



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Marketing and Communications
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Documentary ‘From Swastika to Jim Crow’ to be Shown at Ramapo College

Co-director, producer Steven Fischler will screen film

MAHWAH, N.J. – Steven Fischler, co-director and producer of “From Swastika to Jim Crow,” will screen his film on Thursday, February 14 at 10 a.m. in the H-wing Auditorium (H-129) at Ramapo College of New Jersey. The program will be presented under the auspices of the Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and is free and open to the public.

First released in 2000, the documentary explores the similarities between Nazism in Germany (the Swastika) and racism in the American south (Jim Crow). In 1933, the Nazi government expelled Jewish scholars from German universities. Many of them found teaching positions in Southern universities, where they sympathized with the plight of their African-American colleagues and students. The horrors of prejudice became a common thread that could bind these exiled Jewish professors with their black students and colleagues. The film pairs shocking archival footage of the KKK dressed in costume and carrying torches with footage of Nazi salutes and marching German soldiers to compare the barbarity of both ideologies.

Friends since the age of nine, Fischler and his co-producer Joel Sucher grew up in a rough-and-tumble Brooklyn neighborhood, and early on they took the rebellious road -- declaring themselves "anarchists" while still enrolled in Brooklyn Technical High School. In 1970, two of their NYU student films caught the attention of film school instructor Martin Scorsese, who encouraged them to use film as a political tool. Establishing their own production company, Pacific Films, while still film students at NYU, Sucher and Fischler began tackling political difficult subjects. In 1978, the two received Guggenheim

Fellowships in film, becoming the youngest ever to do so. Two films resulted, "Free Voice of Labor: the Jewish Anarchists" (1980) and "Anarchism in America" (1982).

Sucher and Fischler also worked behind-the-scenes on the sets of "Goodfellas," "JFK" and "Cape Fear." Other works include "Beyond Wiseguys," released in 2007, which candidly described their complicated relationship with Hollywood's fascination with mob-related stereotypes. In 2014, "Dressing America: Tales from the Garment Center" turned their attention to New York City's garment district that was created by an amazing assortment of immigrant Jews. Premiering on PBS in 2017, "Five Finger Discount: A Crooked Family History," directed by Fischler, is a documentary based on best-selling writer Helene Stapinski's story of growing up in a Jersey City family of generations of swindlers, bookies, embezzlers, murderers and mobster wannabes.

For information or to request disability-related accommodations for this event, please contact holgen@ramapo.edu or call 201-684-7409.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice, and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by CollegesofDistinction.com, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on Niche.com, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education.