



American LGBTQ+ liberation from the beginning to Stonewall.  
Written & produced by Devlyn Camp  
[queerserial@gmail.com](mailto:queerserial@gmail.com)

Season 3, Episode 7: "STREET POWER"  
Episode released May 24, 2021

Visit [queerserial.com/s3e7](https://queerserial.com/s3e7) for resources, images, & additional information.

Follow the show [@queerserial](https://www.instagram.com/queerserial) on [Instagram](#) & [Twitter](#).

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 These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.

***Warning: Act 1 of this episode contains a few brief moments of sexual violence.***

AUDIO: footsteps in unison, and *CBS special (1967) audio* featuring the second Annual Reminder gay picket

MUSIC: drums

HOST: **July 4, 1966.**

*MIKE WALLACE: Homosexual groups around the country feel the same way, and they're willing to stand up and be counted on the issue. Nonetheless, even though we live in an age of protest and demonstrations, this picket line in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4 was met with a degree of disbelief. It was a combined demonstration by various homosexual organizations intent upon raising a cry for their own civil rights.*

HOST: Homophiles march in a circle at the second Annual Reminder, men in suits, ladies in dresses, in 103 degree heat. Frank Kameny speaks to reporters from CBS:

*FRANK KAMENY: Every American citizen has the right to be considered by his government on the basis of his own personal merit as an individual.*

HOST: It's quiet. Peaceful. Tourists watch a bit and pass by. But the summer is still heating up, and while protesting quietly has proven to be helpful in spreading our message, it will not curb the growing violence of the police.

## Act 1

HOST: Two weeks after the second Annual Reminder picket, in **San Francisco's Tenderloin** — signs are carried around the block of **Turk & Taylor**. A new organization of activists is furious. The Tenderloin is home, and they're fighting to keep it.

**Transgender women** are picked up by cops all over the city, but they often come to find safety in numbers in the Tenderloin. Many girls lose their jobs and their housing when they can't totally **pass** as female, and they come to find that the Tenderloin's cheap residential hotels down Turk Street are their only option. To support themselves, **survival sex work** is common. Nighttime bar patrons and tourists looking for some fun, and even downtown office workers in need of a lunch break "massage," they all have the convenience of Tenderloin residents to take care of their needs. But it's very dangerous work. There's a serial killer out there abducting trans women, slitting their throats and mutilating their genitals, leaving their bodies in alleys. Sex workers carry weapons in

their bags just in case. But this is the only work many of them can find in order to survive. **Historian Susan Stryker** has pointed out that the residents of the Tenderloin, in 1966, can't afford to leave. Stryker writes that they are in an "involuntary containment zone, or ghetto, for transgender women." Out on the streets, cops come through to arrest trans women for prostitution, even if it's just because the women are out wearing what cops perceive as clothing for the opposite sex. Women are forced into the patrol car, sometimes driven around for hours, sometimes forced to give the officer oral sex. In jail, they're strip-searched, often forced to shave their heads, put in solitary for months, humiliated by other prisoners – who are men. Trans women are put in the men's jail, sometimes becoming victims of assault, rape, or murder. Of all the Tenderloin residents — many immigrants, queers, convicts, sex workers, heroin users, and alcoholics — out of everyone, cops treat the street queens the worst because they're the least capable of complaining about mistreatment. Who would listen?

AUDIO: cafeteria

After long nights of work or going out with friends, the street queens, the trans women, the young runaway gay kids, the drag queens and hustlers, and slummers often congregate at **Compton's Cafeteria**. The bars typically won't let them in. But the Turk & Taylor restaurant, owned by Gene Compton since the 1940s, is open 24 hours. The girls hang out, share a meal, have a coffee. Some of the Tenderloin women have become patients of **Harry Benjamin, Christine Jorgensen's** doctor. He's just published his book *The Transsexual Phenomenon* covering 17 years of work and his friendship with Magnus Hirschfeld. These women know that Dr. Benjamin supports their identities, unlike quacks like Dr. **Irving Bieber**, making his living publishing books about how sick we all are. Dr. Harry Benjamin has made the case that doctors have a responsibility to help transsexuals.

The Compton's Cafeteria staff doesn't care. They're getting annoyed with these folks lingering in the restaurant and spending little money, hanging around just drinking coffee. So the staff calls the cops more and more frequently — who, of course, come in and make arrests. Compton's starts a service fee of 25 cents for everyone at the door. They hire Pinkerton security guards to keep the street queens out, or push around any customers not drinking their coffee fast enough.

**Glide Memorial**, one of the churches responsible for hosting the California Hall New Years Ball, they sponsor a new organization called **Vanguard** and they organize a picket of Compton's Cafeteria.

AUDIO: picket fading back in

HOST: The demonstration airs on ABC, but very little changes at Compton's. By the next month, things are pretty much the same. The street queens hustle in the hot summer night, meet up at the restaurant in the evening with friends...

AUDIO: heels on pavement, into the crowded cafeteria

HOST: And **late on an August night — the exact date remains unknown** — an officer comes in to clear the lingering crowd. He approaches a trans woman at her table, grabs her by the arm, and pulls her out of her seat.

TRANS WOMAN: Hey!

AUDIO: cafeteria quiets

OFFICER: Come on, faggot, you're under arrest—

HOST: She grabs her hot coffee and throws it in his face.

AUDIO: splash

TRANS WOMAN: Get off me, pig!

AUDIO: dozens of chairs scooting back, clinking of dishes

HOST: Compton's Cafeteria erupts.

AUDIO: dishes breaking, patrons yelling, tables overturning, instant chaos

HOST: Plates, cups, and silverware fly through the air toward incoming officers. Quickly behind the dishes comes the furniture. The cops run outside...

MANAGER: We are now closed for night! Get out!

AUDIO: windows shattering

HOST: —patrons shatter the plate-glass windows...

AUDIO: sirens

HOST: The fight pours out into the street, where street queens beat down the officers with handbags and heels.

AUDIO: car windows break, fire burning

HOST: They break the windows of a patrol car and a newsstand is set ablaze, burning all the way to the ground. Cops force queens into a paddy wagon as dozens of others escape throughout the Tenderloin into the night.

AUDIO: chaos fades

MUSIC: fades

AUDIO: picket returns, heels on pavement

HOST: The next night, another picket follows. Compton's installs new windows and refuses to allow trans women or street hustlers back in. So again, they shatter the Cafeteria's windows.

AUDIO: windows shattering

HOST: The **riot** is not covered by the mainstream press. They have no interest in those transsexuals in the Tenderloin. But the new organization, Vanguard, starts a magazine full of psychedelic drawings. Vanguard announces:

AUDIO: typewriter

VANGUARDIAN: Tonight a "clean sweep" will be made on Market St; not by the POLICE, but by the street people who are often the object of police harassment. The drug addicts, pillheads, teenage hustlers, lesbians, and homosexuals who make San Francisco's "*MEAT RACK*" their home are tired of living the midst of the filth thrown out onto the sidewalks and into the streets by nearby businessmen... This VANGUARD demonstration indicates the willingness of societies outcasts to work openly for an improvement in their own social-economic power. WE HAVE HEARD TO MUCH ABOUT "**WHITE POWER**" AND "**BLACK POWER**" SO GET READY TO HEAR ABOUT "**STREET POWER.**"

AUDIO: brooms on pavement

HOST: They borrow 30 big brooms and hit Market Street—one of the busiest streets in town. About 50 people gather with the brooms. As many of them sweep the blocks up Market near Compton's Cafeteria, others carry signs saying "All trash is before the broom," and "Fall Clean Up: This Is a Vanguard Community Project." These queers will not be swept away in another city-sanctioned cleanup.

AUDIO: typewriter

VANGUARDIAN: Vanguard is an organization of “kids on the street” who feel there is no place for them within the organizational structure of the homophile organizations. The homosexual movement will never be unified; this is an impossibility that is so obvious it seems ridiculous that it would even be mentioned. You must realize that 99% of the homosexual organizations in the U.S. are composed of and run by the middle class, well-established, hidden homosexual.

HOST: Vanguard magazine also says, “Vanguard and one or two other organizations are composed of the other 1% of the homosexuals in the country. We are the **hustlers**, who are bought and paid for by the same people who will not hire us to do a legitimate job. We are the people with long hair who (you) will neither hire to work for you nor allow us in your organizations.

“We are the young homosexuals, as young as thirteen or fourteen, who are too damn young and confused to really know where else to go but to one of the well-known organizations. And when we go there, we are told, ‘go to this institute or that psychiatrist.’

“I’m sure that you all know that once one of these kids puts himself or herself in the hands of these ‘professionals,’ the information is relayed to not only the person’s parents and/or relations, but to the police and other organizations which now, with this information, will harass these people.

“My point is this: Let each and every organization understand what the goals of the whole movement are and go about reaching these goals in any possible way they may think will help. We are all in the same boat and it’s beginning to sink. We have got to start getting rid of all the masks and costumes that are weighing us down.

“When this is done, when we first admit to ourselves that we are homosexuals, and admit that we are the most prejudiced people about ourselves, then at this time there will be a possible joining of forces. But I will say again, there will never be a unity of organization.”

HOST: Shortly after the sweep, surprisingly, the city of San Francisco designates a Central City Anti-Poverty Program Office. A police liaison, recently appointed to the homophile community, **Sergeant Elliot Blackstone**, arrives at his office, takes his seat, — and the door flies open.

AUDIO: door slamming open, book hitting the desk

LOUISE ERGESTRASSE: I demand that you do something for my people. Please read this.

HOST: **Louise Ergestrasse**, a transgender resident, has dropped off a copy of Dr. Harry Benjamin's *Transsexual Phenomenon* on the officer's desk.

Blackstone reads the book and, unlike most police officers, actually does something good for queer people. He begins educating local officers about how to interact with trans people, teaches them why these citizens don't need to be arrested for appearing to use the "wrong" restroom, or for carrying ID with a different name. Blackstone sets out on a mission to end charges for cross-dressing in San Francisco. He sets up classes for trans people to learn clerical skills and find jobs outside of sex work if they want to. Soon after, Wendy Kohler, another patient of Dr. Benjamin's, organizes with the Public Health Department to help the Tenderloin women with hormones, surgery, and other medical needs. Glide Memorial starts a support group. New ID cards become easier to access, which means trans people can start doing simple things they couldn't do before, like open bank accounts. And around this time, at John Hopkins University Medical School, the first United States "sex change" program opens, funded in part by that wealthy trans man with the pet leopard, Reed Erickson.

AUDIO: San Francisco traffic, cameras flashing

PHYLLIS LYON: The Daughters have titled this major event "Ten Days in August," as our convention is not the only event in town this week.

HOST: Across town, **Phyllis Lyon** greets the major San Francisco press outside the Fourth Convention of the Daughters of Bilitis, **August 20, 1966**.

PHYLLIS LYON: The North American Conference of Homophile Organizations will also be gathering, and Dr. Evelyn Hooker will join us for a speech. We expect the city of San Francisco to be filled with nationwide Mattachine members, members of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual and SIR, and the Tavern Guild, which will be hosting a lovely fishing trip in addition to their other events. Most importantly, at the NACHO meeting, for the first time, representatives from city hall and the police department will sit down at a conference table with members of the homophile community and allied civic organizations... It is expected that in this face-to-face confrontation, specific recommendations will be made to solve problems encountered by the homosexual minority in San Francisco. Thank you.

HOST: While Phyllis and Del are now inactive members of their own organization, the DOB, they're still organizing the local convention.

AUDIO: typewriter

BARBARA GITTINGS: On the hour news spots were broadcast on radio stations KEWB and KSFO. KDWB recorded two interviews with DOB members—one with Miss Lyon

about the convention and one with Del Martin and Bobbi Deming about problems encountered by Lesbians in our society. Miss Lyon also appeared before the television cameras in a pre-convention news conference.

HOST: Many homosexuals at this time justify staying in the closet still by thinking that the less visible homosexuals are to the public, the safer they are. But as activists like Phyllis Lyon stand in front of the cameras and proudly announce the Movement's many successes, that argument loses strength. Public opinion is shifting. Homosexuals everywhere see the possibility of a less underground culture and queer life becoming more public.

**DOB President Shirley Willer** and her partner **Marion Glass** have begun opening chapters in Boston, Cleveland, Philly, Phoenix, and Dallas. The successful president, Willer, opens the NACHO meeting by asking homophiles from its many organizations to...

SHIRLEY WILLER [into microphone]: be as concerned about women's civil rights as male homosexuals' civil liberties. Here are some constructive steps: homosexual men should value women as people, don't treat them like showpieces, actually give them responsibility, and consider our arguments at this convention. Be open to new avenues of in-depth communication.

HOST: Shirley asks that the delegates from the homophile chapters discuss **women's rights** as part of gay rights. Her call, mostly, goes unanswered. As Barbara Gittings and Kay Tobin end their editorship of *The Ladder* to focus on civil rights cases in D.C., Del and Phyl cover again as acting editors of the lesbian magazine. They thank Barbara Gittings for her work.

AUDIO: typewriter

DEL MARTIN: She firmly established THE LADDER as a 'little magazine' with a big punch.

HOST: And **Helen Sandoz** takes over *The Ladder*.

AUDIO: typewriter

HELEN SANDOZ: With this issue THE LADDER begins its second decade of publishing. Certain changes in editorial policy are anticipated.

HOST: As President Shirley Willer pushes to focus on women's issues, rather than exclusively gay issues, Helen Sandoz changes *The Ladder's* Statement of Purpose, removing all mentions of sexual variance.



HELEN SANDOZ: To date emphasis has been on the Lesbian's role in the homophile movement. Her identity as a woman in our society has not yet been explored in depth. It is often stated in explaining 'Who is a Lesbian?' that she is a human being first, a woman secondly and a Lesbian only thirdly. This third aspect has been expounded at length. Now it is time to step up THE LADDER to the second rung.

SHIRLEY WILLER: The particular problems of the male homosexual include police harassment, unequal law enforcement, legal proscription of sexual practices, penalties for acts of questionable taste such as evolve from solicitations, wash-room sex acts and transexual attire. In contrast, few women are subject to these penalties. The problems of importance to the Lesbian are job security, career advancement and family relationships. There has been little evidence, however, that the male homosexual has any intention of making common cause with us.

HOST: Though Del included proud feminist statements in their first issue of *The Ladder*, the homophile movement as a whole has often pushed women aside. While men are more likely to be discriminated against by society as homosexuals, lesbians are likely to be discriminated against by society as homosexuals *and* as women. Many lesbians feel an approaching tipping point in the feminist movement, and they're ready to focus the DOB in this new direction. Others, like Barbara and Kay, find that gay activism is most important to them. In Philly, other women launch the Homophile Action League after a bar raid because they feel that all the Daughters of Bilitis ever do is send campaign literature and don't respond quickly to actual requests for gay legal help. Meanwhile, former DOB leaders Del and Phyllis hear a radio broadcast about an organizer from the National Organization for Women, and soon after, they join NOW as a couple.

HOST: Back at the NACHO meeting, the new Mattachine Midwest from Chicago (put a pin in them) motions to support that idea of a confederation of homophile organizations, an inter-connected national league for all queer activists to work from a central goal. Mattachine likes this. The new Vanguard group of young activists from San Francisco immediately declines, agreeing with Bilitis leaders. Vanguard says, "The various types of homosexuals are so far apart that a union of them would seem no less than a miracle." The debate goes on and on.

But there is one thing all these queer folks can do together: On Sunday, a break from the conference, the **Tavern Guild** takes more than 600 of the convention's guests 40 miles east to a massive picnic outside the city. Sports and swimming and dancing and eating all day together. Some of the people there are surprised to see two members of another new organization — the **Circle of Loving Companions**. These two have long hair and beautiful flowing robes, almost medieval. They wear amulets in the shape of an erect penis. They are original Mattachine founder **Harry Hay** and his lover, **John Burnside**. If you don't know Harry's story, check out season 1.

Harry and John attended the conference, too, where someone suggested that all of the couples separate for the discussions in order to open up new conversations. Harry and John refused to sit separately.

PHYLLIS LYON: With all of us against them, those two won.

HOST: John Burnside is an inventor, of the teleidoscope, a darkfield kaleidoscope, it's a fun little hit in this psychedelic era. Together, Harry and John attend be-ins in the parks and sell their kaleidoscopes. They recently attended the Armed Forces Day protest in Los Angeles. They're always together, and they pop into homophile events. Del Martin says,

DEL MARTIN: This was a different type of Harry Hay than we had seen before – one who was filled with the joy of life and love and spirituality. And one who could speak our language. He was a different character than we knew in the fifties.

HOST: Harry and John will later help plan the first gay pride parades, they'll appear on TV and in documentaries together, and they'll co-found the **Radical Faeries** together. They'll remain together until their deaths, and their ashes will be mingled together and scattered in Nomenus Faeries Sanctuary in Wolf Creek, Oregon.

As for the movement Harry helped begin, a movement catalyzed by the firing of homosexuals from the State Department, the torch was picked up and is still carried by Frank Kameny, and now also Barbara Gittings. This pair has united as amateur attorneys representing an illustrator, Donald Crawford, fired because the Department of Defense revoked his security clearance. This came just a few months after young Donald Crawford picketed with the Mattachine at the Pentagon. At Crawford's hearing, Kameny makes a case against the Department of Defense for enforcing policies built on religious morality. It's unconstitutional. Crawford testifies that he is homosexual, and will continue to be. So the DOD lawyers then call on their "expert," someone Barbara and Frank have never heard of, **Dr. Charles Socarides**. Socarides, like Irving Bieber, is beginning a career publishing books about the "sickness" of homosexuality. He testifies that homosexuality is a pathological condition, capable of being cured — by him. The DOD lawyers ask Socarides to read the definition of homosexuality from The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. See here, it says, homosexuality is a mental illness. Socarides says homosexuality works like addiction — masculinity is the drug and homosexuals crave it. It makes them reckless, untrustworthy. Kameny points out that the only homosexuals Socarides knows are those who are miserable and check in as patients, they're not typical. Many of us like being queer. Thinking way ahead, Barbara Gittings has already asked several psychiatrists to send her letters confirming that gays can be trusted and are not sick. So, the next day at Crawford's hearing, Gittings holds up her 16 letters from psychiatrists across the country, including Wardell Pomeroy from the Kinsey

Institute and Evelyn Hooker from UCLA, who ran that so-called “fairy project” back in season 2. Socarides's theory is completely disproven then and there. Gittings and Kameny wait for the Department of Defense to make their decision on Crawford’s security clearance. Ultimately, they will decide that because Crawford broke the sodomy law knowing it was illegal, he demonstrated poor judgement, which deems him untrustworthy. Security clearance denied. The government found its loophole.

AUDIO: rising, furious typing

Kameny writes back, comparing this judgement of Crawford to the judgement of the Jews in Germany. Should they have realigned themselves with their government’s values and somehow stopped being Jewish? Kameny and Gittings are furious.

Bigotry against them continues on, a growing force, it seems, the more public they try to become — a force as large as the federal government and as seemingly small as a State Fair: Following the Ten Days in August homophile events in San Francisco, the Council on Religion and the Homosexual is banned from their own booth at the California State Fair. “Too controversial,” the fairground says. So the Council, the Daughters, SIR, and the Tavern Guild print 8,000 pamphlets titled “Every Tenth Person Is a Homosexual” and they hit the streets outside the state fair. They hand out the pamphlets to every person at the entrance. Tourists from all over the country learn about homosexuals directly from the source. The activists find that a message spreads quickly when you get out on the street.

## Act 2

BAR PATRONS: Ten... nine... eight... seven... six... five... four... three... two... one!  
Happy New Year! [celebration]

HOST: The newly opened **Black Cat bar** — *in Los Angeles* — is packed with gays, including 15 or so drag queens who just arrived from a costume contest! Rhythm Queens, a trio of performers, are up on stage. Balloons and twinkling Christmas lights cover the ceiling.

You know where this story is going. Minutes later, plainclothes police who have been watching, raid the club, snatching up pool cues and beating people.

AUDIO: glass breaking, cops beating, patrons yelling

HOST: Officers drag homosexuals outside as the bar employees panic. A cop grabs the bartender and pulls them by the shoulders over the bar. The bartender cuts their face on broken glass. Everyone is running for the door. Another employee runs up to help the

bartender and he's clubbed from behind and kneed. His bowels empty. A cop slams someone else against the jukebox and handcuffs them. In the street, the grinning cartoon black cat on the sign above the bar watches over the patrons running for cover down Sunset — scrambling into other bars — while cops hold down other Black Cat customers and beat them.

Two people make it into the nearby bar New Faces while two plainclothes officers chase after them. The shocked bar owner comes to the door, and she grabs her bartender for backup. The bartender asks the plainclothes cop to present some identification. One of the cops punches the bartender in the nose, breaking it. The cop pulls out his gun and says,

COP: This is all the identification I need.

HOST: In the ensuing scuffle, the cop also hits the bar owner. She goes to the floor. Another employee coming to help her is dragged by officers into the street for a beating. After he's charged with a felony for assaulting a police officer, he's taken from the station to the hospital to remove his ruptured spleen.

10 minutes after it all began: 14 arrests — many of them drag queens — 6 charges of lewd conduct — 2 of which have to register as sex offenders — and many horrible injuries.

Over the following week, the LAPD raids two more gay bars. They've been beating gays up and down Sunset, and people of color in Watts and on the East side. Gay bars display large jars labeled "Tavern Guild Legal Aid Fund," to help people who were charged. They collectively raise \$2,515. San Francisco's Tavern Guild also donates to the cause. But the LA Black Cat is forced to close down.

Flyers are quickly dispersed through the other LA bars encouraging gays to join the upcoming series of protests on **February 11, 1967**, from Venice to East LA.

AUDIO: typewriter

STEVE GINSBERG: CRISIS

HOST: The flyer announces,

STEVE GINSBERG: Police Lawlessness Must Be Stopped!

HOST: A photo of police beating someone is printed in the middle.

STEVE GINSBERG: Because Police Lawlessness is not just a problem of the Sunset Strip but a problem that exists throughout the City of Los Angeles, there will be—

HOST: and in giant capital letters:

STEVE GINSBERG: SIMULTANEOUS DEMONSTRATIONS in Silverlake, Sunset & Hyperion, & Sunset Strip, Watts, East L.A., Pacoima, Venice. Arbitrary Arrests, Illegal Search & Seizure, Police Perjury in Courts, Entrapment, ABUSE of OUR RIGHTS & DIGNITY must stop! Saturday February 11 9:00 P.M.

AUDIO: footsteps in unison

PROTESTER 1: Blue Fascism Must Go

PROTESTER 2: Peace in Silverlake

HOST: More than 200 protesters with picket signs show up at the demonstration, organized by Steve Ginsberg, founder of PRIDE, which stands for Personal Rights in Defense and Education. He encourages everyone to join in protest against—

STEVE GINSBERG: the Establishment war on minorities.

HOST: Policemen line the streets. It's the largest gay protest yet.

AUDIO: fading out

HOST: Steve's new organization, PRIDE, launches a newsletter under the same name. (Jim Kepner, from ONE, is one of their first writers.) The staff recreates their newsletter as a *regional* paper, printed secretly in the basement of the LA ABC television headquarters, where one of their writers works. (Just a little "corporate grant-taking," as some activists called such behavior.) PRIDE renames their paper *The Los Angeles Advocate*, selling 500 copies at 25 cents each in the bars. Next year, as the PRIDE group can't stay afloat, two of the employees will pay \$1 for ownership of the newsletter, and the year after that, they'll rename it, simply, *The Advocate*. Five years after that, they'll be printing 40,000 copies per issue.

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio*

*JAMES FISK: I can state conclusively that the problem is growing.*

*MIKE WALLACE: For the police view of homosexuality we talked to inspector James Fisk of the Los Angeles Police Department.*

*JAMES FISK: During the year 1964 we arrested around 3,000 homosexuals who committed their lewd acts in public places.*

HOST: **March 7, 1967.** 10PM. Over the past 2 years or so, CBS Reports has been putting together a documentary called "**The Homosexuals.**" It's packed with cinéma vérité style shots of hustlers working street corners and footage of the 1965 ECHO conference.

Producing the special has been difficult, because no sponsors will put their product in the ad breaks between information about queers. The network decides to fill the time with public service announcements by the IRS and the Peace Corps. CBS News President Fred Friendly views the final product, and he loves it. He just has one question:

FRED FRIENDLY: We don't have in what homosexuals *do*. For pure reportage, we have to put that on the air.

HOST: Host of the special Mike Wallace, who will soon start hosting the new CBS show *60 Minutes*, he asks News President Fred Friendly,

MIKE WALLACE: Fred, do you know what it is that homosexuals *do*?

FRED FRIENDLY: No, that's the point, I don't.

HOST: Mike Wallace gently explains gay sex to Fred.

FRED FRIENDLY: [nervous] Well, maybe we don't have to put it on the air.

HOST: Before the documentary goes to air, Fred Friendly resigns over CBS's refusal to air live coverage of the congressional hearings about the Vietnam War. When the incoming CBS News president Richard Salant sees the gay documentary, he cuts the thing to pieces. Salant thinks the episode favors homosexuality and sensationalizes it. His version of the documentary brings in far less favorable opinions... Here's more of the real audio:

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio*

*MIKE WALLACE: Chairman of the study, Dr. Irving Bieber, professor of clinical psychiatry at New York Medical College speaks about the roots of homosexuality.*

*IRVING BIEBER: A typical mother, you see, in this group, is a mother that establishes an over-close relationship with her son. She is generally overprotective... She tends to discourage his participation in rough-and-tumble activity. She's over-close, over-intimate. She often prefers this son to her husband, explicitly and openly. The father is detached from this son, spends little time with him. Minimizes his son and resents the position he's been put in by the mother.*

*MIKE WALLACE: What can the father do to keep his son from developing into a homosexual?*

*IRVING BIEBER: The father can do a great deal, even in the presence of this type of mother. I do not believe it is possible to produce a homosexual if the father is a warm, good, constructive father to his son.*

HOST: **Jack Nichols** of the Washington Mattachine writes in their publication *The Homosexual Citizen*:

JACK NICHOLS: What is Bieberism?

HOST: This doctor, Irving Bieber, has now been featured in the *New York Times* and the CBS doc claiming to have cured homosexuals.

AUDIO: typewriter

JACK NICHOLS: Bieber claims to have cured 27% of his patients, but he doesn't mention that his failure rate is 73%. His study is riddled with errors. Even if his research were to be true, examine the math: 18 of his cured homosexuals had 350 hours of therapy at an hourly rate of \$25. Multiply that by 15 million homosexuals and psychiatrists are sitting pretty.

HOST: For good measure, CBS brings in a second so-called "doctor:" Charles Socarides.

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio*

*CHARLES SOCARIDES: Homosexuality is in fact a mental illness which has reached epidemiological proportions. In 1948, Kinsey said that approximately 20% of adult males have had one or more homosexual contacts.*

*MIKE WALLACE: Dr. Charles Socarides is a New York psychoanalyst, clinical assistant of psychiatry at the Albert Einstein School of Medicine, lecturing a group of students. They are taught that no man is born a homosexual, that it is not genetic in origin, not the result of a hormone imbalance. Rather they are taught that sexual behavior is learned behavior.*

*STUDENT: I was wondering if you think that there are any "happy homosexuals" for whom homosexuality is their best adjustment in life.*

*CHARLES SOCARIDES: The fact that somebody is homosexual automatically rules out the possibility that he will remain happy for long, in my opinion. The stresses and strains over the years will cause him to have increasing difficulties. The whole idea of the "happy homosexual" is to create a mythology about the nature of homosexuality.*

*STUDENT: What is it that drives a man into a homosexual relationship?*

*CHARLES SOCARIDES: The aim of the homosexual act, paradoxically enough, is to seek masculinity, achieving masculinity through identifying with his partner. Simply because a person has a homosexual wish does not make him a homosexual, or has a homosexual impulse, or wonders what it would be like to have homosexual relations and um, it's what we do that counts.*

HOST: The lady doth protest too much. Mike Nichols interviews a few ashamed gay men sitting in shadows, one of them sits behind a large plant. You can only see his mouth, and his voice is disguised.

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio* interview clip

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: We have been *defined* into sickness by the use of subjective and personal, moral and social value judgments, cloaked in the language of science,

HOST: Frank Kameny writes to the *Washington Post*.

FRANK KAMENY: As a scientist by training and profession, I can say that the treatment of the subject by Dr. Socarides and his colleagues is shabby, shoddy, slipshod, just-plain-bad science.

HOST: He's especially furious after Socarides calls on the National Institute of Mental Health to start a center to rehabilitate gays. That's a call for national [conversion therapy](#).

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio* of homosexual describing himself as sick

FRANK KAMENY: There is an unfortunate tendency to consider psychiatrists as *the* authorities and experts on homosexuality. They are not. Homosexuality is not a psychiatric problem. It is a *sociological* problem—in prejudice and discrimination against a minority group. We are people; we are not specimens or inanimate objects.

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio*

*MIKE WALLACE: Most homosexuals do not consider themselves ill and they are able to live with their condition very comfortably... On the other hand, there are those whose compulsive behavior becomes a problem for the police. The only faces you'll see are those of the arresting officers.*

*OFFICER & MAN discuss this man's life being ruined by an arrest while **cruising**.*

*OFFICER: You just told us that your girlfriend is down the beach. Yet you're making a homosexual contact. What's your explanation for that?*

*MIKE WALLACE: The average homosexual, if there be such, is promiscuous. His sex life, his 'love life,' consists of a series of chance encounters at the clubs and bars he inhabits, and on the streets of the city. The pickup, the one-night stand—these are characteristics of the homosexual relationship. He is not interested in nor capable of a lasting relationship, like that of a heterosexual marriage.*

HOST: Maybe Mike Wallace should have interviewed Harry Hay and John Burnside, or Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon. As for the organizations they founded, Mike Wallace says,

AUDIO: *CBS special (1967) audio*



*MIKE WALLACE: There are numerous homosexual organizations across the country with a variety of names. Their membership is comparatively small but their influence in the homosexual community is considerable. The head of the Mattachine Society in San Francisco is Hal Call.*

*HAL CALL: In our view, the enforcement of laws which forbid public sexual behavior are appropriate and should be maintained.*

HOST: Readership for Hal Call's *Mattachine Review* has been dwindling. Since 1964 Pan-Graphic Press has only published 10 issues. The other magazine, that was born out of Mattachine members, *ONE Magazine*, is also barely alive. Though Mattachine members remain in chapters nationwide, and ONE, Incorporated has many other projects running successfully, both of their publications stop printing in 1967, the year of the CBS doc. There are more effective forces at work in the chapters, as many of the activists hoped, and there are new ideas in other publications and on the streets. Most chapters in major cities have their own newsletter anyway, and their own set of local problems to focus on. For instance, Dick Leitsch of the New York Mattachine says,

AUDIO: typewriters

DICK LEITSCH: Stop whimpering and begin demanding! Homophile organizations must be radical. We must demand the right to cruise, the right to work, the right to public accommodations.

HOST: Hal and Dick are both Mattachine, opposite coasts, often quite opposite points of view. **Clark Polak** of the **Janus Society** in Philadelphia writes,

CLARK POLAK: The chief oppression faced by the homosexual is the cultural tone which says 'I despise you.' Few of the leaders in the movement have examined their innards sufficiently to be able to accept homosexuality in themselves and rid themselves of their own anti-homosexual sentiments. Anti-homosexuality is rampant within the organizations. Your publications reek with anti-homosexuality, groveling, obsequious... and seem almost designed to maintain the homosexual's position of inferiority.

HOST: Even in organizations like NACHO, in-fighting keeps a lot of work from actually being done. Members like [Randy Wicker](#) find new ways to take action for queer liberation. He starts his button company, **Underground Uplift Unlimited** — selling buttons that say things like "More Deviation, Less Population" and "Make Love, Not War" and "Lick Dick" in '68.

JACK NICHOLS: I think these buttons changed more minds than books did.

HOST: Randy's counterculture messages are extremely popular, his buttons even get a mention in the *Washington Post*. With his profits, he legally changes his gay pseudonym,

Randy Wicker, to his legal name. His buttons, spreading his messages, are worn coast to coast...

In San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, 20,000 people join antiwar activists and people like, of course, Allen Ginsberg in a **Gathering of the Tribes**, where they celebrate peace and love in the park. Long hair, drugs, and the gender-bending influence of artists like Janis Joplin inspire this new generation — people who are activists simply by dressing against convention and challenging conformity in their daily lives.

Meanwhile, Jack Nichols puts on his suit and tie to appear on Mike Wallace's CBS special.

Jack is, of course, not the first gay activist to be interviewed on TV. A few have. He and Frank Kameny were on a D.C. talk show, on which the host screamed at them, until ending the program:

DC TV HOST: Get off my stage, out of my studio, you vicious, perverted, lecherous people! You make me want to vomit!

HOST: When Randy Wicker was recently booked on a show, Frank wrote to him:

FRANK KAMENY: Dear Charlie:

HOST: —his former name—

FRANK KAMENY: Barbara Gittings tells me that you're both going to be on the David Susskind show with Bieber. Congratulations and good luck! I—and a lot of others that I know—will never forgive you if you 'muff' this one...

HOST: It's becoming clear that it's nearly impossible to persuade the heteros to understand the gay cause on shows like these, because they're hosted by heterosexual, cisgender, white men. Speaking of, Frank writes to the producer of the CBS doc:

FRANK KAMENY: Dear Mr. Morgan: Mr. Nichols indicated that you will have someone to discuss the 'homosexual Mafia' in the arts. I feel that this is a bit of sensationalism which can only degrade your presentation. The idea of a 'mafia' implies conspiracy, organization, coordination of activity, direction, goals. I am sure that you see the similarity between the charges of a 'homosexual mafia' and the charges of a 'Jewish conspiracy,' which one hears endlessly from anti-Semitic sources. Both charges are a discredit only to those making them and to those believing them.

Sincerely yours,  
Franklin E. Kameny

AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio

*MIKE WALLACE: Homosexuals are discriminated against in almost all fields of employment in all parts of the country. In the world of the creative arts, they receive equal treatment, even, some will say, better treatment. There's even talk of a homosexual Mafia in the arts, dominating various fields: theatre, music, dance, fashion.*

HOST: Obviously, Frank's letter did not influence the producers.

AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio

*MIKE WALLACE: There is the commonly expressed notion that the homosexual's influence has been corrupting, that **pop art**, for example, is a trivial vulgarization that goes hand-in-hand with **camp**. Half hoax, half hostile. A means by which the homosexual, forced to live between two worlds, strikes back at an antagonistic society. In the fashion industry, many see an effort to blend the sexes, to de-feminize woman—sexless geometric sterility.*

*INTERVIEWER: Inevitably these men are going to project an image onto women which is based on their own imaginings. Since intuitively they want to carve women into a shape that's somewhere between man and woman, boy-woman, let's say, all of this is going to come through in their work. It is notorious that whole fashion industry is dominated by homosexuals. Their fantasies are infused with a great deal of hostility, with an instinctive desire to convert the female into a sort of neuter form, a form that is in between, a hybrid.*

*MIKE WALLACE: We talked about this with homosexual author/playright Gore Vidal, who thinks otherwise.*

*INTERVIEWER: There are those that suggest that there is a kind of homosexual Mafia, mutually protective way helps his fellows.*

*GORE VIDAL: Well, it's like most legends, I suppose, there may be some basis for it. Alarmed editorialists like to write. I don't think that there is any greater incident of homosexual novelists, homosexual painters, homosexuals musicians than there ever were. It is as natural to be homosexual as it is to be heterosexual. The difference between a homosexual and a heterosexual is about the difference between somebody who has brown eyes and somebody who has blue eyes.*

*INTERVIEWER: Who says so?*

*GORE VIDAL: I say so. **It is a completely natural act from the beginning of time.** We have a sexual ethic which is the joke of the world. We are laughed at in every country of the world for our attitudes towards sex. United States is living out some mad Protestant 19<sup>th</sup> Century dream of human behavior. Instead of saying we're wicked because we have a high divorce rate or "Aren't we wicked?"*

*because men like to go to bed with men and women like to go to bed with women. Why not begin by saying that our basic values are all wrong? The idea of marriage is obsolete in our society. Everybody knows it. There are naturally monogamous, there are people indeed who enjoy one another's company. But can you imagine a man and a woman who are told that for 60 years they're going to have to live together and have sex only with one another? This is nonsense. Why not begin by accepting the fact what human beings really are – men and women – which is we are open. We have something that Andre Gide referred to as "floating sensuality." We can be aroused by this, by that. Not necessarily by men, not necessarily by women. So let us begin with the reality of human relations, and not start talking about moral fiber, because we are not living out this mad 19th century dream... I think this so-called "breaking of the moral fiber of the country" that these commentators speak of is one of the healthiest things that's begun to happen.*

HOST: Jack Nichols arrives on set. Mike Wallace is noticeably nervous. During an interview with another gay man, Wallace was kneading his hands. Jack, under his gay pseudonym forced on him by his FBI agent father, he takes his seat as **Warren Adkins** to be interviewed by Mike Wallace:

AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio

*JACK NICHOLS: Now I know from my own standpoint...one of the innermost aspect of a person is his sexual orientation and I can't imagine myself giving this up.*

*MIKE NICHOLS: Warren Adkins is 28, graduated from school in Washington, DC, went to night school for three years, then spent a year drifting around the country. He's back in Washington working as a school registrar. For the last 5 years, he's been an active member of the Mattachine Society, a homosexual organization. What do you think caused your sexual orientation? Have you thought about it?*

*JACK NICHOLS: I have thought about it, but it really doesn't concern me very much. If I had blond hair I wouldn't worry about what genes and chromosomes caused by blond hair. I feel no more guilt about my homosexuality than a person with blond hair or with dark skin or with light skin would feel about what they had.*

*MIKE WALLACE: Did your parents know?*

*JACK NICHOLS: Yes, I told my parents myself when I was 14 years old. I feel in many ways that I've been very lucky to have such a warm and understanding family—*

HOST: A blatant lie, you and I know, but he's trying to set an example for the 40 million people watching.

*JACK NICHOLS: They know about my homosexuality, they have accepted me as a person. And this I feel is very important. They don't think of me as some kind of creature. I have one friend who was beaten savagely by his father, he beat him, in fact, with bricks. I was one of the lucky ones. My family reacted heroically and humanely.*

*MIKE NICHOLS: If most homosexuals had a chance to be heterosexual, would they?*

*JACK NICHOLS: Well, I have a friend who took a poll of 300 people on that very question—*

HOST: Randy Wicker. Season 2, episode 6.

*JACK NICHOLS: He asked them, "If you were able to take a pill to change yourself from a homosexual to a heterosexual, would you?" And something like 95% of them answered "No."*

HOST: When the cameras stop rolling, Mike Wallace tells Jack,

MIKE WALLACE: You answered all of the questions to my satisfaction, thank you.

JACK NICHOLS: Thank you, Mr. Wallace.

MIKE WALLACE: But I really don't think you truly believe in your heart what you're saying to me. I think you know it's wrong.

JACK NICHOLS: No, I know it's just fine. In your heart *you* think it's wrong.

HOST: Jack is livid. He stands up and walks off the set, and out of the studio.

*AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio*

*MIKE WALLACE: Most Americans are repelled by the mere notion of homosexuality. A CBS News survey shows that 2 out of 3 Americans looks upon homosexuals with disgust, discomfort, or fear. One out of ten says 'hatred.' A vast majority believe that homosexuality is an illness; only ten percent say it is a crime; and yet—and here's the paradox—the majority of Americans favor legal punishment, even for homosexual acts performed in private between consenting adults.*

HOST: This program is far more impactful than the more enlightened and favorable San Francisco program *The Rejected* — season 2, episode 11 if you're curious. This CBS program is broadcast nationwide, informing far more people than most journalists have so far. (Both programs leave out lesbians and transgender people, though CBS does briefly mention bisexuals.) Overall, the impact of the program is negative.

The day after it airs, Jack Nichols is fired from his job as a sales manager at a hotel in Washington. And since they just broke up, Lige goes to San Francisco. Jack decides it's time for him to run again, too, this time to Manhattan to start fresh, working for Randy Wicker in his Underground Uplift button shop.

FRANK KAMENY: What about your work for the Mattachine Society?

JACK NICHOLS: I promise I'll stay in touch, Frank.

*AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio*

*MIKE WALLACE: The homosexual, bitterly aware of his rejection, responds by going underground. They frequent their own bars and clubs and coffeehouses where they can act out in the fashion that they want to. Where they can escape the disapproving eye of the society that they call 'straight.'*

*The dilemma of the homosexual. Told by the medical profession he is sick. By the law, that he is a criminal. Shunned by employers, rejected by heterosexual society. Incapable of a fulfilling relationship with a woman, or, for that matter, with a man. At the center of his life, he remains anonymous. A displaced person. An outsider.*

AUDIO: lonely typewriter

HOST: Frank returns to his solitary work, preparing for next year's NACHO conference in Chicago, writing letters to Dr. Hooker about test cases, and to creditors defending himself, as he barely has \$22. He writes to his friend Bob Martin at Columbia University,

FRANK KAMENY: Was interested in the details of your exploits in Philadelphia, beyond what you'd told me by phone. Two at once! How? Explicit details please. What is **the Stonewall**, at which you danced?

MUSIC.

*AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio*

*MIKE WALLACE: No one really knows exactly how many homosexuals there are in the United States... This much is certain, their number is growing. They are attracted mostly to the anonymity that a big city gives them. New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco. The permissiveness and the variety of the city draw them.*

HOST: Tensions are at their highest in all of these cities, and one of them is about to finally strike back. When we return in two weeks, episode 8, "Chicago Ain't No Sissy Town."

*Bonus clip:*

*AUDIO: CBS special (1967) audio*

*GOLDMAN: It seems to me today we're in the course of gradually rolling back our former cultural values or cultural identifications to a more narcissistic, to a more self-indulgent, to a more self-centered and essentially adolescent lifestyle. The homosexual thing cannot really be separated from a lot of other parallel phenomena in our society today. I mean, we see this on every hand. 40% of modern marriages end in divorce. We have a very widespread tendency to live lives of nonstop promiscuity. This is played up in a kind of Playboy philosophy, celebrated, sugarcoated, offered to the masses with pleasure... A masochistic, sadistic vogue. A smut industry that grinds out millions of dollars worth of pornography a year. We have a sort of masturbatory dance style. Homosexuality is just one of number of such things all tending towards the subversion, towards the final erosion of our traditional cultural values. After all, when you're culturally bankrupt, one falls into the demands of the receivers.*

HOST: Thanks so much for listening, my culturally bankrupt sluts! Audio credits of this episode feature more clips from the CBS documentary.

*POST-CREDITS:*

HOST: After California Governor Ronald Reagan fires two suspected gay men in his office, a reporter writes up the story that implies the governor waited too long to take care of these deviants. Frank Kameny writes to the reporter.

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: I can assure you that were I a citizen of California, I would not be considering bringing suit against Governor Reagan for insidious discrimination and for denial of quality of opportunity. I and other homosexual American citizens have brought and are bringing suits on essentially this kind of basis, against the Federal government in increasing number.

I would appreciate your reply.

Sincerely yours,

Franklin E. Kameny

**Season 3, Episode 7-A: “Mafia Buys Clubs for Homosexuals”**

Mini-episode released May 29, 2021

AUDIO: typewriter

NYT REPORTER: *New York Times*. **November 30, 1967.**

MUSIC: “The Skull”

NYT REPORTER: The Mafia is selling off some of its concealed investments in bars catering to homosexuals and is reinvesting the money in private clubs that are immune from police inspection and State Liquor Authority control, according to law enforcement officers. While many licensed liquor places remain controlled by organized crime—especially in Greenwich Village and on the fashionable East Side—there has been a growing shift in Mafia investments.

Underworld owners of several “gay” bars and restaurants have recently sold their interests to legitimate operators who had previously shunned that field as too risky and socially repugnant. This has been ascribed to a more tolerant attitude by the police and the S. L. A. toward bars that cater to homosexuals and an increasing social tolerance of deviates, leading legitimate businessmen to invest in such places and break the near monopoly enjoyed for years by the Mafia.

The private clubs for male deviates and lesbians, most of which operate without liquor licenses, enjoy the same legal sanctuary as an individual’s home against police inspection without a court warrant. The police have found it almost impossible to act against such law violations as unlicensed liquor sales and felony acts of perversion.

Patrons of such places have been reluctant to provide specific information and plainclothes policemen who have got past the front doors of a few private clubs to check on reports of illegal liquor sales have been ejected bodily when they failed to pass a recognition test. Most clubs have tight security and member identification.

There are 73 bars, restaurants and private clubs in the city patronized predominantly or exclusively by homosexuals. Another such private club will open next week. Nearly all are in Manhattan and about one-third are operated by underworld figures, according to Richard Leitsch, president of the Mattachine Society, which aims at improving the status of homosexuals.

DICK LEITSCH: The Mafia has been in the business for years,

NYT REPORTER: Mr. Leitsch said in an interview,



DICK LEITSCH: primarily because the legal setup has been such as to discourage legitimate businessmen from operating gay bars. The police and S.L.A. attitude for a long time was such that an owner might lose his license and his investment through no fault of his own.

AUDIO: typewriter carriage returns with a slam

*Learn more in the episode credits & at [queerserial.com/s3e7](http://queerserial.com/s3e7)*