



American LGBTQ+ liberation from the beginning to Stonewall.  
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Season 3, Episode 5: “Homos on the March”  
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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 These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.

HOST: **August 1965.**

AUDIO: archived Rusk clip

SECRETARY OF STATE DEAN RUSK: I understand that we are being picketed by a group, uh, of homosexuals. [laughter] The policy of the department is that we do not employ homosexuals knowingly and that if we discover homosexuals in our department, we discharge them.

HOST: August 1965. Since the first **Annual Reminder picket at Independence Hall** on July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1965, the East Coast homophiles have been quite busy. The Mattachine Society of Washington circulates their new press release on **August 27, 1965** announcing their next picket – at the State Department, longtime enemy of homosexual civil servants. (Remember, State Department firings were the original inspiration for Harry Hay to create Mattachine.) As hoped, when the FBI picked up the picket press release, they notified Secretary of State Dean Rusk, who announced the picket, which, as you heard, was met with great laughter.

AUDIO: echo laughter

HOST: Just one month ago, on **July 31**, the homophiles picketed the Pentagon in protest of the military's dishonorable discharging of homosexuals. Frank Kameny, Barbara Gittings, Kay Tobin, and 13 others, as usual, carried topical signs:

BARBARA GITTINGS: Homosexuals Died for Their Country Too

KAY LAHUSEN: Government Policy Creates Security Risk

HOST: The Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered an officer of the Army Criminal Investigation Division to take photos of those picketers. One protestor attached his military discharge to his sign. Most of the investigator's notes have been redacted, but they did take photos of every picketer and every license plate on a car that dropped someone off. One protestor had government license plates, and the FBI began to take photos of that protestor around Washington, looking for their identity. The only person we know the investigator identified was Frank Kameny, only because they forgot to redact the "PHD" on his name and no one else in MSW had a PhD, that we know of, I guess.

The only press coverage of the Pentagon picket was the local CBS evening news. A month later at the State Department, everything has changed – but not because of the work the homophiles have done.

AUDIO: CBS news clip

CBS NEWS REPORTER: It began with the arrest by white officers of the California Highway Patrol of two young Negroes, one on a charge of drunk

driving, the other his brother, his passenger. Their mother, who lives nearby, came to the scene, there was an argument, there was a scuffle. By then, a crowd of several hundred Negroes had gathered, a story of police brutality quickly spread through the community.

HOST: A large migration took place in the 1940s — after FDR issued an Executive Order banning discrimination in hiring minorities. The defense industry on the West Coast responded accordingly, and the Black population of Los Angeles rose quickly. From about 63,000 people in 1940 to 350,000 in the mid-60s. After the federal government then discriminated against Japanese-Americans by removing them from their homes and putting them in camps, many of the empty homes in South LA were filled by Black residents moving to town for work. Then, of course, real estate folks started **blockbusting**: which is buying a home on all-white streets, selling it to a Black family, then as white families get irrationally scared, the real estate folks buy up all the white families' houses at low rates, and then sell them to Black families at ridiculously high rates. **Housing segregation** boomed while most white folks in LA supported the militarization of the LAPD, many other people began openly criticizing officers for higher rates of police brutality against people of color — likely the result of the LAPD mostly hiring officers from the South. Responding to his critics in the 60s, the chief of police then referred to his officers as “**the thin blue line**” holding back chaos.

Just days after LBJ signed the Voting Rights Act, and after years of mistreatment and resentment, on **August 11, 1965**, word spread that police had pulled a man and his brother over for reckless driving, and after their mother came to the scene from their house nearby, she was shoved, and a fight broke out.

AUDIO: ABC news clip

NEWS REPORTER: The afternoon of fires added to the chaos that is now southeast Los Angeles. Riots, which had quiet down, sprang again into full-scale violence this morning. The mayhem continues... cars were burned, Molotov cocktails flew through the air...incredible destruction, the worst riots in our city's history.

HOST: Over 6 days of **rebellion in Watts**, Los Angeles, there were 34 deaths, more than 3,000 arrests, and — far less important — \$40 million in public damage. Bayard Rustin wrote:

BAYARD RUSTIN: they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.

AUDIO: ABC news clip

NEWS REPORTER: ...behind them, a trail of blood.

HOST: Just over two weeks later, homophiles notify the State Department in advance that a small group of homosexuals will be quietly walking in a circle outside their building.

AUDIO: echo laughter

## Act 1

HOST: The FBI alerts Metro PD, the Secret Service, the military, and the photographer who went to the Pentagon picket. The State Department picket is watched closely. But the homophiles are feeling bold and relentless. The morning before the picket, Frank Kameny announced to the Mattachine that the Civil Service Commission has finally agreed to a meeting. Here's your proof: the pickets do work and all the press is effective. The activists welcome cameras at their picket. The Secretary of State's announcement that the State Department will be picketed has drawn in a ton of press. CBS, the *Kansas City Star*, and the *Washington Post* show up to see a dozen people protesting from 2-4PM on **August 28, 1965**. The *Post* notes that Secretary Rusk says the "demonstration would have no effect on the department's personnel policies. This has to do with problems of blackmail and problems of personal instability, and all sorts of things, so that I don't think that we can give any comfort to those who might be tempted to picket us." Still, they picket:

KAY LAHUSEN: Sexual Conduct Is Irrelevant to State Department Employees

JACK NICHOLS: 15 Million American Homosexuals Protest Treatment by State Department

LIGE CLARK: This Demonstration Is Sponsored By The Mattachine Society Of Florida, Inc.

MUSIC: kooky

HOST: Yeah, Florida! Sort of. Washington Mattachine members take a photo surrounding this Florida sign, pretending to be Floridians marching in Washington, and they send that photo to a taxi driver in Miami named **Richard Inman**. Jack Nichols has been in touch with Richard, writing letters back and forth about gay liberation. Richard has started a gay group called the Atheneum Society, but Jack has been pushing him to adopt the Mattachine name and join the mainstream movement. Richard agrees, so long as Jack serves as their VP. Jack's boyfriend Lige also agrees to edit the Florida group's newsletter.

The first matter at hand: a "sexual psychopath" bill has landed in the Florida legislature, allowing the state to put citizens accused of "the abominable and detestable crime against



nature” into mental hospitals. Richard alerts politicians that he’ll have a circle of homosexuals picketing the Florida Capitol Building if the bill is passed — but he’s the only Mattachine member in Florida. And he’s really not that good at recruiting, so Jack and Lige set up the phony photo in Washington at their picket – which actually does get printed in the *Miami News* and the Florida state legislature drops the bill! And so begins hours of phone calls from Jack to Richard in Florida, who seems to need a ton of help.

Lige is getting furious. Jack is married to the movement, and Lige starts banning long phone calls to Frank Kameny and Richard Inman. On top of it all, Jack expects Lige to have dinner on the table for him when he gets home. And still, after dinner, Jack goes across the street to use the pay phone to talk Mattachine for hours.

Richard definitely needs the guidance. He goes on Miami’s very popular WTVJ Channel 4 to speak in their documentary called “The Homosexual” and he appears to be very uncomfortable. Here’s the real clip:

AUDIO: Richard Inman clip

RICHARD INMAN: Well, let me say first of all what types of laws we are not after, because there has been much to do that the society was in favor of the legalization between marriage of homosexuals and the adoption of children and such as that, and that is not at all factual at all. Homosexuals do not want that. You might find some fringe character someplace who says that that’s what he wants.

INTERVIEWER: Are you a homosexual?

RICHARD INMAN: Ye—well. That’s yes and no. Uh, I was a homosexual, uh, first engaged in such acts when I was 14 years old. Um, I was never seduced by an older person or anything like that. But I gave it up about, oh, I forget, some years ago. Over 4 years ago. It’s not my cup of tea.

HOST: Hal Call writes to Richard, telling him to stop using the Mattachine name or his own work in San Francisco will be ruined. Of course Richard and the Washington Mattachinos ignore this demand.

In early September, Frank Kameny writes to Richard in Florida:

FRANK KAMENY: Dear Richard, I’ve been ‘threatening’ to write you a letter for quite some time now, and now that picketing is over for a bit, I’m finally catching up on things, so here goes. First, some news of the utmost importance—and (for the moment) **UTMOST** confidentiality...

On August 28—three years to the day since we first requested a meeting, the U.S. Civil Service Commission agreed to meet with us. This was in direct consequence of our

picketing, and was in reply to a follow-up letter from us to the Commission, after our picketing them. The meeting will take place next week. Five of us will go. We will have a briefing and policymaking session beforehand. We consider this as one of the more important breakthroughs we have had to date. In any case, life with the homophile movement continues to be exciting and stimulating and infinitely interesting and rewarding.

MUSIC: shift quiet

HOST: **September 8, 1965**, 7:30 PM. Frank Kameny, Lilli Vincenz, Gail Johnson, and 2 other Mattachinos enter the Civil Service Commission for a 90-minute meeting with two high-ranking officials. The officials are polite, but clearly uncomfortable and uneducated. One of the officials even says to them, “I’m not accusing any of you of being gay.” The group discusses the vaguely worded anti-gay policies of the CSC, and, of course, the new ruling in Bruce Scott’s case that people can’t be fired just on the suspicion that they’re homosexual. The CSC representatives ask the MSW for a formal statement on this matter, which the Mattachine obliges. They send a 16-page document complete with footnotes, explaining the denouncing, essentially, the ongoing **Lavender Scare**. The Civil Service Commission decides not to appeal Bruce Scott’s verdict to the Supreme Court. They allow Scott to apply for federal work again. Kameny calls it a “complete vindication.”

And still, some homophiles write to *The Ladder* describing picketing as—

LESBIAN 1: ridiculous—if not utter insanity

LESBIAN 2: It’s best to work quietly on an individual basis.

HOST: They say it’s still too soon for the young movement, ill-timed. Barbara and Kay are running *The Ladder*, but they don’t care, they picket away. They go their local supermarket to buy several copies of a grocery store rag that has photos of them at the first Annual Reminder back in July. The headline: as mentioned last week, but I love it, “Homos on the March.” And it actually gets all the facts right and doesn’t paint them as sick. Barbara and Kay are thrilled. Frank writes in *Eastern Mattachine Magazine*,

FRANK KAMENY: It should be made plain that this organization does not look upon picketing as a mere publicity stunt, but as an avenue of last resort, to be adopted only when it is clear that all doors are closed to us and are likely to remain so. It is a welcome addition to the movement’s arsenal—but an addition whose use we deeply hope will be rendered unnecessary.

HOST: After a San Francisco reverend involved in the Council on Religion and the Homosexual has his job essentially taken away by the church, 30 picketers, including Del

Martin and Phyllis Lyon, show up at Grace Cathedral to protest during Sunday morning service. Barbara Gittings at *The Ladder* reports that upon hearing this news, there was—

BARBARA GITTINGS: —resounding applause from those members and friends of eastern homophile groups who favor picketing as a strategy to call attention to injustices.

HOST: On this same topic, SIR President Bill Beardemphl writes in their magazine *Vector*. He has a prediction about these protests:

BILL BEARDEMPHL: In social rights movements, is **violence**, such as recently erupted in Los Angeles, inevitable? Will the eventual recourse of the homophile revolution be a similar blood bath?

MUSIC: “The Skull”

HOST: In yet another rambling letter to Jack Nichols, on **September 19, 1965**, Richard Inman of Florida is gossiping, writing, seemingly unconnected to the prediction in *Vector*,

RICHARD INMAN: I have a friend inside the FBI who says there is one boss man of the syndicate’s homo shakedown detail for the whole U.S.

HOST: But this time Richard Inman is dead on.

## Act 2

AUDIO: conference gathering

HOST: At the **1965 ECHO conference in New York City on September 24**, Frank Kameny speaks before the 200 homophile delegates who traveled from all over the country. Kameny shows off a film of the first Annual Reminder picket at Independence Hall to show how successful the pickets have been. When he’s done, there’s a standing ovation.

Another speaker reminds the homophiles that these are techniques picked up from the Civil Rights Movement, and that we should be joining people of color on their picket lines, too. He says, “The answer has to be what is humanly right. And in the end, you’ll go further that way.” The 12 homophile groups’ representatives gather after the banquet to discuss the disagreements between them, especially between East and West Coasts. They decide a national collaboration would be for the benefit of everyone—we should all be working together. The homophile groups vote and decide to meet in the middle, neutral territory, in Kansas City, in February, next year.

AUDIO: footsteps

HOST: **October 23, 1965.** New York City police have already alerted the FBI that the Mattachine Society of New York is organizing busloads of protestors to D.C.

45 picketers are arriving at the White House. FBI Director Hoover informs the Justice Department, Secret Service, Metro police, and the military, which is fine because Frank and the Mattachine *want* everyone to know they're coming. They already let the police know in advance that they'd be returning to picket the White House again. The chief of police tells his captains to prepare for any possible developments during the protest. Spying FBI agents note the 45 protesters even include women, and that all the men are dressed in suits and ties and the women are in skirts and heels: *the binary dream*. The agents write down what some of the signs say:

JACK NICHOLS: Equal Opportunity For All... All Means All!

FRANK KAMENY: Fair Employment Applies to Homosexuals Too

BARBARA GITTINGS: Sexual Preference Is Irrelevant to Federal Employment

KAY LAHUSEN: Government Policy toward Homosexuals Creates Security Risks

HOMOPHILE 1: Legality

HOMOPHILE 2: Demonstration Sponsored by Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C.,  
Post Office Box 11032

HOST: And among the many white people, mostly men, is a Black woman wearing a fitted skirt, dark pumps, white cat's eye sunglasses, and a carrying handbag. She's back for another picket: 24-year-old **Ernestine Eckstein** holds her sign declaring,

ERNESTINE ECKSTEIN: Denial of Equality of Opportunity Is Immoral

HOST: Put a pin in her for next week. Kay Lahusen snaps a few photos of the picket. Check them out on my Instagram @queerserial or at [queerserial.com/s3e5](http://queerserial.com/s3e5). Though Kamenny hoped for, and told the police department to expect, 100 picketers, this one of 45 is still the largest yet.

Soon, an anti-picket line of two teenagers forms. They've got signs, too.

MALE TEEN 1: Get Serious

MALE TEEN 2: Are You Kidding?

HOST: Cops keep them at a distance. TV networks cover the demonstration again. The picketers used to want assurance that their identities would be kept secret, but now they hope to be covered on the news. Some of them even come out on national television. One man who came out on CBS will later say he “gained a little piece of his soul” that day.

At the end of the picket, Frank presents a letter for the president at the White House gate, which the Secret Service accepts.

Frank is frustrated again. Two days ago, the Civil Service Commission wrote to Bruce Scott that he is legally eligible for federal employment again, but they have some information about him that might make him unsuitable... They’re looking for a new way to keep this queer out. Kameny and his Mattachine are right back where they were years ago, still unemployable. And also just days ago, thousands marched in cities all over the country against the war in Vietnam, and yet *only* 45 homophiles have shown up to picket the White House today. Is picketing *really* working?

After the demonstration, the protesters walk over to the Chicken Hut for drinks and to chat about what’s next. Jack is thrilled for the upcoming events, like the national homophile convention in Kansas City. Meanwhile, Lige writes to Jack from Kentucky, where he’s home for his mother’s funeral:

AUDIO: writing

LIGE CLARK: And I wish, too, that you could have been with me through all of this.

HOST: The leaders decide these protests have probably run their course. They’ll limit pickets to the Annual Reminder every Fourth of July at Independence Hall. The barrier has now been broken, and, like Jack said, the activists are now immunized against fear. They’ve put their faces out there. They’ve declared homosexuals exist and deserve rights and there’s no turning back. Government agencies coming after them is now business as usual for them now. Homophiles have almost never backed down when the FBI came for them, which is possibly why the Bureau has finally begun to lose interest in the Mattachine Society. J. Edgar Hoover is distracted by all the other civil rights he wants to suppress? He keeps the queer organizations documented, their publications archived, the major protests recorded. Hoover goes about his usual routine, riding to work with his Associate Director (and suspected lover) **Clyde Tolson**.

MUSIC: “The Skull” fades in

HOST: They often have their car stop a few blocks from FBI headquarters so they can walk the rest of the way down Constitution Avenue together. Hard to say why Hoover let up on his battle against homophiles. There’s a very unconfirmed suspicion, a theory



based on the fact that, in the mid-60s, there's a Mafia boss running a shakedown ring targeting some of the highest-profile closeted homosexuals in the nation. Some suspect that this boss is shaking down America's biggest closet gays themselves: the FBI Directors. Put a pin in that, too.

MUSIC: parade march

HOST: Back in San Francisco, their activists are also moving on. The Tavern Guild puts on a Halloween ball, called the **Beaux Arts Ball**. It's one of the many events the Tavern Guild funds, including picnics and other parties for the growing gay community. This ball is a huge new event for local drag, and they crown their new reigning queen: the renowned former star of the late Black Cat Café, **José Sarria**. José announces,

JOSÉ SARRIA: I am already a queen, so now I must be an Empress.

HOST: José announces himself widow of the late Emperor Norton, who died nearly a century ago. But just like with Emperor Norton in the 1850s, the city of San Francisco accepts José's new title completely, declaring this **drag queen Empress José I, The Widow Norton**.

JOSÉ SARRIA: And that is how the Empress began.

HOST: The Grand Mere Sarria used his reinvention to debut a new charity for the queer community. He goes to the Tavern Guild, the Mattachine, and the Daughters of Bilitis to form an organization of allies in San Francisco, who mostly don't want to be led by a drag queen. So, he starts his own, **the Imperial Court**, which will be led by an annually elected Empress. The Daughters bring a throne and mismatched dishes, and invite dozens of people to make donations to fund various gay interests, such as funding leaders' travel to the upcoming homophile planning conference in Kansas City. Empress José also declares Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon the first Duchesses. The Imperial Court will hold an annual pilgrimage to the Emperor Norton's grave in Colma, California, where the Widow Norton lays flowers for her very, very late husband. **José Julio Sarria, A.K.A. the Marquesa, the Black Cat, the Nightingale of Montgomery Street, the Grand Mere, Absolute Empress I de San Francisco, the Widow Norton** even buys a burial plot near Emperor Norton's, where José will be buried in 2013.

The Imperial Court will go on to become one of the largest LGBTQ organizations in the world, raising millions in cities everywhere. And just as Empress Sarria had hoped, an Empress will continue reign on the throne for decades to come.

MUSIC: returning to the 1960s

HOST: Back in 1965, the Mattachines, remain a poor, struggling court jester. In San Francisco, Mattachine and the Daughters rely on support from the gay bar community. But in the East, homophile groups don't even have much help from the bars. The **Mafia** runs the East Coast bars, and the profits are huge so long as queers need protection from the cops.

One New York homophile aims to change that.

Over 100 gay men per week are **entrapped** by New York police and arrested for "homosexual solicitation." Cops dress in normal clothes and pretend to **cruise for sex**, oftentimes engaging in some actual sexual contact, and then they arrest the gay man they've lured in. It's a common problem and it's getting worse. Gay guys like to hang out along Central Park West between 59<sup>th</sup> and 86<sup>th</sup>, where they sit on a long bench that runs from one corner all the way to the next. Huge crowds come hang out. The police drive by a few times every night, shining their lights on the crowd.

POLICE OFFICER [into megaphone]: Move on. Keep moving, faggots. Keep moving.

HOST: The guys get off the benches, and walk, very slowly, until the cops turn the corner. Then they all run back. Dick Leitsch loves this spot. He's from Kentucky, where he dreamed of moving to New York to drink cocktails and smoke cigarettes like Bette Davis. One winter night in New York, Dick cruised down Greenwich Avenue and spotted a cute guy standing in a bakery doorway. The guy walked down **Christopher Street** and Dick casually followed him. The cute guy stopped, leaned against a building, and waited, for Dick. He's Craig Rodwell, who you might remember from some pickets. Dick cracked up when Craig said he was in the Mattachine, that old conservative group. But anytime Dick wanted to hang, Craig had a Mattachine meeting, so Dick joined him. After their nasty breakup, Dick was elected second-in-command of the New York Mattachine Society, behind Julian Hodges—that was the election with the closeted author Donald Webster Cory. Dick Leitsch promises to work to end police entrapment. Mayor Wagner has led a tough drive against homosexuals, sex workers, and people on the street as New York City cleaned up for the World's Fair. (History repeating itself.) The plainclothes cops entrapping gay men have become so frequent that people in the bars start recognizing the cops. Bar patrons sometimes make a circle around the cop and tell everyone around them who this person is. Sometimes they even follow the cop to his next bar and warn people there.

In October of '64, the *New York Times* reported that the First Assembly District is demanding a cleanup of "the problem of...homosexuals who have been congregating on Village Square at Eighth Street and Avenue of the Americas." (Those democratic leaders were led by Ed Koch, who once openly supported legalizing sodomy. But after losing an election, he changed his tune.) Two days after the announcement, the *Times* added that Koch was to "head a drive to rid the area" of homosexuals "and other undesirables."

Koch and the commissioner announced, “plans to increase surveillance of Greenwich Village to curtail loitering and solicitation by homosexuals.” Gay bars all over New York City shutter and hundreds of homosexuals are entrapped by plainclothes police, just like Dale Jennings in the earliest Mattachine days, and so many others before and after him. And for these many entrapped queers, their lives and careers are ruined.

AUDIO: distant phone ringing for a long time

HOST: The Mattachine phone in New York rings all night sometimes with calls asking for help. Sometimes the cops recommend an attorney to their arrested victim, who ends up charging ridiculous fees because the gay men are so desperate. Those attorneys, of course, then give a cut back to the cop who arrested the guy. Back in April of '65, Koch asked Mayor Wagner for another cleanup of the Village and he got it. And three months later, another sweep went down Christopher Street. It all works pretty well for Ed Koch politically.

*And as history has shown*, a new mayoral election means even more trouble for gay bars. Republican Congressman John Lindsay announces his bid for mayor against Wagner. So Wagner needs to prove to the people that he cleans the streets.

AUDIO: series of several distant MSNY phone rings through music

Meanwhile, New York Mattachine President Julian Hodges comes to Dick Leitsch in their office. He tells Dick he's been misappropriating Mattachine money. Dick says you've gotta tell the treasurer, who tells Julian he'll make up the missing funds, but Julian's gotta leave town. Dick Leitsch becomes president of the New York Mattachine as John Lindsay becomes Mayor of New York City. Dick is hopeful that the new mayor will be less aggressive with the gay community.

AUDIO: the distant phone, rings overlapping, a knock at the door

DICK LEITSCH: Hello, I'm Dick.

JOSEPH KAHN: Joseph Kahn, *New York Post*.

DICK LEITSCH: Hello, I'm Dick.

JOSEPH KAHN: You're the President of the Mattachine Society of New York?

DICK LEITSCH: Proudly so. Please, come in. Have a seat.

AUDIO: seats scooting, phone ringing

DICK LEITSCH: Someone will get that.

JOSEPH KAHN: Thank you for meeting with me, Mr. Leitsch, I—

AUDIO: phone rings again

DICK LEITSCH: You'll have to ignore it, it rings all day.

JOSEPH KAHN: Ah. I'm here to talk about the potential change in the sodomy law under consideration in the state legislature.

DICK LEITSCH: Yes, exciting stuff—

AUDIO: phone rings again

DICK LEITSCH: The Mattachine Society would like to—

AUDIO: phone still ringing

DICK LEITSCH: I better go get this one.

MATTACHINO: [distant] I've got it!

DICK LEITSCH: Thank you.

JOSEPH KAHN: Do you mind if I ask, who are all these phone calls from?

DICK LEITSCH: News reporters, lawyers, usually guys who got entrapped by the police.

JOSEPH KAHN: Entrapped? Set up by the cops?

DICK LEITSCH: Yes, exactly that. Set up for lewd behavior and such.

JOSEPH KAHN: Are they—excuse me for asking—are they really set up, though? Aren't they...out...looking for sex, you know, in the parks?

DICK LEITSCH: Sure, but it's not legal for cops to lure them into it. But it happens every night.

JOSEPH KAHN: Hm.

DICK LEITSCH: Hm?

JOSEPH KAHN: It's hard to believe there are so many entrapment victims.

AUDIO: phone rings again

DICK LEITSCH: Would you like to talk to some?

HOST: Next week on episode 6, "The Sip-In and the Social Prophet"

**Season 3, Episode 5-A: "Detective at Hotel Is Held in Extortion"**

Mini-episode released May 15, 2021

AUDIO: typewriter

NYT REPORTER: *New York Times*. **August 5, 1965**. A 39-year-old house detective at the New York Hilton was arrested early yesterday as the leader of a gang that had extorted a total of \$100,000 from 'rich playboys and executives.'

MUSIC: "The Skull"

NYT REPORTER: The police said that the gang, operating in fashionable bars and hotels, would lure a victim to a hotel room and promise to 'send him company.' Later, a man or woman would go to the room. A gang member, posing as a detective, would then appear and threaten arrests. He would be willing, however, the police said, to accept money and forget about the incident.

The police said that the highest amount the gang extorted in its several months of operation was \$8,000. The case broke, the police said, with the arrest on March 14 of John Aitken, 35, who was charged with impersonating an officer. He is free on \$10,000 bail.

On July 25, William Burke, 53, was arrested and also charged with impersonating an officer. Free on bail, he is scheduled to have a hearing on Aug. 9.

The house detective, **Edward Murphy**, was held on \$7,500 bail for a hearing Aug. 13. He was impersonating an officer.

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