



AN IMMIGRANT STORY THAT HELPED SHAPE A CITY

SHELTER

A RON CHAPMAN FILM

PRESS KIT

PRODUCER / DIRECTOR

Chapman Productions

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PUBLICITY

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SHELTER

Chapman Productions | 2021 | Canada

Genre

Documentary

Director

Ron Chapman

Length

Feature 88 mins, International 54 mins,
Canadian Broadcast 44 mins

Language

English, Hebrew dubbing & subtitles

Production Partners

Rogers Media, Rogers Documentary Fund

Broadcast

Rogers/OMNI Television

Soundtrack Release

Sony Classical

Screener Available Upon Request



WATCH TRAILER



LOGLINE

Fleeing religious persecution, resilient Jewish immigrants arrive in Toronto and begin building affordable/quality housing in a growing metropolis.

SYNOPSIS

Toronto—voted one of the top 5 most liveable cities in the world and renowned for its vibrant cultural diversity—was forever changed for the better when a group of resilient Jewish immigrants came to Canada in the first half of the 20th century. **Shelter** is the inspirational story of how these brave Jewish immigrants survived religious persecution in their homelands to build wildly successful real estate and land development businesses and help shape a growing metropolis by making it a refuge for all newcomers to Toronto.

Forced into entrepreneurship by prejudice and circumstance, these new Torontonians started their businesses by buying land, building homes and then reinvesting in the process. But they had a vision. They saw in the post WWII real estate boom the need for affordable, quality, rental housing and instinctively knew that high-rise apartments were the answer. From 1952 to 1975, their companies, renowned and still active developers, built over 500,000 apartment rental units across all areas of the city, winning awards and accolades and providing shelter for countless newcomers. They knew that a healthy city provided shelter for all. During that time the city grew from 1 million to 2 million people.

“When I came to Toronto there were no big buildings. There was absolutely nothing.”



Shelter features exclusive interviews with celebrated visionary businessmen and their families, including: Sam Brown (The Brown Group), John H. (Jack) Daniels (The Daniels Corp.), Mendel Tenenbaum (The Tenen Group); Shirley Diamond (wife of the late Eph Diamond, Founding Partner and Chairman, Cadillac Fairview Corp); Anne Weinbaum (wife of the late Jack Weinbaum, W. J. Realty & Gonte Construction, now the Preston Group); and David and Cary Green (sons of Al and Harold Green, Greenwin group) along with the Cogan, Green, Hofstedter, Krehm, Merkur, Minz, Ross, and Rubenstein families. The film also connects with Graeme Stewart, Director, The Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal and Derek Lobo, CEO, SVN Rock Advisors Inc.

Shelter combines intimate interviews with survivors and their families, archival footage and images, and dramatic reenactments to capture what it was like for these brave people to come to a new world and build families and communities that made Toronto better for everyone.

2021 marks the 76th year after the last inmates of Auschwitz were freed. In light of that anniversary, **Shelter** offers a story of hope, resilience and determination. **Shelter** is also a timely and important note to a future Toronto; a Toronto whose current real estate market is turning it into an unaffordable and inhospitable city for the kinds of immigrants who made it what it is today.

“
There was major growth in Toronto
after the world war of about 1
million people. How do you house
one million people?
”



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was compelled to tell these important and impactful stories of a group of inspiring individuals; people who include some of the last living Holocaust survivors and who, against all odds, achieved the impossible. Their lives and the families they raised in Toronto have contributed greatly to the growth and culture of this unique city, as immigrants have and continue to contribute to the growth and shaping of cities throughout the world. Their legacy is a testament to the benefits of successful immigration—a universal message especially critical in light of the rising xenophobia of our times.

- Ron Chapman, Director



FEATURED FAMILY PARTICIPANTS



SAM BROWN (1924 - 2020)

The Brown Group

“ I’ve been in the worst (concentration/work) camps. Over 600 people went in and in three weeks time it was down to six and I was one of them.

- Sam Brown

I saved two thousand dollars and it was like two million today. And I started building. I bought houses and fixed them and painted them. Then I started buying the land. I did a lot of deals with land. I bought thousands of acres and I sold it for \$2,000 an acre. That land is worth a million dollars an acre today.

- Sam Brown

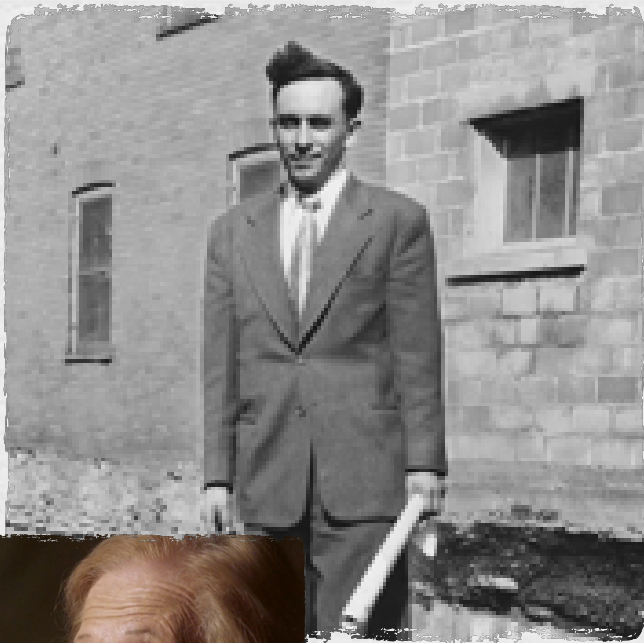
JOHN H. (JACK) DANIELS

Cadillac Fairview, The Daniels Corp.

“ There was such a great need for housing but especially affordable housing. Many, many immigrant families lived in these buildings. Culture is very important anywhere in the city. And it’s very meaningful when you think; this was just a vacant lot. Our buildings serve a purpose for so many people and it’s very rewarding.

- Jack Daniels





EPH DIAMOND (1925 - 2008)

Cadillac Fairview Corp

“ Eph was a builder because he couldn’t get a job as an engineer. In those days, our people weren’t very welcome in that field.

- Shirley Diamond, wife



“ They put their own personalities into the buildings. There were works of love, works of art in addition to works of business.

”

AL GREEN (1925 - 2016)

The Greenwin Group

“ In the late 40s Al and his brother (Harold) leveraged their experience, building baker’s ovens and chimneys into house repairs, and finally building houses. It was touch-and-go to start.

- David Green, son





MENDEL + MILA TENENBAUM

The Tenen Group

“ I feel that I had the best life, I also think I had the worst life. I will never, ever, ever forget.

- Mendel Tenenbaum, Auschwitz Survivor



“ You want to build something bigger than yourself, it's a bigger goal than your own success... You could do that in Toronto, you could build the country from scratch and that's what they did. They provided not just shelter, not just affordable living, but a place of pride for immigrants to call home.

- Sally Tenenbaum, daughter

FEATURED EXPERTS



DEREK LOBO

CEO, SVN Rock Advisors Inc.

“ I suspect that our immigration pattern would probably have been different if people didn’t have these places to come and live; and they were all built between 1960 and 1975. Canada gave my family shelter from the storm. Rental apartments gave my family shelter from the storm. Where would all our immigrants have lived if these apartments wouldn’t have been built? This was a great service to this country, building these rental apartments.

- Derek Lobo

GRAEME STEWART

Founding Director, Centre for Urban Growth and Renewal

“ I would call these buildings irreplaceable assets. They served their function for the people who have been here and they are going to serve their function in the future.

- Graeme Stewart



FULL LIST OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Jay Brown

Mel Brown

Sam Brown

Annette Buchman-Mincer

Lawrence Cogan

John H. (Jack) Daniels

Mark Diamond

Mike Diamond

Shirley Diamond

Carey Diamond

Stephen Diamond

David Green

Cary Green

George Hofstedter

Jonathan Krehm

Derek Lobo

Edwin Merkur

Paul Minz

Jeff Ross

Robert Rubinstein

Graeme Stewart

Mendel Tenenbaum

Mila Tenenbaum

Sally Tenenbaum

Allan Weinbaum

Anne Weinbaum

In memory of Sam Brown, Lawrence Cogan, and Anne Weinbaum, who passed away shortly after the completion of the film.



CREW BIOS

RON CHAPMAN

Director/Producer

Director and producer Ron Chapman is an award-winning Toronto filmmaker. His feature documentaries have garnered acclaim worldwide and have aired on major networks and platforms. They include: ***Who the F**K is Arthur Fogel***, featuring Lady Gaga, U2, The Police, Madonna, Rush, and key music industry insiders; ***The Poet of Havana***, with Carlos Varela, Benicio Del Toro, Jackson Browne; and ***The Forbidden Shore***, an in-depth exploration of Cuba's top musical artists.

Ron's latest concert film, ***Carlos Varela Live in Havana*** was released internationally in January 2021, along with a special limited edition boxed set including ***The Poet of Havana***, ***Carlos Varela Live in Havana***, and a double album of the live concert.

Shelter is one of three films Ron has produced and directed being released 2021. It will have its world premiere as the opening film of the Toronto Jewish Film Festival, June 3, 2021.

His other documentary feature ***From Earth to Sky***, the story of seven Indigenous architects from Turtle Island, will have its world-broadcast premiere on TVO, June 21st 2021, National Indigenous Peoples Day.

Ron is currently in production on a new music documentary investigating 1969's The Toronto Rock N Roll Revival – what Rolling Stone called “the second most important event in rock history” – with John Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band, Bo Diddly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, Gene Vincent, The Doors, Chicago and more, for release 2022.

Ron has had a lifetime of creative entrepreneurship, starting out as a musician, he became an artist manager, record producer, club owner, and concert promoter; and evolved to develop his own film production company, and advertising agency, where he produced and directed commercials for international brands. His album of original songs, ***As Worlds Collide***, is on Current Records, with recent single and video “Turn Away”.





PHYLLIS ELLIS

Producer/Writer

Filmmaker Phyllis Ellis is a director, actor, theatre artist and teacher with 35 years experience working in the arts here in Canada as well as in Europe, Asia, Africa, India and the U.S. Ellis's work searches the dark corners of the human condition to reveal the light. Her work addresses themes of justice, transformation, beauty and healing. Her latest film, ***Born To Run***, is her tenth film project as director/writer/producer.

Her critically acclaimed, award-winning feature film ***Toxic Beauty*** (2019) was selected as one of the five big idea films at Hot Docs

International Film Festival 2019, and is currently screening in over 200 theatres in the U.S. ***Toxic Beauty*** has garnered worldwide distribution.

Ellis's film ***About Her*** won the prestigious Donald Brittain award at the Canadian Screen Awards (CSAs) for Best Social Political Documentary Film. Ellis won 4 CSAs and received a nomination for best direction for her work in documentary film, series, writing and performance.

Ellis is also an Olympian who has dedicated her career to telling stories empowering women's voices around the world.

EUGENE WEIS

Editor

Eugene Weis has more than 10 years experience working as an editor on feature documentary films. His keen sense for storytelling lends itself well to the craft of editing, and his work has garnered accolades, including a Canadian Screen Award nomination for Best Editing and best editing in a feature documentary by the Canadian Cinema Editors. Selected titles include: ***Hitman – The David Foster Project*** (2020), ***Shelter*** (2021), ***Metamorphosis*** (2019), ***The Poet of Havana*** (2015), and ***Who the F**K is Arthur Fogel*** (2013).





JACK LENZ

Composer

John Frederick “Jack” Lenz is an award-winning composer, producer and musical director. He has written, performed and produced music for film, television and theatre both in Canada and abroad. Lenz’s passion for music, television, film and the arts has translated into a thriving business - Lenz Entertainment. Based in Toronto, Canada, the company was founded in 1992 and specializes in music production, television and feature film production as well as artist development and management. A small sampling of his composing credits include: ***Battle Dogs*** for Discovery Channel US (2018–2019, ten episodes);

Little Mosque on the Prairie (2007, 95 episodes); and ***Due South*** (1994, 65 episodes).

A passionate humanitarian, Lenz co-founded the Canadian chapter of Hilary Duff’s “Kids with a Cause”, a charity that supports local children’s based charities. He is also involved with KidsFest Canada, Rainbows Canada and is currently working with Dr. Carter Snead on an unparalleled donation drive for Sick Kids Hospital.

HENRY LESS

Director of Photography

Henry Less is an acclaimed filmmaker, writer and director of photography with over 30 years of experience in the film and television industry. His documentary cinematography credits include: ***The Pathway*** (2016); ***I Am Anna*** (2015); ***Backstage with Barrymore*** (2012); ***Operation Unplugged*** (2012); ***From Spain with Love: With Annie Sibonney*** (2011); and, most recently, ***Shelter*** (2021).





MARK KENNEY

Executive Producer

Mark Kenney is the President and Chief Executive Officer of CAPREIT - the Canadian Apartment Properties Real Estate Investment Trust. CAPREIT is one of Canada's largest real estate investment trusts managing over 65,000 residential rental apartment and townhouse suites and manufactured home community sites in major urban centres across Canada, the Netherlands, and Ireland. Kenney oversees all of CAPREIT's operations in Canada and Europe, including CAPREIT's own portfolio in the Netherlands and the Irish Residential Properties REIT portfolio in Ireland.

Kenney's career includes leadership roles at Greenwin Property Management and Tridel where he managed various portfolios in the Greater Toronto Area. He is a board member and prior chair of the Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario, a board member of St. Hilda's Towers and was a founding board member of the GTAA. *Shelter* (2021) is his first feature film venture.

COLETTE JOHNSON-VOSBERG

Producer

Colette Johnson-Vosberg is a management level professional whose expertise lies in film and television production, programming, distribution and digital media. Her portfolio is complemented by years of active public service targeted to professional development in the broadcast and digital sector, as well as numerous awards and seminars related to film, television and digital platforms.







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WEBSITE

<http://chapmanproductions.ca/shelter>