

ARTS & LEISURE



It could happen here

No on 9 supporters in Heather MacDonald's Ballot Measure 9: A battle against misleading arguments about special rights.

Documentary: An intimate account of the campaign by the Oregon Citizen's Alliance to limit gay rights.

By **Mike Romano**

The big problem in the US is that people don't think for themselves. That's why I don't use narration in my film," said documentary filmmaker Heather MacDonald at the Seattle International Film Festival last May. Her film *Ballot Measure 9* covers the 1992 initiative sponsored by Lon Mabon's Oregon Citizen's Alliance (OCA) that sought to set the Oregon constitution's definition of homosexuality as "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse" and ban state funding of any project that might

ing themselves in public and thinking that they're better than us." One junior high student — at an Anne Frank exhibition, no less — says of the Nazis, "I could see how people could say 'they're not like us, so I'm going to get 'em,' because that's the way I feel about fags . . . I just beat them to make them think about it . . . [but] I'm not prejudiced, and I don't like people who are." Another adolescent proposes to put all gays and lesbians in Illinois, saying "I think they could fit."

After shooting these scenes, MacDonald told me, she explained to the boys that she was a lesbian. They literally didn't believe her — one even invited her to his church group.

"facilitate" homosexuality. The film, which won this year's audience prize for best film at the Sundance Festival and begins a four-day run at the Varsity this week, chronicles the OCA campaign, the fivefold

Ballot Measure 9

directed by Heather MacDonald
Varsity, July 14-17 only

increase in anti-gay violence in Portland, and the battle of those who fought for the initiative's defeat. Despite MacDonald's obvious liberal sympathies (and knowing the victory of the "No on 9" campaign) *Ballot Measure 9* remains genuinely surprising in its documentation of bigotry and inspiring in its demonstration of courage.

While MacDonald lets the characters tell the story for themselves, she maintains a sharp editorial presence. She is at her best in a montage that cuts between three OCA activists demonizing homosexuality with dubious statistics as they lay the foundation of their campaign. One activist lectures professorially beside an overhead projector, the second is campaign coordinator, and the third, a signature collector. "We have golden showers," begins the lecturer. "Men stand around and urinate on each other," contributes the campaign organizer. "We have scattung; scattung is defecation on each other," adds the lecturer. *Cut to the sig-*

nature collector." —rubbing it on the hair and skin! Return to the podium: "28 percent of homosexuals engage in sodomy with more than 1,000 males. It's a proven fact." "We have molestation of children, 90 times more often." "A documented fact."

Once the rhetorical seeds are planted, MacDonald shows how the OCA tempers its rhetoric and focuses its campaign on misleading arguments about special rights. At one point, an Oregonian bending over to sign Measure 9 turns to the camera and explains, "[Homosexuality] is in the same category with lying and murder. . . . Why should we give murderers a special right?"

For his part, Mabon plays off of such rhetoric as he holds up the children's book *Heather has two Mommys* and lectures on the evils of cultural diversity. "They don't use the word homosexuality, they use the words 'sexual orientation,'" lps Mabon. "They don't use the words sexual orientation to tell you what they're trying to do. They use the words 'cultural diversity' [reading from a pamphlet] 'to embrace and celebrate cultural diversity.' Now let's bring up what it really means, and put in 'homosexuality'; 'to embrace and celebrate *homosexuality*.'"

The most telling — and most disturbing — effects of the OCA rhetoric come in the numerous interviews MacDonald conducts with young people. A little girl says to the camera: "Homosexuals shouldn't be show-

Measure 9. Each (including an former Marine and police officer) admit their terror as they speak out against the OCA. Kathleen Saadat passionately and intelligently defends equal rights for Oregon's lesbians and gays while building the vital statewide coalition against Measure 9 that included special efforts at rural folk and urban African-American communities. On November 3, 1992, "no" votes on the Oregon Measure outnumbered "yes" votes by 14 percent. On the same day, voters in Colorado approved a similar initiative, and Bill Clinton was elected president.

The movie concludes with an ominous shot of a sign on the bridge leading north on I-5 out of Portland: "Welcome to Washington." Indeed, OCA's sister group, Citizens Alliance of Washington, last year sponsored two anti-gay initiatives, which

were subsequently defeated through the efforts of the gay-rights group Hands Off Washington (HOW). New attempts to limit the rights of gays and lesbians are currently being challenged by HOW's 1995 Northwest Pledge campaign. "The movie gives an in-depth personal look at how initiatives like this create hatred and divisiveness . . . it's a preview of what we can avoid," says HOW spokesperson, Dianne McDade.

Ballot Measure 9 is a compelling, impressively crafted story. Be you hardened to prejudice, familiar with right-wing radicalism, or weary of knee-jerk liberalism, *Ballot Measure 9* brilliantly displays how brutality can be husbanded through a wicked combination of gross manipulation and subtle innuendo. Lon Mabon is right on one thing: "It is a simple battle between good and evil." ■

THE SEATTLE TIMES

SUNDAY, JULY 9, 1995

Gay-rights film brings rural town into picture

By JOHN HARTL
Seattle Times movie reviewer

Heather MacDonald seems to be everywhere in her prize-winning new documentary, "Ballot Measure 9," about the defeat of Oregon's anti-gay-rights initiative in 1992.

She talks to schoolboys, worried parents and grandparents, Portland Police Chief Tom Potter and Lon Mabon, chairman of the Oregon Citizens' Alliance and sponsor of Measure 9. She visits not only Portland's gay-rights activists but their supporters and detractors in rural Oregon. She finds historical precedents and integrates relevant footage from the 1992 Republican Convention and Colorado's gay-rights battles.

"It was like putting together a jigsaw puzzle," she said during a visit to the Seattle International Film Festival, where the movie received a standing ovation in May. The film returns Friday to the Varsity.

"We shot about 300 hours, some on 8mm, some on VHS, some on Beta," she said. "New York is still my base, but I worked on and off for about eight months, starting in the spring of 1992."

A former actress and maker of documentary shorts ("Kiev Blue," "Nuclear Navyport, New York City"), MacDonald had never created a feature-length film before. "Ballot Measure 9" didn't start out on that scale. It just grew.

"I was actually doing research on another documentary about violence against gays and lesbians," she said. "Violence in Oregon was already increasing. I shot for a couple of weeks there, thinking it would be a segment of a larger documentary. Finally I saw it as a feature on its own."

Once she'd made that decision, she designed "Ballot Measure 9" to be all-encompassing, partly because she wanted it to become a useful political tool in later gay-rights battles.

"We tried to get to the rural areas because we needed to be representative," she said. "We wound up choosing one place, Grants Pass, which seemed to have the most material and the most interesting characters. Perhaps it's a larger act of courage to make a stand in a small town like Grants Pass. There was a lot of tension there."

Perhaps the movie's most-quoted scene was shot there. She inter-



BARBARA LOUDIS

Heather MacDonald's prize-winning documentary, "Ballot Measure 9," opens Friday at the Varsity.

views a teenager who suggests that all gays should be shipped to Illinois.

"Everyone remembers that from the film, but he's actually a nice young man. His friends were the thugs. There is some hope for him.

He was shocked when I came out to him, then he invited us to dinner. He had no idea there were so many people around him who might be gay."

Not in the completed film is a segment about Oregon's facetious Special Righteousness Committee, which wants to counter Bible-based opposition to homosexuals by making all of Leviticus part of the U.S. Constitution. In addition to suppression of gays, this would outlaw beard-shaving, oyster-eating and wearing polyester.

"People are very selective in their use of the Bible," she said, noting that many Christians are reacting against the use of Leviticus to justify prejudice. "There's now an Interfaith Alliance Against Pat Robertson that includes fundamentalists as well."

MacDonald discovered that she had to be selective as well, leaving out the Special Righteousness Committee and other scenes in order to streamline her material.

"There was so much that didn't get into the film," she said. "It's a filmmaker's choice. You look for some emotional thread. What we saw was people getting more and more frightened. By emphasizing certain people, some of the secondary characters were sacrificed."

Also contributing to the editing process was her determination to finish the film before the 1994 elections. A videotaped 80-minute version turned up on VHS at house parties last fall, and there were two public showings in Portland.

"After watching it with an audience, I could see we were repeating ourselves and holding back the audience." She pared it down to 72 minutes for the Sundance Film Festival, where it took the audience award in January for best documentary.

"I wanted to get it out in a grassroots kind of way," she said. "Sun-

dance made it eligible for the Oscars and gave it a wider audience, beyond the gay and lesbian community.

"The press didn't come to see it at Sundance. The audience discovered it. They were extraordinary. It wasn't a jury of five people that voted the award."

For distribution, she picked Zeitgeist, a small company that handles only a few films, such as "Manufacturing Consent" and "Coming Out Under Fire," that its employees feel passionate about.

It has now been seven years since MacDonald abandoned her theater career, going "from ingenue to muckraker" when she decided to devote herself to creating nonfiction films. She works part time to support herself and her projects. Although she admits that for the past couple of years "I didn't have a life," she says she feels better about herself.

"With acting you're always selling

"With acting you're always selling yourself, wondering whether they like the way you look..."

HEATHER MACDONALD

yourself, wondering whether they like the way you look or the way you talk," she said. "Self-esteem is constantly in question."

"The documentary form uses so much more of me, all my passion and intellect. Now I work as a paralegal, nights and weekends, but my self-esteem doesn't suffer in any way. I put all my other energy the rest of the week into something that's deeply important to me. I would lose ground now if I went back to acting."



It Can Happen Here

By Paula Nechak

"We won't stop getting and gaining power until we return every institution in this country back to a moral base," says Lon Mabon, leader of the OCA—the Oregon Citizens Alliance. The problem that arises, however, is by whose code are we gauging that moral base?

Temporarily halting the OCA's quest to limit civil rights for gays and lesbians within the state, Ballot Measure 9, the seminal issue on the 1992 Oregon voting block, was narrowly defeated in the fall of '92. But Mabon and his group will not give up, and they've targeted Washington as another of their places to clean out and clean up into mirror images of white, right, and upright docility. The quintessential question is: Do we want to

While awaiting the premiere of her film in New York City, Heather MacDonald visited Seattle this past May. *Ballot Measure 9* had already won the Documentary Prize at the Sundance Film Festival, and she was anxious for it to break through in other critical markets. The Seattle screening offered a perfect opportunity to drum up awareness of our own struggles-to-come with Lon Mabon and his gang. *Ballot Measure 9* packed the house, receiving a standing ovation at its Seattle International Film Festival screenings.

But MacDonald expressed concern that her film might be relegated to only playing in distributor "A Markets" (the big, generally liberal coast cities), instead of smaller, more conservatively minded mid-western hubs as well. There lie the audiences that should be made aware of the reality; gays and lesbians are only the tip of the iceberg. A way to whittle away and segregate the larger but less-unified "real target," anyone or any group that does not subscribe to white Christian values.

"What we're looking at in the radical right policy is an oppressive society," said MacDonald. "If we're talking about moving toward a theocracy, which is indeed what the agenda is, it will dictate our reproductive choices, and dictate our schools and education. It's really a matter of dictating creationism, to teach our 'American Culture Values' as opposed to anything that comes from another country that is not exactly up to white Christian values."

I pointed out to MacDonald that often the young, white, mostly heterosexual male community feels immune to and peripheral of topical issues. And though this elusive but high-profile faction felt AIDS was a "gay disease," they are still the ones with the power to change and sway other like minds. Yet they stay on the periphery because they feel the issues do not hold any relation to them. As MacDonald emphasized, "They're largely apolitical. And many of the issues at stake—my mind goes to the women hurt by the anti-affirmative action and anti-immigrant movement—who do these help? All these movements help white males regain stature in society."

"Look at the young man in the film who voted for Measure 9 because he just graduated from college and he's looking for a job," she continues. "As far as he's concerned, gays or lesbians could take a job from him when it's hard enough to get one. He believes that special rights rhetoric. It comes down to the kind of country they want to live in. We're redefining the concept of democracy here."

So what will make that apolitical brood of young, white men and women sit up and look at how they will be affected? If they aren't interested in ethnic, lifestyle, and religious oppression, what will impact life if the OCA has its way? How about censorship? Since there will only be, as MacDonald stresses, "One culture, one language, one belief system," who is to say Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, or even Tom Clancy might not be targeted as a threat to radi-



live in a democracy or not? This is the pose struck and taken in Heather MacDonald's unfailingly objective look at the OCA's campaign and its opposers in the '92 election.

Ballot Measure 9 is less a lecture than a mystery. There is the misconception that documentary equals dull, but MacDonald structures her film unpredictably, tossing in surprises and shocks while maintaining a low-key accessibility. Over 300 hours of film were shot, initially for a segment of a four-part PBS film on violence against gays and lesbians in the United States. But MacDonald eventually spun off into her own orbit when momentum picked up during the Measure 9 campaign.

As it stands, *Ballot Measure 9* could play as a suspense thriller, climaxing in the vote and results of the election. But everything that MacDonald and her crew alert us to prior to that crescendo is equally engaging: the break-ins, arson and vandalism, the frightening espousals of the interviewees. This is *All The President's Men* with a bigger payoff and more than a corrupt president and his cabinet at stake. This issue effects every single person residing as a citizen-in-good-standing in the United States of America.

Ballot Measure 9 eerily shows the lengths the white right will reach to intimidate and eradicate the opposition. Yet its presentation is unflinchingly fair. The best thing MacDonald can do is sit back, turn on her camera, ask the questions politely, and let the John Doe interviewees speak. She doesn't prompt or prod her subjects, and tells me she was never afraid for her own safety; there were so many film crews running around during the election that her tribe wasn't an anomaly. "Nobody tried to withhold information from me," she said. "The Yes on 9 people were sometimes a little suspicious and we simply told them we wanted all opinions."

If gays and lesbians are the popularly targeted group, the backlash will affect every other segment of society; no one is immune. That the largest group who voted down Measure 9 was the elderly is significant of the fact that they remember the Holocaust and the Civil Rights Movement. More emphatically, they'll soon be dead and gone, leaving the vote in the hands of the young, white, largely male population. A point worth noting is that when MacDonald staged a mock vote in an Oregon high school, Ballot Measure 9 passed by a wide margin and Ross Perot was elected President.

cal right value systems? What about music? Could Kurt Cobain, for example, be banned because he opted to end his own life?

Where does it stop? Easy. Before it begins. As MacDonald described, "If you're talking about someone setting up a moral criteria, basing their laws on their own perception of morals, then you are talking about censorship. What music you can listen to, what books are available to buy, what clothes you can wear, and how you can cut your hair. That's the kind of society we're aiming toward, one that's so homogenized that if you do not follow all the norms that are set, well, what do you do?"

What you do is get involved now. Read about the issues on both sides, and see *Ballot Measure 9*. It's an engaging, emotional ride that allows the viewer an elementary introduction to the struggle for basic civil rights. As MacDonald concludes, "I don't want people to think this film is a political, important polemic. I want people to understand that it's exciting and dramatic. The biggest thing it has going against it is its subject matter and its title. Forget that it's a documentary, a 'political' documentary, where you feel, 'Oh, it's supposed to be important for me to see this,'" MacDonald laughs, concluding "Oh, God, please don't tell readers it's important to see this film!"

(*Ballot Measure 9* plays at the Variety 7/14-17; call 632-3131 for info.)

Screen

Unequal Measures

A new video documentary chronicles one Oregon gay rights struggle on the eve of another

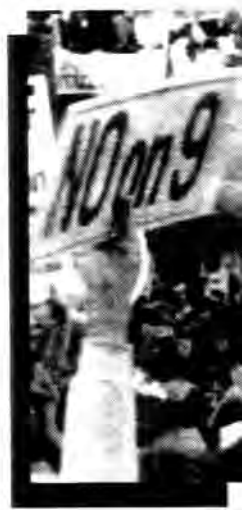
By D.K. Holm

Polemical filmmakers who take on an explosive subject put themselves in a bind. Take Heather MacDonald and her solid account of the competing Measure 9 campaigns from two years ago. If she too blatantly favors the No on 9 forces, she risks taking the group at face value. If she grants the Yes on 9 forces equal time, she risks neutralizing her efforts by appearing to have no polemic at all and presenting a "he said, she said" debate with no active intelligence to sort out the issues for the viewer.

And No on 9 people make some bold statements in the course of the film: Donna Red Wing's emotional claim, for instance, that people in Oregon had died because of the No on 9 campaign. Red Wing was probably referring to two fatalities in a Sept. 26, 1992, bombing in Salem, but without specifics such claims serve less to win support for those fighting the Oregon Citizens Alliance than to evoke a martyr image that perpetuates emotionalism at the expense of thoughtful debate.

There is no doubt that OCA sympathizers harassed No on 9 activists—the proof is presented in this videotape in the form of vile messages left on answering machines. But ultimately the viewer is less interested in the trials suffered by the forces of right. Most viewers of this video will agree with the efforts of the No on 9 campaign. Rather, we find ourselves more interested in the forces of wrong. The enemy can only be defeated through knowledge. Who are these people standing in the rain along Front Avenue, holding signs and shouting out such slogans as "No Special Rights for Homosexuals" passed down from the OCA strategists?

Who are these grizzled people in Grants Pass who run lone OCA centers, who in their cluttered living rooms pontificate from the



Bible and claim to love homosexuals so much that they want to "save" them?

Sadly, they are among the 43 percent of Oregonians who voted yes on 9, from among the 21 of 36 Oregon counties that actually passed the measure (were it not for Portland and Eugene...).

As it happens, MacDonald managed to acquire incredible access to Lon Mabon and other elements of the OCA. It's easy to make these people seem ridiculous. All you have to do is quote them. It's harder to isolate and interpret them. Yet, in this brief, 80-minute tape designed mostly to present recent history, she manages to accomplish the difficult task of defining the enemy.

Ballot Measure 9 is a straightforward account of the state's most recent civil rights struggle. MacDonald followed the campaign from both sides, then amassed after-the-fact interviews. Her approach is calm and uninflamatory, and accurate in its account of the campaign. MacDonald also lavishes attention on common people whose stories are often overlooked by historians—activists and family members who fought the measure in small towns where conformity is an unstated rule.

The film concludes by alarming viewers with the fact that the OCA has passed 23 local anti-gay rights initiatives—and Measure 13 is looming in the near future. If nothing else, MacDonald's film reminds us, as its conclusion makes clear, the fight isn't over.

REVIEW

BALLOT MEASURE 9
NR. Clinton Street Theater
2522 SE Clinton St. 7 pm
Sunday, Aug. 21. \$5-\$10
281-4653

www

Documenting the politics of hate

An interview with
Heather MacDonald

Photo by Barbara Leonard



Heather MacDonald, producer/director of *Ballot Measure 9*.

Paula Nechak
Contributing Writer

Ballot Measure 9
Directed by Heather MacDonald
Varsity Theatre
Opens July 14

For 15 years, Heather MacDonald worked hard and long as a theater actor. For the director of *Ballot Measure 9*, the emotionally heart-stopping chronicle of the 1992 Oregon initiative in which Gay and Lesbian civil rights were put under jeopardy, the experience was a self-proclaimed "self-involved life."

"You get hired by how you look, how you sound," said MacDonald, whose film won the Documentary Grand Prize at this year's Sundance Film Festival. "You work on your body, your voice and appearance. You're always aware of how people identify with you. You're always auditioning."

Because the isolation of acting made her restless, MacDonald was continually focusing elsewhere — on the issues, on the world and its political and environmental revolvings. As a passionate person and a "citizen activist," she practiced not only recycling but reaction against the Vietnam War, the disputed placement of nuclear armed battleships in the harbor of Manhattan. She spent money and time on Greenpeace and Environmental Action. But when you don't work as an actor, since "you have to do something while you wait for somebody to give you a job," she read, wrote and pursued photography, coming across an advertisement in a magazine for film school.

There on the page was a woman wielding a movie camera, and MacDonald felt a thrill, a rush of excitement, to further her inceptive interest in still photography into moving

images. She signed up, and a couple of documentaries later, *Ballot Measure 9*, a thriller disguised as a documentary, came to be. *Measure 9* described Gays and Lesbians as "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse" and would have denied them basic civil rights. However, the rhetorical rantings of its supporters in the Oregon Citizens Alliance (OCA) labeled these civil rights "special rights." OCA Director Lon Mabon promised to rid the white, right and Christian uptight faction of "evil",

to speak candidly. It revealed more about the ignorance and misinformation they operated under than any prompting could have.

Well, yeah. If I'm going to meet Will Perkins of Colorado for Family Values, then I'll be charming. They'll reveal themselves, you've just got to be nice to them. And they were all very nice people, that was the hard part, talking to these sweet little old ladies while you're thinking inside, "Oh my god!"

I noticed in the closing credits that

Photo by Linda Kluwe



A welcome moment of levity for community activist Kathleen Saadat in Heather McDonald's film *Ballot Measure 9*.

purporting to "return every institution to its moral base." But whose morality is the gauge? And who has the right to gauge the moral sanction for others?

After a stirring screening at the Seattle International Film Festival, in which *Ballot Measure 9* received a standing ovation, MacDonald sat in her hotel room and discussed her hopes for the film, as well as the political future of our troubled, splintering society.

Paula Nechak: You interviewed several OCA-affiliated individuals. How eager were they to answer questions? Did you even for a moment feel in any personal jeopardy?

Heather MacDonald: No, I didn't feel in personal jeopardy. I didn't do the Lon Mabon interviews, but I wouldn't have felt in jeopardy with him. There was a potential to feel jeopardized if certain elements discovered who we were, but there were so many film crews from around the world that we weren't an anomaly. Certainly people were a bit cautious when approached, but I'm not a frightening person, so I just said, "Hi, we're making a documentary on *Ballot Measure 9*. Can I ask you whatever?" I'd ask and everyone had an opinion in Oregon. Nobody tried to withhold information from me. The Yes on 9 people leader-types were sometimes a little suspicious, but we'd tell them we wanted all opinions.

One of the smartest things you did was to let the people who were Pro 9

a lot of the money that funded *Ballot Measure 9* came from New York State. Did you reveal funding from either Oregon or Colorado, since Colorado was the other high-profile campaign? How about Washington State, since we're an OCA target?

The executive producer, David Meieran, was raising money for a documentary about violence against Lesbians and Gay men. The Oregon issue was to be a story within that, and I was researching in Oregon and it became very clear that the Oregon story would be mine. But really, it was much of the money he had raised, the foundations gave him money to do his project, which became a four-part PBS series, out of which evolved my Oregon documentary. Actually, the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment gave me a nice grant. David did a letter campaign for individual contributors, which was successful and pretty national. But other than individual contributors in Oregon, we didn't get much at all there. Fundraising was difficult in Oregon because they were suspicious of a film, and they needed to keep their money for their own campaign, not really understanding the power of the media. The film would have been a good idea to fund.

There is a tremendous emotional impact when you pull up the demographics at the end of the film, the voting ratios by age, sex, etc., who voted no on 9. The largest percentage were

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SEATTLE GAY
NEWS
JULY 7, 1995

the elderly, who remember the Holocaust. They will all soon be dead, which leaves a frightening chasm.

Yes. And the ballots that came in from a mock election we staged at an Oregon high school came out overwhelmingly yes on 9. And Perot was elected president – overwhelmingly.

To fantasize a little, we know Gay and Lesbian rights are the tip of the iceberg. Yet, we're a nation of multicultural and ethnic people. The white, right faction is relatively small when compared to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, African American, Latino, Asian, Catholic and Jewish numbers. Why do we have a difficult time rallying together against basic rights issues? Do we keep to our own? Why is the OCA, for one, better on the offensive? It's like a revivalist movement, all this fury and frenzy, fire and brimstone-

There were pockets of success. In Oregon, the coalition building demonstrated in *Ballot Measure 9*, well, I chose the best. I wanted to give a good image and show how to do it. I didn't show the racism that was in the campaign. I didn't show the homophobia. I wanted to show coalition building at its best, hoping people would get the idea that we're nothing without each other and that the issues touch each other. But you're right, I don't understand why people are so short-sighted.

Even the Mormons (in Idaho) kept their initiative from winning because Gay organizers were able to show them that the same group made an anti-Mormon tape, which suggested Mormons are immoral and have an agenda to take over the government. The Mormons supported the No on 1 in Idaho. And even me, until Sundance, I wouldn't go to Utah (where the festival is held). I boycotted Utah my entire life because it was Mormon money that stopped the (Equal Rights Amendment) from passing. So when I went to Sundance it was like, I guess I'm going to have to spend some money in Utah. And then I had to realize, excuse me, the Mormons are our allies here.

So you received your own education as not only a filmmaker, but an activist and human being. That proves things change. Have you ever been approached by anyone once affiliated or who approved of the OCA, who came to you and said, "I've seen your film and it has changed my thinking."

No. That would be great. In the instances it's played so far, it's been in film festivals. It opened its first theatrical run in San Francisco, and then New York City. I hope we get good press and houses. How far-reaching we can go with distribution depends on the New York engagement.

It's important to reach markets other than the more liberal "A markets" – it needs to play in smaller cities in the Midwest.

Exactly. It played the festival in Austin. Probably the Denver Film Festival, but a theater run is best, where people can go talk to other people and bring in a variety of audiences.

Let's assume I am totally ignorant of the issues, that I am young, white, predominantly male and heterosexual. I am unaware of the ramifications of the AIDS virus because it's a Gay disease and does not affect my life. I assume the issues in *Ballot Measure 9* are Gay and Lesbian Issues. Why should I be concerned about what the OCA has to say?

You're generally apolitical.

Yes. And I have the capacity to change other, similar thinking minds.

Let me contemplate that. Okay, why should you care? My mind initially goes to larger issues – the people affected by anti-affirmative action, the anti-immigrant movement. Who does that affect? It helps the white male regain stature in society. It comes to the kind of country we want to live in. Do you want to live in a democracy? We're re-defining the concept here.

We have a tremendous amount of freedom to take for granted. Many young people have never lived under any oppression. No Holocaust, no Civil Rights Movement to recall, no era of Camelot and lost idealism –

Yeah. And what we're looking at in radical right policy is an oppressive society. We're moving toward a theocracy, which will dictate reproductive choices, dictate schools and education. The whole anti-public school agenda is hidden in the voucher thing, the "you can choose your school" agenda. It's really a matter of dictating creationism, to teach our "American" culture values as opposed to anything from another country. There will be only one culture, one language, one belief system.

We're talking anti-Constitution; we're talking censorship.

Exactly. If you talk about setting up a moral criteria, basing our laws on someone else's perception of morals, then it's censorship. What music you can listen to, what books are available, what clothes you can wear to what places and how you can cut your hair.

To end positively, what is your biggest hope for *Ballot Measure 9's* opening here?

Well, we got a standing ovation in San Francisco. We got a standing ovation at the Seattle International Film Festival. My hope? Nothing but fabulous reviews, and that's what we've gotten so far. But I want reviews to translate to houses. I don't want people to be scared off thinking this film is a political, important polemic. I want people to understand it's exciting, it's dramatic, that it takes you on a ride, a real emotional ride. Forget it's a documentary – more so, forget that it's a political documentary. It's a thriller. ▼