

GALERIA ALASKA P R O D U C T I O N S

THE GOOD AMERICAN



a documentary by jochen hick

THE GOOD AMERICAN With Tom Weise, Keith Richmond, Frederik Berlin, Talvin DeMachio, Jeffrey Davids, Sascha Müller-Bardone, Mike Jones, Lars Svanson, Vin Nolan, Chad Leigh, Angel Benton

Written, filmed, directed and produced by Jochen Hick. Edited by Thomas Keller. Production Consultant Karin Walenzus. Assistant Editors Nicholas Ricciardi, Johannes Salzmann. Production Assistants Ewald Kentgens (Las Vegas), Christian Modersbach (New York). Additional Camera Wolfram Elmer, Keith Richmond, Tom Weise. Sound Design Jörg Thell. Sound Mixing Michael Kaczmarek. Publicity Ira Kormannshaus. Subtitles by Joel Kirby, Thomas Keller. A production of GALERIA ALASKA PRODUCTIONS / Jochen Hick

www.the-good-american.de

Alle Informationen unter www.galeria-alaska.de und www.the-good-american.de
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GALERIA ALASKA
PRODUCTIONS

GALERIA ALASKA PRODUCTIONS
present

The Good American

A documentary by Jochen Hick

Berlinale 2009 Panorama Dokumente Screenings
9.02.09 CineStar 7 17:00
11.02.09 CineStar 7 22:30
12.02.09 Colosseum 1 15:30

press contact: Ira Kormannshaus 0163-732 30 31

Festival presentation supported by Filmförderung Hamburg / Schleswig-Holstein
Subtitling supported by German Films



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P R O D U C T I O N S



content 1:

Jochen Hick's new film portrays Tom Weise, one of the initiators of the Hustlaball (an event originally meant to raise the acceptance of male prostitutes and also promote a rentboy website). Estranged from his parents and no contact to them, the small framed former political science student goes to New York in the early 90's. Being HIV-positive, he can only stay in the US illegally. Under the current laws he isn't even allowed to visit the country and cannot leave since that would mean a waiting period of several years to re-enter (if permitted at all.)

At first Tom ekes out a meagre living in New York as escort. He doesn't make money, becomes homeless. Eventually he helps Jeffrey Davids building up the website rentboy.com, which ten years later is to be the most popular website for gay male escorts.

Health issues, loneliness and drug excesses torture Tom increasingly, until, in 2006, he meets his life partner. He decides to return to Berlin together with the Afro-American Keith and re-enter Germany for the first time in 12 years. A few days later the Berlin Hustlaball takes place.

Appearing a very confident businessman in the first minutes of the film, he increasingly opens up, revealing himself as a person with weaknesses, fears and dreams. Jochen Hick's new film is a successful filmic portrait of a largely unknown gay icon. The film accompanies Tom Weise in his private life as well during the last parties he organized in Las Vegas and New York. And it accompanies his return to Berlin.

The film, apart from showing a lively portrait, becomes a socio-cultural excursion between New and Old world, mirrored in a marginalized group with exciting glimpses into the world and mindset of escorts and party makers.



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GALERIA ALASKA **P R O D U C T I O N S**

content 2:

Internet platforms change the relationship between buyers and sellers. This also goes for the service product sex. In the mid 90s Tom Weise and his business partner Jeffrey put a platform online, adjusting the communication between tricks and treats anew. They simplify the initiation of buyable sex; shift the sexual search from dark parks and damp toilets to the pc-surroundings. This opens up fair and independent ways of negotiation for clients and escorts as well.

For 10 years German-born Tom organized parties in the USA around the platform community, bringing hustlers and clients closer together. Hustlaball is his creation.

Jochen Hick (Sex/Life in L.A.; Talk Straight; East/West) accompanies Tom Weise, illegally living in New York and threatened by deportation, during his last business year in the USA and his return to Berlin.

The film documents a financially interesting business scheme, which hovers on the brink of legality. And it's attempts at providing an emotional home for escorts and hustlers between economic self-assertion and sexual lust in a field of work formerly named prostitution.



content detailed:

A fascinating genre picture of society and politics tells about protagonist Tom Weise, shot in New York, Las Vegas, Paris, London and Berlin. The story of a young German student of political science, trying to escape a German depression under difficult family and personal circumstances. In the USA, the country of positive thinking, he builds up a small empire. The largest website for gay male escorts evolves and a famous party empire. After 12 years he wants to come back to Germany having made it, as successful party producer, finally with a life partner. With an American accent and enormous capacities in showing off, he comes back to a Berlin, where time and attitude seem unchanged to him.

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GALERIA ALASKA **P R O D U C T I O N S**

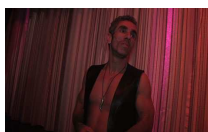
The film describes Weise's last summer in New York, with big events, parties, jubilees and trips to Fire Island. From private and very personal moments to big events the spectator gets glimpses into a fascinating and largely unknown world. They also find out about the hopes and defeats our protagonists go thru. In October 2007 Tom Weise wants to go back to Berlin and for the first time attend Hustlaball, an event he created, in Berlin.

In the film we meet friends and companions from all over the world, as well as other Europeans (French, English, Italians, etc.) who have also have recognized the market potential for escort- and party industry in the US. Thrilling, at times deeply moving life stories occur throughout the film as well as Tom's often weird encounters with other protagonists. And current social and political cross references constantly emerge.

THE GOOD AMERICAN becomes at the same time, an ironic cross-examination of the small, but important differences between Old Europe and North America – mirrored in an often marginalized group, which loses its wickedness, its danger in the film. A story of emigration and immigration – just totally different this time!



protagonists:



Tom Weise

Born February, 14th 1967 in Hannover, Germany.

Studied political sciences at the Free University Berlin. In the early 90s lived in Berlin and Sydney. 1993 diagnosed HIV+. 1994/95 internship with "The Mac Neil/Lehrer News Hour" in New York City. 1995 completes studies, moves to New York. In 1997 he meets Jeffrey Davids, with whom he starts the internet site rentboy.com, currently the world's largest gay male escort site. Actively involved in Gay Pride parades, party organization, and working with care groups for children with HIV, he also fostered 2 African-American boys from Harlem for over 5 years.

For many years he led a group visiting detainees (illegal immigrants like him) at a detention center at JFK airport.

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In March 1998 first Hustlaball, (a party bringing together male prostitutes, porn stars and their fans), afterwards taking place annually in cities such as New York, Las Vegas and eventually Berlin.

Increasing conflict between public and private life, mounting problems with loneliness, health and drugs. He meets his life partner. In 2007 they decide to move to Berlin.

Participating for the first time in the Hustlaball Berlin he also leaves rentboy.com to his business partner. Tom lives happily with his (registered) partner Keith Richmond in Berlin and Paris.



Keith Richmond

Also known as Og'e, born in Chicago, Illinois into a loving military family. The creative boy studied at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts in Washington, DC focusing on music and theatre. In New York he attended the renowned Fashion Institute of Technology studying women's fashion, focusing on "Couture". He loves all things extravagant, detailed and elegant. He worked 14 years for a retail consulting firm. In addition to working with a Parisian accessory designer, he also designs fashion for private customers

Currently he enjoys the exchange with European designers.

In addition he sings Rhythm & Blues and writes his own blog. Keith lives with his (registered) partner Tom in Berlin and Paris.



Frederik Berlin

Born January 27th, 1973 as son of a US-soldier and German mother in Augsburg. They divorce, when he is four, he is raised by his mother in Germany. In 1997, training as advertising merchant in Munich, studying marketing management.

Simultaneously works through an agency part-time as an escort/callboy. Later acts in porn films, does live sex-performances and go-go dancing. 2003 leaves the advertising business, and starts up his own business as escort/callboy. 2004 moves to Berlin and meets his partner Marc.

2007 first visit to the US, successfully works as escort there. Back in Berlin schooling as communication trainer, coach (NLP) and as gay-tantra-masseur.

In 2009 aims at becoming a holistic therapist for body, mind and soul combining sex, tantra, training, coaching, and marketing consultancy.

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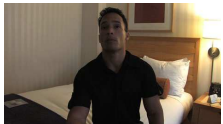
Jeffrey Davids

Studied philosophy among others at Oxford University (UK). Founder and owner of the website rentboy.com. Lives in New York and Madrid. While at Oxford, meets a group of 40 plus men who discuss male prostitution and is fascinated by this glamorous world as well as the term "rent boy". Anticipatory he registers the name, but only two years later, following personal experience with online cruising, he ventures from computer specialist to internet businessman.



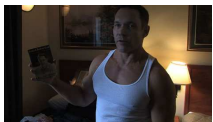
Sascha Müller-Bardone

1971 born on the north German border.
1991 diagnosed with leukemia, completes apprenticeship as an engine mechanic, first sex parties, meets his life partner.
1998 moves to Berlin, works at Mann-o-Meter, organizes his first sex parties.
2003 first Berlin "Hustlaball", accidentally and spontaneously.
2004 founder of "SMB-Berlin" and organizes series of parties including "Fickstutenmarkt" (*Mare-Fuck-Market*)



Talvin DeMachio

Born 1971, porn actor and escort for over ten years. "Escort of the Year 2007".



Mike Jones

Escort and masseur from Denver. Outed religious leader Ted Haggard, alleged customer of his for over three years, who subsequently retired. Mike's book on it "I Had to Say Something" has also been adapted to the stage.

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Lars Svenson

Escort and porn actor from Germany. Lives and works part-time in the USA.



Alex Baresi

Porn actor and escort. International Pornstar 2007 (category above 27 years) 2004 finishes his studies of International Economy at the University of Genoa. Starts porn career in 2005, but turns down first offer, a bareback-film, because he insists on safer sex. He also designs latex and leather clothing, which he distributes himself.



Vin Nolan

Porn actor and escort, took part in the internet-realityshow „ChiChi LaRue's Raw Hotel". Vin Nolan's story is also featured in the second part of SEX/LIFE IN L.A.: CYCLES OF PORN. Currently lives in New York and still works in the porn industry.



Victor Steele

Victor Steele is a 28 year old American-Italian Porn Actor working exclusively for Raging Stallion (studio). He has appeared and performed at Hustlaball events in New York, Las Vegas and Berlin. Victor lives in New York and works as a dancer, escort and bartender.



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information on filming and technical data:

Technical Data:

92 Minutes,

16:9 anamorphic,

Color,

English and German Dialogue

(Festival version is the original version with german and english Subtitles)

Main filming phase: October 2006 through October 2007 / Post-filming until January 2009

Filming locations: Las Vegas, New York, Fire Island (The Pines), Berlin, Hannover

Short-synopsis to filming: After a short filming at the 2006 Hustlaball Berlin made possible by Sascha Müller-Bardone, he suggested Jochen Hick contact Tom Weise. In January 2007 Jochen Hick filmed the Hustlaball in Las Vegas, which was held parallel to the world's largest Porn-Convention there (AVN). During this filming he met Jeffrey Davids and a large part of the protagonists, whom, on various filming trips over the year across the USA (Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Los Angeles and San Francisco), he subsequently accompanied and interviewed. This film emerged out of this material.



press:

exberliner 2/09:

<http://www.exberliner.net> > Talking Straight

kulturspiegel (26.1.09):

<http://service.spiegel.de> > Der Berlinalist

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team:

author, director, producer, director of photography



Jochen Hick

Born in Darmstadt, grew up in the Taunus Mountains, Munich and Stuttgart.
Studied "Visual Communication" focusing on film at the Academy of Fine Arts Hamburg. Diploma, „Master Student“ of Helke Sander.
Continued studies in Hamburg, Florence and Bologna (DAMS).
Broad experience as assistant director, sound- and cameraman, editor and production manager as well as journalist.
First premieres and awards at the Oberhausen Shortfilm Festival.
1994 co-founder of Galeria Alaska Productions (Hamburg), since 1995 president.
Since 2007 chief editor of TIMM TV.

filmography:

1984 Mond über Pittsburg (Short)
1987 gerd hansen, 55 (Short)
1990 Via Appia
1992 Willkommen im Dom (Short) *
1995 Menmaniacs - The Legacy of Leather *
1998 Sex/Life in L.A. *
2000 No One Sleeps *
2003 Ich kenn keinen - Allein unter Heteros * (*Teddy Award Best Documentary Film*)
2005 Cycles Of Porn- Sex/Life in L.A. 2 *
2005 Am Ende des Regenbogens (TV)
2006 Rainbow's End (mit C. Jentsch) (EFM)
2006 Hallelujah! (Short)
2007 Deutschland - Ein Herbstmärchen (Short)
2008 East/West - Sex & Politics *
2009 The Good American*
* Denotes official Berlinale Entry

GALERIA ALASKA

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editor



Thomas Keller

Born 1973 in Ulm. Lives and works in Berlin.

Studied Theatre and Film in Gießen and Bristol.

Worked with various theatre and film projects throughout Europe, mainly directing and editing. Numerous awards and grants, including a grant from the Baden-Württemberg Foundation for the Arts.

production supervisor



Karin Wallenczus

Born in Adelaide, Australia.

Degree in Psychology. Since 1987 professional experience in film and TV.

Responsible for development, production-consulting, dramaturgy and casting for GALERIA ALASKA PRODUCTIONS. Post-production supervisor as well as press work.

Since 1994 involved in all GALERIA ALASKA PRODUCTIONS' film and TV projects.

Lives and works in Hamburg.

assistant editors

Nicholas Ricciardi

Johannes Salzmann

additional camera

Wolfram Emter

Keith Richmond

Tom Weise

subtitles

Joel Kirby

Thomas Keller

assistants

Ewald Kentgens (Las Vegas)

Christian Modersbach (New York)

sound design

Jörg Theil

sound mix

Michael Kaczmarek

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special thanks to:

All performers and crew of Hustlaball (Las Vegas 07, New York 07, Berlin 07)
Team of rentboy.com
TIMM / DFW
Dr. Bernd Reuter
Sean @ rentboy
Bernhard Koppmeyer
Christoph Weber
Bjoern Wieland

Kitkat Club Berlin
Club Krave Las Vegas
Pascal
Edith @ rentboy
Maximilian Moll
Oliver Standke
Thomas Prokop

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