

RECENT HATE CRIMES IN SAN DIEGO PROMPT DEL SHORES – DELTA BURKE & LESLIE JORDAN TO SPEAK OUT AS THE PLAYS *SORDID LIVES* & *SOUTHERN BAPTIST SISSIES* PREPARE TO OPEN

Shores wrote *Southern Baptist Sissies* in response to hate crimes – specifically the murder of Matthew Shepard.

SAN DIEGO, CA — Writer/Director/Producer Del Shores (*Queer As Folk*, *Dharma & Greg*) and his productions of *Sordid Lives* and *Southern Baptist Sissies* join forces with the San Diego LGBT Community Center to combat hate crimes. While in town on their first stop of a national tour, they will raise money for the Center, to educate the larger community about the impact of hate crimes, as well as the LGBT community about available resources for victims.

“As many of you may know, there was a vicious attack four weeks ago against six gay men leaving San Diego’s LGBT Pride,” remarked Shores. When I found out about this hate crime, I knew we had to do something. Some of our cast had been at Pride that very day, plugging our shows. The catalyst for me writing ‘Southern Baptist Sissies’ was Matthew Shepard’s murder. I had seen a picture of one of the killer’s apartments in a magazine and there was a picture of Jesus prominently displayed on the wall, and I wondered – did the church teach these young men their hatred against gays? Did their parents? Did society?”

Shores continues, “thank God, the hate crime attackers (in San Diego) have already been arrested, but one of the victims remains hospitalized with a fractured skull and a breathing tube inserted in his neck. Sadly, when a community is denied equality and deemed ‘second class citizens,’ they become targets of hate. And even more disturbing about hate crimes is that the victims are not the only ones affected. These acts of violence are meant to intimidate whole groups of people. For those of you who were outraged by the brutal attacks last month, I hope you will join me and the producing team, along with Delta Burke, Leslie Jordan and the entire cast of *Sordid Lives*’ and ‘*Southern Baptist Sissies*’ in the fight for equality.”

“We recently got a letter from a Southern Baptist minister in San Diego asking us to cancel our shows down there. Rest assured, that is NOT going to happen, and the message of my plays – love and acceptance for all – will be heard loud and clear at the North Park Theatre August 24, 25 and 26th!” said Shores.

Fundraising:

- One dollar from each ticket sold will benefit the San Diego LGBT Community Center and its efforts to stop hate crimes.
- While in San Diego, Del Shores and his cast will speak out against the hate crimes, with Shores talking about the same catalyst that compelled him to pen the award-winning play *Southern Baptist Sissies*.
- Donations will be accepted at each performance, as well as on the San Diego LGBT Community Center’s website: www.thecentersd.org.
- Delta Burke is scheduled to hold her 50th birthday party at Baja Betty’s (1421 University Avenue, San Diego) after the show on Thursday, August 24th (open to the public). At the party the production will raffle off caps, t-shirts, DVD’s, show tickets, etc. (\$5 per ticket), with all proceeds going to The Center.

Show information:

Southern Baptist Sissies is Del Shores’ fifth installment of Texas-based comedic plays with heart, originally opening at the Zephyr Theatre in 2000. The show came back to Los Angeles (after a sold-out run in Dallas) in

2002, and then again was revived earlier this year to launch A Season of Shores- the revival of all six Shores plays. Winner of the GLAAD Award for Best Theatre Production, *Southern Baptist Sissies* has made Los Angeles history as the longest running play on the Zephyr Theatre's stage (currently celebrating its 50th Anniversary). Cast members include Delta Burke (*Designing Women*), Leslie Jordan (*Will & Grace*, *Boston Legal*), Dale Dickey (*Domino*, *My Name is Earl*), Newell Alexander (HBO's *Big Love*), Ted Detwiler (*The Ring Two*), Joe Patrick Ward, Anthony Cherry (*Blast Off!*), Emerson Collins (*The Secret Garden*), Rich Delia (*Strong Medicine*), T. Ashanti Mozelle (*Angels in America: Perestroika*), and David Ojalvo (*Down Hearted Blues*).

Sordid Lives is a black comedy about white trash! In the "coming out" story, three generations of a small Texas family prepare for a funeral, and that's when the hilarious, sad, trashy truth about their lives runs amuck! The original production opened in 1996 and was sold-out for its entire 14 month run. In 2001 it became a cult movie, starring Olivia Newton-John, Beau Bridges, Delta Burke, Leslie Jordan, Bonnie Bedelia and Beth Grant. The touring cast includes: Leslie Jordan*, Dale Dickey*, Patrika Darbo (*Days of Our Lives*), singer Sean Wiggins, Mary-Margaret Lewis* (*Kalamazoo*, *Friends*), Ann Walker* (*Las Vegas*, *Sex, Love & Secrets*), Mitch Carter* (*Children of the Corn*), Newell Alexander*, Sarah Hunley* (*The Ghost Whisperer*), David Cowgill ("Orkin Man") and Rosemary Alexander*, introducing Jason Dottley. (*also starred in the film version of *Sordid Lives*)

San Diego is the first city on the national tour (other cities include: Dallas, Palm Springs, Nashville, St. Louis, and Ft. Lauderdale). *Southern Baptist Sissies* will be performed at the North Park Theatre on August 24th and 25th at 8:00PM. *Sordid Lives* will go on stage August 26th at 3:00PM and 8:00PM.

Tickets are available online at www.seasonofshores.com or by calling 1-800-595-4TIX (4849). Prices range from \$45.00 to \$100.00.

Donations will be accepted at each performance, as well as on the San Diego LGBT Community Center's website: www.thecentersd.org.

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