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Linda Kliewer and Heather MacDonald (lower right) on a shoot

PHOTO BY ELLEN HANSEN

SHOWING AT SUNDANCE

Ballot Measure 9 hits the big time, along with a Marlon Riggs film and a documentary about Audre Lorde

by Inga Sorensen

Oregon is going to Sundance. More precisely, an 80-minute documentary highlighting the state's volatile struggle two years ago over Ballot Measure 9 has been tapped to show next month at the internationally renowned Sundance Film Festival—the nation's premier showcase for independent films.

"We think this is fantastic," says Heather MacDonald, the creator of *Ballot Measure 9*,

has primarily aired on cable access channels across the country. She donated 100 tapes to Oregon's Rural Organizing Project and People of Faith Against Bigotry—grass-roots organizations that advocate for human rights—to be used as educational tools during the more recent Ballot Measure 13 campaign.

Ballot Measure 9's showing at Sundance, says MacDonald, could increase the film's exposure exponentially. "It's an important story that people need to know about," she says.

Kliewer adds, "Though it was hard at times, it was also a very rich experience, and I'm thrilled more people will have an opportunity to get a sense of what we've been through."

Ballot Measure 9, which was sponsored by the Oregon Citizens Alliance, ultimately lost 57 percent to 43 percent, but the campaign created an omnipresent sense of fear and divisiveness in the state. During the months leading up to the election, reported hate crimes skyrocketed, and media from around the world swooped down on Oregon to cover what they viewed as an emerging and extremely sexy new story: America's Burgeoning Culture Clash.

"It was an incredible experience. It was like a war zone" says MacDonald, who pushed aside the story's so-called sexiness to instead focus on the reality of it all. Her film, which follows the campaign chronologically, tracks the daily lives of gay and lesbian rights activists and their supporters. She also talks with the measure's proponents.

"Undoubtedly the campaign was about homophobia," she says, "but it was also about the right-wing's overall assault on people's civil rights. This affects everybody in some way."

Also selected to appear at Sundance are two other films that may be of particular interest to gay men and lesbians. They are: *Black is...Black Ain't*, the last film directed by the late Marlon T. Riggs, who died in April 1994 from complications of AIDS, which examines the issue of identity within the African American community; and *A Litany for Survival: The Life and Work of Audre Lorde*, which looks at the life of the African American lesbian poet. Lorde died of cancer in November 1992.

Copies of *Ballot Measure 9* can be obtained by sending a check for \$22 to Media Network/Oregon Tape Project, 54 W 16th St., Apt. 12J, New York, NY 10011.

Cinema

which tells the true tale of the campaign over the proposed state constitutional amendment which initially equated gay and lesbian relationships with pedophilia, bestiality and necrophilia. The unprecedented initiative also sought to legally brand homosexuality "abnormal, wrong, unnatural and perverse."

Thousands of cinema enthusiasts, critics and Hollywood players—that is, those with the power to make or break a filmmaker's career—will be on hand at Sundance, which runs Jan. 19 to 29 in Park City, Utah.

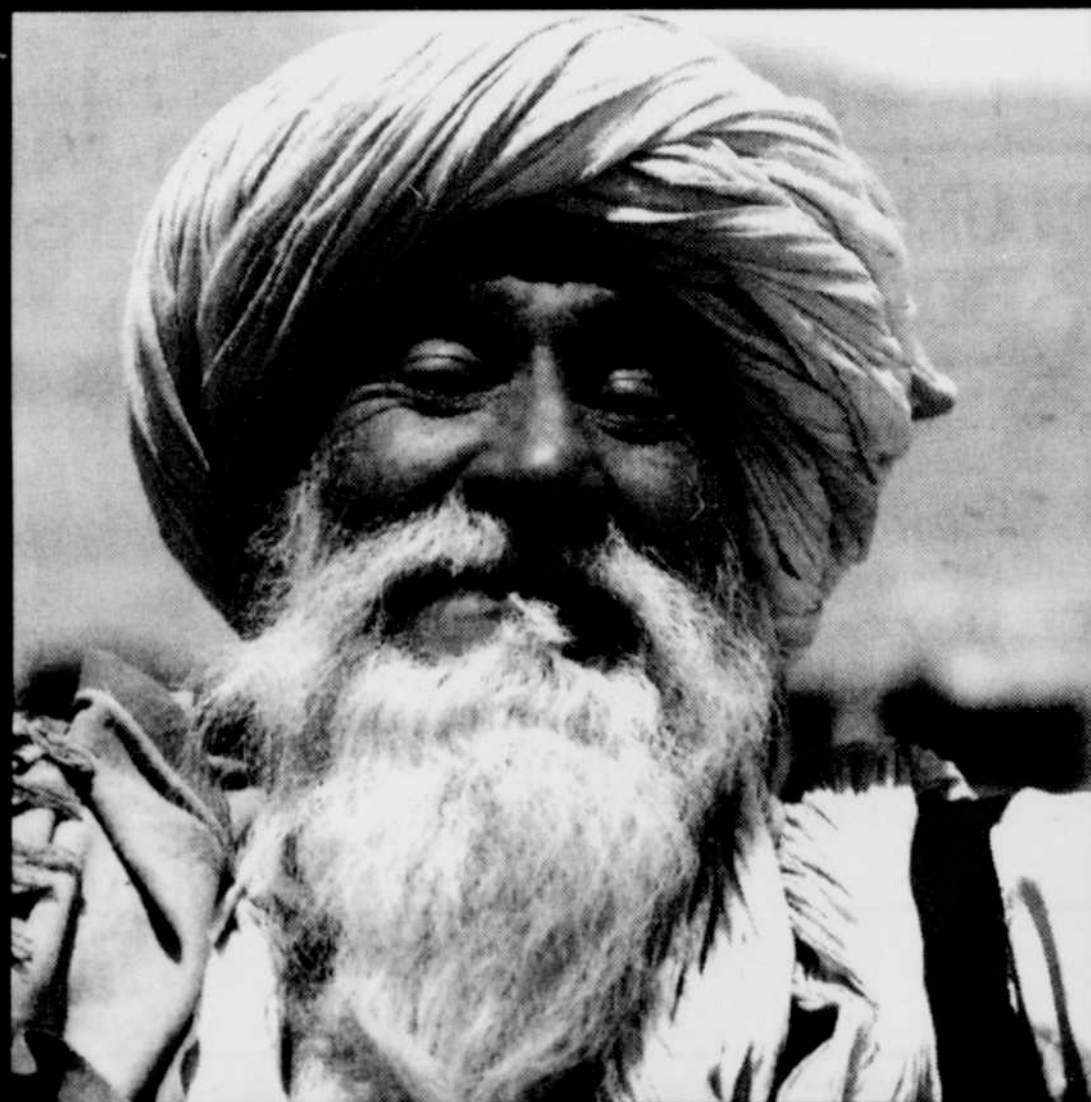
Only 16 documentary films were selected for the competition out of 116 submissions. Feature films that have previously premiered at Sundance include *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, *Reservoir Dogs*, and *Go Fish*.

"This is an incredible opportunity for us to expose to the world the very real dangers of the right wing," says the 46-year-old MacDonald, a New York City resident. "The fact that the film was selected to appear at Sundance will give it a legitimacy it did not previously have."

Portland resident Linda Kliewer is *Ballot Measure 9's* regional producer and cinematographer. The 40-year-old spent the months leading up to the November 1992 election capturing the intensity of the campaign on film.

"It was such a horrendous experience for so many people, but I think it is incredibly important we not only remember the experience, but that we also share it with others," says Kliewer, who hopes to attend the film festival. "At times it was difficult for me because I was covering the unfolding of the whole campaign. It wasn't like I could say, 'Well, I'm not going to think about this today.'"

According to MacDonald, *Ballot Measure 9*



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