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## What You Can Learn From >America's Greatest Living Tailor

From his shop in Brooklyn, Martin Greenfield once transformed Bubba-from-Arkansas into President Clinton and produced thousands of suits for Donna Karan. Now, at age 81, he's cutting cloth for all the coolest young labels, from Rag & Bone to Band of Outsiders



### What gets me to work in the morning...

"Young designers bring passion, and that's why I'm still working at 81. Scott [Sternberg] from Band of Outsiders has had as much success as you could ask for in a short amount of time in a bad economy. That's because he's doing something new but including quality. I've been doing this for sixty-two years, and it's quality that's kept me in business."

### ...And what I do when I get there

"My job is to interpret the designer's vision. They come with ideas and energy, and we figure out how to make it producible at high quality with a salable price. That way the customer wears the suit, likes it, and buys more."



BAND OF OUTSIDERS



RAG & BONE



FREEMAN'S SPORTING CLUB

### GREENFIELD'S KEY CLIENTS

- Yeah, Scott Sternberg's suits have that au courant shrunken fit, but the fundamentals are classically American.
- Greenfield doesn't bat an eye at the more experimental, punk-inspired cuts of Rag & Bone.
- FSC's Taavo Somers imagines the suit. Martin Greenfield makes it a reality.



### Fundamentals of fit

"Whatever the current fashion, two things must always be right with a suit, and they both involve the jacket. The shoulder must be even—not too wide or too narrow—and the suit must closely hug the shirt collar. Compared with that, the rest is crap!"

### Suiting the King of Pop

"The Michael Jackson job we did just before he died wasn't easy. We made two suits: One was blue silk, and another was black with trim sewn into

the seams so they could hang chains off it."

### How to identify a handmade suit

"A suit jacket has three layers of fabric: inside, outside, and an interior canvas layer. In a handmade suit, the interior layer floats freely between the inside and outside, and that's what gives the jacket life. On an okay suit, the chest floats, but the bottom is fused by machine. On a cheap suit, the middle layer is entirely fused to the front layer. So feel both above and

below the buttons for that free-floating middle layer."

### Life as First Tailor

"When Bill Clinton came out of Arkansas, Donna Karan brought him to me. We used to make 10,000 crepe suits a year with Donna Karan, and he loved those because they felt like leisure suits. I slowly raised the button stance and got him into a fitted suit, but he liked to be casually dressed."

### From servicemen to civilians

"Ford, Eisenhower—it's the military guys

who like to dress, because they're used to wearing suits every day. Colin Powell sent me a note that says 'Thanks for changing my uniform.' I've been dressing him since he took it off."

### So where should a man start?

"One gray suit and one navy suit. You could go to London for a month with just that. Wear the navy jacket with the gray pants; keep changing your shirt and tie. I don't care where you go, you'll look elegant every day."—WILL WELCH

