



## NEWS RELEASE

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# CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE ANNOUNCES READING OF DUSTIN LANCE BLACK'S "8"

*Cleveland Play House Joins Nationwide Productions of  
Landmark Marriage Equality Play by Academy  
Award-Winning Screenwriter of Milk & J. Edgar*

**CLEVELAND, OH (May 20, 2013)** – **Cleveland Play House**, with license from the American Foundation for Equal Rights (AFER) and Broadway Impact, is proud to announce a one-night-only reading of "8," a play chronicling the historic trial in the federal constitutional challenge to California's Proposition 8, written by Academy Award-winning screenwriter and AFER Founding Board Member Dustin Lance Black.

"8" is an unprecedented account of the Federal District Court trial in *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* (now *Hollingsworth v. Perry*), the case filed by AFER to overturn Proposition 8, which stripped gay and lesbian Californians of the fundamental freedom to marry.

Black, who penned the Academy Award-winning feature film *Milk* and the film *J. Edgar*, based "8" on the actual words of the trial transcripts, first-hand observations of the courtroom drama and interviews with the plaintiffs and their families.

The reading will be held in the Allen Theatre at PlayhouseSquare, Sunday, June 30, 2013 at 5:00 pm. Tickets are on sale now, at two levels: \$25 public ticket (includes reading and post-show discussion), and a limited number of \$100 premium tickets (includes priority seating for the reading, post-discussion and a private reception with cast and special guests). All net proceeds will be shared equally between the American Foundation for Equal Rights and the Cleveland chapter of Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Call 216-241-6000 or visit [clevelandplayhouse.com](http://clevelandplayhouse.com) to purchase tickets.

"8" had its much-heralded Broadway world premiere on September 19, 2011, at the sold-out Eugene O'Neill Theatre in New York City. The production brought in over \$1 million to support AFER's efforts to achieve full federal marriage equality. "8" had its West Coast premiere reading at the Wilshire Ebell Theatre on Saturday, March 3, 2012, in Los Angeles. The West Coast premiere reading of "8" featured an all-star cast led by Golden Globe Award-winner and Academy and Emmy Award-nominee Brad Pitt as United States District Chief Judge Vaughn R. Walker; and Academy and Golden Globe

Award-winner and Emmy Award-nominee George Clooney and Emmy and Golden Globe Award-winner Martin Sheen as Plaintiffs' lead co-counsel David Boies and Theodore B. Olson. The benefit reading was directed by AFER Founding Board Member Rob Reiner, and raised more than \$2 million for the fight to secure full federal marriage equality.

"People need to witness what happened in the Proposition 8 trial, if for no other reason than to see inequality and discrimination unequivocally rejected in a court of law where truth and facts matter," said AFER Founding Board Member Dustin Lance Black. "The goal of '8' is to show the world that marriage equality is a basic constitutional right. The facts are on our side and truth always finds the light. AFER and Broadway Impact are doing all we can to help speed that process along."

The Cleveland Play House production will feature leaders from area government, social, education and arts organizations, along with a cast of the area's best actors. The full 21-person cast will be announced in early June. Key in securing this Cleveland Play House production are CPH Board member Jeffrey Grover and CPH Artistic Associate - Engagement, Corey Atkins, who will also direct the reading. Senator Sherrod Brown, Human Rights Campaign national President, Chad Griffin, and Tony Award-nominated Lakewood native, and Broadway Impact co-founder Rory O'Malley will all contribute special video greetings to the event.

In addition, many local organizations have already signed on as community and promotional partners. Presenting Partners include: The AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland; Cleveland Stonewall Democrats; Equality Ohio; Human Rights Campaign (HRC); Ideastream; LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland; PFLAG; and Plexus - LGBT and Allies Chamber of Commerce. Supporting Partners include: Baldwin Wallace University; The Beck Center; CWRU College of Arts & Sciences; Cleveland Public Theatre; CSU Theatre & Dance; Dobama Theatre; Ensemble Theatre; Great Lakes Theatre Festival; Oberlin College; and PlayhouseSquare. CBS Radio with New 102 FM on-air personality Kory has joined as a promotional partner.

Throughout 2012, AFER and Broadway Impact are licensing "8" for free to colleges and community theatres nationwide in order to spur action, dialogue and understanding. As with most productions of "8", the Cleveland Play House reading will be followed by a post-show discussion where cast and audience members can discuss the issues presented in the *Perry v. Schwarzenegger* trial with a diverse panel of local experts.

"CPH chooses every show to engender a conversation with our specific community and '8' is no exception," says CPH Artistic Director Michael Bloom. "With '8', we join hundreds of organizations across the country—from the LA premiere with the likes of Brad Pitt and George Clooney, to churches and schools, to our peer regional theatres like the Goodman in Chicago—in presenting the facts of an issue that is at the center of a national conversation."

The story for "8" is framed by the trial's historic closing arguments in June 2010, and features the best arguments and testimony from both sides. Scenes include flashbacks to some of the more jaw-dropping moments of trial, such as the admission by the Proposition 8 supporters' star witness, David Blankenhorn, that "we would be more American on the day we permitted same-sex marriage than we were on the day before."

On February 7, 2012, the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a landmark decision upholding the historic August 2010 ruling of the Federal District Court that found Proposition 8 unconstitutional. The Ninth Circuit concluded:

“Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples. The Constitution simply does not allow for laws of this sort.”

The case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

To purchase tickets, call 216-241-6000 or visit [clevelandplayhouse.com](http://clevelandplayhouse.com). For information on how your local theater can produce “8,” visit: [www.8theplay.com](http://www.8theplay.com)

Follow “8” on Twitter: [@8theplay](https://twitter.com/8theplay) or on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/8theplay).

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#### **ABOUT THE AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR EQUAL RIGHTS**

*The American Foundation for Equal Rights is the sole sponsor of Hollingsworth v. Perry, the federal constitutional challenge to California’s Proposition 8. After bringing together Theodore B. Olson and David Boies to lead its legal team, AFER successfully advanced the Perry case through Federal District Court and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The case is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. The Foundation is committed to achieving full federal marriage equality for all Americans.*

[www.AFER.org](http://www.AFER.org)

#### **ABOUT BROADWAY IMPACT**

*Broadway Impact is the only grassroots organization of the theatre community and its fans mobilized in support of marriage equality. Tony Award-nominees Rory O'Malley (The Book of Mormon) and Gavin Creel (HAIR) and Production Coordinator Jenny Kanelos founded the organization in direct response to the passage of California’s Proposition 8 in November 2008. Currently, Broadway Impact, in partnership with AFER, licenses and coordinates readings of Dustin Lance Black’s “8” at regional, community and university theaters around the world. Broadway Impact was the recipient of the 2009 Human Rights Campaign Community Award and proudly operates under the fiscal sponsorship of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS.*

[www.broadwayimpact.com](http://www.broadwayimpact.com)

#### **ABOUT CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE**

*Founded in 1915, **Cleveland Play House** is America’s first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, Cleveland Play House has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate and entertain diverse audiences in Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. It has produced more than 100 world and/or American premieres, and over its long history more than 12 million people have attended over 1,300 CPH productions. Today, under the leadership of Artistic Director Michael Bloom and Managing Director Kevin Moore, Cleveland Play House looks toward its centennial while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at PlayhouseSquare in downtown Cleveland.*

[www.clevelandplayhouse.com](http://www.clevelandplayhouse.com)

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