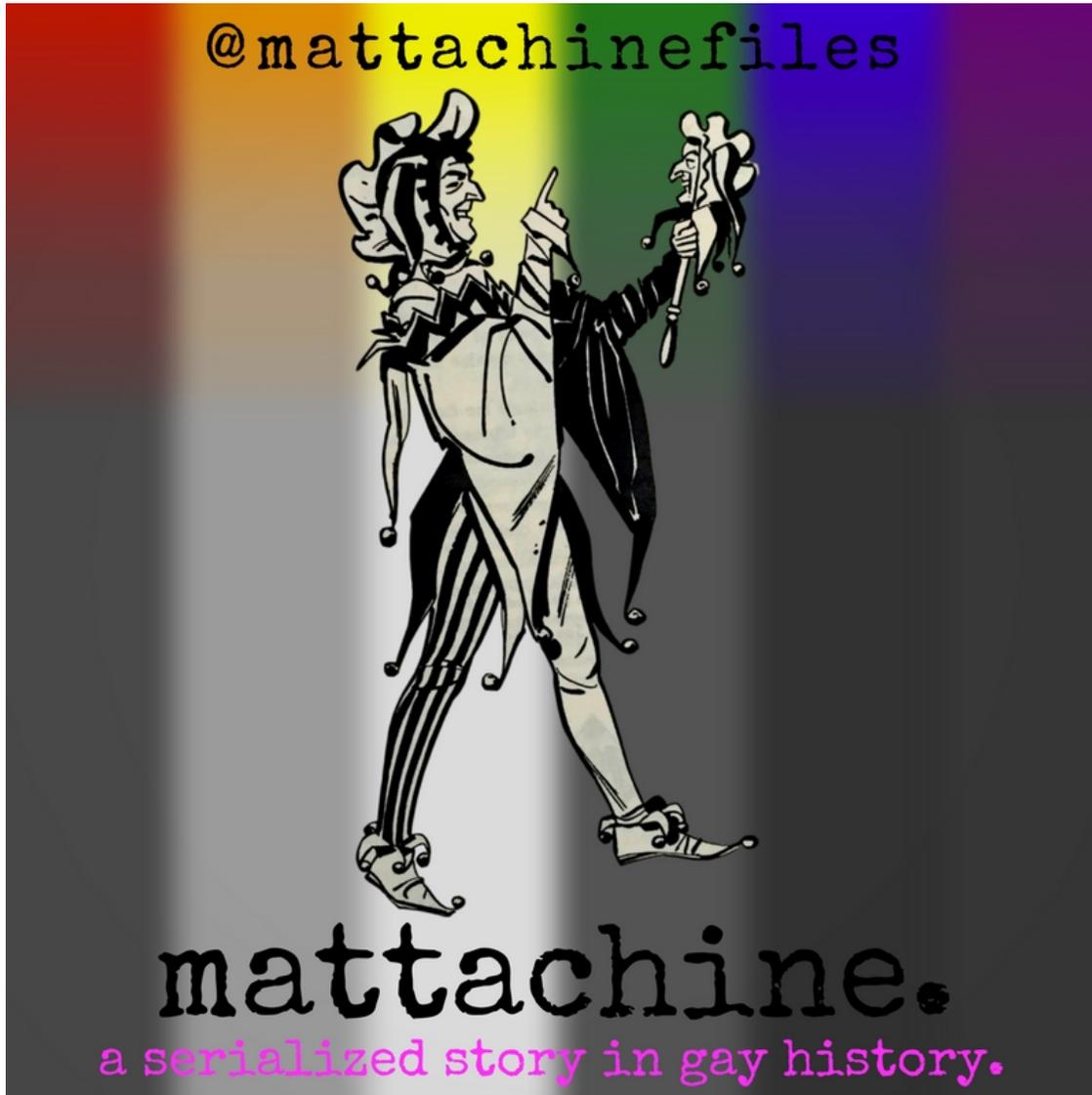


**MATTACHINE: A SERIALIZED STORY IN GAY HISTORY**  
**EPISODE 9: "I THINK THAT MAN IS ONE OF THOSE"**



A podcast dedicated to exploring the overlooked, forgotten,  
or often-untold stories in gay history.

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Dedicated to Albert Williams

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

Harry is gone. Rudi is gone. Dale, whose entrapment and arrest led to the rise of the Mattachine, now grows to hate the society he co-founded. He's editor-in-chief of the spin-off group's publication, ONE Magazine. Chuck is still active in the Mattachine's legal chapter, though their new lawyer wants to eliminate that chapter, arguing that if homosexuals want to integrate into society, they can't rub up against the laws of society. Bob keeps in touch with Chuck and other members, but finds himself drifting away from activism. As everyone scatters to their own corners of the movement, the Mattachine Society moves forward under Chairman Ken Burns and his conservative allies.

**August 12, 1953.** "It may be good that we have our difficulties and have then come to such a dramatic climax. I believe that the next Convention will bring about an even stronger unity of purpose when everyone sits back and looks at the problems as a whole and not from the individual viewpoint." -Ken Burns

The Chairman of the Mattachine Society **Ken Burns** wrote that statement of optimism to the new Vice Chair **Harriet Stanley**. The conservative new leaders have ousted members who agreed with communist rhetoric or believed in cultivating a gay culture separate of larger society. This was done with a lot of pressure, and with writing by the new Publications Chairman **Hal Call** and his friend **David Finn**.

Despite distancing the society from former communists, or rather, distancing former communists from the society, the threat of government infiltration remains. None of the members are aware that the FBI has been watching them since March of that year, and at least one informant inside the Mattachine is bringing Hal and David's publications to FBI Director **J. Edgar Hoover**, reporting that "the Mattachine Foundation may be a fertile field for Communist activity" despite the new conservative Mattachine doing everything they can to appear clean and wholesome for the FBI.

The Mattachine begins to pursue respectability for homosexuals. They'll conform to the expectations of respectable men and women. They will not be militant, they will accommodate, as historian John D'Emilio will one day write. He'll write that the new Mattachine pursues respectability instead of self-respect. And they do begin to ease off legal battles. The Convention had already approved a committee to fight sodomy laws, but David Finn, chair of the committee, and Hal Call stalled the legal fight. They publish a statement:

"Any organized pressure on lawmakers by members of the Mattachine Society as a group would only serve to prejudice the position of the Society. It would provide an abundant source of hysterical propaganda with which to foment an ignorant, fear-inspired anti-homosexual campaign."

They want credibility through professionals first, in order not to be struck down. Best not to cause trouble on their own, they decide. This is one of many instances when the new conservative leaders begin to move away from embracing the things that typically make homosexuals different than heterosexuals – in this case, sodomy – and they embrace what they have in common with heteros instead.

This assimilationist behavior that recently tore apart Mattachine membership angers **Jim Kepner**, a former communist who was kicked out of the party for his homosexuality. He writes to the Mattachine leaders, "For McCarthy and his ilk, who hate Communists and homosexuals so equally they can't tell them apart, it would be worse than useless for us to deny being one while admitting being the other."

Persistent pushback against feminine men and butch women runs through these conversations. Many feel it would be safer to avoid the less "obvious" homosexuals for fear of causing trouble and giving the homosexual community a bad name. But on the other hand, Mattachine members are gathering in apartments and noticing FBI agents watching from their cars in suits and ties. Director Hoover's dress code requirements for the FBI make his field agents *obvious* to anyone being followed. Would the Mattachine be any more vulnerable to the FBI if their members appear just as *obvious* as the agents?

Mattachine begins hosting biweekly discussions of 50 or so guests in San Francisco and Los Angeles. They discuss topics such as "What Is A Homosexual?," "Homosexual Behavior with Emphasis on Aspects Approved and Disapproved," and "What do the Heterosexuals Resent in Homosexuals?" The first discussion brings in a psychiatrist from the Langley-Porter Clinic to give a speech titled "Social Acceptance—A Problem for the Homosexual." And as they dig deeper into what makes gay people disrespected by society, many people see these conversations as progress. New York and Seattle reach out for information on starting chapters. **Reverend Maxey** plans to host a November convention. The aforementioned Langley-Porter Clinic and psychologist Evelyn Hooker study homosexuals, verifying the Mattachine's desire to have the medical community validate their sexuality. Chairman Burns writes to Harriet, "We have high hopes that these tests will prove that we are 'normal' in at least most respects, and they will be printed in national professional publications."

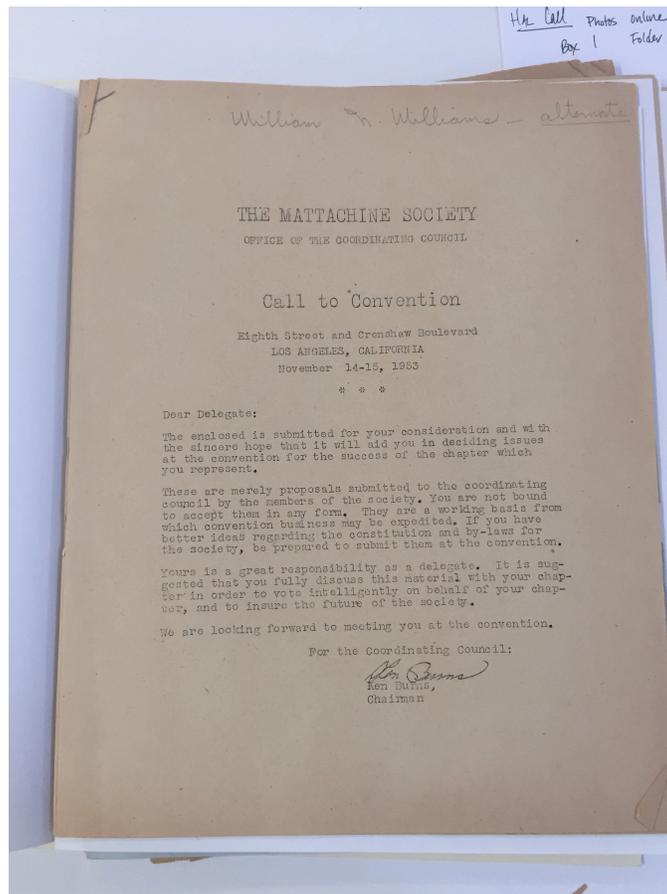
The next Convention at the Universalist Church begins on **November 14, 1953** with the Pledge of Allegiance and the National Anthem, as recommended by David Finn. A conservative speaks to the members about homosexuals gathering in public: "Is it the policy of this Society to recommend love on a street corner? Perhaps the day will come, who knows. But when it does, I for one do not want to be known as homosexual. Do we want official recognition to cruise and act as animals in public? I think not."

But this isn't just another convention episode. As the seeds of the movement are scattered, the new homophile groups grow stronger, and the Mattachine's opposition will make their next move that night at the post-convention banquet...

Welcome to *Mattachine*.

**November 14, 1953.**

The Mattachine convention adjourns for the day. 50 or so delegates gather at a local LA restaurant, delegates including Hal Call, **Rene d'arcy**, Jim Kepner, **Chuck Rowland**, and **Dale Jennings**, among others. Dale is now the editor of ONE Magazine and tonight he's receiving an achievement award. Chuck is still participating, connected to the Mattachine, even though he's not an official Mattachine member. Chairman Ken Burns recently wrote to Chuck, providing a self-addressed stamped envelope urging him to join a chapter and support the Mattachine at this convention. But Chuck didn't respond.



*From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.*

The 50 or so from the convention, all homophiles from the Mattachine or related organizations, gather in the restaurant. The banquet begins, and upon receiving his achievement award, **Dale Jennings** takes the floor to speak. He has a lot to say, and

what he says shows progress in his understanding of what it means to be proudly homosexual and foresight into the community they will leave behind for their descendants – you and me.

So Dale accepts his award, and faces the crowd.

“I’m going to embarrass you. It has to be done because not all of us are positively sure why we’re here tonight. If we’ve come to kindly congratulate a few strangers with whom we feel no identity, then there has been a mistake and we are merely imposing ceremony upon one another. This is most decidedly not just another meal. Nor are we here to applaud Society at large for loosening a jot more of its infinite prejudice--or the Law for a smattering more of acquittals and dismissals--or Religion for rattling a few less tooth on its bone necklace. No, we applaud no group called ‘Them’ — but we do applaud, frankly, *us*. We ourselves here tonight! Those on either side of you and you, you yourself sitting there in unsuspected glory. Each of us here tonight is a hero, each has a place in history — if only for being here tonight.

“And how much more than that have we done! We are that little band that the Future will celebrate. But in today’s absence of tomorrow’s laurels, let us immodestly crown ourselves. And how realistic, how crystal-clear-eyed we are to do so, for we are most surely making history. We most surely are leaders, historic fighting leaders! Our only mistakes occur when we forget that fact.

“What we have gotten, we have earned. Even our smallest victories have not been gifts. We’ve wrenched them from unwilling hands and now hold them only as concessions. We are despised, yet we sit here tonight in courageous defiance of a society given to lynching. The early Christians never had it so bad: their persecution ended. Ours started long before theirs, and still isn’t over. And more of us have fallen. Then were we to fully realize how well we deserve this immoderate praise, were we to live in the expectation of highest respect, we could never err and we would accomplish our dream with a speed surprising to only ourselves.

“Yes, these are the words of an immoderate man. Wholly unrestrained, more than a little vulgar and shockingly belligerent. Standing so labeled, it is quite natural to look around for company — and there’s plenty. The Allies in revolting against a Nazi reign did not say, ‘We will avenge Buchenwald moderately.’ Lincoln in revolting against established slavery did not say, ‘This must eventually be destroyed.’ The revolting nobles did not gradually educate the King into signing the Magna Charta. Nor was the Bulgarian who revolted against paganism and rudely tossed the money-changers from the temple primarily interested in good taste. All leaders have an immoderate sense of their place in history--they know precisely what they’re doing--and they have the courage that stems from being able to say *Why fear? We do no wrong!*

“Moderation is a form of fear. When we avoid action by pleading its imprudence, we in our fear forget those most imprudent men at Valley Forge. The hungry, freezing men who revolted against an order no tiny whit more menacing than the order against which we here in this room now revolt. They did not say, ‘Forward men, but try not to give offense!’ Nor were the Ten Commandments written by a hand not wishing to disturb the majority of society. The Jew Moses did not say, ‘Thou shalt commit less adultery.’ Yet the established order against which he revolted was no more primitive than the identical bigotry which we face.

“Before smiling away these grand comparisons, think for a moment how gigantic is the oppression under which we live. None has ever equaled it in completeness. We are dictated to in every facet of human behavior. Where we live, whom we shall have for friends, how we shall express that friendship, the color of our friends, their number: we shall not have physical satisfaction of any kind not approved by courts of law, what we wear, how we wear it, how we move, our facial expressions, gestures, vocabularies and what we say with them, our very tones of voice — and even the way we think! We know well the punishments for non-conformity. This is a tyranny beyond any tyranny ever known! Then is it immoderate to say tonight that those who fight this tyranny deserve the highest praise?

“And is it rash to say, ‘Why fear? We do no wrong!’ Is it merely rabble-rousing to insist we must be roused? Some say yes. Some are prudent. Some say this very sober, profoundly moral banquet should not be publicly announced until it is over. We might be raided. But what would we be raided for? What have we done? What are we now doing that we would not courageously, proudly do before our very God! What is improper here — what is unnatural and unlawful!

“Don't say that the police need no valid charges to clean up such a gathering. The answer to that must inevitably be, ‘Then all the more reason for challenging them and fighting them with all our resources, all our strength, and all our great number.’ Legions would rise for us. So why fear? We do no wrong! We accept the enemy's own evaluation of us when we fear. Let them circle the building, let them burst in grandly and arrest us all, and then, by God, let them try us! The reason they haven't done this yet in all the years of Mattachine is because they know we're unafraid — they know we'd stick together they know we've done no wrong — and they know they'd get the biggest fight they ever ended up running from!

“And the Law must be faced squarely, too. He who denies that our present laws against ‘unnatural acts’ are not an abomination--he who denies these laws are not themselves unnatural perversions of justice, is himself a fool--or a hypocrite--or an enemy. To attack the immoderate bestiality of such laws with moderation is to prove that we are as mild as prejudice claims us, as meekly effeminate as tradition brands us and as silly as even our well-wishers must at times concede. These primitive laws must go and there is no one to erase them but us. No one else is quite this interested. Foolish hets think it doesn't concern them — until they get that phone call from Lincoln Heights.

“But while moderation is a form of fear, fear takes the form of many immoderate acts. Of these we are all guilty. I have purposely been using the awful word revolt, summoned up the idea of revolution and — knowing very well what I was saying — advocated overthrowing certain violent laws. At any other time in our lives this would be recognized as reform and my right to speak out such ideas also recognized.

“But not today. Not even tonight for there has been wincing. We, in our great category, are deathly afraid of categories. We are afraid in precisely the way our enemies wish us to be afraid. For in 1953, it is quite fashionable to call all opposition by a certain name pre-filled with odium. Not only are proven spies this awful thing but school-teachers, too, ministers, most movie actors and writers and whomever opposes us at the polls. It's used when anyone — I say *anyone* — suggests a change including babies in diapers. This *Readers' Digest* version of a four-letter word is thrown about like rice at a wedding. Take a handful and let go; you're sure to hit someone.

“Today, in 1953, no longer must the accusers prove their charges. The burden of proof has been, pardon the expression, changed. Today, in 1953, the accused himself — and this will seem incredible in future times — the accused must prove himself innocent. Anyone can with impunity stand up and say, ‘I think that man is one of those.’

“It is not really for any specific act, not on any concrete charge mind you, that one might be accused but merely on the principle of state-of-being. This is in spite of the fact that state-of-being in normal times does not constitute a valid charge! No one can be legally found guilty of *being* a criminal or a homosexual. She or he must be accused of a *specific act of criminality* or homosexuality, and that act must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt before the accused can be found guilty.

“But this is not so with the suspected homosexual or his shockingly close kin, the alleged subversive. They are both so vile and low that we deny them the due process of law automatically given rapists and kidnap-murderers. Now it may be that I am merely brazenly avoiding the very question that is supposed to be the essence of the whole matter. Am I or have I ever been a communist? In normal times this would deserve no answer whatsoever. Today it is different and I will give four answers, none of which will satisfy any but my constituents.

- 1) No man, woman or mixture has to answer that question constitutionally.
- 2) Those who do ask it are convinced of what the answer should be before they hear it and intend only slander.
- 3) If you think I am, prove it, prove it beyond a reasonable doubt. Confronted by the overpowering evidence that should legally accompany such a charge, it won't matter whether I "hide" behind the 5th Amendment or not, will it?
- 4) Before you start the whispering, remember that if you don't prove my guilt beyond a reasonable doubt — if you don't successfully slander *all of* my work — you've proven yourself the real subversive, proven that you don't belong in this organization or in this country.

“But we do, nevertheless. We accuse without proof, make claims without sources, hold trials in the absence of the accused and destroy ourselves more efficiently than any thuggish fairy-hater. In this we are *not* moderate. In this we show vulgar zest, a tasteless zeal, a thoroughly ungentlemanly belligerence as we think, talk, and act against ourselves. We immoderately create factions in which everyone would rather be right than present at a meeting. The good rich life attained lies in proving someone out of order or tabling his motion. We couple mightily with protocol for endless hours and give birth to only minutes — piles of them!

“We wrestle in admirable earnestness with the problem of nature and nurture totally unaware that it's not of overwhelming consequence whether you were born or made that way when you look at the world through bars. (You don't cling to them incidentally, as in movies. They're too cold. Anyway, you feel there's nothing left in a jellied world to cling to.)

“We are exuberantly immoderate in our pastimes as we forget how infinitely safer it is here or at a chapter meeting or discussion group than in a known bar or on a beach, in a bed,

under a bush. Yet we do haunt these places and take the Society's name and work right along with us to jail. Danger and risk mean nothing to the sexually excited — but a great deal to those with another darned meeting to attend.

“Yes, there is a certain amount of confusion here. It comes of humility. We're too damned modest. We do actually great things and still blush like maidens. Incredible! How can we be so humble as to bicker, accuse, cross dangerous wires, aspire to little and be contented with anything less than the tremendous! How can we forget that we here tonight need not fear! We do no wrong! Smile an embarrassed smile if you will at the thought of tomorrow respecting you as heroes. But you are. We here in this ordinary room are history's darlings! Let's applaud ourselves!”

Chuck applauds Dale. “Brilliantly delivered,” he says, “Embracing the highest principles of the original Mattachine.” Hal and Ken are livid. The response from the rest of the Mattachine Society is also overwhelmingly negative.

They're furious, and they take their anger back to their convention the next day. David Finn takes the stage as parliamentarian, Chairman Burns with gavel in hand beside him. Hal Call moves for a revision of the original Mattachine preamble once again. Hal proposes the removal of the phrase “a highly ethical homosexual culture be integrated into society.” He suggests instead, “that the priceless integrity and freedom of the individual be forever maintained in our society.” Subtle, right?

**A delegate stands and shouts:** “It was stated at the first convention that it was necessary to write the preamble last because that under *no* conditions was the preamble amendable without disbanding the Society and start over.”

**Another stands and adds:** “Mr. Chairman, the main reason why I'm here is that I do not want to be considered different from anyone else. And for that reason, I do *not* want a homosexual culture. I want to be a part of the culture as a whole...not put in a segregated ghetto.”

**Chairman Burns responds:** “The influence of the Foundation at the last convention forced that peculiar wording upon us... It is my understanding that this Society is not for the benefit of the homosexual alone, but includes in its ranks the heterosexual and sex variant and that one of our purposes was to show the homosexual as being different from a sex criminal.”

Jim Kepner watches from his seat as Hal claims that he knows prominent people in San Francisco, one of whom, he says, has the key to the governor's bedchamber. They'll support Mattachine if the communist-inspired language is removed, Hal claims.

Chuck Rowland from the original Foundation stands to fight the revision.

David Finn rules him out of order on the grounds that Chuck is not a member of Mattachine. He did not respond to Ken's self-addressed envelope.

**Another member adds:** "If there are those who now disagree with the preamble, it is for them to withdraw and form whatever organization they choose."

David Finn screams against the communist phrasing. He lashes out in a rage, announcing that he has reported hundreds of subversives to the FBI and other intelligence agencies. *"I have all of your names,"* he tells them. And he'll hand over every single one of them tomorrow morning if they don't rewrite the preamble. Jim jumps to his feet and demands that David Finn be thrown out.

The convention hall fills with the clamoring shouts of angry members.

"Point of order!" Chairman Burns hollers over the crowd. "Point of order!"

**Delegate 1:** "Mr. Chairman, I demand the expulsion of the delegate!"

**Delegate 2:** "Outrageous!"

**Delegate 3:** "This delegate's presence endangers all of us!"

Members point fingers at Founding Mattachine members, calling them Red. Burns pounds his gavel. David Finn holds the floor. The Chairman demands a recess.

Members scatter to cool off. Jim Kepner will later remember Hal verbally attacking Chuck, almost leading to a fistfight. Hal had been shouting *"there is no room in Mattachine for Chuck and real Americans."* As the members calm down, most members seem to have written off David Finn's outburst as just "a nasty breach of etiquette." A heat of the moment thing.

They return from recess. A motion to expel David Finn is denied. He makes a non-apology. Like, "I'm sorry if what I said offended you." When Jim and Dorr ask if David Finn will continue reporting to the FBI or give up his list of names, nothing comes of it. Suddenly, the revised preamble is accepted through the loophole of the Society quickly dissolving and reforming "exactly as before" but just with a preamble lacking "ethical culture" or even the word "homosexual." And I must point out that David Finn has set back the movement 30 years. If you recall, from our episode 1, Henry Gerber's society in 1924 also neglected to use a word labeling them as homosexuals. But that word was barely used yet, and Henry didn't have the intention of going public with his group in the way this organization does. Yet they don't label themselves as homosexuals.

Anyway, the rest of the convention sets new guidelines for the Council to hold a stronger grip on the organization – taking in more money and having more control over contact with other organizations, at the risk of members' expulsion. And before the convention ends, they give Hal Call permission to investigate the practicality of creating a magazine for the Mattachine Society.

Jim Kepner and Dorr Legg resign. Not because of the magazine, but, of course, everything else that happened that day. Boopsie Rieger resigns as well, citing just "personal reasons," and she vanishes from the movement altogether, as far as I can tell. In fact, a lot of people resign for a lot of reasons. Some go to join ONE, Incorporated. Many of the more effeminate so-called "swishes" are pressured to

resign. Some likely leave in fear of David Finn naming names. Most in attendance that day will never return. Konrad and James of the original Foundation are fed up, and also resign.

Chapter leader William N. Williams writes to the Society complaining of “morals to a degree that smacks highly of Puritanism, a paradigm that should hardly be a source of pride... Instead, they wish us to step with a gait which is not necessarily ours, to speak in a voice which is false, but certainly—God forbid!—not falsetto, or to say ‘Dorian’ when we really mean ‘homosexual male.’”

The resignation letters come in, Hal responds to one of them: “We don’t have time for the middle-minded, cruise-bent and confused queen, and so far we have received practically no help of value from such people.” He writes to another, “We accept the fact that the ‘fairy’ is one of us. Like the blind, the lame and those otherwise handicapped.... It may be that they should be exhorted to modify their behavior in public so that they draw less attention and scorn—in fact, we encourage them to do so.”

The new Mattachine is obsessed with how **heteronormative** society views them, to the extent that member Bert Belanger writes to Chairman Burns to resign after his drunken arrest because it’s thought to possibly bring along bad publicity to the Mattachine. For the same reasoning of bad PR, Bert’s resignation goes right along with – finally – David Finn’s.

### **December 1953.**

Shortly after the hysteria of the convention, according to FBI records, the Bureau closes their investigation. They determine “no Communist infiltration or control is indicated” in ONE or in Mattachine. They stop approving informants to attend Mattachine events. But, still obsessed with the possibility of conflating homosexuals and criminals, the FBI continues to collect all gay publications like ONE Magazine. Just in case.

What the FBI reads on the back page of a 1953 issue of ONE Magazine is a statement written by Dale Jennings: “ONE is connected in no way with the Mattachine Society, either legally, secretly, or ideologically. The January issue will contain the first of a series of criticisms of this organization that does not appear to hold with any of the purposes which motivate this magazine.”

The article is printed as promised in **January 1954**, titled “Can Homosexuals Organize?” by **Jeff Winters, AKA Dale Jennings**, which still, the FBI has yet to figure out. The article tells the ostensible “inside story” of how the Mattachine “silenced” a critic – Chuck Rowland – and how the organization is too timid to fight. Chuck also writes an article, completely aware of his bias, stating the new leaders of the

Mattachine are “scared, little people,” “summer soldiers” not capable of leading a strong homosexual minority of people.

This is not a new struggle. Early on in this program read a quote by German sexologist **Magnus Hirschfeld**, from 1927, in which he said, “All efforts aimed at creating a ‘mass organization’ of homosexuals have, in the end, failed.... Aside from a few minor cliques, homosexuals are in reality almost totally lacking in feelings of solidarity; in fact, it would be difficult to find another class of mankind which has proved so incapable of organizing to secure its basic legal and human rights.”

Later, **Henry Gerber** argued through letters with Manuel and Frank in our episode 1. Harry Hay and Dale Jennings disagreed as Mattachine took off. Now these organizations lash out through their magazine, and this fight won’t necessarily be conquered any time soon. There will still be assimilationists and radicals for... an indefinite amount of time. Your assimilationists, in 2018, are getting marriage licenses. They buy gay family children’s books for their kids, as historian James Sears has pointed out. They’re watching gay minstrelsy on *Modern Family*, and Ser Loras Tyrell denounce his lover and his homosexuality on *Game of Thrones* – and calling that representation progress. On the other hand, there are still radicals like John Waters and his filthy art, the political work of Angela Davis, and writing of James Baldwin. There are groups like Bash Back!, an anarchist queer network of projects that protest groups outside and within the mainstream queer movement for their trans-exclusion and assimilation to heteronormative politics. Modern radicals are on the frontlines fighting for trans liberation, protesting police brutality, battling intersections of oppression in the queer community with people of color and women and the working class. Our modern radicals, in 2018, don’t just fight for one community. But in the Mattachine, in 1954, they can’t even agree on whether to use the word “homosexual” in a document representing homosexuals. If they can’t agree on this, they certainly are not yet able to commit action against society like the Stonewall Riots, or make picket signs, or create a gay flag for us to unite under, or surround a Chicago police station and announce the stats of trans and queer people killed by the police – which is what Bash Back! did in 2008. A fight within our own community, often against each other, is all the Mattachine can handle. Historian John D’Emilio writes that the new leaders of the Mattachine remove the parts of their organization that will be essential for a successful movement. They don’t boldly deny homosexuality as crime, sin, or sickness. They stop recognizing that gay oppression is more than just a simple prejudice. They don’t view themselves as a group that can serve a purpose in greater society. They have no courage to accept and unite all queer people as they are for a mass movement of action. In short, they have no pride.

In 1944, the activist Henry Gerber, from our episode 1, wrote to his pen pal about the type of queer company he keeps: “When it comes to ideal friends, we want people who share our ideas and delusions.”

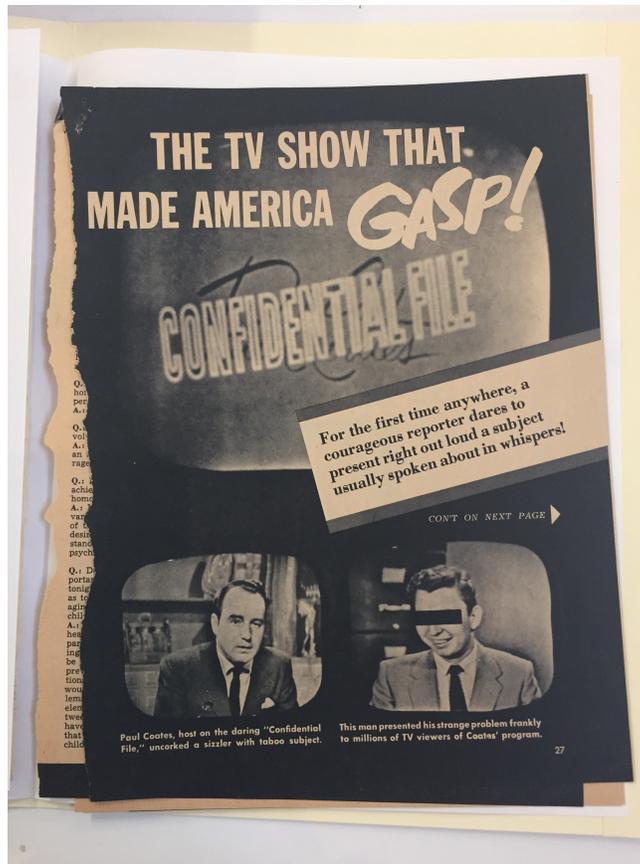
Other ONE Magazine articles against Mattachine quickly follow: “How Clean Can A House Get?” “Why Try to Organize a Bunch of Queers Anyway?” “Quo Vadis, Mattachine Society?” Ken Burns and Hal Call are outraged again. Hal writes to Dale Jennings at ONE, calling this a “bitch fight.” Chairman Burns writes in to ONE and they publish his letter: “...is it fair to assume that ONE alone has the single magic key? Do its editors have a monopoly on thought? ...At the present time, the Society is investigating the possibility of launching its own publication... While such a publication is not presently viewed as competition to ONE, it naturally would to some extent invade ONE’s field.”

So they take the fight within our community to the newsstands.

But the magazine is not just reporting on the flawed practices of the Mattachine. They’re documenting a flourishing gay culture, whether anyone believes that culture exists or not. Dale publishes comics and fictional short stories, Jim Kepner reports gay news from around the country. They write articles covering political crackdowns and convictions of homosexuals all over the U.S. ONE Magazine even has book reviews written by Martin Block, and ads for clothing modeled by attractive men.

Meanwhile, Hal Call reports to the Mattachine council that his magazine will be much more serious, and will include essays on research, law, religion, and community service. His goal is to educate Mom and Dad, and their homosexual child with the Mattachine’s own publication. Hal writes in a letter to an associate, “Through education, research, and social actions it will ultimately be possible, perhaps, to ease barriers, prejudice, and ignorance. Then, one day many generations hence, when people are willing to accept human behavior realistically for what it is, there’ll be an improvement in our social order....And when that happens, this Society I’ve been writing about can dissolve.”

Yes, Hal was right: the Mattachine Society will dissolve – but not because homosexuals will be accepted into social order. Quite the opposite. It will happen because the Movement will soon outgrow them all...



*From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.*

**NEWS ANCHOR:** *America, on Guard! HOMOSEXUALS, INCORPORATED.*

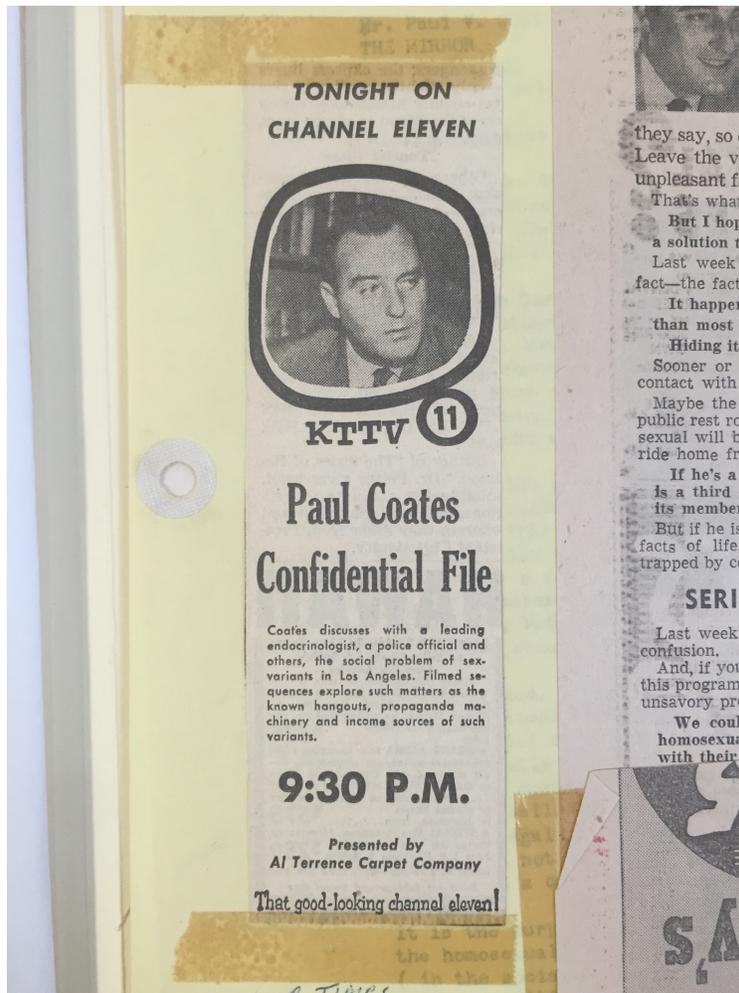
The periodical called *Confidential* publishes the headline in **May 1954**.

**NEWS ANCHOR:** *"Don't sell the twisted twerps short! Once they met in secret. Today, they've organized as the 'Mattachines,' with a goal of a million members and a \$6,000,000 bankroll!"*

The periodical is soon broadcast as a tabloid-style television show called *Confidential File*, and if you thought the host's name, **Paul Coates**, sounded familiar, it's because Mr. Coates was the journalist in LA that reported on the first actions of the Mattachine Foundation, an article that tipped off the FBI and inspired their first investigations of the organization, in our early episodes.

[Check out a real *Confidential File* episode: <https://youtu.be/GI8IJA8kdkI?t=37s>]

In early May 1954, Paul Coates invites a member of the Mattachine onto his show for a special report on homosexuals, soon after referred to as *"The TV Show That Made America Gasp! For the first time anywhere, a courageous reporter dares to present right out loud a subject usually spoken about in whispers!"*



*From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.*

Paul Coates presents a short film of a Mattachine meeting he attended, which is later reported to be an organization that aims **“to adjust constructively to a world that condemns them.”** He goes on to discuss ONE Magazine and invites on a psychiatrist who incorrectly presents reasons for why homosexuality exists, such as over-dominant mothers, and he discusses ways parents can **“avoid encouraging homosexual trends in their children.”**

Coates’s next guest is a policeman called “Captain Stanley.”

**Coates:** Captain, how do you feel about the notorious homosexual hangouts in this city?

**Captain Stanley:** Well, they make a very good place for young men who are unattached in this city to come in contact with the type of person we’re discussing. These contacts often develop into situations that give the police some very serious problems. In many cases the homosexual will furnish one of the young men with financial aid and before long this young man will develop into a professional blackmailer making his living from money extorted from this type of person.

Sometimes situations will arise where the person being extorted will rebel and a serious assault or even a homicide may result. There are many men who as a sideline engage in this type of extortion and they will immediately locate these gathering places as a fertile field for victims.

**Coates:** What about these bars as recruiting depots for homosexuality?

**Captain Stanley:** Without a doubt there are many young men who have the latent tendencies of homosexuality and if they are exposed to the type of person found in these hangouts the chances are that their potentialities will be developed.

**Coates:** What can the police do about them?

**Captain Stanley:** Well the police carry on a continual program of enforcement against these places and their patrons in an attempt to discourage patronage by the homosexuals. Also an attempt is made to secure the revocation or suspension of the liquor licenses. And even in some extreme cases to invoke the red-light abatement act.

But please, someone tell me again how the police are on our side.

Paul Coates's third and final guest tonight is a man named **Curtis White**, which the *Confidential* periodical reports as "**an admitted sex-deviate**" and representative of the Mattachine Society.

**Coates:** Are you a homosexual, Mr. White?

**White:** Yes.

**Coates:** When did you first realize you were?

**White:** At about twelve.

**Coates:** Do you consider that the fact of your homosexuality has presented great personality problems to you?

**White:** No.

**Coates:** Has it caused social problems?

**White:** No. I have always felt that it is possible for homosexuals not to be homosexuals 24 hours a day. Most of our contacts are heterosexual and we adjust to both heterosexual and homosexual environments.

**Coates:** Do you have any record of arrest?

**White:** No.

**Coates:** If it were possible, either through psychotherapy or through some physical treatment, for you to be transformed into a heterosexual person, would you desire that treatment?

**White:** I'm speaking only for myself, but the answer is No.

**Coates:** Do you consider homosexuality abnormal?

**White:** No. Homosexuality has always existed.

**Coates:** You're appearing on tonight's *Confidential File* as a spokesman for the Mattachine Society, is that right?

**White:** Yes... We work for the elimination of sexual discrimination both in the law and in society.

**Coates:** By what means do you hope to achieve those ends?

**White:** By the evolutionary process of research, education, public discussions, so that we and the rest of society can learn more about the problems of the sex variant.

**Coates:** How did the Mattachine come into existence?

**White:** The movement began in Los Angeles about four years ago and evolved into the present society last year... We received our incorporation papers from the State of California in March... Membership is about one hundred and sixty and we have chapters in several principal cities of the country... We welcome membership from anyone, homosexual or heterosexual, who is interested in the problem of the sex variant.

**Coates:** What is your feeling about the notorious bars and gathering places of the homosexual? Isn't it true that these places are avenues for attracting recruits to homosexuality?

**White:** The Mattachine Society does not condone improper conduct in any place. However, it's necessary for homosexuals to have some social meeting place. If you do away with the gay bars, you're going to put them out on the streets where they can create even more of a problem. To do away with this, we've got to put something better in its place.

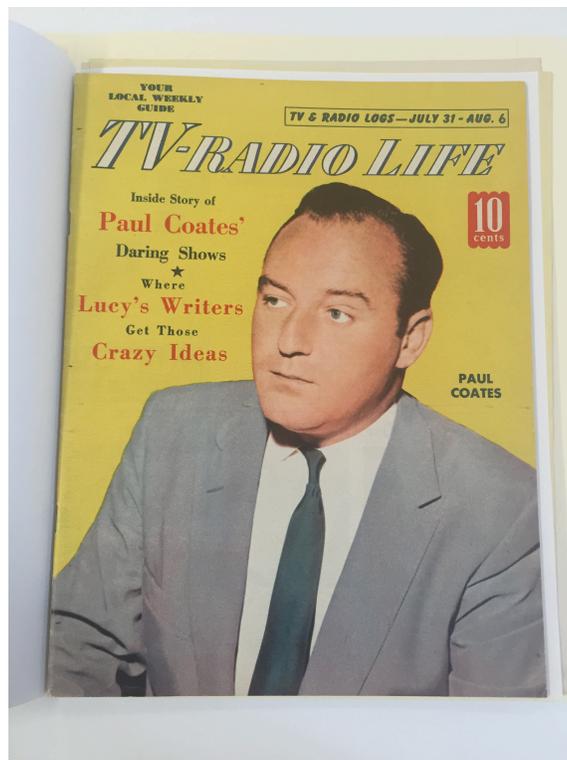
**Coates:** Does your family know you're a homosexual, Mr. White?

**White:** Well, they didn't up until tonight... I think tis' almost certain that they will... I think I may very possibly lose my job too.

**Coates:** May I ask why, under the circumstances, you were willing to appear on *Confidential File* tonight?

**White:** Well, I think that this way I can be a little useful to someone besides myself.

**Coates:** Well, thank you, Mr. White, for your cooperation.



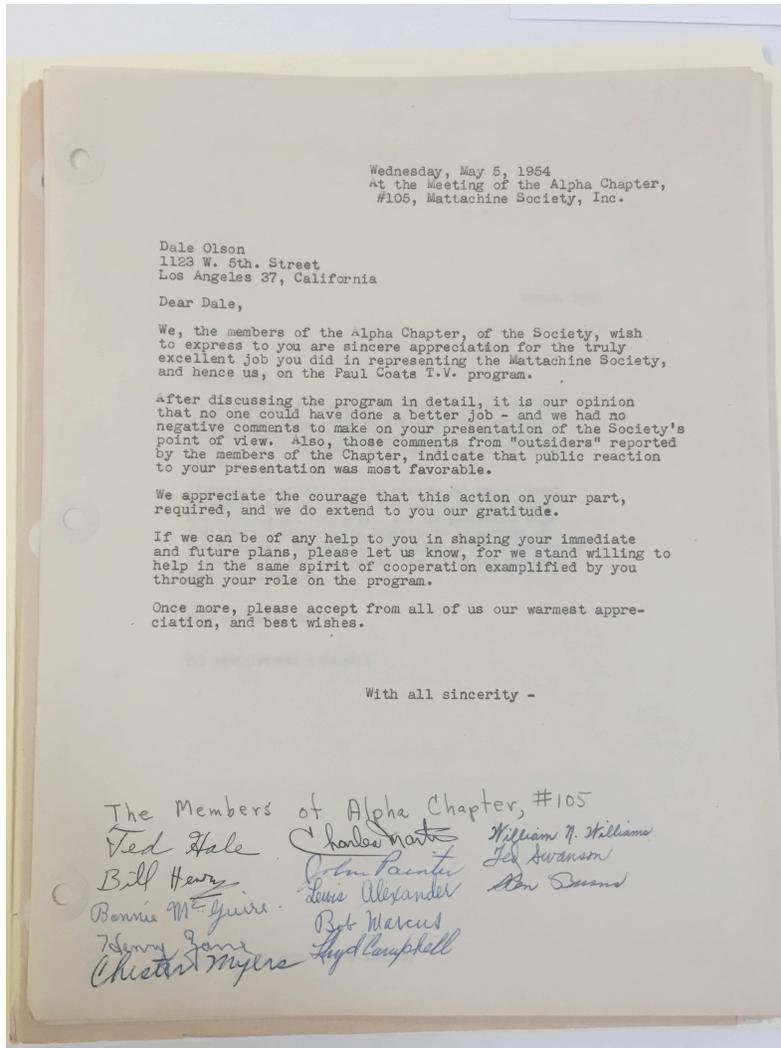
*From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.*

The Mattachine Society is trying to do some serious damage control for their reputation within the gay community, and establishing a reputation in the community beyond homosexuals. Due to David Finn's scene at the previous convention, only 42 people attend the May convention. There is only one discussion group left in LA. The Mattachine wants to prove they are respectable members of society, so they collect clothes and books for donations to hospitals and they sponsored blood drives. Which is rather ironic, considering that in 2018 a gay person must remain celibate for an entire year in order to donate blood. But that's another story to stick a pin in for later. The point is, no matter how hard the Mattachine tries to present a clean image – both for society and the gay community – they are still homosexuals, and everything they do stirs the pot.

**May 20, 1954.** A San Franciscan informs the FBI that Mattachine "is an organization that the Commie element would *very easily* be introduced as it gets in a bunch of liberal radicals." They promise to "report anything I hear against the M.S. and its activities." It's signed, "An American."

The Bureau becomes curious again. They begin checking in on Mattachine leaders at work in their day jobs. Mattachine leaders are checking in on each other, too – an inevitable reaction to Cold War paranoia. They want to be sure their comrades are clean and won't get the Mattachine into trouble. The Mattachine leaders investigate their own legal chapter, until someone in the chapter admits to calling the FBI and military intelligence. They're checking in on the loyalty of Chairman Ken Burns and Publications Chairman Hal Call and the rest of the Council. The entire legal chapter is kicked out of the Mattachine. Over at ONE, **Dorr Legg** pressures Dale Jennings out of the magazine because of his communist connections.

On the other hand, Mattachine's appearance through member Curtis White on *Confidential File* at least does some good within the gay community. Dozens of requests for bail money come flooding into the Mattachine post office box. Letters are coming in from all over the world. Some envelopes just have cash with no name, others have letters from doctors seeking advice for their patients. Some are letters from very lonely people who the Mattachine assign pen pals, much like Henry Gerber did through his contact service. These letters are being handled by **Dale Olson**, a member who begins dating Chairman Burns. This job is important for Dale, as he'd lost his day job after appearing on *Confidential File*. **Dale Olson is Curtis White**. He's named Mattachine Member of the Year for 1954.



From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

This representation in media is extremely important for the movement, and it's rare that they can get it on television. But on the other hand, when they *are* represented on TV, the *Confidential* tabloid still says things like "No one wants to point the finger at one of these hands-on-hips boys because it's such a nasty business to get mixed up in. Hell hath no fury like a swish scorned, and these queries have been known to exact vicious revenge by accusing completely virile and normal men of being abnormal themselves!"

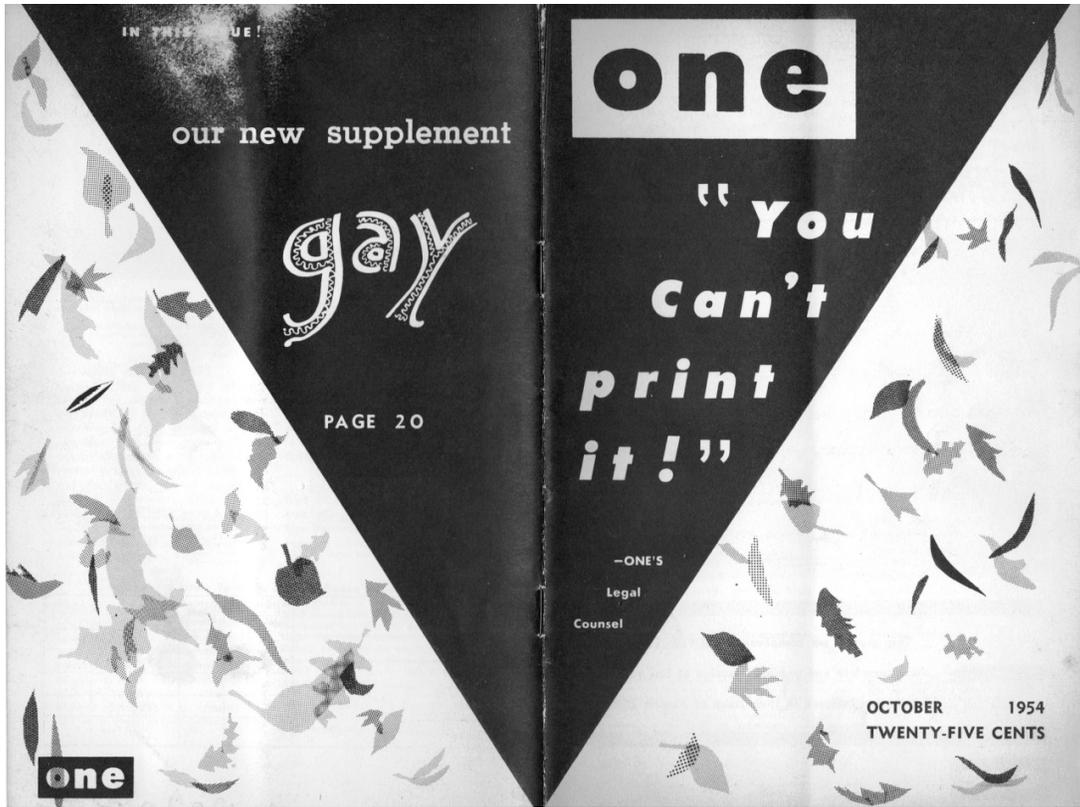
It's out of their control. Their own print is their only option for truly positive representation. As autumn comes, Hal presses forward on his Mattachine magazine. "It will be the central point around which a membership can rally; it can become the proof of our reason for existence to the general public."

As far as gay publications, he's right. The gay publications of the 1950s, like ONE Magazine, are helping many homosexuals find each other. Shorthand phrases and slang develop through the writing, building a vocabulary that is – and in some cases in 2018, will remain – a queer secret language. The publications create a public discourse that put us all on, not the same page, but in a similar place. Under his pseudonym in ONE Magazine, Chuck Rowland writes a salute to Mattachine Curtis White for his courage to appear on television.

It seems as though things are looking up for Mattachine and ONE, Inc., with both groups finally finding their footing – however different their opinions may be, and despite their differences dividing the gay community. When ONE Magazine's October 1954 issue hits the stand, Hal Call's Mattachine publication is prepared to launch the next month, presenting their conservative perspective on the movement. Two homophile publications will be on the stands disagreeing with each other about how we fight our way to liberation.

**But ONE's newest issue, October '54, will not circulate through the gay community this month.** The Los Angeles Postmaster picks up the issue, the cover boldly declaring "You Can't Print It!" It's an article written anonymously by ONE Magazine's lawyer Eric Julber. That headline will prove to be prophetic. The postmaster **Otto Olesen** flips through the issue to find a short story about a lesbian in love, a poem about cruising, and an ad for *The Circle*, a magazine with homosexual pulp romance. He finds this, in his words, "lustfully stimulating." And declares the new issue of ONE Magazine "obscene, lewd, lascivious and filthy." Due to what are called the Comstock Laws, pornography and other sexual materials can't be sent through the mail. And with the support of the US Post Office Department, the postmaster seizes this gay magazine and treats it as obscene.

The seizure of ONE Magazine might seem like great news for the Mattachine's own magazine, a chance to lead the charge in the movement with one loud voice presenting one solid argument. But the government's new push against gay publications is not good news for anyone in the movement, and the scattered homophile organizations will have to turn back to each other for help to fight this injustice. They'll have to work together, against their government – a government that will soon seek answers from the movement's ousted founder, Harry Hay. Next week on the finale of *Mattachine*.



**The Law  
of  
Mailable  
Material**

by  
**ONE'S Legal Counsel**



I have been asked by the Editors of ONE to write an article explaining the legal problems involved in screening and selection of the written material appearing in the magazine. I am happy to do this, and hope it will serve two purposes: (1) to give the readers of ONE an idea of some of the difficult behind-the-scenes problems facing ONE's Editors, and (2) to indicate to ONE's contributors the legal limits of printable material.

**I. THE LAWS PERTAINING TO MAILABLE MATTER.**

The use of the mails is not an absolute right. It is, rather, a privilege extended by the Government. The privilege is a broad one, as broad as the guarantee of freedom of speech in the First Amendment. Nevertheless, it has its limits, and it has long been the law that the Government can exclude from the mails any matter it deems contrary to the public welfare or morals. For example, it is illegal to send gambling tickets or abortion-producing devices through the mails.

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## **A NOTE TO TEACHERS:**

I talk during this series about how schools don't teach us gay history. If you learned anything about gay history in your school, you're one of the lucky few. This is changing because of programs like HISTORY UNERASED. Check out [www.unerased.org](http://www.unerased.org). Not only is bullying still an issue, but nearly half of homeless youth are queer. 1 in 5 queer kids of color attempt suicide. Young queer kids are even more likely to drop out of school. This is why I'm talking about HISTORY UNERASED, not because this is a paid ad - it's not. This program is doing important work, and they're bringing educators in K-12 classrooms proper training and resources to include LGBTQ history and queer inquiry in Social Science classes, Fine Arts, and Health courses, among others. And language is always expanding for the queer community with new terms and complexities that educators want to understand and apply in their classrooms. For instance, how do I use the word "trans" properly? What does "nonbinary" mean? Teachers want to help students feel safe and understood by using the proper terminology, so the people at History Unerased are helping with that, too. If all kids in school learn about our history, then we can get rid of misperceptions about queer people and fix the real problems those misperceptions create: queer kids quitting school because they don't feel safe, homelessness, suicide. If you're an educator that wants to help your classroom be a safer space for your LGBTQ students, check out [www.unerased.org](http://www.unerased.org) for more information. You could save your student's life. You could improve the safety of your community. And you could teach your kids some fascinating history.