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Retired Malibu Doctor Fulfills Lifelong Dream

Dr. Tony Greenberg, who lost his home in the Woolsey Fire, is now producer of "The Rideshare Killer" starring Eric Roberts.

By Jimmy Tallal / Special to The Malibu Times
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Dr. Tony Greenberg (right) with wife Jill at their home in 2015

Devon Meyers / TMT

Well into his 70s, Dr. Tony Greenberg (who lost his house during the Woolsey Fire) has finally realized his dream of becoming a movie producer. Albeit very low-budget, his film, "The Rideshare Killer," has already been shot and the last \$20K needed for post-production was just successfully raised through a campaign on Kickstarter.

"It's not going to save the world, but I do hope it gives people one-and-a-half hours of fun and entertainment," Greenberg said in a recent interview.

It all started a couple of years ago, shortly after Greenberg retired as a physician. He'd always been interested in filmmaking, and started acquiring film options on books.

"My idea was to produce a movie based on a book I liked," he said. He began raising money to finance writing a script for one of the books.

He then set up a meeting with Ashley Scott Meyers of Agoura Hills, who runs a podcast that Greenberg listens to called Sell Your Screenplay.

"I wanted to see if he could refer some writers to me," Greenberg recalled. They immediately hit it off and ended up deciding to collaborate on making a film out of Meyers' screenplay, "The Rideshare Killer," with Meyers as writer/director. They also landed other investors.

"The Rideshare Killer" appealed to Greenberg because, "It's a fun story, a mystery, a whodunit and a little scary. And it had to do with ridesharing, which is a relatively new thing. I love ridesharing, myself, and I had a son who worked for Lyft. But there have been issues with ridesharing, and it seemed like a contemporary idea and didn't require the expense of special effects."

Meyers described the film's story: "The female CEO of a new ridesharing app must stop a serial killer who's using the app to lure victims into his car, before he destroys the company and kills her entire technology team. It's 'Scream' meets 'The Social Network.'"

Just as they were getting started on the project, the Woolsey Fire burned down the Greenberg's Malibu Park home where he'd lived for 30 years, which temporarily brought things to a halt. After some delays, the film was finally shot over 17 days in December 2019.

"I'm learning every step of the way. The one thing that was remarkable to me was that everybody worked on this film without an expectation of getting paid very much," Greenberg said. "The passion that people had about the work and the bonding together was tremendous.

"There was so much to do in 17 days that we tried to set a calm, constant tone," he continued. "I had to learn everything—including how much I don't know. But I did get a good sense of how to audition people, and I think we were very successful with the people we chose. I learned that courtesy and respect is just as important in filmmaking as it was in the medical field, and that honesty and integrity is critical to really feeling good about what you've accomplished."

They landed actor Eric Roberts, an Oscar nominee and three-time Golden Globe nominee, as the lead, playing the part of Lieutenant Moyer.

Despite his lack of filmmaking experience, Greenberg discovered there was still plenty he could do during shooting.

"I'm not a writer, and I can't act or hold a camera, but interacting with people, troubleshooting, scheduling, locations, talking to neighbors about traffic complaints, and keeping people from getting upset were all important things I could do to keeping everything going smoothly and be involved," Tony learned.

Now that \$20K has been raised successfully in a Kickstarter campaign, "The Rideshare Killer" will be edited shortly, and music and sound will be added and refined. The film should be ready for screenings in three to six months. In the meantime, Greenberg and Meyers will be planning for film festivals, promotion and distribution.

What's next for Greenberg? He's already working on another project. He has a finished script for the book "Three Days Missing" by Kimberly Bell about kidnappers kidnapping the wrong child and is sharing the script with other producers. He also has other books waiting on scripts.

"If any of these movies get made, that's inspiring," said Greenberg. "I strongly believe that when you retire, you've got to be active and pursue things that use your mind and your energy. I'm glad I'm still able to do this."

Jimmy

