



American LGBTQ+ liberation from day 1 to Stonewall.

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Season 2, Episode 8: “Peddled Like Pornography”

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For this episode, begin with posts starting July 27, 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 These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.

HOST: **Summer 1959.**

CHEERY CAMPAIGN AD: **Russ Wolden's** 15-Point Program... Is a Program of Progress... for you, for all San Franciscans! You know Russell L. Wolden. You know he means it when he declares in his Program—

RUSSELL WOLDEN: I will appoint men to the Police Commission who command the confidence and loyalty of rank and file members of the department and will permit officers and men to perform their duties without political interference.

CAMPAIGN AD: Elect WOLDEN MAYOR. (Wolden-for-Mayor Committee, 1198 Market St., S. F.)

CAMPAIGN AD 2: Re-elect... **George Christopher.** A GOOD Mayor... He Gets Things Done! (Sponsored by Christopher-for-Mayor Committee)

MUSIC: driving

HOST: It's been a long, hot summer since Chief of Police Frank Ahern died of a heart attack at a baseball game. When San Francisco mayor George Christopher needed a chief who would crack down with the same ambition as Ahern, and he found that drive in Thomas Cahill.

Cahill orders Ahern's policies to stay in place and for police to keep San Francisco a "closed town." He implements new "S-Squad" tactics – the S standing for "strategy of saturation and selective enforcement." The S-Squads of 64 undercover officers hit the streets 2 to 4 nights per week to question any citizen who looks suspicious. Arrest rates soar as the squads bring in gays from the bars and many other selectively enforced people of suspicion: transgender people, sex workers, people drunk in public, underage kids, racial minorities – many of each are queer. The chief's squads are called "Gestapo" style by the district attorney, but Mayor Christopher supports them, and he has the support of the three major newspapers. Some of the public is furious. The mayor has cracked down so hard that some citizens long for the time when San Francisco was a wide-open town. Others say, finally after a century, someone is cleaning up this town. City Assessor Russell Wolden sees his opening to take the lead in the 1959 mayoral election.

AUDIO: typewriter

FBI SPECIAL AGENT: Phyllis Lyon, President. Del Martin, Vice President of the Daughters of Bilitis.

HOST: An FBI Special Agent writes to the SAC in San Francisco.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT: It will be noted there has been a large number of homosexuals and Lesbians drifting into San Francisco and most of the contact are gathering spots for these

individuals which are so called 'queer bars.' Statements have been made by informants that there are approximately 40 queer bars in San Francisco at the present time. Investigation is being conducted to identify and list the owners of all of these bars.

HOST: The following day, the list is sent by the agent.

FBI SPECIAL AGENT: Known hangouts of homosexuals.

HOST: Two sources confirm the list. The San Francisco Special Agent in Charge forwards the list to military authorities, in order to take—

MILITARY OFFICER: —disciplinary actions...against the first ten bars on the list. The Paper Doll, 57 Club, the Black Cat, Handlebar, Spur Club... [fading out]

ELVER BARKER: Should I tell my parents? my brother? sister? Should I confide in my fiancé? my closest friends and associates? How can I tell my wife? My husband? My son or daughter? Do I dare let it be known to my employer? What good would it do? What possible harm?

HOST: Elver Barker writes from Denver in the *Mattachine Review*,

ELVER BARKER: It is an undeniable and uncomfortable fact that we homosexuals ourselves are largely responsible for the aura of ignorance and prejudice which enshrouds us. We are responsible because of our silence. And our silence is rooted in fear. No human being should have to live in fear of his fellowmen. The homosexual's fear is caused by the prejudice of society which we have failed to enlighten. We are caught in a vicious circle of our own maintenance. Laying our cards on the table would explain many things about us. It would unveil the mystery from that impenetrable something which others have not been able to understand. And it would remove the feeling of our estrangement from the very people we love the most. Some homosexuals claim "it is more fun the way it is". They find excitement in secrecy, a thrill in fear itself. But 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. And those who have been betrayed, treacherously entrapped, or blackmailed, or who have had their very lives threatened, would hardly say they "enjoyed" playing that kind of game. Such weapons would be rendered ineffective in a social climate of truth. Just so long as we homosexuals help maintain society's ignorance we are guarding the very weapons we fear. If our cause is going to succeed I believe the time is coming, and soon, when we must cease to be cowards.

AUDIO: stop typing

ELVER BARKER: *Mattachine* is going public.

Act 1

HOST: As of 1959, the Mattachine Society has area councils in 7 cities, each with its own newsletter, lectures, and meetings. There are 272 nationwide members and the national magazine the *Mattachine Review*. Well, Pan-Graphic Press distributes it out of the same office. The national headquarters in San Francisco, still at 693 Mission Street on the third floor, has five rooms and an 800-volume library. It funds hundreds of social service cases the small staff is working through while up to 40 calls per day are answered and dozens of letters are sifted through each morning. The Mattachine Society helps teachers who lost their credentials, psychologists looking for accurate information, and researchers of sexual variance. The publications fund most of the operations here now, and sales are improving now that Ken Burns and Dale Olsen have resigned and Hal Call can make the *Review* a bit more sexualized. While San Francisco thrives, though, other chapters dwindle. Mail to the LA chapter is returned to sender – their post office box has been closed. Chicago members are too scared to even go to the post office to close their box. The police shut down their stuffed-full mailbox and send it all back to its senders, too. The Chicago Mattachine vanishes. Hal is eager to expand membership in other cities. He strategizes with his confidante in Denver, Elver Barker. Elver suggests a homosexual pen pal club through the magazine, like Henry Gerber’s *Contacts* (season 1, episode 1). Hal says a sexual correspondence club would be—

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: THE KISS OF DEATH FOR US.

ELVER: Fear of the unknown is the essence of the public’s problem about us. So is your fear of the pen pal clubs.

HOST: Sex is a tricky topic. Ken and Dale refused for it to be covered in the magazine for a reason. Many believe too much exposure of their sexual habits will undo their progress. The public will find them disgusting. A drugstore tabloid called *Man’s Magazine* this year is already writing of the Mattachine Society as “a semi-secret order” within the “Nightmare World of the Gay Man.” They write, “As for the Mattachine Society, little is know as to how it precisely operates. But it is known that it serves countless numbers of hidden homosexuals.” Some Mattachinos believe their secrecy is making them look mischievous. Didn’t they root out their communists so that they could be more public? Many others find it upsetting that one of the Mattachine panelists on *Showcase*, JJ Belanger, was discharged from the military for being exposed as homosexual. They think it makes them look bad.

JERRY “LADY JAI” MOORE: Do you possibly feel that your usefulness as a national officer may perhaps be over because of your recent trouble?

CHAPTER SECRETARY: It would be nice if all the national officers had completely spotless histories behind them, without *any* blots.

JJ BELANGER: How dare anyone even think such a thing.

ELVER BARKER: Fear of publicity of the fact of such a discharge is a perfect example of why the Mattachine Society exists.

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: Such 'blots' on the record of an individual in no way makes that person unsuited for membership or office within the Society. If every member of Mattachine who has ever been arrested or cashiered out of the armed forces, or ever lost a job, etc., because of his homosexual nature were to be banned from the Society, then close to half our membership, I should guess, would have to get out.... I for one would have to go.... The most dedicated and valuable workers in the Society often come from the ranks of the people who have felt the sting of the bad laws and savage, outmoded attitudes toward the homosexual.

HOST: JJ, the *Showcase* panelist who was sitting next to Tony Segura in his mask on TV, tells Denver members to spread word of Mattachine in the open, no matter your legal history. He follows the advice of his Denver leader, Elver Barker: tell everyone you know about the Mattachine Society.

JJ BELANGER: Homosexual life can be downright fun. It should not be peddled in the shadows of the cruisiest streets like the latest samples of pornography.

ELVER BARKER: Yes, I state my interest in organizational work for sexual equality as matter of factly as I state my interest in painting pictures. When individuals show a further interest, I send them Mattachine literature.

HOST: Elver is inspired by his chapter's general support of publicity for activism. He writes from Denver to the Mattachine board, *ONE Magazine*, and the Daughters of Bilitis:

AUDIO: typewriter

ELVER BARKER: These 'radical proposals' I recommend are certain steps some members have feared to take in the past. When are we going to stop fearing our own fears? Granted there is an element of risk involved, but if we really believe in our cause, then shouldn't we be willing to take that risk?

HOST: The Mattachine Society board approves Elver Barker's Denver chapter to host the sixth annual convention.

MUSIC: lively

ELVER BARKER: Only by an education program aimed directly at the general public can our organization help abolish prejudice and halt discrimination in employment and other areas of life. If such publicity were accepted by newspapers, radio and TV, it would be handled by those media in an objective and respectful manner.

AUDIO: Camera flashes, press gabbing, microphone feedback

HAL CALL (into the microphone): Some of the great men of history were homosexual. Homosexuals, as such have only limited social and civil rights. In fact, our whole society is organized to keep them, in many respects, more completely oppressed than are various racial and religious minorities.

REPORTERS: Mr. Call! Mr. Call!

REPORTER 1: Mr. Call, your magazine states to contain “accurate information toward the solution of the problems of human sex behavior, particularly those of the homosexual adult...”

REPORTER 2: Where does the name “Mattachine” come from?

REPORTER 3: Mr. Call, you wrote the *Aims and Purposes* pamphlet distributed to the press—

REPORTER 4: Why are you going public now, Mr. Call?

HAL CALL: We would like to thank the Albany Hotel for hosting this conference, and we invite you all to attend our public lectures throughout the convention. To answer that question, the word “Mattachine” comes from medieval France...[fading out]

AUDIO: typewriters

REPORTER 1: “Group to Discuss Homosexual Needs”

REPORTER 2: “Society Probes Problem of Perversion”

REPORTER 3: “Homophile Defense Voiced at Session”

REPORTER 4: “Denver Man Is Elected by Mattachine Society”

REPORTER 5: “Group Seeks to End Homosexual Stigma. Some of the great men of history were homosexual. Homosexuals, as such have only limited social and civil rights. In fact... [fading out]

HOST: The heaps of headlines are bundled into a brochure for other chapters across the country to prove the organization’s value in the media. The brochure is titled:

ELVER BARKER: Breakthrough in the Conspiracy of Silence

HOST: **September 4th, 1959.** The Sixth Annual Labor Day Convention begins with a keynote titled “New Frontiers in Acceptance of the Homophile.” Gathered in the audience are the usual players: Hal Call and Don Lucas from San Francisco, Jim Kepner writing for *ONE Magazine*, Hal’s ex-boyfriend Jack, Curtis Dewees and Al deDion from New York. Rumors of Kenneth Zwerin appearing are shared, but he doesn’t show. Two burly men sit near Elver Barker. The

convention is public and many new people are attending. Daughters of Bilitis travel to Denver to join the discussion. Ever the politically savvy, Hal brings along a new prosperous friend, **Bill Brandhove**, who pays for the San Franciscans' hotel rooms and drinks. Bill Brandhove even hires a stenographer for the convention.

AUDIO: typewriter

JIM KEPNER: Brandhove was escorted around on Hal Call's arm, setting up drinks for everyone Hal wanted to influence.

AUDIO: gavel

DON LUCAS: Nominations are now open for the position of parliamentarian for this convention.

ELVER BARKER: Mr. Chairman, I understand we do have a member from the San Francisco area Council who is well qualified and highly recommended for this particular task. I nominate Bill Brandhove.

DON LUCAS: Thank you, Mr. Harding.

HOST: The typical debates ensue. Lectures. Cocktail parties. Business meetings.

AL DEDION: Motion to appoint a constitutional committee.

HAL CALL: Nay.

HOST: Hal Call submits his 84 proxy votes. Once again, by signing on so many members in the Bay Area, however uninvolved in the organization they might be, Hal holds more than half of the 142 votes in the convention, and a considerable number of supporters among the delegates.

DON LUCAS: The nays have it. The next report is from the director of education, Carl B. Harding.

HOST: Elver Barker.

ELVER BARKER: Mr. Chairman and fellow members: At the Fifth Annual Convention last year in New York City, the manuscript of the Educational Handbook was submitted for approval of its publication. Over thirty individuals had cooperated in compiling and editing of the manuscript. The convention approved publication. After final polishing by officers and other persons, I typed the stencils in Denver. These were sent to Pan-Graphic Press in San Francisco where 600 copies were printed. The many people who collaborated in writing the handbook hope it is serving the purpose for which it is intended. No matter who is education director one or two years from now,

I believe we should work toward an improved revised second edition as a more effective instrument in our work... As your director of education, I am most concerned that we do reach the general public as well as homosexuals and other sex variants in our education outreach. Because publicity of our educational meetings through the press, radio, and television has been and still is controversial issue, I brought this matter to a head by obtaining a Democratic vote on whether or not to publicize this, our Sixth Annual Convention. My publicity proposals for pre-convention publicity by newspapers, radio, and TV, as well as for having news reporters cover the public sessions and for a group press conference were voted upon individually by members of the Denver Area Council. Also I sought the opinion of officers in our fellow organizations, One Incorporated and the Daughters of Bilitis. The results have been far more extensive and better than any of us in Denver anticipated. To the best of my knowledge as of now there have been five articles published. Three of these were in the Denver Post, one item of which included the Denver Area Council mailing address and my phone number as local secretary. Five letters of inquiry have been received thus far, and yesterday there were a few new people who attended the panel and one Central City excursion as a result of having read about our convention in the newspapers. I believe the present convention has set a precedent for the publicity of future conventions, and also of major educational meetings. We have proven now that it can be done, and one of the important factors about publicity of this kind is that the cost is so very little. In closing my report I must say sincerely that I would like to be your educational director again for at least another year. If I am re-elected, I have at least one major project in mind. Last January, Edward R. Murrow narrated a one-hour CBS program entitled, "The Business of Sex". The tape recorded program included excerpts from interviews with prostitutes themselves, with madams, big businessmen in the call girl racket, anthropologists, Margaret Meade, a Roman Catholic priest, a psychologist, and others. I believe the Mattachine Society could organize a similar program comparable in structure. Officers of Mattachine, One, and Daughters of Bilitis, and from interviews with professional people recognized for outstanding work in different fields related to our cause. Will you please give this idea your prayerful thought? Thank you.

AUDIO: Applause

DON LUCAS: You have heard the report. What is your pleasure?

MATTACHINO 1: I move that it be accepted.

DON LUCAS: Do I hear a second?

MATTACHINO 2: I second the motion.

DON LUCAS: All those in favor?

MATTACHINOS: Aye.

DON LUCAS: Opposed.

AUDIO: Silence.

DON LUCAS: So carried. The next department to be heard from is the Director of Publications, Mr. Hal Call. I would like to first present a comment in connection with a report made by the Director of Education. Mr. Harold Winkler, president of the radio station KPFA in Berkeley contacted us recently at the office and stated that his radio station is going to prepare a documentary of one or two hours' length from homosexuals along the lines of the type of

program you suggested. I would like to make a report of the Publications Department as an informal one and instead of telling what the department has done, entertain questions from the floor about what it is doing, how it is doing it, and how the publications director of the Society who, at the present time is having to fit in a questionable—let's say—dual capacity, entertain any questions from this group about that relationship.

HAL CALL: Now here I am. Let's fire.

AUDIO: men laughing

HOST: The convention then goes *in* on Hal, asking him all sorts of questions about how he runs Pan-Graphic Press. They ask about the time it takes to build the *Mattachine Review*, the labor utilized, the profits made, the intent of his business from the very beginning.

HAL CALL: I did not quit a job to work over on the Society side, full time, or over on 693 Mission full time because I wanted to become a commercial printer. I have been a commercial printer. I did it because I wish to work with a sociological project such as *Mattachine*.

HOST: The interrogation of Hal Call goes on and on, and he charms and charms until lunch.

HAL CALL: [distantly, underneath Host] *We got, in the period of September, October, November, and December, four months to do three issues, we got exactly thirty days behind.* The printer at the end of that said, "I'll tell you how to get the *Review* back. Take the damn thing. I don't want it."

AUDIO: laughter

DON LUCAS: The meeting will please come to order. I'd like to open this afternoon session by reading a telegram which was received. It reads: "Dearly beloved idiots: Thank you. I am deeply honored. Signed Leah Gailey."

AUDIO: loud applause

DON LUCAS: So I guess she appreciates her member of the year award. Would Mr. King like to speak at this time on the Chicago area?

WILLARD KING: Sure. Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the convention: I am most happy to report as a Chicago Area Chairman that we be recognized at this Sixth Annual Convention with eleven charter members as a new Chicago Area Council...

HOST: As the convention carries on, members take shots at Hal's power and his 84 proxies.

MATTACHINO 1: Motion that all members must have a thorough knowledge of the Mattachine Society and actively participate.

MATTACHINOS: One vote against.

One vote for.

Two votes against.

One vote for.

8 votes for.

We vote no.

For.

HAL CALL: Nay.

DON LUCAS: The motion is defeated. 47 for and 98 against.

MATTACHINO 2: Motion to remove Mattachine publications from Pan-Graphic Press and replace Hal Call's seat.

HAL CALL: Nay.

ELVER BARKER: Nay.

PHOENIX MATTACHINO: Nay.

LOS ANGELES MATTACHINO: Nay.

AL DEDION & CURTIS DEWEES: Aye.

DON LUCAS: The nays have it.

HAL CALL: I submit a resolution, a collaboration between myself and our new constituent Mr. Brandhove, to express that "the Mattachine Society is deeply appreciative of the efforts of law enforcement authorities in San Francisco" for allowing our "call for tolerance and understanding of the problems and rights of certain minority groups" to be exercised by this organization. We wish to pass this resolution in order "to...butter our bread with a couple of areas in San Francisco."

AUDIO: men laughing in agreement

HAL CALL: It will do the entire organization a lot of good. Now therefore be it here resolved that the Mattachine Society go on record as recognizing and expressing its appreciation to Mayor George Christopher and Police Chief Thomas Cahill for their persistent and consistent efforts to conduct their administration with these high ideals foremost in mind and congratulate them for favorable results in the sociological problem areas.

ALL: Aye!

DON LUCAS: The resolution in support of passes unanimously.

HOST: As Denver's Mattachine is overwhelmed with membership requests, homophiles across the country report on the convention's successes. *ONE Magazine*:

JIM KEPNER: An effective publicity campaign. The press coverage was revolutionary. The American homophile movement took a great stride forward toward maturity with the Mattachine Society's Sixth Annual Convention... the most surprising gain was in the matter of publicity.

HOST: The New York Mattachine newsletter:

CURTIS DEWEES: Sixth Annual Convention Makes Mattachine History

HOST: *The Ladder*:

PHYLLIS LYON: Mattachine Breaks Through the Conspiracy of Silence

HOST: Bilitis co-founder Del Martin writes,

DEL MARTIN: At every one of these conventions I attend, year after year, I find I must defend the Daughters of Bilitis as a separate and distinct women's organization.... What do you men know about Lesbians? In all of your programs and your 'Review' you speak of the male homosexual and follow this with—oh, yes, and incidentally, there are some female homosexuals too and because they are homosexuals all this should apply to them as well. ONE has done little better.... Neither organization has recognized the fact that Lesbians are *women* and that this 20th century is the era of emancipation of woman. Lesbians are not satisfied to be auxiliary members or second-class homosexuals.

HOST: Despite the Mattachine overlooking lesbians at the convention, Bilitis will stand alongside the men when the convention's scandal breaks one month later.

Act 2

AUDIO: phone ringing

DARLENE ARMBECK: Darlene Armbeck, stenographer. How can I help you?

BILL BRANDHOVE: Hello, Miss Armbeck. This is Bill Brandhove, do you remember me?

DARLENE ARMBECK: From the homosexuals convention, how could I forget? How are you, Mr. Brandhove?

BILL BRANDHOVE: I'm well, thank you.

DARLENE ARMBECK: Lovely to hear—

BILL BRANDHOVE: I'm wondering if you might provide three copies of the minutes you typed at our Mattachine convention? I need to take them to a notary.

DARLENE ARMBECK: Of course, Mr. Brandhove. I happen to be a notary myself, if you'd like to come by, I—

BILL BRANDHOVE: Thank you, ma'am.

AUDIO: dial tone

REPORTER: **October 7, 1959:** *The San Francisco Progress*. SEX DEVIATES MAKE S.F. HEADQUARTERS. A just-completed survey of vice conditions in San Francisco discloses that this city, during the Christopher administration, has become the national headquarters of the organized homosexuals in the United States. It is a sordid tale, one which will revolt every decent San Franciscan, but one which the *San Francisco Progress* believes is of vital importance to our city, and therefore must be told. The survey was made in an effort to determine the truth or falsity of George Christopher's claim that he has given the people a "clean city." The facts are that some of the big call girl operations and a number of minor bookmakers have been put out of business. But in their place another form of vice — homosexuality — has been allowed to flourish to a shocking extent, and under shocking circumstances. Last month at a convention of deviates in Denver, Colorado, a resolution, passed unanimously, praised the mayor of San Francisco — by name — for an "enlightened administration" which has permitted the group to flourish here.

RUSSELL WOLDEN: This is a matter of grave concern for every parent,

REPORTER: Russell L. Wolden, assessor and candidate for mayor, declared today.

RUSSELL WOLDEN: For a city administration to permit this situation to exist is nothing less than scandalous. The whole rotten mess cries for investigation. Mayor Christopher and Chief of Police Thomas Cahill have allowed this city to become the national headquarters of the organized homosexuals in the United States.

HOST: Beside the article is a notarized copy of the Mattachine convention's resolution put forth by Hal Call and Bill Brandhove. The section praising Mayor George Christopher and his police chief is circled.

REPORTER 2: "Mayor Is Praised"

REPORTER 3: "Sex Deviates Soar, No Neighborhood Immune"

REPORTER 4: "Cancer Is Growing; Secret Society Recruiting Cited"

HOST: That night. 6:45PM. KNBC.

ANNOUNCER: The Truth About the Mayor's 'Clean' City—An Exposé!

RUSSELL WOLDEN: This is not a political speech, but a heart-to-heart talk with the people of San Francisco, especially mothers and fathers. These are the facts: The number of sex deviates in this city has soared by the thousands. Federal Bureau investigators and military police have found there are more than twenty bars and restaurants downtown catering to crowds of young men conducting themselves in a repulsive manner. They move from place to place. They accost normal young men and boys. I say San Francisco is not a closed town! And it is not a clean town! And I charge that conditions involving flagrant moral corruption do exist here which will revolt every decent person. Under the benign attitude of the Christopher administration, those who practice sex deviation operate in San Francisco today to a shocking extent, under shocking circumstances, and in open and flagrant defiance of the law. So favorable is the official San Francisco climate for the activities of these persons that an organization of sex deviates known as The Mattachine Society actually passed a resolution praising Mayor Christopher by name for what the resolution described as the enlightened attitude of his administration toward them. Pick up your telephone book. You'll see the Mattachine Society — spelled M-A T-T-A-C-H-I-N-E — listed in it. The Mattachine publish and sell sex literature of the most lurid, distasteful and disgusting variety. The Mattachine Society is the national voice of organized sex deviates. Its principles and objectives are subscribed to by the thousands of deviates who do not care or dare to join it. From these thousands come the sex gangs whose abnormal appetites are catered to by these bars and other joints whose operations I have just described. This is a matter of grave concern for every parent. It exposes teenagers to possible contact and contamination in a city admittedly overrun by deviates. Every San Francisco neighborhood is threatened by the bold shadow they cast over the entire community. When I, Russell Wolden, am elected mayor, I will appoint men to the Police Commission who will clean up this town.

HOST: Reverend Wallace de Ortega Maxey's publishing house puts up the \$1000 fee for the Mattachine Society to file a lawsuit – a \$1.1 million lawsuit against Russell Wolden for

“wrongfully and maliciously stating that the Mattachine Society exposed teenagers to contact with homosexuals.” Wolden doesn’t gain any popularity with the crowd that is already against Christopher’s “Gestapo” S-squad tactics. He’s saying he’ll be even harder on crime. Your choices for mayor: Hard on crime, or even harder on crime.

Hal writes to Wardell Pomeroy at the Kinsey Institute:

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: Things have happened so fast and furious we hardly know where we are. The telephone has rung incessantly. Many have called seriously—to learn about the Society, and to ask for help with problems. Many others, though, have been cranks and crackpots, some of them shouting obscenities when we answered.

HOST: Within a day, the journalists that gave Mattachine their new publicity boost get another scoop – from Hal Call.

HAL CALL: Bill Brandhove.

HOST: Hal calls all the major papers and explains Brandhove’s role in getting that resolution passed. The reporters recognize this name: a man who has been involved in congressional and mayoral smear campaigns, HUAC contempt charges, blackmail trials. Why was he at a homosexual convention? Journalists search the city for Bill Brandhove. They seem to hit a dead end at the dumpy Grand Hotel in the Tenderloin, where they discover Brandhove has checked out. But right outside in a car plastered with Wolden stickers, they find him.

BILL BRANDHOVE: I’m not a homosexual but I joined the Mattachine Society only to find out about its activities.

REPORTER 4: Did you send the notarized copies of the resolution in support of Mayor Christopher to your lawyer for distribution?

BILL BRANDHOVE: (hesitant) I did.

REPORTER 3: Mr. Brandhove, is your lawyer Ralph Taylor, Russell Wolden’s campaign treasurer?

BILL BRANDHOVE: Uh. Well...

HOST: The next day, **October 8**:

REPORTER 1: ‘Mystery Man’ Seen in ‘Smear’

REPORTER 2: Record Bares ‘Plant’ for Wolden Smear

REPORTER 3: Wolden's Own Team Shocked by Tactics

REPORTER 4: Praise for Mayor's Policy on Deviates Engineered by Ex-Police Informer

REPORTER 5: Sordid Vice Charges by Wolden Backfire—Hoax Revealed

HOST: The *San Francisco Chronicle* calls for Russell Wolden to withdraw from the mayoral race.

REPORTER 5: Russell L. Wolden has put himself beyond the pale of decent politics by his effort to inject the shoddy issue of homosexuality into the mayoral campaign.

HOST: Journalists report on Brandhove as a "police reformer with a shady past," with an alleged communist background and a 1930 sodomy conviction. The smear he caused is not one against the Mattachine Society, tricking them into supporting an anti-homosexual mayor with respectability politics – although the Mattachinos were quick to fall in line – but the papers reported a smear campaign against Mayor Christopher and the city of San Francisco for Wolden claiming that the city is a haven for homosexuals. And that he would do this on the radio at dinnertime, while children are gathering with their parents for dinner they abruptly learn about sexual deviance – it's an invasion. The papers quickly report opposing statements.

NEWS-CALL BULLETIN: A special unit of the vice squad is detailed to keep tabs on possible deviate colonies, and is augmented from time to time by special squads of plainclothesmen form districts – notably North Beach and South of Market – where homosexual invasions may begin.

SF EXAMINER: He succeeded only in smearing the city he professes to love.

MAYOR CHRISTOPHER: In a blind drive for office, my opponent has degraded the city. I am deeply regretful that his sordid campaign material has been thrown on the doorstep of every home. I want no formal arrangement with Mr. Wolden of any kind.

HOST: The *News-Call Bulletin* asks Wolden about Brandhove:

RUSSELL WOLDEN: I wouldn't know him if I saw him.

HOST: The *Bulletin* prints that statement beside a cheery photo of Brandhove and Wolden together. Wolden returns to the radio and announces a media conspiracy against him. Fake news!

RUSSELL WOLDEN: San Franciscans, if they destroy me, we will never have another free and open democratic election in this city in your lifetime, or in mine. Then, Russian-type elections have come to San Francisco.

HOST: The *San Francisco Progress*, ever Wolden's ally, prints arrest stats and a list of gay bars, proving Wolden's claim that the city is not clean. Wolden's office sends the transcripts of his speeches and that article to PTAs and religious groups.

AUDIO: doorbell

HOST: Across the city, pamphlets are given out door-to-door.

CITIZEN: You parents of daughters—do not sit back complacently feeling that because you have no boys in your family, everything is all right as far as you are concerned. To enlighten you to the existence of a Lesbian organization composed of homosexual women, whose purposes are the same as the Mattachine Society, the male counterpart, make yourselves acquainted with the name ‘Daughters of Bilitis.’

HOST: The pamphlet includes the Daughters of Bilitis office address and phone number. The Daughters haul all of their membership materials and mailing lists out of the office to a secret location just before the SFPD shows up to search the office. They find nothing. Until Election Day, the Daughters operate their organization and plan their magazine out of the back of a station wagon with a large blanket covering their files. The *Examiner* retracts their call for Wolden to leave the race. They call for him to stay in so the voters can show him how much they dislike his treatment of their city.

AUDIO: writing

HAL CALL: [writing to Pomeroy] It marks the first time one of our organizations has hit the news smack-dab in the middle of a city as large as this, and with such force as to bring knowledge of the Society’s existence home to every citizen in the community. Two papers carried front page editorials asking Wolden to get out of the race. The third said for him to stay in so the voters could have the privilege of chopping his head off... All in all, the Society has gained prestige from this.

HOST: *TIME* magazine reports on San Francisco democrats and newspapers turning against Wolden for his infiltration of the Mattachine convention in order to make a move against Mayor Christopher. Hal Call believes Brandhove pulled a double-double cross, offering to infiltrate Mattachine for Mayor Christopher and then instead selling it to Wolden’s campaign.

HAL CALL: A lot of us thought, at the time, that Bill Brandhove was a real skunk in our midst. He told me “Hell! Don’t cuss me out. I put you on the map! Now get out, shake the can. You can get more than quarters now!”

HOST: Russell Wolden doesn’t bow out. And homosexuality’s existence is suddenly known in every home. For the first time in the country, it’s a major issue in a campaign. Bilitis and Mattachine phones are ringing constantly.

DEL MARTIN: The important issue here for homosexuals is to register—and vote.

HOST: The Daughters organize and register people to vote. Once they've all registered, none of them vote for either candidate. They vote for supervisors, judges, and amendments, but 9,000 people leave the choice for mayor blank. There's such a large number of abstaining registered voters that journalists cover it in the paper. The Daughters will later credit this election as the first event to put forth the notion of a homosexual voting bloc.

Perhaps somehow the lesser of two evils, Mayor Christopher wins reelection by more than 50,000 votes.

MAYOR CHRISTOPHER: It is time to forget the unpleasantness that has occurred in the past few months. San Francisco is on the move in the eyes of California, the nation, and the world.

HOST: Russell Wolden returns to his job as City Assessor to later be indicted for taking bribes. He's convicted and briefly sent to prison. But a lesson is learned here: Mayor Christopher will never again allow himself to look soft on homosexuals.

Elver's plan for publicity had already been brilliantly executed. But with the scandal picked up in San Francisco, most of the country has heard about the homosexual mecca that San Francisco has *suddenly* become. Mattachine has joined Bilitis and removed their masks, and the unintended consequences are just beginning.

AUDIO: heavy bangs on a door, door opening

COP: Bill Matson, we have warrant to search your home.

BILL MATSON: For what, if I may ask, officers?

COP: Letters of a pornographic nature. Sent to an inmate in prison.

BILL MATSON: I have no idea what—

COP: Homosexual letters, Mr. Matson. Did you flaunt the inmate's letters around at your little convention?

BILL MATSON: Officer...

COP 2: What is this? 'Mattachine library file.'

HOST: As Denver PD arrests Bill Matson, the officers collect his books, mail, and erotic photos. They search the library checkout list for members who borrowed books by James Barr, Kraft-Ebing, and Magnus Hirschfeld.

AUDIO: typewriter

ELVER BARKER: Two burly gentlemen at the convention proved to be just what they looked like—morals officers,

HOST: Elver Barker will write in the next Denver newsletter. As he arrives home from teaching junior high students, Elver walks up the stairs to his rear apartment to see the two burly men waiting by his door.

COP 2: We understand you have some pornographic material here.

AUDIO: typewriter

ELVER BARKER: While respectable and courteous in their conduct of the search, the detectives showed an appalling lack of knowledge about the nature of homophiles.

COP 1: Do you consider yourself a homosexual?

ELVER BARKER: Yes!

AUDIO: typewriter

ELVER BARKER: I got out the Kinsey scale and I pointed out the continuum and gave them a little lecture on sexuality.

HOST: The officers open a drawer holding a little box full of cards.

ELVER BARKER: That is the Mattachine mailing list and that is protected by the U.S. Constitution!

HOST: The officers look it over, but they put it back. The *Denver Post* that Saturday prints Bill Matson's address and place of employment. Several other convention attendees' homes are searched. Denver membership plummets. Matson pleads guilty to possession of pornography and pornographic correspondence. \$100 and 60 days in jail later, he returns to Nebraska to work in his parents' grocery store. Elver never hears from him again.

Written under a pen name in the Denver newsletter and reprinted in the *Mattachine Review*, a member writes,

ROLLAND KARCHER: There are many people, professional social reformers and do-gooders and up-nosed busybodies who, making a great show of their 'concern' for 'society's welfare,' are forever seeing evil in such things as homosexuality and pornography, and, indeed, sex itself... Sex itself has become largely taboo. Heterosexual or homosexual or any other kind, it is removed from public conversation and public art. Children grow up thinking of themselves as abnormal because they do not have a fig leaf in their crotch.... The Mattachine Society cannot and does not

condone or encourage an interest in pornography. But, by the good Lord, the Society is interested in freedom and the rights of human beings! And the current censorship practices constitute a gross invasion of privacy.

HOST: Denver's Mattachine pushes forward with a small ad in the *Denver Post* for their public discussion forums. They rebuild membership and expand their mailing list to 10 states and over 200 people. Detroit, like Chicago and so many other cities, dwindles to nothing.

AUDIO: typewriter

HAL CALL: The homosexual must be realistic, too, learning to discriminate as to when it is proper to 'stick his neck out' and when it is better to 'play it cool.' Remember the late Dr. Robert Linder's sage observation that America is not merely antihomosexual, but actually antisex in its official attitudes. That is why Pan-Graphic Press will soon debut *Dorian Book Quarterly* – to promote a 'freedom to read' movement, push back against censorship, and urge public and university libraries to place socio-sexual titles on their shelves.

HOST: Police and postal authorities all over the country beat through letters to find sexual messages like Bill Matson's to the inmate.

In Oakland, two women named Helen and Marge enter Mary's First and Last Chance Bar. Women mingle, talk, dance, even kiss. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board has been watching this bar for over two years, waiting. And now, the mayor seems to be done looking soft on homosexuals.

BUDDY: Hey, I'm Buddy, what can I get you ladies?

HELEN: Whiskey, neat.

MARGE: Make it two.

BUDDY: You got it.

SHIRLEEN: Hey.

MARGE: Yeah?

SHIRLEEN: You're a cute little butch.

MARGE: Heh, thanks. I'm Marge.

SHIRLEEN: Shirleen. And...

HELEN: Helen. Nice to meet you.

HOST: Shirleen leans in close to Marge.

AUDIO: drinks on the bar

BUDDY: No kissing at the bar. Back to the restroom for any of that.

HOST: A couple nights later, Buddy the bartender finds Marge and Helen in their usual seats.

BUDDY: Still flirting with that ki-ki girl, Marge?

MARGE: I keep myself occupied.

BUDDY: I'm sure you do...

HOST: Marge watches as Buddy the bartender joins another group of women. Marge submits her report.

AUDIO: typewriter

MARGE: She joined the trio of sexual perverts. The majority of the female customers were dressed in mannish costume. Agent recommends the revocation of liquor license for Mary's First and Last Chance Bar on the grounds that it is a resort for sex perverts.

HOST: Against a movement now amplified by nationwide publicity, a series of arrests sweeps the city, and queer people begin their march, handcuffed, into the 1960s, next week on episode 9 "The Twilight Woman."

POST-CREDITS:

HOMOSEXUAL: Dear Frank, Got yours of July 27—easily spotted from stack of correspondence by profusion of crossed out words, dashed lines, truncated capitals, liberal underlining, strewn with parentheses, heavy on two-line paragraphs, and no farewell—all well familiar to me now.

"How could the homosexual vote wisely? To vote for Wolden was to vote for a scandalmonger who, having made capital of a group, would have to follow through with some trumped-up prosecution. To vote for Christopher, who wouldn't even utter that nasty word, was to vote for a man smarting from the accusations, who, in aspiring for future political office, would be out to prosecute the homosexual in every way possible to clear his so-called record. Either way the homosexual could not possibly win—and hasn't."

Del Martin