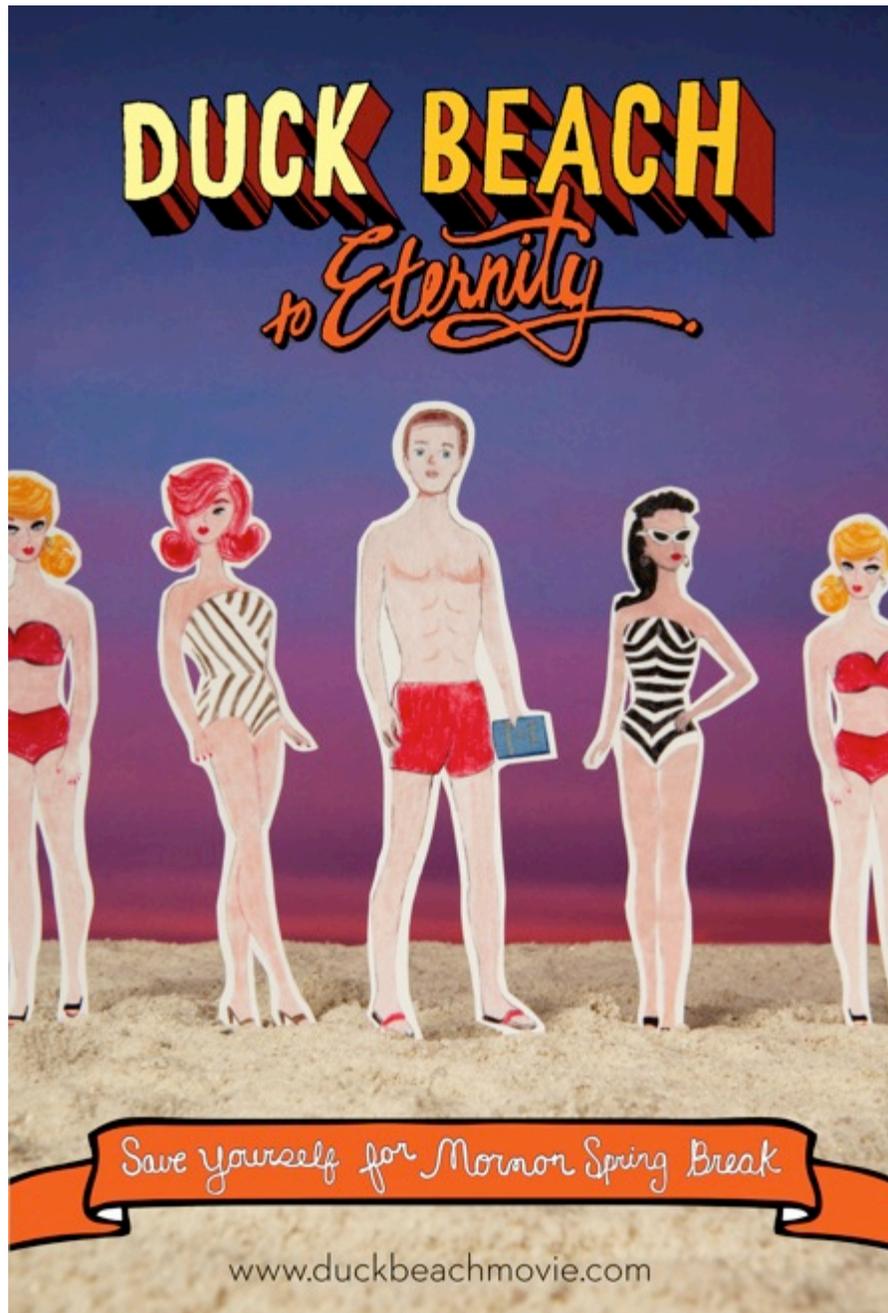


Big Iron Productions Presents



A Film about Mormon Spring Break

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## LOGLINE

Providing rare access to the usually insular world of single Mormons, *Duck Beach to Eternity* follows four hopeful singles as they party at an annual "Mormon Spring Break" in Duck, North Carolina, and struggle to find an eternal companion.

## SYNOPSIS

In April 2011, Mormon leaders convened a General Conference. In line with church teachings, they urged young men not to put off marriage any longer and stressed that the blessings and fullness of eternal life are impossible to receive unless married in the Mormon temple.

One month later, a throng of over 1,000 single Mormons swarmed to Duck, North Carolina for a weekend of partying without booze and flirting without sex. This is the annual Mormon spring break: Mormons Gone Mild.

*Duck Beach to Eternity* explores this weekend of gentle partying and soul mate scouting through the eyes of four single Mormons:

**Bryan** is a 32 year-old Latin teacher living in Brooklyn, NY. Despite his struggle to find a spouse, and the lack of a personal social circle, Bryan's optimism is unrelenting. "Going in there with the specific purpose of finding someone to date I might come up short-handed," he says, "but, shoot, if it happens...fantastico! Finalmente! Right?"

**Melissa** is a 23 year-old professional dancer from Salt Lake City whose friends and family see in her a perfect Mormon. She is beautiful, blonde, and akin to a Disney princess. She wants nothing more than to be a "wife and a mom so bad".

**Stacey** is a 36 year-old, Washington DC consultant at the Department of Energy. Jaded but hopeful, work gives her life meaning, and helps her forget some of the painful realizations that come along with being a divorcee in the single Mormon dating pool. "Monday morning, I am, like, so happy to go back to work."

**Ryan** is a 34 year-old attractive and intelligent real-estate investor who has found success in his career, but not in finding a mate. The onslaught of beautiful, Utah girls never quite fit his qualifications, for one reason or another. "The grass is greener syndrome is a very real syndrome here. You can go out with someone who is fun, cute and has a lot going for them, but if... she chews her dinner with her mouth open once, you can quickly rule her out because there are five other girls who you are think are cute that you want to take out."

In the end, *Duck Beach* is about hope. Hope for eternal life, hope for love and companionship, hope for community and belonging. It is through this hopeful struggle that the film depicts the complexities, contradictions and confusions that are a part of being a single person of faith in modern America.

## About the Film and the Filmmakers

A Mormon, an Ex-Mormon, and an Australian walk into a bar in New York City. This may sound like a setup to a joke, but it actually describes the first brainstorming sessions of DUCK BEACH TO ETERNITY.

When Hadleigh Arnst heard about a week long spring break for Mormon singles on the Outer Banks of North Carolina – an annual “Mormon Jersey Shore” - he knew the story had to be told. But contrary to the norm of documentary filmmaking with pointed agenda (Save the environment! Expose religion!), he wanted it to be a human story—a story that would underscore the complexities and contradictions inherent in such an event.

Mormons are particularly insular. With the exception of potential converts, the LDS church has been a traditionally closed-off entity to all outsiders. Often stricken with a persecution complex born from the church’s early years of antagonism with neighbors and government, its members are wary of opening up. Now, with a driven PR machine, the church works hard to create and hold tightly to a squeaky-clean image.

In order to demystify the Mormon experience and gain access to this guarded world, Hadleigh enlisted the help of Stephen Frandsen, a practicing Mormon (and, at the time, also single). Stephen then brought on Laura Naylor, another filmmaker and former Mormon who was married in the Mormon temple but has since divorced and left the church.

After much conceptualizing and planning, the three made a casting trip to Salt Lake City where they attended a church service frequented exclusively by Mormon singles. All told, they walked into the bar for those early brainstorming sessions and out of the church service with three very different experiences and viewpoints to bring to the making of the film. After several months of casting, they found 4 singles that represented the cross section of modern Mormonism. They spent months getting to know each person, building trust, and following them in their daily experiences. Finding practicing Mormons who were willing to open up to the camera was a major coup, and essential to telling the story of Duck Beach.

After a lightning-quick kick-starter campaign funded by Mormons and non-Mormons alike, they hired a 12-person crew, and traveled to Duck, North Carolina. There were up to six cameras rolling simultaneously at any given time. They shadowed the characters, stayed up all night to gain party access, and interviewed as many single attendees as possible. In the film, *all* voices are those of Mormons – there are no outside commentators. This is a story of Mormon singles as told by Mormon singles. Above all, it is a human story that is as real and true as it is entertaining.

## **Big Iron Productions Bio**

Big Iron Productions—founded by producers, writers, and directors Stephen Frandsen and Hadleigh Arnst—is a full-service story-telling company based in New York City. Between Hadleigh and Stephen, they've told stories in Australia, New Zealand, London, throughout Asia and Europe, and in New York and Los Angeles. They come from a background in film and photography, as well as philosophy, anthropology, PR and music. Telling stories is what they love to do, and their background and eclectic mix of disciplines gives them a unique perspective .

### **Hadleigh Arnst - Director and Producer**

Hailing from Australia and New Zealand, Hadleigh Arnst has told stories throughout the world. He is co-executive producer of Big Iron Productions, and currently directs and produces branded content. This is his feature-length directorial debut.

### **Stephen Frandsen - Director and Producer**

This is Stephen Frandsen's feature-length directorial debut. A former teacher and current Mormon, he is the co-executive producer of Big Iron Productions; he directs and produces both moving and still content.

### **Laura Naylor - Director and Producer**

Laura was raised in Salt Lake City, and studied art history and visual arts at Columbia University in New York City. She has photographed in over 40 countries around the globe and spent a year living in Shanghai, China, where she documented the jarring divide between the past and the glitz of the new generation. Her work has a broad range, from portraits of herdsman in Lesotho to prostitutes in Tokyo, and has been published in The Shanghai Daily, Small Words Magazine, and InTandem Magazine. In 2010, Laura wrote and directed an experimental short video, *Therefore Because*, which screened in New York City. *Duck Beach to Eternity* is her feature-length directorial debut. She currently lives in Manhattan and is shooting a short documentary and writing a feature-length screenplay.

### **Victoria Lesiw - Editor**

Detroit native Victoria Lesiw started her editing career when she moved to NYC in 2004 shortly after graduating from the University of Michigan where she studied architecture. Working primarily in advertising, she didn't get her first taste of long format until 2007 when she edited the hugely successful web series "MMovie," which received millions of hits world-wide and went on to be nominated for a Webby Award. The following year she completed her first feature, James Siegel's inspirational documentary "Hope Deferred". The emotionally potent film garnered several awards at film festivals across the country. Her first narrative feature, "Forgetting the Girl," is currently making the rounds at film festivals, playing to sold-out crowds around the world and generating a host of critical acclaim.

## Michael Freeman – Music Supervisor

Michael Freeman, music producer at Ogilvy & Mather in New York City, hails from The Big Easy and prides himself on his jazz roots and New Orleans heritage. Aside from being a current saxophone sub in New York bands, Michael's been a music supervisor on several independent films, and had his hands in some vital musical projects that have helped merge marketing and music artistically and respectfully.

At Ogilvy, Michael produces original music and licenses music as well. His current to date International musical branding includes: American Express, the GAP, Ikea, Coca Cola, UPS, Chase Bank, Time Warner, Reebok, Disney, Kraft, Wendys, Swiffer, Hewlett Packard, Procter & Gamble among many others.

