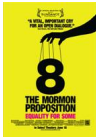


## 8: The Mormon Proposition

Written by Dave Howard

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So this is how Californians got hoodwinked by some Utah good ole boys?

November 5, 2008 was the day hope and hate collided in California. The front page of the L.A. Times blared "IT'S OBAMA!" An unfamiliar optimistic feeling was emerging. But as it seems with many Democrat victories, the second headline was a kick to gut. "In California, gay-marriage ban takes early lead." It soured the Obama victory and gave us a reminder that Bushies were not extinct, just in the closet.

How in the HELL did this happen?

Californians are hippies, surfers and, the right's favorite punching bag, "Hollywooders!" On a good day, we are all three. But we forgot about our embarrassing kid brothers in Anaheim, Bakersfield and Eureka.

"8: The Mormon Proposition" is a new expose op-ed film about the influence of The Mormon Church, housed far away in the flyover of Utah, on the laws of California. This is movie that will make you feel angry and stupid. How did we let these people get the best of us?

Reed Cowan explains very succinctly the philosophy of the Mormom of the church and why they think that homosexuality is the downfall of civilization. This is an important point and he pulls no punches as he reminds his audience that Mormons once shed blood over their right to alternative marriage. He goes on to show a long history of racism (people of color were not allowed into the church in 1978) and abuse of homosexuals in effort to "heal" them. One survivor of this abuse was a student at BYU. In the most harrowing sequence in the film, a survivor recalls how he was reported and abducted. He was held for days of reformatory training which included testicular shock treatment.

Since 1992, the Mormons have been preparing for this legal battle. Knowing the the Church of Latter Day Saints is not popular in California, they made a partnership in name (though mostly funded it themselves) with the Catholic Church and Focus on the Family.

This is where the movie made me feel stupid. Our biggest mistake in fighting Prop 8 was not knowing our enemy. We thought these zealots were bumpkins from the sticks. They were anything but that. With Prop 8 trending towards defeat throughout most of the year, the Mormons became social media evangelists. The Mormon Prophet, Thomas S. Monson held webinars instructing their faithful in how to use You Tube, Facebook and Twitter to get their point across. They made untruthful viral video campaigns. And yes, they did what they are known for-- knocking on doors and talking to as many people as they could. They were

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instructed to remove any hint of their true identity (the white collar shirts, the name tags, the bicycles) and became known as The National Organization For Marriage. How many of us were even on Twitter in August of 2008. In one week alone, they raised \$30 million. This also included door-to-door strong arm donation drives of church members. And yet, their tax exempt is still intact. Though last week, they got a a little slap on the wrist.

At the center of the film are Tyler Barrick and Spencer Jones, two men who were married May 15, 2008. Both raised in the Mormon church they were the brunt of attacks by former friends and family members. The human element of this story rounds it out, showing what a tragedy this law and Church has had on the American family.

In my opinion, this is THE front runner for the Oscar Doc nom. The filmmaking and the raw emotion shown and evoked make "8: The Mormon Proposition" the most moving film I have seen this year.

The movie opens at Laemmle's Sunset 5 Friday June 18, the two year anniversary of the first gay marriages.