



American LGBTQ+ liberation from the beginning to Stonewall.

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Season 3, Episode 9: “Mattachine Millennia,” or,  
“The Whole World Is Watching”

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 These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.

STUDENT 1: How long do your relationships last?

STUDENT 2: What are your relationships with your parents?

STUDENT 3: Did you have domineering mothers or passive fathers?

MARTHA SHELLEY: Okay, okay, one at a time. Um, as long as any other relationship lasts. As far as parents, we have our differences just the same as any other young person and her parents. My parents didn't make me this way. Despite me guest speaking for your class today, "Abnormal Psychology" isn't something I experience. In fact—

AUDIO: papers tearing

MARTHA SHELLEY: Pass these down, please. Mark an X on your slip of paper if all of your experiences have been heterosexual. Mark a Y if all of your experiences have been homosexual, and an XY if you've had both kinds of experiences. Then fold up paper and give them back to me.

AUDIO: pencils marking papers, papers passed, Martha unfolding

MARTHA SHELLEY: Well, this class is statistically normal. One out of every ten people is gay.

STUDENTS: [rumbling of chatter] *I wonder who?*

MARTHA SHELLEY: To those of you who marked Y and XY, you're not alone. To those of you who marked X – heterosexuals – you are not alone.

Music.

HOST: **Martha Shelley** is booking tons of speaking engagements as the new President of the New York Daughters of Bilitis chapter. She speaks in schools, at special events, and even on the radio. She's only 25, and along with her busy speaking schedule she's still holding down a day job at Barnard College—where she remains in the closet. Sitting at her desk early in the morning while having her coffee, the 65-year-old administrator comes in and takes off her coat.

ADMINISTRATOR: Guess what?

MARTHA SHELLEY: What?

ADMINISTRATOR: This guy was here from WOR radio last night interviewing the girls at Plimpton Hall.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Oh?

ADMINISTRATOR: Yes, I must stay up late tonight and listen to this radio program.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Shit, she's gonna hear me!

HOST: Martha says to **Joan Kent** over the phone, another Daughter in her chapter.

JOAN KENT: [over the phone] It's already been taped, right?

MARTHA SHELLEY: Yes!

JOAN KENT: Why don't you call the radio show and explain what happened, and I'm sure they can remove that segment.

MARTHA SHELLEY: [sighs] Well, I'll think about it.

HOST: She waits until 5PM, and then nervously stands up and goes into her boss's office.

MARTHA SHELLEY: I'm going to be on that radio show tonight.

ADMINISTRATOR: Why?

MARTHA SHELLEY: I'm representing an organization called the Daughters of Bilitis.

ADMINISTRATOR: What's that?

MARTHA SHELLEY: It's a civil rights organization for lesbians.

ADMINISTRATOR: Well, that's nice, dear. It's wonderful that you young people are taking up all these causes.

HOST: She gives Martha a wink.

ADMINISTRATOR: Now help me on with my coat. I've got to go catch my bus.

HOST: Later, Martha will hear that her boss lives with a well-known businesswoman.

Each victory, Martha finds, gives her the courage for the next one. Since her first Bilitis meeting, Martha has been challenging herself, and the organization. She arrived in 1967, Martha **Altman**. She signed in for DOB leader Joan Kent, whose real name was Gene Powers. Martha wrote,

MARTHA SHELLEY: Martha—

JOAN KENT: Oh no, you need to sign in with a pseudonym.

MARTHA SHELLEY: A pseudonym? Why?

JOAN KENT: The FBI could compromise the mailing list.

MARTHA SHELLEY: The FBI? Really? What are they gonna do?

HOST: She finished signing her name, writing "Shelley" instead of Altman. But then added,

MARTHA SHELLEY: Care of Martha Altman.

HOST: Soon after, she'll decide that if the FBI wants to find her, they probably will. So she'll change her pseudonym to her legal name.

Walking into that first meeting in the DOB office on 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Martha saw about 10 women smoking cigarettes and chatting. Like many of them, Martha is really there to meet women. It's a decent alternative to the loud and sketchy Mafia-run bars.

JOAN KENT: Tell us about yourself.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Um. I'm Jewish, and I look it.

DAUGHTERS: [laughter]

HOST: She quickly discovers that the women of DOB appreciate her for her personality. They listen when she explains her stance against conventional marriage and recreating heteronormative relationships through **butch/femme roles**, even though many of the Daughters don't agree with her. While Joan Kent is rather WASPy and votes Republican under her legal name, Martha Shelley wears cutoff jeans and tie-died tank tops and reads *The Feminine Mystique*.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Being gay blows the barriers on sexuality. The Civil Rights movement blows the barriers on who we get to be friends with and make our lives with. The women's movement is challenging our roles in this society. The yippies and the left-wing folks question politics. Let's question everything. The whole perception of reality I was raised with is fucked up, totally crazy, certifiably insane.

HOST: Martha sneaks into the Columbia men's dorm and does LSD with her friend from the Student Homophile League. They walk into homophile meetings arm in arm, man and woman, just to stir up the uptight gay kids. She takes the job as DOB chapter president because no one else wants it, not even her. She just wants a platform to speak on—even at the risk of losing her job. She's lucky she has a cool boss.

Coming by work isn't easy for queer people. **Sylvia Rivera**, a 17-year-old woman, walks the streets in New York. She was once living as an 11-year-old boy who ran away from home because her grandmother didn't approve of her feminine behavior. The street queens who adopted her named her Sylvia. Working Times Square, men pick her up.

AUDIO: Sylvia explains "street walking," relationship with her grandmother, "passing," and going to jail, audio from [MakingGayHistory.com](http://MakingGayHistory.com).

HOST: Trans people and queer folks of color continue to handle a disproportionate amount of discrimination. For white gay men, more barriers are broken, and it seem the era of hiding in the shadows is coming to an end—or a lucky few. The public has consistently heard from cis gay white men on TV programs like "Confidential File,"

“Showcase,” “The Rejected,” “The David Susskind Show,” “The Les Crane Show,” and CBS’s “The Homosexuals.” The underground culture of gay men is detailed in publications like TIME and Life magazines. The public hears directly from gay men on radio programs like “Live and Let Live” and *The New Symposium* on WBAI, which features gay men talking, and using their real names, in a weekly show “with the aim of inspiring a sense of social identification within our subculture.” Gay male voices are now...pretty much everywhere.

**Almost none of this media reported on lesbians, bisexuals, or transgender people.** But the barrier has been broken for some, and now that the underworld of gay men has been revealed to the public, openly gay male characters begin to appear in films. And finally, a full cast of them on stage, in **1968**. An openly gay playwright is finally getting a play produced about homosexuals who, mostly, behave unapologetically queer. It’s witty, acidic, pretty white, but honest – and controversial — and playing off-Broadway.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

EMORY: Mary, it takes a fairy to make something pretty...

#### Act 1

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: Who was it who always used to say, “You show me a happy homosexual and I’ll show you a gay corpse.”

HOST: *The Boys in the Band* opens off-Broadway on **April 14, 1968**. It’s named after a line from *A Star is Born*, starring Judy Garland.

AUDIO: *A Star is Born* scene

JAMES MASON: Relax, it’s three AM at the Downbeat Club, and you’re singing for yourself and the boys in the band.

Judy hums.

On opening night, the writer Mart Crowley is chatting with the director, Bob Moore.

MART CROWLEY: You think they’ll laugh?

BOB MOORE: They’ve been laughing at fags since Aristophanes. They’re not going to stop tonight.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: You’re stoned and you’re late.

HAROLD: What I am, Michael, is a 32-year-old ugly pock-marked Jew fairy, and if it takes me a while to pull myself together and if I smoke a little grass before I get up the nerve to show my face to the world it's nobody's god damn business but my own. And how are you this evening?

HOST: They don't stop laughing tonight. (These clips are from the 1970 movie, read the credits for more info.) But many gays see all the self-loathing of Crowley's characters as counterintuitive to the movement—but most gays can find some truth in it. The play is a hit. Harold ends the play with a speech about self-loathing, leaving the audience thinking about queerness as a state of existence, rather than a sickness to be cured or a sin to wash away.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: If we could just learn not to hate ourselves quite so very much.

HOST: Crowley shows his audience that homosexuality is a permanent and powerful influence, a lifelong part of one's identity—a point further supported by the fact that his characters — and this is groundbreaking — his gay characters don't commit suicide or get killed off before the final curtain. Their lives go on after the play is over. Audiences leave thinking about what it's like to live a full lifetime as a gay person. What problems exist in the day-to-day? How are their friendships strained or strengthened by their queerness? Why can they be so vicious? Perhaps it's part of their survival.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: See you tomorrow?

ALAN: No, I think I'm going to be awfully busy. I may even go back to Washington.

EMORY: Got a heavy date in Lafayette Square?

HANK: Emory!

ALAN: What?

EMORY: Forget it.

ALAN: If you ever get to Washington, I'd like you to meet my wife.

HANK: Right, good.

LARRY: Oh, that'd be fun, wouldn't it, Hank?

EMORY: Mmm. Love to meet him. Or her. I have such a problem with pronouns.

ALAN: How many S's are there in the word "pronoun"?

EMORY: How'd you like to kiss my ass? That's got two or more S's in it.

ALAN: How'd you like to blow me?

EMORY: What's the matter, your wife got lockjaw?

ALAN: Faggot!

[fight]

HOST: As *Boys in the Band* hits the stage, **James Baldwin**'s new book *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* hits bookshelves. His new book follows the story of a bisexual actor from Harlem, living in Greenwich Village. Baldwin writes about white privilege, incarceration, and religion. The book is likely sitting on one of the 8 little bookshelves in the newest Village bookstore, the **Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop**.

AUDIO: shop door's bell

HOST: Over the past year, Craig Rodwell, from the Julius' Sip-in, has been saving for the radical storefront he dreamed of Mattachine starting. Turned down by the organization, he dropped out and opened his own bookstore on **Thanksgiving Day 1967** at 291 Mercer Street. It began with just a few shelves selling Baldwin, James Barr, Donald Webster Cory, and the Wolfenden Report. Craig also carries publications from all of the homophile organizations, no matter how conservative or radical, and many of the gay slogan buttons like Randy sells in his shop. He carries some erotic literature too, but, as a rule, nothing that vilifies or fetishizes queers. Nothing with "third sex" or "perversion" in the titles. A bulletin board announces gay events. Free coffee and cookies welcome his guests, who meet his Schnauzer Albert.

CRAIG RODWELL: Albert is gay, and very promiscuous.

HOST: Craig's former lover **Harvey Milk** comes by often, enjoying this new gay community center. It'll inspire his own in a few years... [put a pin in that](#). Occasionally Craig will arrive to work to see the windows broken or slurs and swastikas spray painted on the door. But he keeps the blinds open and proudly lets the sunlight in. He's here every day from noon to 10PM.

And still an activist at heart, Craig keeps himself busy, writing his own newsletter:

AUDIO: typewriter

CRAIG RODWELL: The **February 1968** issue of *The New York Hymnal* marks the beginning of a new publishing venture directed towards the homosexual community. *New York Hymnal* is published by the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop. Why was the name *Hymnal* chosen? Because *Hymnal* will have a "religious" fervor and crusading spirit in its treatment of the homosexual way of life and the homophile movement. We will make no pretense of speaking to the hetero-sexual in trying to persuade him to "accept" homosexuals. *Hymnal* is solely concerned with what the gay person thinks of himself. The community has the economic, political, and social potential to shape its own future. This potential only needs to be encouraged and channeled.

HOST: Craig immediately confronts big issues:

CRAIG RODWELL: Although it has been common knowledge among New York's homosexual community for many years, the Mafia (or "The Syndicate") control of New York City's gay bars has only recently been brought to the public's attention.

MUSIC: The Skull

CRAIG RODWELL: The New York Times, starting in early October of 1967, ran a number of [front page articles on the Mafia](#) and, in particular, on the Mafia's control of gay bars. The Times named John (Sonny) Franzese as kingpin of the Syndicate's gay bar operations on Long Island; and in subsequent articles they identified the heads of the Manhattan gay bar Syndicate.

**The Stone Wall** on Christopher St. in Greenwich Village is one of the larger and more financially lucrative of the Mafia's gay bars in Manhattan. New York *Hymnal* received a report from a reliable source over a month ago that the Stone Wall was going to be closed by the Health Department because it was alleged that a number of cases of hepatitis (which has reached epidemic proportions among the homosexual community) had been traced to the Stone Wall's bar. It was reported that the Stone Wall does not wash the glasses. The case of the Stone Wall only points up the fact that the Community cannot rely on governmental agencies to break the Mafia control of gay bars until the day comes that pay-off and collusion between the Syndicate and governmental agencies are ended.

How can you identify a gay bar as being Mafia?

1. When you walk in, there will be at least one or two "gray goons" sitting near the door checking out everyone as they enter. If it's a Mafia "private club" like the Stone Wall or the Bon Soir, and you are wearing a jacket and tie and don't fit the Mafia's stereotype of a "fairy," the goons at the door will refuse to let you in.
2. The bar will be dark—to hide the filth and to give the place an atmosphere of "anything goes."
3. On Friday and Saturday nights, it will cost you \$3 or \$4 to get in and they will give you 2 tickets for drinks.
4. There will very likely be dancing in a back room hidden from view when you enter the bar.
5. Policemen will make periodic and mysterious appearances to talk with the goons at the door.
6. The general atmosphere will be one of licentiousness and gloom.



Gay bars in Manhattan's Greenwich Village that fit generally the above description include the Stone Wall, Bon Soir, Danny's, The Den, The Skull, Telstar, Keller's, Checkmate, 17 Barrow and the Sea Colony.

The situation as it now exists makes it virtually impossible for a legitimate businessman to open a gay bar with a healthy social atmosphere. And the only way the situation is going to change for the better is for homosexuals to stop patronizing bars run by concealed Mafia interests. We cannot rely on governmental agencies in this fight. The Mafia monopoly on gay bars has existed in New York for decades and the City government has shown no interest. When the Department of Investigations of the City of New York was asked if they were planning any steps to break the Mafia monopoly, we received the standard "No Comment."

HOST: In the following issues of *Hymnal*, Craig continues to press the issue.

CRAIG RODWELL: Since the founding of the Tavern Guild of San Francisco, the gay bars in that city have become models for the rest of the country of what a gay bar can and should be. Founded in 1964, the Tavern Guild of San Francisco (TGSF) quickly became the focal point of the homosexual community in San Francisco in its fight to improve the operating conditions and atmospheres of the bars. The TGSF is composed of owners and operators of gay bars and taverns. It protects its member businesses from harassment or abuse by authorities, which has virtually eliminated the problem of payoffs. The TGSF's main contribution to the improvement in the social atmosphere in San Francisco has been its firmness in resisting infiltration efforts by organized crime. Many of the bars have benefit nights for the various homophile organizations and donate one night's profits to them. They also show old movies, have ten-cent beer nights, support the homophile publications in S.F. by advertising in them and, in general, make their customers feel welcome and "at home." In three years, SIR, the Society for Individual Rights, has opened a community center with varied social activities, a theater, a storefront, and has become a force to be reckoned with in San Francisco. Candidates for public office seek their support. The same thing can and must be done in New York City. A Tavern Guild of New York is impossible at the moment for the simple fact that there is only one gay bar in the city which is not Mafia-run.

HOST: Over at the **Mattachine New York** offices, their newsletter of **March 1968** announces,

DICK LEITSCH: Gay Bar Closed. The police have been taking action against Mafia-operated bars and recently closed the Long Island Rail Bar and Grill in Brooklyn. The actual charges against the bar were that "homosexuals were permitted to conduct themselves in an indecent manner" in that men kissed, danced together and "solicited." The courts have ruled recently that bars cannot be closed for those acts, but a charge that men "made out" in the booths at the rear of the premises provided a reason for the

closing.

The manager of the bar was **Edward F. P. Murphy**, also known as **The Skull**, an ex-convict who is alleged to have been the head of the national ring which recently was active in extorting money from homosexuals. Murphy has served prison terms for larceny and for carrying deadly weapons, and was arrested for impersonating an officer and for extortion at the New York Hilton Hotel, where he was working as a house detective.

MSNY has been informed that Murphy's sentence has been so often postponed because he had made a "deal" to turn state's evidence, and the delays are to work out another "deal" to lighten his sentence. He could get up to 15 years in prison as a second offender, on the robbery charge alone. Other charges include attempted grand larceny, violation of the weapons law, and extortion.

MSNY has also been informed that Murphy has an interest in the Stone Wall, a club on Christopher Street, and several other gay clubs in New York. Our source claims that the membership lists of some of these clubs are used to further extortion and shake-down schemes.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HAROLD: Who is she? Who was she? Who does she hope to be?

AUDIO: typewriter

CRAIG RODWELL: The Stone Wall is still in operation, unfortunately. Hoping to save their declining business, the Mafia management instituted 'go-go boys' on platforms.

Music settles.

HOST: **February 25, 1968.** In the *Washington Post*, **FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover** is quoted as saying,

DIRECTOR HOOVER: I certainly would not want any of the beatniks with sideburns and beards as employees of the Bureau... No member of the Mattachine Society or anyone who is a sex deviate will ever be appointed to the FBI.

HOST: Immediately on the same day—*of course!*—Frank Kameny writes to the *Post* editors:

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: Gentlemen: Mr. J. Edgar Hoover's comment that 'no member of the Mattachine Society will ever be appointed to the FBI' is revealing.

The Mattachine Society of Washington is an organization working by lawful and orderly means. For Mr. Hoover to make employment by his agency contingent upon working only for the good of 'acceptable' people, but not for the good of 'unacceptable' or unpopular, or controversial people, indicates only how shallow is Mr. Hoover's grasp of the basic meaning of Americanism.

Mr. Hoover states, in addition, that homosexuals are not employable by the FBI. Unfortunately, since Mr. Hoover's agency is responsible for clearances of individuals for jobs in many other places, the pernicious effects of his prejudices extend far beyond more harm to his own agency. It is obvious both that private, consensual adult sexual conduct bears no rational relationship to eligibility for employment by the FBI or by anyone else; and that, of course, like all government agencies without exception, the FBI is not without its share of homosexual employees.

I might point out that a few years ago, Mr. Hoover asked to be removed from the Washington Mattachine Society's mailing list upon which he had been placed, at the Society's initiative, along with many other government officials obviously needing education on homosexuality. Apparently he was rather more afraid of appearing upon the Mattachine Society's lists than the Society is of appearing on Mr. Hoover's lists.

Mr. Hoover's request was turned down. If his remark, quoted in the *Post*, is any indication, he apparently did not profit by the Society's literature, which he continued to receive. Like the ignorance to which it is so closely related, entrenched prejudice is often invincible.

Sincerely yours,  
Franklin E. Kameny

HOST: Hoover took no action against the Washington Mattachine for sending their newsletters, except that one meeting to intimidate them, back at the end of season 2. The MSW offered a quid pro quo: destroy the Mattachine file and they'll take Hoover off their mailing list. He didn't acknowledge the request. Hoover didn't find the homophiles to be much of a threat, and he didn't have much reason to negotiate with them. It's also possible that the last thing Director Hoover wants is public attention on a rumor that has run rampant for decades throughout the government, a rumor about him and his Associate Director Clyde Tolson.

MUSIC: "The Skull" creeps back in

HOST: Chuck Rowland referred to the rumor under a pseudonym in 1955—[at the end of season 1](#)—he implied Hoover was gay. Hoover and Tolson responded by telling their agents to "take this crowd on" for stoking the gay rumor about them, which led the Bureau to vindictively get involved in *ONE Magazine's* Supreme Court case—which

totally backfired because the homophiles won, and then the Bureau became legally unable to stop any homophiles from mailing their magazines.

Hoover has spent much his career trying to stamp out the rumors. Most recently, in 1968, the *Homosexual Handbook* was published listing Hoover as a gay celebrity. The *Handbook* says the FBI director “has for several decades remained the eminence froide of our national great society.” A cold superior figure. Hoover sends the FBI to pressure the publisher to stop printing the book, so they reissue it without Hoover’s name listed.

And like FBI historian Douglas Charles has said, it’s all just a rumor, we’ll never know if Director Hoover was gay. But if he was—and *it seems likely, right?*—then perhaps the other rumor is true: The very juicy rumor that someone was blackmailing him.

The rumor is tossed around by Allen Ginsberg and other gay personalities, mostly jokingly, but funny because it could be true. There’s another gay man who might know Hoover’s secret—and he’s been running the largest, most organized known gay extortion operation in American history—as reported in the *New York Times* and the MSNY newsletter. Ed Murphy, “The Skull,” arranged for sexual encounters between young men—chickens, his sex workers—to meet with closeted wealthy homosexuals. The Mafiosos—bulls—then charge in, pretending to be cops, and demand payoff—or they’ll reveal the homosexual’s secret. The NYPD called the case [“the Chickens and the Bulls.”](#) The FBI called it “Operation Homex.” The Mattachine Society of New York even helped law enforcement contact closeted gay victims of this scheme. This gay mafioso, The Skull, turned state’s evidence and spilled the tea on his partners. The Skull walks free, even though he pled guilty—and his name vanished from the papers as the ring continued to unravel—The Skull apparently had very good information and/or very good leverage. And now he’s managing illegal gay bars throughout New York City. The rumor is that two of The Skull’s many high-profile extortion victims might be the pair of homosexuals running the FBI, who “took on” the entire queer crowd, and encouraged the Lavender Scare, because they were so certain being gay would get you blackmailed.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HAROLD: You’re a sad and pathetic man. You’re a homosexual and you don’t want to be. But there is nothing you can do to change it – not all your prayers to your God, not all the analysis you can buy in all the years you’ve got left to live. You may very well one day be able to know a heterosexual life if you want it desperately enough – if you pursue it with the fervor with which you annihilate – but you’ll always be homosexual as well. Always, Michael. Always. Until the day you die.

HOST: Hoover also has a suspicious stance on organized crime: that it doesn’t exist. The nation’s top law enforcement official denies the existence of the mafia, several newspapers point this out. Allen Ginsberg openly suspects that Hoover must be denying

the mob's existence because they have something on him—a theory which historian David Carter will later support in 2004. In his research of The Skull's extortion ring, Carter found a newspaper reporting in the 1980s on the ring, quoting law enforcement sources who worked on the case and claimed that their investigation turned up a photo of Hoover and Edward Murphy, "The Skull," and the investigators reported that Clyde Tolson had "fallen victim to the extortion ring." The paper also reported that after federal agents joined the investigation, the photo and the Tolson documents disappeared. Now I know that sounds like some gay *X-Files* conspiracy, but if you'd like to explore for yourself I recommend reading David Carter's "Stonewall" book, or other resources in the episode notes.

Whatever may or may not have motivated J. Edgar Hoover, the vicious purge of homosexuals throughout the federal government rages on in **1968**. After another publicly reported round of purges, Frank Kameny writes to the *Post* editors, again:

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: Gentlemen: I note that the State Department has just gone through its annual American 'fertility rite' by announcing the firing of a certain number of homosexuals in the preceding year... The ancient Aztecs or Mayans used to sacrifice virgins, annually, to propitiate the gods and to gain favors from them. The State Department sacrifices homosexuals, annually, to propitiate the House Appropriations Committee, and to gain money from them. There is little difference.

Sincerely yours,

Franklin E. Kameny

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HAROLD: Beware the hostile fag. When he's sober, he's dangerous. When he drinks, he's lethal.

## Act 2

HOST: **In the previous year, 1967**, President Johnson issued an Executive Order to set up a bipartisan Commission on Civil Disorders, in an effort to find the truth of the causes of so much rebellion across the nation. The report is released in **early 1968**:

CHAIRMAN: Police have come to symbolize white power, white racism, and white repression. And the fact is that many police do reflect and express these white attitudes. The atmosphere of hostility and cynicism is reinforced by a widespread belief among Negroes in the existence of police brutality and in a "double standard" of justice and protection—one for Negroes and one for whites.

HOST: **Martin Luther King, Jr.** reads the report and describes the report as a “physician’s warning of approaching death, with a prescription for life.”

AUDIO: newsreel montage featuring James Baldwin on the lack of change fueling a breaking point; Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated and nation’s reaction; [Columbia University Student Uprising](#) and subsequent police brutality; LBJ announces he will not run for re-election; Senator Kennedy assassinated; Adam Clayton Powell’s “Black is Beautiful” speech. Vietnam news coverage.

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: I feel that opinions and feelings on this draft and upon war—any war or all wars—should be studiously avoided by the homophile movement. But...**DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE INDUCTED.** Since you are homosexual, the Army is acting illegally in inducting you.

HOST: 1968 is a year so packed with events in the movement for social justice, there’s no way I could cover it all. But all of these events influence the lives and actions of the homophile activists. After the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. 65,000 troops are sent to 130 cities. Uprisings are turning up everywhere—39 more deaths and 20,000 arrests follow King’s death. Four days of protests on Chicago’s West Side. Fires burn throughout D.C. And machine gun nests are set up on the Capitol steps...

MUSIC

**Monday, April 8, 1968.** Gittings and Kameny arrive at the Pentagon for their hearing with the Department of Defense. They’re still representing fellow Mattachine Donald Crawford, who was fired by the DOD for picketing the Pentagon with Mattachine. After that hearing with a guest appearance from **Dr. Socarides**, the DOD refused to reinstate Donald Crawford’s security clearance because he knowingly broke the sodomy law.

Gittings and Kameny hold a press conference in the hallway at the Pentagon before the hearing, but no reporters show up. There’s bigger news to cover right now. Gittings and Kameny go into the hearing and sit with three Department of Defense officials and defend their client.

FRANK KAMENY: You have just seen Washington burning. You have seen the maneuverings of slimy southern demagogues with their racist dogmas, **placing property interests above human interests.** You need only to walk through downtown Washington to see the harvest which they are reaping. Government bureaucrats like yourselves are destroying lives with pettifogging legalism, and frightened acquiescence to prejudice. If you choose to support morality and freedom, and if you choose to decide in consistency

with the national interest, you have no choice but to give Mr. Crawford his clearance. Common sense and the national interest demand it.

HOST: Requests have begun coming to Gittings and Kameny's mailboxes, asking them to write statements declaring individuals as homosexuals so they can take that letter to the draft board and avoid war, and possible dishonorable discharge. As the MSNY begins doing the same thing—writing letters to the draft board—Kameny and Gittings realize that avoiding the draft is an incentive to coming out. They begin to push that message. Frank writes up a new pamphlet: **“Refraining from Your Induction, or, 10 Steps to Freedom.”** He says be calm and honest. “Be yourself. You are obvious enough.” When the Department of Defense continues to deny another security clearance for one of their clients, Kameny and Gittings write to the DOD, “Mr. Wentworth is becoming a minor national hero. We shall do our best to make of you a major national villain.”

Frank writes to his friend, and former lover, at Columbia University, who participated in the school's recent protests. He recently organized a homophile group at the school with Frank's help.

AUDIO: typewriter

FRANK KAMENY: I am strongly opposed to approaches which contribute to fragmentation and separatism in our society—particularly based upon as superficial and meaningless a criterion as skin color... Unfortunately, the Mindless Sixties don't believe in rules of procedure, or in any sort of discipline. And they believe ONLY in total consensus, not in any kind of majority rule. That is why your meetings go on for hours. That is also why they never accomplish anything truly meaningful... As pointed out in *Newsweek*, they believe in action without ideology. But meaningful action is impossible without ideology. And so the so-called 'new left' has accomplished absolutely nothing, and won't.

I don't think that they've realized that the only way they will ever get the unanimity that they insist upon is either to rule by force, or fragment into smaller and smaller groups, and form new groupings and alliances whenever a new question arises. Their deadly fear of any kind of delegated authority results in an endless change of chairmen, vanishing short terms, when they formalize their structure at all, instability, inability to create or to carry out long-range plans, and total non-accomplishment. Participatory democracy is a nice-sounding idea. It doesn't work.... Keep in close touch. My greetings to all who know me at Columbia.

Affectionately,  
Frank

HOST: In Chicago, Mattachine Midwest President Jim Bradford sends out a call, as their city prepares for the **Democratic Convention** and all the outraged activists it'll bring.

AUDIO: typewriter

JIM BRADFORD: We need people willing to stick their necks out, walk the picket line, go on radio and television, and even get arrested if need be to bring real equality to the homosexual in Chicago and the Middle West.

INTERLUDE

HOST: **Summer, 1968.** *The Ladder.*

HELEN SANDOZ: On Wednesday, **June 19, 1968**, *The San Francisco Chronicle* carried a front page article by science correspondent, David Perlman, covering the June 18, 1968 talk by Dr. Charles W. Socarides before the American Medical Association, then meeting in San Francisco. Dr. Socarides, a psychiatrist at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York City, characterized homosexuals as mentally ill and potentially curable.

AUDIO: footage of Socarides describing homosexuals as sick

HELEN SANDOZ: He went on to advocate a government-supported “national center for sexual rehabilitation,” where homosexuals desiring help would be treated “humanely.” Obviously, the homophile community had no alternative to rebutting this sort of biased and inaccurate treatment, and they did a fine job, too.

HOST: Homophiles hold a well-received press conference to protest Dr. Socarides's idea, which they compare to a “final solution.”

HELEN SANDOZ: The Society for Individual Rights (SIR), the Daughters of Bilitis, the San Francisco Council on Religion and the Homosexual, and Dr. Joel Fort, a psychiatrist and lecturer at San Francisco State College and founder of the San Francisco Center for Special Problems, held a joint press conference at Glide Memorial Church’s Fellowship Hall on June 20, 1968. At the same time, members of DOB and SIR handed out 2,000 leaflets to persons attending the June 20, 1968 meetings of the American Medical Association.

HOST: Both *The San Francisco Examiner* and *The San Francisco Chronicle* cover the press conference in their June 21, 1968 issues.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: Isn’t he funny? He’s an amusing faggot. That’s what you called Emory, isn’t it? A freak. A pansy. My, what an antiquated vocabulary you have. I’m surprised you didn’t say sodomite. Or pederast! You better let me bring you up to date. This isn’t new, but it might be new to you. Have you heard the term “closet queen?”

MUSIC: Annual Reminder



AUDIO: footsteps marching in unison, Independence Hall bell

HOST: **Two weeks later**, homophiles return to Philadelphia for the fourth Annual Reminder picket.

BARBARA GITTINGS: On the 192<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, American homosexuals call for the completion of the American Revolution!

KAY LAHUSEN: First Class Citizenship for Homosexuals!

CRAIG RODWELL: Government by the Consent of the Governed!

HOST: Martha Shelley marches in a skirt.

MARTHA SHELLEY: Tourists standing there eating their ice cream cones and watching us like the zoo had opened.

HOST: Martha's getting frustration with outdated modes of protest. Kameny is still insisting on the dress code at demonstrations put on by NACHO groups. He also insists picketers march in a single-file line with 22x28 inch signs, identical messages on both sides, and 5 staples in each side. Martha can't even try to get the Daughters of Bilitis to break the rule because they're even more conservative than the rest of NACHO. Gotta point out that Mattachine and some other homophile groups are basically using the same tactics Hoover uses to make sure the FBI agents are taken seriously: look like salesmen, look like a professional. Is that how we're gonna win them over? Dressing like them?

**National DOB President Shirley Willer** is often unavailable, but since she has the connection to the anonymous wealthy donor they call "Pennsylvania," it's difficult to criticize Shirley. And Shirley herself is getting frustrated with DOB's inability to agree on actions. She decides it's time to eliminate the national Bilitis board and allow each chapter to function on its own, locally. The Mattachine did exactly that, last season on the podcast, but Bilitis does it for the exact opposite reason—not as a grab for power, but a release of it in order to give power to the people in each respective city. Shirley and her partner Marion write a new Bilitis constitution. In a *Ladder* article titled "Changing Times," Shirley writes that she would like all chapters to—

SHIRLEY WILLER: —immediately undertake to be the effective nucleus of the Daughters in their areas. We must face the problem of reaching the appropriate balance between what should be saved to preserve continuity and what must be replaced to ensure vitality.

HOST: **Helen Sandoz** announces the upcoming fifth DOB convention in Denver, another location chosen because it's nobody's home turf. At this convention, there'll be no speakers, no panels, no galas. They'll simply be discussing goals, the magazine, membership, and what this organization is even trying to do anymore.

HELEN SANDOZ: It will be a very important meeting for all members of DOB and friends who may wish to come and help plan our course for the next two years. This is a jam-packed business meeting. Every member should come to this meeting.

HOST: Less than two-dozen members show up. Shirley and Marion's new constitution, their attempt to create a new, lasting version of DOB, cannot be voted in with so few people. Shirley even had a heart attack just before traveling to Denver, and two guys from SIR stayed up all night making copies of the new constitution and collating them for her.

At the empty convention, Shirley and Marion mail out materials important to each chapter. **Rita LaPorte** is chosen as DOB President and "Lesbiana" book reviewer **Barbara Grier** takes over as editor of *The Ladder*. Former President Shirley Willer is heartbroken. She and Marion walk out of the convention's hotel, get in their camper, and just start driving. They quit the movement altogether. Helen Sandoz and Stella Rush are also ready for a break from DOB. Denver is the end of the road for many Daughters. In fact, in the book *Before Stonewall*, Del and Phyllis will credit Shirley's role as the cause of the Daughters of Bilitis's ultimate downfall, to come. **Jeanette Howard Foster**, the bibliographer, writes in *The Ladder*:

JHF: During my service at the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research, I learned that homosexuals are homogenous in nothing except their preference for their own sex. When one considered the geographical, racial, economic, intellectual, and social differences among the national members of D.O.B., what can be expected but sharp variations in interest and sympathy? A considerable number of the sisterhood have a strong need to dominate—even though some may look delicately feminine.

HOST: Helen Sandoz's final issue of *The Ladder*, titled "The Changing Scene," features bright counterculture artwork with writing by Martha Shelley. Under Barbara Grier's new editorship, she doubles the page count and leans into lesbian-feminist writing—and she drops the magazine's subtitle "A Lesbian Review." Barbara Grier picks up many new subscribers, and loses many old ones, too.

Music settles.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HAROLD: [laughing]

MICHAEL: What's so fucking funny?

HAROLD: Life. Life's a god damn laugh riot. You remember life.

MUSIC: groove

HOST: **In the East Village**, Jack Nichols and Lige Clark decide to try being together again. They get an apartment near Tompkins Square Park, light up the incense and eat LSD-laced jello.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: Alan, Hank and Larry are lovers. Not just roommates. Lovers. No man has a roommate after they're 30 years old. If they're not lovers, they're sisters.

HOST: By leaving Jack back in D.C., Lige forced him to reevaluate, to loosen up. Jack lets go of the idea that he needs to feel like the “man” of the relationship. He realizes he's been “role-trained” by [heteronormativity](#). He'll later write a book about it called *Men's Liberation*—as in men being liberated from the constraints of masculinity. Jack and Lige finally reconnect. Jack shows Lige the writings of **Walt Whitman**. Lige shows Jack tantric yoga. He teaches classes. One of his students is Kay Lahusen.

Jack gets a job as an editor for *Countrywide*, a mass-circulation magazine company covering dozens of topics. Pretty soon one of those editors hires Jack and Lige to write a column for a new sex-positive magazine called [SCREW](#). Theirs is the first uncensored gay column in a straight magazine – a magazine which will become the nation's biggest selling underground publication. Even closeted people can buy it without anyone suspecting they're reading the one little column about gay sex. Jack and Lige, of course, name their column after the newsletter for the Washington Mattachine Society: “The Homosexual Citizen.” Notes of gratitude from gay readers fill Lige and Jack's mailbox at *SCREW*.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HANK: I do love him. And I don't care who knows it. Why not? It's the truth.

HOST: Back in D.C., their friend Frank Kameny is left behind. He's preparing for the **North American Conference of Homophile Organizations**, to be hosted in Chicago just as the **Democratic National Convention** is beginning. He's also helping his new protege Bob start the **Student Homophile League at Columbia University**, which the school's lawyers are trying to stop. And, as is traditionally Mattachine, he's fighting with another chapter's president in a different city.

AUDIO: typewriters

FRANK KAMENY: I am writing with care here. I trust that you will read this with equal care,

HOST: Frank writes to **MSNY President Dick Leitsch**,

FRANK KAMENY: I write sincerely, and with no intent at sarcasm, when I say that I was pleased to receive your letter of June 14... *Pleased* because it represents the first letter which I have received from you in a very long time which attempts reasoned communication and exchange of ideas instead of tirade, polemic, recrimination, casting of aspersions, expression of baseless suspicion, attribution of discreditable motive, noncooperation and the like...

DICK LEITSCH: I was speaking at Ohio University when I first heard of the chartering of the Columbia faggot group. I just got back late last week, and walked into the biggest fuckin mess I ever had on my hands. Boy, when you and Barbara meddle and interfere, you certainly do a good job of it! New York's homosexuals spoke with one voice: Mattachine. Soon it'll be like the Negro movement. The caphony [sic] will be so loud you won't be able to hear any voices at all, just a meaningless roar. Organize New Orleans or something, but, for god's sake, stay out of New York.

HOST: Kameny and Leitsch have had their differences. But despite disagreements, they still manage to work together. After all the shade, Frank talks about how homosexuals should be considered the medical experts on homosexuality, but that not every homosexual agrees.

FRANK KAMENY: Within the movement, I point out that many of the people in our own movement are often the unwitting purveyors of the same attitude. Read Hal Call's remarks some time, as an extreme case. Now, I take credit for a good many of the worthwhile ideas floating around in this movement, and for the phrasing of them. This is the point: that we must instill in the homosexual community a sense of the worth of the individual homosexual. A sense of high self-esteem. We must counteract the inferiority which ALL of society inculcates into him in regard to his homosexuality.

HOST: He sends off his letter to Dick in New York, and writes another to the DOB in Chicago, worried the upcoming homophile convention won't get media coverage because of the DNC. Frank writes,

FRANK KAMENY: "There are murmurings of civil disorders in connection with the Convention."

MUSIC: Return to Chicago

HOST: **August 11, 1968**. Activists from 14 homophile groups nationwide arrive in Chicago. The homophiles meet at **The Trip**, the recently raided gay bar near historic

Towertown, where Mattachine Midwest meets. The bar is currently shut down, waiting to go to trial.

The NACHO meeting is very organized, following Roberts Rules of Order, as usual. The 75 delegates and guests spend the week intensely debating the movement's future in a radicalized society. For Kameny and Gittings, it's a week of wins. Two years ago, when these groups met in Kansas City, Frank struggled to get any delegates to support him. Now, in Chicago, everyone seems to have his back. The delegates pass a **Homosexual Bill of Rights** to all agree on what they're fighting for—huge—some of those things are legalizing consensual gay sex, the right to cruise, the right to security clearances and military service and jobs, and for the police to stop harassing us and keeping lists of us, and for gay sex to be taught in sex education classes—and as far as I know, that last one still hasn't happened 50 years later.

Then, at Gittings and Kameny's suggestion, the legal committee passes a motion to encourage creating test cases to challenge anti-gay laws.

On Saturday, Frank gets up to speak again.

FRANK KAMENY: The other day, on television, I saw Stokely Carmichael, before a group of Negroes almost chanting 'Black is Beautiful.' To a Negro, living in a society in which 'white,' 'snow,' 'purity,' and 'good' are all equated together; and 'black,' 'evil,' 'darkness,' dirt,' and 'ugliness' are all equated together, Carmichael's tactic is understandable—and necessary, and desirable. Within our somewhat different framework, we need the same kind of thing....

Our people need to have their self-esteem bolstered—singly and as a community. People who are TRULY equal, and TRULY not inferior, do NOT seriously consider acquiescing to the majority and changing themselves. To submit to the pressures of immoral societal prejudice is immoral. Self-respecting people do not so submit. Self-respect is what *I* am trying to inculcate into my people, even if you are not... In parallel to Carmichael, 'homosexuality is GOOD—positively and without reservation—the ONLY people in all the world who are doing this are the pitifully small handful of us in the homophile movement. And our people are very sensitive to any squeamishness and half-heartedness on our part... We will get there a lot faster if we encourage our own people to hold up their heads, look the world in the eye and say "**Gay is Good**"—without ANY reservations—and face the world with solidarity and self-confidence.

HOST: Their new slogan, a way to announce to the world that they are morally good people in the simplest of terms: Gay is Good.

Barbara Gittings seconds the motion, and the resolution passes unanimously.

The owners of the hosting bar, The Trip, will soon go to the Illinois Supreme Court to become the first gay bar to challenge the Chicago Police Department—and they’ll win, and reopen.

**As the NACHO convention closes**, other gay bars on the North Side of Chicago hang signs in their windows: “Closed for two weeks for redecoration.” They know cops are sweeping through town, like other cities have done in preparation for the World Fairs and political conventions. Cops are cleaning up undesirable businesses before tourists and activists pour in for the DNC. Chicago police target Black neighborhoods, especially, parking mysterious, windowless vans outside the homes of known activists. The New Left, the hippies, the yippies, students, and anti-war activists—activists of all kinds—plan to stage demonstrations in Chicago. The FBI has been watching, planting informants, and arranging blackmail to sew chaos inside the activist groups. And the week of the Democratic convention, a heat wave hits Chicago.

MUSIC BOOMS to a close.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: You can decorate his house for him, Emory. And he can get you out of jail next time you’re arrested on a morals charge.

**Two days after the NACHO convention ends, August 20, 1968**, CPD raids two large gay bars: Sam’s, on Clark and Division, and the Annex, near Clark & Diversey. Sam’s bartender, **Jim Flint**, remembers his boss paying off the cops, but they raid anyway, and shut down the bars before the DNC starts. 17 people are arrested. Mattachine Midwest writes an open letter to the city’s superintendent, citing one of the arrested people, who says a cop raiding the Annex said,

COP: You’re part of a minority group and should expect to be treated like it.

HOST: Mattachine’s open letter is copied and spread through the gay bars.

**Two more days later, August 22**. In Old Town, where the gay neighborhood migrated after the era of Towertown, two teenagers are out walking. One is a 15-year-old Native American from South Dakota, **Jerome Johnson**. The other is **Bobby Joe Maxwell**, an 18-year-old Black man. It’s late at night. They’re stopped by an officer for a “stop-and-quiz,” a common Chicago police practice used to intimidate minorities. The officer, **John Manley**, will say that the younger of the two, Jerome, pulled out a gun, fired a shot, and ran. So Officer Manley will say he had no choice but to fire at him, shooting 15-year-old Jerome Johnson in the heart. Officer Manley then arrests Bobby Maxwell on a weapons charge, for carrying a hunting knife. Word spreads quickly. An angry rally and a memorial march are held in Lincoln Park on **Sunday, August 25**, the day before the Democratic National Convention. Officer John Manley is just beginning his career as a

longtime villain in Chicago's Black and gay communities (and for his own female co-workers).

Following the memorial on Sunday night, a group of yippies and gays, including Allen Ginsberg, "omm" quietly in Lincoln Park—past the mayor's 11 PM city curfew. Police charge into the park, swinging batons and releasing tear gas on the meditating queers. They go running into a nearby gay bar, the Inner Circle. Mayor Daley gives police and the National Guard an order to **"shoot to kill"** protestors next time they don't obey. **And so the 1968 DNC begins.**

AUDIO: Gore Vidal covering the DNC on ABC

HOST: The next day, **August 26th**, the convention starts at the International Amphitheater on the South Side, with Aretha Franklin opening—

AUDIO: Aretha Franklin singing the national anthem

HOST: —the only good thing to come out of this. Thousands of activists gather in the South Loop and Grant Park. These anti-war demonstrators are from the New Left, progressives who grew up in the hopeful era of JFK, now disappointed by a never-ending war and the American Government's constant abuse of its own citizens. Some of these activists are yippies, from the Youth International Party. Many activists come from the Students for a Democratic Society, and many other groups. These groups requested permits to protest in the city. Mayor Daley refused. But that isn't gonna stop 10,000 anti-Establishment activists with a **right to peacefully protest.**

Inside the convention, it's tense. With LBJ stepping down, democrats with varying points of view see their chance to jump in and influence the war, one way or another. The two potential presidential nominees are in opposing positions: Vice President Hubert Humphrey supports the war, Senator Eugene McCarthy is against. And while they're debating, everyone knows there's a mob of activists outside making demands. The scene inside is uncomfortable. For everyone watching the convention at home, the entire frame of the television screen is a packed crowd of men in suits, pushing at each other, packed so tightly that no one can move.

AUDIO: DNC newsreel of fighting in the crowd

HOST: As the delegates debate into the night, police confront activists in Lincoln Park.

AUDIO: DNC footage of the crowds in Lincoln Park

HOST: The country is mostly focused on the convention inside, though. A large audience is particularly transfixed on ABC's coverage, which ABC really needed, as the lowest-

rated of the three networks. They went for an unconventional type of coverage. Rather than having an anchor talk through the convention live, they have two intellectuals debate for an hour each night—during both conventions. For their two intellectuals, ABC hired founder of the conservative magazine *National Review*, **William F. Buckley**, and author **Gore Vidal**. I've been quoting him since episode 1, but we mostly recently heard him give all those fabulous remarks on the [CBS Reports gay documentary](#). Vidal's most recent book is huge—*Myra Breckinridge*. It is a ridiculous camp satire written as the diary of a trans woman. William Buckley, the conservative in these debates, is a friend of Ronald Reagan. You can imagine what he thinks of *Myra Breckinridge* author Gore Vidal—an obvious homosexual. He cracks all sorts of jokes about *Myra* and Vidal's morals. Each night, millions of Americans are captivated by this unique form of convention coverage—a news style that will become the norm to a terrifying degree. Buckley and Vidal are almost completely opposed to each other politically, a feeling the millions watching can relate to. Both think the other is incredibly dangerous for the country. The debates quickly become an absolute cat fight.

AUDIO: Vidal vs Buckley clip

HOST: **On the second day**, viewers across the country watch the convention from the inside as CBS anchor Walter Cronkite talks to Dan Rather, reporting on the scene. He's attempting to interview someone who's being removed from the convention when the [reporter himself is stopped by security](#).

AUDIO: DNC newsreel of Rather & Cronkite

HOST: Gore Vidal is in his car, headed to an event with Arthur Miller and Paul Newman. They drive into a cloud of tear gas.

AUDIO: DNC protest footage

**The following day, August 28**, while the delegates at the convention debate the country's role in the Vietnam War, about 10,000 people meet in Grant Park. Even though today is the only day they've actually been granted a permit to gather, the peaceful protestors prepare to face off with the CPD. 23,000 police and National Guardsmen stand by to sweep through the demonstration. Police form a human barricade around Grant Park, intending to keep protestors from marching to the convention.

In the afternoon, one of the demonstrators gets up on the band shell and lowers the American flag, and police begin pummeling their way through the crowd, beating protestors with their batons. Trash and chunks of concrete come flying toward the police.

AUDIO: DNC protest footage



HOST: Meanwhile, the convention votes to support the war in Vietnam. Protestors in the park make their way onto Michigan Avenue. Under the flood of news camera lights, the police do what they do best—they beat protestors and reporters in what will be called the **Battle of Michigan Avenue**.

AUDIO: DNC newsreel featuring “Peace now!” chanting, police rioting, protestors chanting “The Whole World Is Watching”

HOST: Less than an hour later, the news stations decide to turn from convention coverage to the riots outside. The country finally sees what the police are capable of for everyone — the majority of the people at this protest are white, and many of them are journalists and reporters.

AUDIO: DNC newsreel “Mr. Chairman, most delegates to this convention do not know that thousands of young people are being beaten in the streets of Chicago.” Arguments ensue.

HOST: For the minority communities watching, people of color and queers, they already know what the police are capable of. Many Americans refuse to take it anymore.

AUDIO: Vidal says, “It’s like living under soviet regime here... you’ve seen the roughing up.” Buckley rebuts, and expresses support of police. They argue. [[Watch here.](#)] Vidal calls Buckley a “crypto Nazi.” Buckley says, “Now listen, you queer. Stop calling me a crypto Nazi, or I’ll sock you in the goddamn face and you’ll stay plastered.” They continue to fight.

HOST: “Now listen, you queer. Stop calling me a crypto Nazi, or I’ll sock you in the goddamn face and you’ll stay plastered.” You gotta watch this clip. The very second William Buckley calls Gore Vidal a queer, Vidal’s eyes flash with total joy, he smiles so big—because he knows he won. Buckley cracked, he called him one of the worst slurs on TV—and then threatened him. It’s symbolic of all the fights around the DNC. I’ll cover some more about what happened to their relationship after the debates in the credits.

**The next day, the final day of the convention,** pro-war Humphrey accepts the democratic nomination.

AUDIO: Humphrey at DNC

HOST: Al Capp, political satirist, jokes, “Of course, now that the election is over, will Bill Buckley and Gore Vidal kiss and make up? I think Vidal would like that.” Big laughs.

Outside, hundreds of protestors try to march on the convention. Police release the tear gas and the convention comes to a close. A candlelight march against the war walks through the streets of downtown Chicago.

Okay, short story long, but it's an important piece of the movement. And here's the most important part: The official story by the Chicago Police Department is that 589 people were arrested and 100 protesters were injured. The Medical Committee for Human Rights will later report that more than 1,100 people got treatment for injuries from the DNC protests. And shortly after, a national commission will appoint a team to determine the cause of these violent outbreaks. Their report will use hours of films, thousands of photos, and thousand of interviews to determine that in some cases protestors did provoke police, but police responded with violence.

The Walker Report says, "The nature of the response was unrestrained and indiscriminate police violence on many occasions, particularly at night. That violence was made all the more shocking by the fact that it was often inflicted upon persons who had broken no law, disobeyed no order, made no threat. These included peaceful demonstrators, onlookers, and large numbers of residents who were simply passing through, or happened to live in, the areas where confrontations were occurring....To read dispassionately the hundreds of statements describing at firsthand the events of Sunday and Monday nights is to become convinced of the presence of what can only be called **a police riot.**"

The **1968 DNC** inspires the New Left movement, a movement demanding peace, civil rights, women's rights, and gay rights. 100 new Students for a Democratic Society chapters open across the country. And instead of blaming the police, like the evidence says to, the U.S. Government accuses 8 activists of conspiracy to incite a riot. They go on trial in Chicago. Senior prosecutor Tom Foran calls defense witness Allen Ginsberg a "goddamned fag" on the witness stand, and while he's prosecuting the trial Tom Foran tells a parents' meeting at Loyola High that all the activists on trial are fags, except probably not the Black Panther Bobby Seale. Foran tells the parents, this country's children have been lost to the "**freaking fag revolution.**" Of course, Chicago gay activists immediately start [printing the buttons](#). Mattachine Midwest reports:

AUDIO: typewriter

JIM BRADFORD: The whole world saw the hatred and violence of which Chicago police are capable, whether one's sympathies are with the demonstrators or not, the police tactics during the week of the convention belong in a history of Nazi Germany.

HOST: Mattachine Midwest calls a press conference to bring publicity to the raids and bar closures. Entrapment still rises, particularly by Officer John Manley. Jim Bradford

and Pearl Hart update the pamphlet “**Your Rights If Arrested**” and print thousands. Frank Kameny writes,

FRANK KAMENY: “Yes, our movement, in many ways, IS ready for its Rap Browns and Carmichaels.”

HOST: Kameny and Gittings return to the Pentagon to represent another homosexual determined to get his security clearance back. They present a recent issue of the *Wall Street Journal*, which ran an article on their client, an open homosexual ousted from Bell Telephone Labs. Gittings and Kameny argue that he can’t be blackmailed with a homosexual secret if his sexuality has been published in this major publication. Department of Defense lawyer Rowland Morrow counters, saying, “There may come a day, gentlemen, when the homosexual in our society is not considered as an outcast, guilty of criminal behavior and an object of derision and humor and Broadway plays which portray him as sick, driven, and full of hatred. But gentlemen, we submit that the Appeal Board of the Department of Defense sitting this 9th day of September must look at the world as it is, and not as it might be if the applicant’s counsel’s dreams were to come true. The Board must face facts, the reality of what is here and now and not what might be when the Mattachine millennia has arrived.”

The Civil Service Commission continues to be vague about whether or not they’ll allow gays back in to government jobs. It’s a sort of half-step forward. Having watched Gittings and Kameny’s cases, the ACLU then advises all attorneys in their chapters nationwide to *publicize* any gay cases against the federal government—tell your clients to **come out** publicly.

MUSIC: empowered

HOST: As the general public continues to discuss human rights on all fronts, homosexuals and the gender variant are now often included in that conversation. The whole world watches them on TV, in movies, off-Broadway, in books. The *Wall Street Journal* features a front-page article about gays demanding “a piece of the action.” Craig Rodwell’s *Hymnal* responds by reporting,

CRAIG RODWELL: It is said that *The Wall Street Journal* is six months ahead of society in indicating trends.

AUDIO: 1960s *Tonight Show* music

HOST: Americans who tune in to *The Tonight Show* see Criswell, a TV psychic who seems to know a thing or two about the future. He says he’s publishing a book, which predicts homosexual cities all over the country rising up in the near future. (He kind of does predict the Radical Faeries.) At the movies, if you’re old enough to get into an X-rated movie, you can see lesbians—with a sex scene—in Robert Aldrich’s new film *The Killing of Sister George*.

It's becoming clear to America that the queers are not going anywhere.

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

MICHAEL: It's not always like it happens in plays. Not all faggots bump themselves off at the end of the story.

AUDIO: typewriter

DICK LEITSCH: **September 18, 1967.** Those two cops who came to visit us...have informed me that they discovered one of the cops whose name I gave them was taking payoffs from that club [the Stonewall], and he's been dismissed from the force. The other one is still under investigation and surveillance, though they think he's clean. They're not going to take any action against the Stonewall.

HOST: Next week, episode 10: "The Walls of Jericho."

AUDIO: *Boys in the Band* clip

HAROLD: [laughs] Friends, thanks for the nifty party.  
Revolution complete.

### Season 3, Episode 9-A: ““Gay Party At Police Station”

Mini-episode released June 19, 2021

AUDIO: typewriter

DICK LEITSCH: MSNY Newsletter, June 1969. The NYC Police Department recently hosted a wild gay party which was so successful they moved it down to the Criminal Courts Building. They didn't start out to have a party, of course, but they ended up having a dilly that won't be forgotten soon by the “guests,” the cops, or the courts. Here's the story as we heard it from one of the “guests.”

A new gay “club” opened recently in the East Fifties. The owners were blithely selling liquor to three score customers, sans license, permit, or even the basic Certificate of Occupancy. In walked the fuzz and arrested the management (which is legal) and all the customers (which is illegal), for “disorderly conduct.” The cops herded more than fifty very elegantly dressed, and very high, male homosexuals, four women, one sex-change-in-progress, and one dog (belonging to a customer) into the paddy wagons. A lot of the people, we understand, had pills, which they proceeded to swallow as fast as possible, so as not to be caught with them. By the time they got to the station house, they were flying. The cops could neither control them nor shut them up. The arrested people had to be questioned and searched, and that was a real freak-out. The artificial gaiety of the high ones rubbed off on everybody else, and the station house was the scene of perhaps the biggest “camp-in” of all time. The more the cops tried to maintain order, the more ridiculous the whole situation got, and the more the cops lost control of the mob they had arrested. Things hit a high point when it came time to search the sex-change. He had siliconed breasts, which were reportedly enormous. But he still had his male equipment as well. The cops were at a loss as to who should search him (her?)—a policeman or a police woman. Somebody suggested that a police woman search the top half and a policeman the bottom half. That broke up the whole crowd, and the embarrassed cop in charge decided not to search the sex-change at all.

Finally, despite great obstacles in the form of loud camping, freaky carryings on by those so high on pills they weren't sure what was happening, a yapping dog, four furious women, and a bunch of gay kids, some of whom were enjoying the whole ridiculous scene and others who were very unhappy about it all, the cops got all their paper work done, and then loaded everyone into paddy wagons again to go to jail.

That trip precipitated another crisis. The women wouldn't ride with the “queens” so the cops settled that by letting the real ladies ride up front. The sex-change, to the amusement of everyone else and the consternation of the cops, demanded the same privilege. That was eventually settled and everyone went to jail. There, isolated ones were photographed—with much posturing, posing and camping. A cop suggested fingerprints, and a squeal arose about ruined manicures and dirty fingers. Finally, rather than go through another scene, the cops forgot the fingerprinting idea.

The gay boys were herded into two cells, 25 to a cell. The women got a cell to themselves, and the sex-change (again, they couldn't decide whether it was a "he" or a "she"), got a cell alone, and the dog was impounded in a separate cell. Every hour during the rest of the night, the cops came around and took half the gay boys out of one cell and moved them to the other, apparently with the idea of preventing sexual carrying-on. What they didn't notice was that the same crowd was moving each time, and the coupling was going on. With so many people in the cell, the cops couldn't see what was happening in the back, and there was more than a little hanky-panky.

Came the dawn, as the old movie titles say, and everyone got "breakfast"—hot tea with no sugar and bologna sandwiches. Once again they were piled into the wagons and hauled to the court house. There, they were kept in a back room and led out four at a time before the judge. Our reporter says the whole scene was too much. All those rumped Cardin suits, hair in disarray, and pimples and beard stubble sticking out under traces of make-up.

The first four trooped before the judge, who heard the case and dismissed the charges. Another four, this time more swishy, trooped in. The courtroom began to titter, and the judge rapped for order. The charges were dismissed. The next four were called, and three gay boys and the sex-change came in. That, it is said, did it.

The judge made the mistake of asking the sex change why "she" had a man's name. He got a lecture on sex changes and how they work. The lawyers, bailiffs, criminals awaiting trial, and spectators all got involved. Courtroom discipline collapsed. For the rest of the morning, four queens at a time tripped before the bar of justice while the judge tried to be serious. The courtroom remained in an uproar, and it took a lunch recess to restore order.

The cops told our informant that they intend to arrest, on charges of disorderly conduct, any person found in a club that they bust for not having a license. We doubt if they mean that, especially after this incident, which destroyed police and court discipline for 17 hours one night.

However, we serve notice on them now that if they continue with such a campaign of illegal arrests, we will initiate a campaign to have all the people who have to go through this sue for false arrest. The police have no right to make such arrests, and if they insist upon doing so, we'll have to win a few thousand dollars for some of their victims. If justice and law will not prevail, perhaps economics will.

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