



American LGBTQ+ liberation from day 1 to Stonewall.

Written & produced by Devlyn Camp

Episode released June 17, 2020

queerserial@gmail.com

Season 2, Episode 3: “Resorts for Sex Perverts”

Visit www.queerserial.com for resources and additional information.

For images to accompany the story, follow the show [@queerserial](https://www.instagram.com/queerserial) on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/queerserial) & [Twitter](https://twitter.com/queerserial)

For this episode, begin with posts starting June 14, 2020. (Click above.)

The original Mattachine Society jester logo is courtesy of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

This transcript includes text from real homophile-era publications, letters, organizational documents, et cetera. These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.

That spring, McCarthy was censured. The Supreme Court decision on the desegregation of schools was announced in the English newspaper, and for a while all of us seemed to go crazy with hope for another kind of America.

—Audre Lorde, *Zami*

MUSIC: Lounge music in the style of “The Man That Got Away”

HOST: **1954.** Jay walks into the Handlebar with a companion. The bar is filled with men sipping drinks and talking under low lights and loud music. Jay and his friend have a cruising system worked out. They part ways and Jay takes a seat at the bar, where he watches the other guys cruise. Someone approaches him there, asks for a cigarette and a light. He’s handsome. He puts the cigarette to his lips and Jay holds up the light. As the flame touches the cigarette, the man holds Jay’s hands in his, squeezing, looking into Jay’s eyes. He says he likes Jay’s eyes, his beautiful face. He takes a seat and they chat while the man flicks the cigarette against the ashtray. He asks Jay if he’s ever been in love. The man says to Jay,

MAN: I sure like your face. I don’t love you, but I could learn to love you. Would you like to come up to my place and make love tonight?

JAY: What do you mean?

HOST: The man hems and haws. Jay gets up to go.

MAN: No, don’t leave me.

HOST: He rubs Jay’s arms and kisses his cheek. Standing close, touching for several minutes. Jay’s friend watches from across the room.

MAN: I want you to love me, and I want to love you at my place tonight.

HOST: Jay follows the man to the door, passing through the exit. When their feet hit the sidewalk, Jay turns to the man and slaps cuffs on his wrists.

MAN: Wait a minute—

HOST: His partner follows them out of the bar and grabs the man by the arm. A homosexual has fallen into their trap.

Act 1

HOST: **January 1956.** San Francisco's new law-and-order mayor **George Christopher** takes office after a campaign against the former State board chairman George Reilly, as in *Stoumen v. Reilly*—he lost the case against the Black Cat. Reilly was defeated by a homosexual bar. Now Christopher, a republican Greek immigrant who served as a city supervisor for ten years, thinks he can crack down on this city more effectively than Reilly. He grew up in the South of Market district and saw how crime operated: Cops would become familiar with their district's crime systems and take payoffs. The sex tourism and drug profits thrived as cops took bribes to ignore the sex work and bars where so-called "perverts" gathered. Tourists heard about the fun in San Francisco and brought plenty of cash to the city. But Christopher doesn't care about tourist money here. When he takes his place in the mayor's office, one of his first acts is shaking up the police department. He asks for the resignation of the chief of police appoints his own man: **Frank Ahern.** Square-jawed Ahern transfers all captains and lieutenants to new districts in order to break up neighborhood alliances and awareness of where vice operates. He puts his most dependable officers in the city's center and effectively jams the pay-off systems. Sex and drug tourism seizes up as new cops in the neighborhoods lay down the law on their new districts. Letters pour into Mayor Christopher's office. Even the newspapers print the citizens' angry letters, lashing out at the mayor for stopping their thriving vice businesses. Mayor Christopher says,

MAYOR CHRISTOPHER: It got to the point where you'd have thought *they* were the crusaders and *I* was the bad guy.

MUSIC: rising tension

HOST: Behavior that used to be overlooked by San Francisco police now indicates potential illegal behavior. For instance, an effeminate man swishing into a bar suggests sexual solicitation inside the establishment. Undercover officers will follow him inside. The *Stoumen v. Reilly* case – the Black Cat's defeat of State Board chairman Reilly – the bar's winning verdict allows homosexuals to gather in a bar, which cops can't take action against. But limp wrists and high voices tell police that the illegal act of sodomy might occur, and the women wearing men's clothing is grounds for indecent behavior. The cops begin sending their people inside to check for these violations. Undercover officers change the space, as no one knows who is watching them inside. Agents continue to make arrests on these grounds, so the California State Legislature just oversteps the *Stoumen* verdict and unanimously passes a measure allowing the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, the ABC, to investigate any bar seen as a "resort for sexual perverts."

As word spreads that cops are infesting the bars to arrest patrons, bars again use structural defenses against the police in order to save their business: boarded windows, back room dance floors, and coded language.

Downtown vendors and business folk see fewer and fewer customers as the neighborhood becomes less fun. Gambling houses move business across the Bay, sex workers move to the Tenderloin. ABC investigators go undercover in a bar called the Paper Doll and encourage men to solicit them. Soon, they lure their queers outside, where more ABC agents who wait with guns make the arrests. Chief Ahern orders cops to park outside gay bars around closing time so patrons are too paranoid to return. Once the arrests are made at an establishment, the investigators use their power with the police, the city, and the military to revoke a bar's license on that grounds that it's a "resort for sex perverts."

With the endorsement of the mayor and his police, the ABC turns over the graft and reveals the city's underbelly. Mayor George Christopher has shut the city down. As gay bars shutter due to minor flirtations between their patrons, bar owners begin to wonder what their responsibility is in policing their own customers.

MUSIC: tango

HOST: **February 1956.** Hazel Nickola has run her bar just south of San Francisco for almost 20 years. She runs and bartends Hazel's herself, so she keeps very busy. On an average Sunday night while Hazel is busy tending bar, she's unaware of five undercover agents mingling among the dancing men. The agents have been coming for weeks to scope out the place and figure out who is a regular. The agents flirt and buy drinks for other men. And most importantly, they watch each other flirt with other men, so that they can corroborate each other's stories in court. Just after midnight on this February night, the doors slam open and 35 officers raid Hazel's bar. Cops, ABC agents, state highway patrol, and military police scatter the patrons. The police department can handle this raid alone, but the sheriff has called in everyone. 300 customers are lined up as the agents pick out 90 regulars. 77 men, 10 women, and 3 minors are arrested on vagrancy charges. 3 bartenders are arrested for serving the minors. And finally, the cuffs are slapped on Hazel Nickola for "operating a dance without a permit." The police officers testify in court:

OFFICER: Many of the men had their arms wrapped around each other's waists, or shoulders, or buttocks. Many men were observed kissing or fondling or biting each other, or holding hands, and other men were seen sitting on the laps of their male companions and kissing and fondling each other.

HOST: ABC agents testify:

ABC AGENT: Female patrons were dressed in mannish attire, men were seen powdering their faces, talking in effeminate voices, and generally acting like over-affectionate females.

HOST: The court deems this gender transgression as evidence of a "resort for sexual perverts," which is grounds for the bar's license to be revoked. The ACLU opposes, saying vagrancy charges are "a crime of condition, of status."

The judge agrees, and it's difficult to prosecute everyone together. The judge says the bar owner "must have actual knowledge that his premises are being used for such purposes."

The Alcoholic Beverage Control board rolls their eyes and holds their own separate hearing to quickly revoke Hazel's license. She appeals the verdict, and as it continues to work its way through the state's appeals process, Hazel Nickola continues to lose her case. As so-called "resorts for sex perverts" continue to be determined illegal, the right for homosexuals to gather in an establishment – won by the Black Cat case – is broken down. The First Amendment "right to assembly" argument is lost for the bar community. The state's decision points to bar owners as fully responsible to make sure their bars aren't a place for deviants to gather in order to do illicit things like gender bend or go home to sodomize. Those bartenders who do intend for homosexuals to gather in their business must now remain paranoid about undercover agents inside and bar owners are forced to moderate the behavior of their queer customers.

Back in the Mattachine offices, Hal Call mimeographs a list of 35 gay bars to give out at the annual Mattachine convention. He numbers each copy and intends to have every person who takes one to sign for it, just to be sure the list won't end up in the hands of the police. Mattachine membership is scarce. Many people that do join see it as an alternative to bars, somewhere safe, so it seems to Hal that the only way to get more people involved in the Mattachine Society is to go meet them in their own spaces – particularly now that these homosexuals arrested in the bars are the ones who are going to need the Mattachine's help.

HAL CALL: By and large they couldn't care less about our project, our magazine, or anything we are trying to do... But, when they run afoul of the law, the song—and chorus—is changed. Then they want help.

HOST: Mattachine can fight to protect homosexuals using the right to due process. In order to do this, the organization needs for gays to work within political expectations. Put on a suit and tie and fight in court. Many bars, desperate to maintain their business, begin to regulate their patrons' image, too. Meanwhile, the ABC board strategizes with the military and city police, who call on all cops to keep "gathering places of homosexuals under constant pressure." As effeminate men are discouraged from many bars and homophile meetings, they seek out the other options for sex and socializing: parks, baths, beaches. Undercover investigators create a "blueprint of action" to sweep through the city's cruising grounds and target the "obvious homosexuals." Those with swishing hips are stopped on the streets and questioned. Those who are arrested have their name, address, physical description, and place of employment sent to sex crimes investigators for a list of "known homosexuals" in San Francisco.

José Sarria boldly stands on the stage of the Black Cat in drag, declaring that they must assert themselves as a community! They must avoid entrapment, if possible, but if arrested, they must assert their rights. The ABC board sends undercover agents into the Black Cat. The agents testify that patrons inside the Cat solicited them to participate in "lewd acts." This is grounds for the liquor license to be revoked, as the Black Cat is deemed a "resort for sex perverts." Attorney **Morris Lowenthal** steps in again.

LOWENTHAL: The agents induced patrons to solicit them.

HOST: That's entrapment. Lowenthal argues that this "resort" law is unconstitutional, and against the Black Cat's earlier verdict in *Stoumen v. Reilly*. The case moves forward to the ABC Appeals Court, where Lowenthal cites the Kinsey Reports again.

LOWENTHAL: Modern researchers on sex have shown that a large number of persons have homosexual relations at one time or another.

HOST: He says that people can't just be pointed out as queer based on their body language. Bartenders can't hold people responsible for who they take home from the bar. The State's Deputy Attorney General rebuts:

DEPUTY AG: It is our contention anyone can tell a homosexual... these bars constitute a danger to morals and health. If it constitutes a danger to the public, a bar owner's license will be taken away from him to protect the greater public interest.

HOST: This case takes about 7 years to settle. Appeal after appeal, ultimately, the California Supreme Court refuses to hear the case and the Black Cat will shut down in 1963. The Black Cat is just one of many gay bars who face their fate with the Alcoholic Beverage Control board.

The ABC board pushes people and their recognizably queer behavior back into the closet. Homophiles seem to have no choice but to work within these boundaries. So the people that can't pass as heteronormative are punished the most severely. Not just by the police, but by their own community. One homophile writes in to the Mattachine Society:

AUDIO: typewriter

MATTACHINO 4: By walking down Market Street, you can well see the faggotts [sic] swishing away with their—OH—so sophisticated voices, with the least concern or care toward who sees or hears them. Make-up, mascara (sometimes), lipstick—the whole works is used by these faggotts. I'm not one to know the usage of cosmetics, only when used so thick that anyone could scrape it off with a butter knife and still have some to spare. I wear cosmetics myself, but only to cover blemishes and then I am discreet. I used to be one of them, but I have learned my lesson. That is 'recognition by action and speech.' Acceptance into heterosexual society is one of the most important 'firsts' for most homophiles, even to the faggott. For the majority of us, it is due to these faggotts who scream with defiance that we are not accepted. Is it not high time that those who still have their wits about them do something to clean up this saddening mess? Or are they scared? Scared so much that it is even still difficult for them to stand up and fight for a right that is being denied them, by cleaning up our own homophile society! Fight is easy, if it is done properly and I hardly mean by fists, but by enforcing—that faggotts not be allowed into your gathering places unless they conform. It is not hard to make

some changes in habit. In the long run, life *will* be worth living, and acceptance will be for all.

HOST: Hal Call responds to the letter.

HAL CALL: We agree that defiance and ‘way out’ expression of one’s feelings of rejection by a few brings scorn and derision upon the many. Nevertheless we have also observed that rebellion ignored soon falls flat, and most of these ‘social rebels’ see the folly of their faggotry in time. But here we see another—and possibly greater sickness on the part of society itself. A new horde of swishes seems to sashay onto the scene every generation. If the majority of society changes its attitude and accepts sexuality for what it is, ...then we won’t have to waste time in the impossible task of remodeling every affected and effeminate swish. After all, the ‘harm’ he causes is more ephemeral than permanent, more an uncomfortable sting than a damage of consequence.

MATTACHINO: These are individuals who, while not dressing in female attire, use heavy facial makeup, wear bouffant hairdos, and exhibit many feminine characteristics (e.g. swiveling hips, falsetto voices, holding cigarettes with bent wrists, etc.). They are perhaps the most openly rebellious and defiant of all homosexuals, wearing their sexual orientations like a lavender badge of courage. Most “hair-fairies” (also referred to as “street queens”) use feminine pronouns and terms of reference among themselves (e.g., “she,” “her,” “that bitch,” etc.). They often can be seen in large “packs” walking down the main street in the central shopping district of San Francisco.”

HOST: These people they write about are not necessarily homosexuals. They are not being criticized by homophiles for their sexuality. They’re being targeted for their gendered expressions. Had Harry Hay’s vision for the Mattachine survived, one of inclusivity, perhaps the organization might have reached out to help these nonconforming people, too. Who can say?

Historian Nan Amilla Boyd will one day write that the gays who survived on moderating their behavior to seem hetero had their homophile ideology sharpened. The Mattachine is able to provide legal counsel, advice to veterans, referrals to lawyers, employment, housing, and psychiatrists who understand them—but only to those people who can pass as not so obviously queer. Otherwise, who would take them seriously? An anonymous Mattachino writes,

AUDIO: typewriter

MATTACHINO 2: We are not distinguishable from heterosexual people in any visible way...we are not more unreliable, unstable or dangerous than heterosexuals... Our hearts are not less full of pride and honor at the sight of massed American flags because we are homosexual. We do not work less hard for America, or love her less, or support the Republican administration and policies less whole-heartedly because we are homosexual.

HOST: Let's bypass the obvious pandering to McCarthyist paranoia, and notice the first line of that letter: "We are not distinguishable." With this statement, transgender and gender nonconforming people who cannot **pass** as **hetero or cisnormative** are automatically rejected from the homophile movement – you are not one of us if you cannot pass. And with this view, the homophiles reject themselves from the greater queer movement.

At the next annual convention of the Mattachine Society in **May 1954**, only 42 members attend. As membership dwindles, especially among women, Mattachine president Ken Burns notes, "What the Society requires as members is quality—not quantity."

Publications Chairman Hal Call has an idea for getting their mission out and reaching new members: the magazine. A Mattachine publication might reveal the realities of homosexuality to a new audience. It might help more homosexuals gather self-esteem, and also educate heterosexuals, too. Rather than encouraging a culture around homosexuality like he sees the folks at *ONE Magazine* doing in LA, he decides to present the facts in a more serious tone. Articles that

HAL CALL: advance our cause on the fronts of research, law, religion community service, personal adjustment.

HOST: Hal predicts 3,000 subscribers after launch. But there's steep competition. *ONE Magazine*, recently reorganized with Don Slater at the helm, is hitting new peaks with 5,000 subscribers per year. Slater's encouragement of pieces on queer history, literature, and philosophy brings new and exciting awareness to homosexuals.

And Mattachine's competition isn't just with *ONE Magazine*. The Daughters of Bilitis are also preparing their lesbian publication, which they will print in the Mattachine offices. While they rent half a small room from the men, and write their pieces on a used typewriter and a donated desk, the Mattachine men don't see the women as much competition. Even Kinsey had his funding pulled from the Rockefeller Foundation when he published his *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* report. Will anyone buy the women's magazine?

But perhaps, with chapter power, the Mattachine's publication can spread quickly in major cities. On **May 31, 1954**, the first chapter outside of California holds their first meeting in Chicago. 40 people attend. The few members left in the Mattachine wonder where this is all headed.

Dr. Evelyn Hooker, the psychologist who once watched the queens of Finocchio's perform... wonders where this is all headed now. In the San Francisco Mattachine chapter newsletter for **September 1954**, Dr. Hooker ponders what the future of this fumbling organization should be:

AUDIO: typewriter

EVELYN HOOKER: It must either become a quiet-working cooperate organization, seeking to use processes of education, findings of scientists whose research the Society may facilitate, and the aid of agencies in the fields related to Mattachine to accomplish its program, OR attempt to require society as a whole to accept the minority through hostility and demands for integration.

HOST: By that **December**, 2,500 copies of a teaser issue are printed in the Mattachine offices for distribution to bars and potential subscribers all over the U.S. Hal Call knows exactly which message he wants to promote through the *Mattachine Review*.

He establishes his own little company called **Pan-Graphic Press**, to print the *Review* on a used 11x17 offset press that he bought in 1954. By having his own company print the publication, he can keep it away from the board of the Mattachine and promote his own homophile message. As material is very scarce, he comes up with several pen names under which to write many of the articles.

February 2, 1955. *The Mattachine Review* issue 1 hits newsstands! Of course a homophile publication can't sell much advertising space, so the publishers wait and hope for newsstands sales and subscriptions to rise. And maybe a big donor or two will come along. Mattachine President Ken Burns writes to all existing members:

KEN BURNS: Our goal...is to enlist every member's support in the Mattachine magazine. If this project is to succeed, all of us must not only subscribe...but we must get our friends to subscribe.

HOST: Where is the best way to meet with gay friends to spread the word about the new magazine? Bars. It's only natural, since many people are finding their entrance into the homosexual world through the Mattachine Society meetings, ultimately ending up at the bars and dropping out of the society. But most of the Mattachine leadership hesitates to get involved in places deemed by the government as "resorts for sex perverts." It could hurt their organization.

James Barr, the author of *Quatrefoil*, the first novel to portray homosexuality in a positive light, James Barr writes to the *Mattachine Review* writers on **May 9, 1955**:

JAMES BARR: Mr. Burns, and friends of the Mattachine,
...What you, and your vehicle of expression, will become is up to your collective wisdom. Whether, in twenty years, you become fresh or pedantic, effective or powerless, a guide or a pawn, is up to you. You are in the enviable position of controlling your own destiny—a position too few of us can dare to covet these days.

HOST: In twenty years, the Mattachine will be long dead.

Act 2

HOST: In the May/June 1955 issue of the *Mattachine Review*, a piece makes a bold endorsement. The piece is titled “Let’s Kill Idle Rumors About Mattachine Aims”

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: The public has a right and duty to provide self-protection. We earnestly support law enforcement aimed at preventing sexual indecencies in public.

HOST: They believe consensual sex should be legal, just not in public. (That doesn’t really consider that people are having sex in public spaces like park bathrooms because they’re so stigmatized and forced to live closeted lives.) The piece goes on to encourage working within the law, printing the names of state legislators readers should contact.

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: Change can only be accomplished in the proper way and manner and by the proper people.

HOST: The early issues cover more of California’s laws:

HAL CALL: an anachronism of medieval law and a menace to civil liberties.

HOST: The issues cover Mattachine meetings featuring a transsexual guest speaker who talked about gender identity, they cover new and classic gay books like *Quatrefoil*, employment discrimination, and a report by Dr. Evelyn Hooker:

EVELYN HOOKER: Homosexuality is not a *distinct* clinical identity.

HOST: Heating up the tea a bit, the *Review* prints contrasting arguments, such as a piece by psychologist Albert Ellis in the November/December 1955 issue. Ellis believes homosexuality is a neurotic condition based in a phobia of the opposite sex, resulting in a fixation on the same sex. He thinks, through psychotherapy, he can change a person. Angry letters stack up on Hal’s desk:

MATTACHINO 3: I had thought you acknowledged us as human beings, as individuals whom you were fight for the rights of...Now I see that all you are doing is poking fun...and using us as a target for further ridicule by the public in general. We are not sick and don’t ask treatment; we seek only understanding that we are as human as the rest. Our sexual desires are part of our nature.

HOST: The *Mattachine Review* responds with neutrality:

HAL CALL: We hesitate to comment that either Ellis or his critics is to be regarded as wrong or right... We shall not evade an issue simply because it may be controversial and Albert Ellis dared to face it.

HOST: Phyllis Lyon writes in *The Ladder*:

PHYLLIS LYON: WE don't think Dr. Bergler's ideas are acceptable to us or to a vast majority of people in the psychiatric field.

HOST: The *Review* continues to print pieces such as "Homosexuality: Disease or Way of Life?" which refers to homosexuals as "miserable souls" and "unreliable troublemakers." Many readers who spent decades reading coded language like in Henry Gerber's *Contacts* see publications like this as progress, but often readers see the *Review* as conformist and apologetic. But despite it all,

HAL CALL: Newsstand growth had been rapid.

HOST: —jumping from 1,000 copies in February to 4,500 copies for the September/October 1955 issue. And only 14 cities carry the magazine on 23 total newsstands willing to risk selling it. In a time when the only queer stories in the mainstream press involve raids, violent crimes, and arrests, these rare lights in the dark such as *ONE Magazine*, *The Ladder*, and the *Mattachine Review* allow homosexuals to find their way into a secret world.

JIM KEPNER: You could be arrested for possessing such a publication, tame as it was.

HOST: Newsstands sales are rising, but subscriptions don't move much. Fear of the postal authorities finding out your home address is a likely reason. Mattachine Elver Barker suggests encouraging subscriptions by connecting members with gay pen pals in the New York group. Hal writes:

HAL CALL: My unqualified opinion that it always has been and still is—NO. Our prestige would topple as though a blast had occurred at the base of whatever tall or short tower of light and confidence we have thus far constructed.

HOST: People already are hesitant to give their names. They'd definitely abandon *Mattachine* if they get caught up in a lawsuit for mailing sexual letters. It's for the same reason that the *Mattachine Review* doesn't print personal ads, names, physique magazine titles, or locations of bars, baths, or cruising spots. In order to keep these pillars of gay culture standing safely, they must remain part of their underground secret world. (Ironically, Hal Call is aware of a gay culture even though part of his reasoning for taking the *Mattachine* was arguing that a gay culture didn't exist.)

The *Mattachine Review* continues to push against getting involved in the bar culture, despite their desperate need for gay bar patrons to subscribe to the magazine. They are the *Mattachine's*

constituency! As homophiles fight against stereotypes in the paper, bar patrons embrace stereotypes as their identity. They enjoy living in queer spaces, even if it's dangerous. The *Review* encourages homosexuals to fight the laws that make the bars dangerous, and tells them not to—

HAL CALL: —withdraw into an invert society of their own... Since variants desire to be accepted by society, it behooves them to assume community responsibility... For only as they make positive contributions to the general welfare can they expect acceptance and full assimilation into the communities in which they live.

HOST: Subscriptions aren't rising. With little money coming into Mattachine, the group's debt to Hal Call's Pan-Graphic Press is rising. The Mattachine Society owes Hal about \$1200. He's writing, printing, folding, stitching, cutting every issue that is barely selling. An investor in Hal's Pan-Graphic Press writes to Mattachine President Ken Burns:

INVESTOR: Once the debt has gotten beyond the Society's ability to liquidate it, it will have lost the magazine to Pan-Graphic Press.

HOST: Henry Gerber, watching the movement now from a very safe distance, writes that homosexuals just want contact with other homosexuals, not to give their money away to them. His pen pal, Manuel boyFrank, adds that Hal's *Review* is trying to sell sanity, but readers want something splashier, something gay. So maybe it's time for a little splash...

In **July 1956**, Hal writes a tribute to “outstanding female impersonator” T.C. Jones, referring to him as a “trailblazer...breaking down barriers of prejudice.” T.C. Jones is a drag star known for impersonations of Judy Garland, Bette Davis, and Katherine Hepburn. He'll even appear on *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. When President Ken Burns and his partner Dale Olsen read Hal's tribute in their copy of the *Review*, they're livid. Olsen writes to Hal.

DALE OLSEN: I don't feel that the Society's Pledge and Aims and Principles [which Hal wrote] we have stated in the past agree with the type of thing Jones is doing. I can't see where it gives us any valuable standing to salute a drag queen. I hardly think that the professional people we have been trying to win will be pleased with it at all.

HOST: Hal keeps pushing for magazine sales. His *Review* articles begin to address religion and it's responsibility for encouraging sex-negativity. He starts writing sexy poetry and tells the magazine's artists not to submit drawings of homosexuals that—

HAL CALL: —make them all look like tragic inverts.

HOST: He even includes some drawings of San Francisco gay spots. Hint hint, dear reader. Under his pen names, Hal writes grabbier headlines like “Take My Name Off Your Mailing List!” and “You're Fired!” or “Sex Pervert, Age 7” He tries out “Queen's Country Revisited” and

“New Light on Masturbation.” Mattachine leaders are furious. President Ken Burns writes to criticize Hal. Hal responds, saying that he never wanted the magazine to be the Mattachine board’s own message. He never planned to jump through their hoops.

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: That’s just the plain unvarnished truth.

HOST: With sales still not incredibly high, but definitely higher than Mattachine meeting attendance, where some cities report only 5 members, Hal’s magazine is the Mattachine’s main voice.

HAL CALL: In other words, we ARE the Board. If you think otherwise, you are only being unrealistic.

HOST: He then goes on to tell Ken he wants to publish 12 issues per year instead of 6. Ken says fine, but half of those will be printed privately for subscribers only. They can cover subjects that can’t be sold on newsstands.

But the petty infighting continues. Dale Olsen is overwhelmed by secretarial duties in LA while fighting with Hal up in San Francisco. His partner, President Ken Burns, is often away, traveling to other Mattachine chapters. Hal is off visiting the new East Coast Mattachine chapter in New York, while Burns and Olsen trying to settle into their new home in LA. When Olsen checks the mail, he finds he’s received a membership card from Don Lucas in San Francisco welcoming him to the Mattachine Society. Dale Olsen cracks. He’s done feeling like San Francisco is looking down on him, even while his lover is their president. Dale resigns from the Mattachine, and begins taking jobs writing for newspapers in Hollywood. Sam Morford addresses his fellow New York Mattachinos:

SAM MORFORD: Many people will reject the entire organization because all they can see is the one person they don’t like and they can’t see all the people they do like. That to my mind goes right back to what is the main problem with the homosexual today: The greatest discrimination, the greatest rejection, the greatest prejudice, I feel, is one homosexual to another.

HOST: It’s around this time in 1956 that Hal has 500 subscribers and the *Mattachine Review* is also sold on over 100 newsstands and bookstores across the country. You can pick it up on the street in New York City, in a market in the Tenderloin, or at City Lights Bookstore, just around the corner from Finocchio’s.

April 1956. Naturally, the New York Special Agent in Charge for the FBI sends a couple issues of the *Review* and *ONE* to Director J. Edgar Hoover. He says they were “received anonymously through the mails,” and “published ostensibly for homosexuals.” The agent notes his interest that the publications discuss the rights of people when arrested. The Bureau decides to continue

following any public information about the Mattachine and related publications. They keep in contact with informants visiting Mattachine meetings, and wait for the right time to take action...

But by now, the Mattachine Society knows they're being watched. That was the entire basis of eliminating the cultural minority folks of the early Mattachine. The FBI watching from around the corner is business as usual. They've got the Bureau's full attention at all times. Now the Mattachine writers, like **Carl B. Harding**, encourage members to come out – as a radical political strategy.

AUDIO: typewriter

ELVER BARKER (A.K.A. CARL HARDING): Concrete social action can include informing carefully chosen individuals. It is far more practical for each homosexual to light a candle than talk about the darkness.

HOST: This piece, titled "Whom Should We Tell," addresses the same issues that Henry Gerber dealt with in the 1920s: homosexuals who enjoy the thrill of secrecy.

ELVER BARKER: The innumerable homosexuals who have been purged from their employment would hardly call their predicament 'fun.' Nor would those who have been unjustly arrested, paid heavy fines, had embarrassing publicity, or gone to prison for harmless elements of their personal lives... Just so long as we homosexuals help maintain society's ignorance, we are guarding the very weapons we fear.

HOST: The following **August, 1956**, Carl Harding – whose real name is **Elver Barker** – returns to his home in Denver, Colorado where he's a fifth grade teacher. He decides to start his own Mattachine chapter there, in Denver, with 6 other people. His vision – to come out publicly and proudly – is one he believes would not just benefit members, but also the Mattachine Society as an organization. As Elver continues to write for Hal's *Review*, he imagines a Mattachine with newsletters, a library, guest lectures, group therapy, dinners, picnics, theatre fundraisers, and publicly advocating for civil rights in the press... And Elver will get it all.

But while Hal's articles push for evolution, not revolution, Elver demands change right now. Hal says, 'let's assimilate, but push against sexual Puritanism. Let's get respect, but not repress our sex lives.' Sometimes it's hard to see the forest for the trees, but Hal's message is often an oxymoron. And in addition to that, his largely conservative paper leaves behind much of the queer community. At this point, transgender women are included in the gay male category. Sexuality and gender are still blurred together. Why would a trans woman living on the streets of San Francisco pick up Hal's paper when he's only writing about men? Like everyone else, Hal thinks trans women are just really swishy gay men. His paper has articles about police harassment, but it says gay men should fight those laws in the court while also saying gay men shouldn't swish down the Tenderloin sidewalks. So, these gender nonconforming people, who have to work those streets in order to survive, have no interest in this paper that has no interest in

them. The Mattachine and its paper aren't helping them—it'd be bad optics for the organization. The world still looks at gay men in general as sick, as "sex perverts." Especially the swishiest ones. And with their main gathering places, the bars – the "resorts for sex perverts" – still under crackdown by the government, there is only one way for the movement to go forward.

AUDIO: Crowd quieting down. Microphone feedback. Dr. Hooker coughs.

HOST: **August 30, 1956.**

EVELYN HOOKER: Good afternoon, I'm Dr. Evelyn Hooker.

HOST: The American Psychological Association Convention in Chicago.

EVELYN HOOKER: It seemed highly probable that few clinicians have ever had the opportunity to examine homosexual subjects who neither came for psychological help nor were found in the mental hospitals, disciplinary barracks in the Armed Services, or in prison populations... This, I recognized, would be fraught with extreme difficulties. And so it was...

HOST: Next week on episode 4, "The Fairy Project."