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No Live TV of a Trial on Marriage, but a Replay

By MALIA WOLLAN

SAN FRANCISCO—Considering all the media hoopla surrounding the trial on Proposition 8, California's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, it was bound to get the Hollywood treatment. But, this fast?

Frustrated by a Supreme Court decision barring broadcast of the trial, two Los Angeles film types are translating the courtroom testimony into elaborate YouTube re-enactments, complete with professional actors, realistic sets and a budget that might buy you lunch.

"We told the actors: 'Don't embellish this. These are real people. This is real testimony. We have to be true to that,'" said John Ainsworth, an actor who, along with a filmmaker, John Ireland, is producing the videos and an extensive media campaign of their own.

Once completed, 60 hours of video will reconstruct 12 days of testimony taken verbatim from court transcripts. Each day's

testimony will be uploaded in hourlong chapters to YouTube and marriage-trial.com, a Web site Mr. Ireland and Mr. Ainsworth created for the project. They said Tuesday that they hoped to have all the video online within two weeks.

Though many in the cast have real acting chops — one plays the president on the Fox show "24" and another, Tess Harper, was nominated for an Academy Award — all are volunteering their time. Shooting takes place in 16-hour stretches on weekends in a mock courtroom at the University of Southern California's law school.

Mr. Ireland, 39, and Mr. Ainsworth, 35, are gay and legally married, both having wed their respective husbands in the months before voters passed Proposition 8.

"This court case is of great personal interest to us," Mr. Ainsworth said. "I wanted to see what was going on in that courtroom."

The two decided to make the re-enactment after the Supreme Court

blocked Judge Vaughn R. Walker of Federal District Court here from broadcasting the trial proceedings. Judge Walker, who is expected to hear final arguments in March, has not set a date for issuing his decision.

Those looking for a few minutes of typically goofball YouTube entertainment will probably want to go elsewhere. But judging from reactions posted online after the first two installments, those searching for an accurate accounting of the proceedings of a constitutional case all but guaranteed to reach the Supreme Court will not be disappointed.

"Fabulous," commented CBjargh. "It's the next best thing to seeing the actual trial."

Wrote steveplittle: "I thought the guy playing the judge was very good at representing how boring and dry most legal proceedings are. This is not 'Law and Order' (thank goodness)."