



American LGBTQ+ liberation from the beginning to Stonewall.

Written & produced by Devlyn Camp

queerserial@gmail.com

Season 3, Episode 11:

Stonewall Inn • Night 1:

“The Devil with the Blue Dress On”

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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 These texts contain **identifying terms** that may now be out of date.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: They ran from the southern tip of the island to escape the many epidemics of yellow fever and cholera. They went north, to the Dutch farmland, far enough away to escape the contagion, they hoped. There were already paths on this farmland, from **before colonization**, left behind by the indigenous people who first lived there—so they put down roads on those paths. Natural walking paths at odd angles, not created with vehicles in mind. Later after these **18th century** migrations, a plan to make all the streets on the entire island a grid is put in motion, but the citizens of this one little village resisted the grid plan. They wanted to keep their ties to the land's past. **Greenwich Village** becomes the only area in New York City north of Wall Street to keep their original streets from before the grid. The Villagers had no idea they were creating the perfect battleground to outwit the colonizer's police.

Seventh Avenue was extended south in **1914**, cutting through the many one-way streets, making a direct route into the Village. And with Sheridan Square's subway stop opening soon after, the neighborhood began to fill up with tearooms and clubs. These spaces became speakeasies for the rebellious artists and intellectuals to meet. Naturally, gays, lesbians, and the gender variant found their home here.

In the heart of Greenwich Village, in 1920s, the Jefferson Livery Stable at 51 and 53 Christopher Street became a French bakery and "most desirable STUDIO APARTMENTS" before they're both later merged into a single building in **1934**: a tearoom. Not the "t-rooms" I'm usually talking about, bathrooms where men cruise, but an actual tearoom. It's called Bonnie's Stone Wall, opening perhaps coincidentally, the same year Mary Casal's autobiography is published, a lesbian romance called "The Stone Wall." Bonnie's Stone Wall – the tearoom – is thought to be named after its owner Vincent Bonavia, who originally opened his Stone Wall restaurant at 91 Seventh Avenue South in 1930. Prohibition agents raided it in 1930 to reveal it as a speakeasy, noting it as one "of the more notorious tearooms" in the Village. But after Prohibition ended, Vincent reopened the tearoom as a restaurant and bar in 1934, just around the corner at its new location. He installs a large vertical sign hanging over Christopher Street: "Bonnie's Stonewall Inn." It becomes a popular location for banquets and wedding receptions, with guests posing for photographs by the indoor wishing well. These old buildings are delicate, though. They burn down easily. Just outside the bar, when it was a stable, a tenement building burned down and killed more than 40 people. The Villagers would not allow a new building to put on those grounds, so the small space in the center of these cross streets became **Christopher Park**. Later in the '60s, the Stone Wall is also gutted by fire, and left vacant.

The Stone Wall sits empty, scorched by fire, **until 1967**. The son of Mafia boss, nicknamed Fat Tony, buys the cheap old building. His dad thinks running a fag bar is low class Mafia work, but Fat Tony knows he's gonna make a killing. He knows all the shortcuts: instead of replacing the burned wood, Tony and his associates paint everything black—the walls, ceiling, everything. They tear down the Greek Revival columns and put

in heavy oak doors. Like all gay bars, the windows are blacked out and reinforced with plywood and two-by-fours, in order to keep cops from quickly sweeping through the place. A quick coat of stucco covers the exposed brick of the building's dilapidated facade, and they take the word "Restaurant" off the vertical "Stonewall Inn" sign. Tony doesn't bother coming up with a new name for his business. The sign's already here! Tony's pals Zookie Zarfaz, Tony the Sniff, and Matty the Horse put in \$500 each, and they're ready to open one of the – if not *the* – largest gay bars in the country.

They hire some managers. One of whom was recently indicted, a mobster who posed as a Hilton Hotel house detective, centering himself in a blackmail ring that targeted wealthy homosexuals: **Edward Murphy A.K.A. The Skull**.

On the Stone Wall's first night of business, they all make back their investments plus profit.

The **1969 *Homosexual Handbook* by Angelo D'Arcangelo** describes the bar:

AUDIO: typewriter

ANGELO D'ARCANDELO: There's a certain hastiness about the look of the place. It seems to have only recently been converted from a garage into a cabaret in about eight hours and at a cost of under fifty dollars.

HOST: Why invest a ton of money into something you know is gonna get shut down any day? **Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine** secretly plans his second raid on the Stonewall this week, for just after midnight on **June 28, 1969**.

Act 1

HOST: A street queen named **Opera Jean** walks through the Village, and spots a young, clearly gay boy panhandling. His name is **Tommy Lanigan-Schmidt**.

OPERA JEAN: 'Scuse me, you drop your hairpin, Mary?

TOMMY: I'm not Mary!

OPERA JEAN: Mary, Grace, Allison—what difference does it make? After all, we're all sisters. Aren't we?

TOMMY: But I'm a man?

OPERA JEAN: How'd you end up here?

TOMMY: I failed out of art school, so my dad tried to put me on a ditch-digging crew. I went out for the newspaper and... caught a train and—

OPERA JEAN: Oh, hiding from dad. Well I know a thing or two about that. If you need a place to stay, I have one.

TOMMY: Oh. Thanks.

OPERA JEAN: Come on. They call me Opera Jean. You?

TOMMY: Tommy.

OPERA JEAN: Oh, Linda, we gotta get you a better name.

TOMMY: Why's that?

OPERA JEAN: Everyone's got one. [fading out] I've got a boyfriend we call Wilma. Sometimes my girls call me Sister Tooley, but that's cause they caught me stealing their Tuinal from their medicine cabinet...

HOST: Tommy meets the queens. We met a few last week, but let's meet some more. Tommy meets **Bambi**, who has big eyes. She's always got a bottle in a bag in her hand. She stops traffic in the middle of the street to tap on windows and ask for change from the drivers.

AUDIO: car horns

HOST: There's **Nelly**, also known as **Betsy Mae Kulo**, who is a very young and femme Latina hustler. There's **Orphan Annie**, she has a red afro and hollow eyes. She says her wealthy grandmother sends her money. A Black queen they call **Congo Woman** throws bricks through shop windows to steal wigs and dresses. She carries a stone in her purse for self-defense. And there's **Irish Sylvia**, who had a drug problem. Many will wonder if she was high when she fell off the roof of the St. George Hotel and died. Some will wonder if she was pushed. And of course there's the legendary [Miss Marsha P. Johnson](#), and the other queens we met last week. Many of the **street queens** are runaways, like Tommy. That's why they take him in. One of his new friends has a scar from a burn down his face and body from his mother, who didn't want men to be tempted by her son's good looks anymore. Another has a clothing iron scar on his ass, others have boiling water or glass scars. Many have been kicked out of the military with nowhere to go, sleeping on benches, fighting over public spaces, stealing to eat. Sometimes they team up to distract shop owners while others grab something for dinner. Some have died in the winter, some have been killed and found in the Hudson River. The queens carry nail files and scissors to protect themselves, and in case they're arrested for soliciting or loitering, then they can just say the weapons are for their nails. Villagers even throw things from their windows at the women. Sometimes one queen will get enough cash to get a hotel room, and she'll invite all her friends to crash in the room. The street queers look out for each other.

STREET QUEEN 1: Check in a place like the Hotel Albert and be sure to have a shopping bag with you. Since the curtains have hems on their tops and bottoms and a lining on the back, you simply cut the seam off the top and the bottom, slip in between the cloth and the lining, put on a belt, and attach a broach. After you've put your male attire in the shopping bag, you're ready to leave the hotel in your new dress.

TOMMY: Hey, Miss Polka Dot!

HOST: Out walking with his family down Greenwich Avenue, Tommy sees his crush. A young, masculine, Puerto Rican guy who loves to wear shirts with polka dots. Tommy knows nothing will come of his flirtatious calls to the boy, because he's apparently a favorite of the Village's well-known Mafia pimp: The Skull. Miss Polka Dot rolls his eyes at Tommy's call, and Tommy runs up to him. Suddenly—

AUDIO: tires screech

HOST: —a car pulls up and some men jump out to grab Miss Polka Dot. They pull away, and Tommy never sees him again. No one does. Rumors spread. Maybe he stole something from The Skull, or maybe he cheated on him. No one is shocked to hear it, though. [According to historian David Carter](#), The Skull has a reputation of making his boyfriends disappear going back to the early '60s when he worked a waterfront gay bar called Dirty Dick's. Many young men were last seen there. There are other, somewhat safer ways to work the Village. Other young hustlers often meet up in Christopher Park. They tie their shirts in midriff knots and let their hair grow long. There's a guy that's often there named [Bob Kohler](#), who walks his dog Magoo. Kohler sometimes holds stolen items and money for the hustlers while they run back to the piers to turn a few more [tricks](#).

STREET QUEEN 2: Take this, here comes Betty Badge.

HOST: He's charmed by the street kids and their machine-gun fast dialogue. They're quick-witted, competitive in their clever reads.

STREET QUEEN 3: Here comes the bubble gum machine!

HOST: A cop car. Cops have this one big, round light on top of their cars. The kids hand Bob all their stolen items for safekeeping and leave him and Magoo in Christopher Park, running off to the piers, off to work the streets, off to meet friends in the bars.

At the First Division headquarters on East 21st Street, Inspector Seymour Pine is ready to present his plan. He gathers his team for a midnight meeting: **two policewomen** from Chinatown's Fifth Precinct, **five Public Morals officers**, all in plainclothes to work undercover. He also has a search warrant from the D.A., issued by a judge yesterday. He can search the premises of the Stone Wall, seize alcohol, and cut the bars up and take them out with the vending equipment. Normally a warrant isn't needed, but Pine wants to be sure these charges against the bar stick, rather than letting a Mafia lawyer use a lack of a warrant as a reason to get the charges dropped. To strengthen his case, Pine also asks for the city to send an inspector from the Department of Consumer Affairs. **Inspector Adam Tatem** is sent to the meeting. Now the city's own expert will be citing infractions. Pine also requested a **federal agent from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms**

to come with them. They sent Pine a message saying a federal agent will meet them there at the bar to take a sample of the liquor. Pine knows the Stone Wall is watering down their liquor, which is against federal law—one of the more minor laws they're breaking.

The team is ready.

MUSIC: The Skull

HOST: Inspector Pine sends two of the five morals officers, along with the two policewomen, and Inspector Tatem. They'll go the Stone Wall early to observe in plainclothes. They need to *witness* illegal alcohol being served and, of course, queer customers breaking various laws. And, who is mixing and pouring drinks? Who serves them? Who is giving the orders to staff? They need to know who exactly to arrest. The policewomen change into street clothes, drive down, and approach the front door of the Stone Wall Inn.

AUDIO: The Stone Wall, doors opening

HOST: They're in.

30 minutes later, Inspector Pine, **Officer Charles Smythe**, and the two other plainclothes morals officers leave the First Division headquarters. They get in their own cars – not recognizable “bubble gum machine” cop cars.

Pine drives with Smythe in his car, and they park a few blocks from the Stone Wall. The four officers rendezvous in Christopher Park, watching the bar from the bushes. Tommy arrives at the bar, his favorite gay bar, and the doorman examines him through the slats. Not looking queer enough tonight, it seems. Tommy is turned away and he walks away down Christopher Street.

VILLAGERS: [distantly singing to the tune of “It’s Howdy Doody Time”]

We are the Village Girls!

We wear our hair in curls!

We wear our dungarees

Above our nelly knees!

HOST: Meanwhile, Craig Rodwell and his lover are leaving their friend’s place near NYU and heading home. Men are out cruising down Greenwich. It’s unusually hot. Still one of the hottest days on record in New York City. Inspector Pine watches the Stone Wall’s entrance for the two undercover men to exit. Finally, they do, and cross Christopher into the park. The team waits for the undercover women to follow out – their signal to raid the place. They wait. For a long time. 1 AM. 1:10. 1:15 in the morning.

AUDIO: "Satisfaction" by the Rolling Stones playing distantly inside the bar

HOST: Inspector Pine says,

SEYMOUR PINE: Something is wrong.

OFFICER 1: Think someone spotted the guns in their purses?

OFFICER 2: It's strangely busy in there tonight.

CHARLES SMYTHE: Yeah.

SEYMOUR PINE: They might be in trouble. We can't wait any longer.

HOST: He looks at the officer with the radiotelephone.

SEYMOUR PINE: You wait here. Let's go, fellas.

HOST: They cross the narrow street to the bar. Pine bangs on the door.

SEYMOUR PINE: Police! We're taking the place!

AUDIO: music stops

HOST: Several seconds pass.

AUDIO: raid chaos

HOST: Inside, the lights go up and the music stops. **Blond Frankie**, the doorman, takes his time turning the locks. One by one. Future activists **Morty Manford** and **Sylvia Rivera** look around, knowing what's coming. **Miss Major**, who just moved here after being kicked out of college again for being trans, in Chicago, she just met up with her girlfriend when the lights went up. Bartenders are stuffing cash into their pockets and jumping over the bar into the crowd. Suddenly, cops storm in. Inspector Pine sees Inspector Tatem in plainclothes, sitting at the bar hitting on a trans woman. Pine doesn't want to give the undercover officer away, so he and his officers walk by without saying anything to him. The men move through the confused crowd, most people wondering what the cops will want them to do. One officer goes to the payphone to call the Sixth Precinct and ask for backup.

SYLVIA RIVERA: Oh god, are we gonna be arrested?

QUEER 1: I'll lose my job. What'll happen to me?

HOST: The cops go to the back room and push people out to the main dance floor. They check the bathrooms, pulling people out by the arm.

OFFICER 2: Over there! Everyone to the east side of the room.

HOST: Go-go boys climb out of their cages and put their clothes on. And the front doors —are locked.

OFFICER 3: Get your ID out and get in line! Now.

SEYMOUR PINE: Where were you two?

OFFICER 4: When we arrived the bartenders were changing shifts and we wanted to be able to identify staff from both shifts.

OFFICER 5: There's a manager there,

HOST: she points,

OFFICER 5: and those two are the bartenders who served us.

AUDIO: crowd murmuring, bar's destruction

HOST: Other cops gather up the alcohol. Pine notes that none of the bottles in the storage room have labels, while other officers are separating customers into two lines. Inspector Tatem is surprised to see the woman he was flirting with standing in the so-called 'transvestites' line. Stone Wall employees are sent to the back room for questioning. They watch officers break down the benches and clear out the bar. Cops begin checking IDs in the line and letting some people leave. Uniformed Sixth Precinct officers are gathering at the door. People stuck in line pass word down that cops won't let people leave without proper ID. Some don't have ID, but others have extra IDs with them, without photos, like a Bloomingdales credit card, so they share with other people. While they wait, cops wreck the place.

AUDIO: furniture breaking

OFFICER 4: Okay, let's go in and check you out.

HOST: Trans women are lined up at the bathroom for the female officers to examine their genitals. They'll often just comply, say okay, arrest me, I'm a man. And they don't have to be examined. But sometimes they are anyway. Other times trans men and women are sexually assaulted by male officers. Tonight, they get examined.

STREET QUEEN 1: Get your hands off me!

STREET QUEEN 3: I ain't going in there, don't touch me!

AUDIO: furniture still breaking, crowd still murmuring

HOST: The policewomen push them in to the bathroom. Inspector Pine feels the tone of the room begin to change. The noisier trans girls are put under arrest and held in the coat closet. A group of lesbians stand back from the line, against the back wall.

OFFICER 2: Time to go, get in line.

DIESEL DYKE: We have a right to be here.

HOST: A couple cops grab and frisk the women, pushing them up against the wall. Pine feels the quiet anger, everyone in line wide-eyed as the women are pushed around. If anyone says anything or asks a question, the cops ignore them. Finally the line makes progress. More patrons are let go as patrol cars from the Sixth Precinct pull up outside the Stone Wall. Inspector Smythe watches the officers carry out all the tagged bottles of liquor.

SEYMOUR PINE: You're almost finished?

CHARLES SMYTHE: 28 cases of beer, 19 bottles of liquor. No room in the wagon for the fags waiting in the coat closet.

SEYMOUR PINE: I wasn't planning on arresting so many tonight.

HOST: Pine calls Emergency Service, requesting both bars to be cut up and removed, along with the jukebox. They clean the place out. The patrons who weren't arrested, and allowed to leave, they linger outside on Christopher Street, chatting. They gather in Christopher Park and watch the wagon get loaded up with liquor. Typically customers let go from a raided bar just wander off to another one or go back home. But some of the Stone Wall's customers have friends inside, possibly getting arrested, or they're waiting to see what became of the women who were being pushed around. There's still anger in the air. Some people talk about how the Stone Wall was just raided on Tuesday night. Someone mentions the Kew Gardens vigilantes cutting down the trees. And there have been lots of raids on various other bars, like the Checkerboard and the Sewer.

STREET QUEEN 4: Come on, Patty Pig, it's hot out here!

VILLAGERS: [laughter]

HOST: Down the block, on the corner of Christopher and 7th Avenue South, a reporter is sitting at his typewriter in the *Village Voice* offices. He notices several police cars outside his window on Christopher, so he grabs his binoculars. A growing crowd. **Howard Smith** grabs his notepads and his blue plastic press pass, throws it around his neck, and runs downstairs. He walks up to the cops outside the bar.

HOWARD SMITH: Officer, can I ask you a few questions? Every time I blink there are more people out here.

HOST: **Lucian Truscott**, another *Village Voice* reporter, comes out of the **Lion's Head** and sees the crowd. Howard lets him into the *Voice* office to grab his press badge, too. They split up to check out the scene.

They won't see each other again tonight. Villagers passing by join the crowd, trying to see what everyone is waiting for. One young gay guy just passing by stops and looks at the cop stationed by the Stone Wall door, and says,

Queer 2: Hello there, fella!

AUDIO: laughs

HOST: Tommy comes back to the bar to try the doorman again, to find the giant crowd standing there. Suddenly, the oak doors open and out come the queens, one at a time. The police are letting some leave.

STREET QUEEN 1: Thank you, thank you!

HOST: Stone Wall favorites exit the bar to cheers. They camp it up, bowing and throwing their arms up into proud poses. Strutting down Christopher, into the crowd. She bows, and another queen exits the Stone Wall.

AUDIO: crowd applauding

STREET QUEEN 4 (butch): Have you seen Maxine? Where *is* my wife? I told her not to go far!

AUDIO: crowd applauding

HOST: Howard Smith, the *Village Voice* reporter, peaks into the bar and spots the cops pushing the arrested people around. Kicking them.

STREET QUEEN 3: [distant] Don't touch me!

QUEER 2: [from outside] Go get 'em!

HOST: A patrol wagon pulls up on Christopher, parking partly on the sidewalk in front of the Stone Wall, facing against traffic. Craig Rodwell and his lover pass by Sheridan Square on their way home and see the crowd. Craig has seen raids before, but this is strange. A crowd of about 500 now, an eerily quiet crowd—outside the Mafia bar Craig

has been criticizing in his bookshop's newsletter. He pulls his lover into the mass, going for the tallest stoop on Christopher, just west of the bar. Inspector Pine comes out of the Stone Wall.

STREET QUEEN 2: Oh, there she is. The devil with the blue dress on.

VILLAGERS: [laughter]

HOST: He's surprised to see such a huge crowd. Usually everyone just leaves. Pine brings out his prisoners and evidence collected, which means the raid is over. But he only has the one wagon and several people. Pine isn't too worried. He's never seen homosexuals fight back before, but this is odd. He calls the precinct on the radiotelephone.

SEYMOUR PINE: I need a backup patrol wagon at 51 Christopher.

HOST: A mysterious voice responds.

RADIOTELEPHONE VOICE: Disregard that call.

SEYMOUR PINE: Hm. I need a backup patrol wagon at 51 Christopher.

RADIOTELEPHONE VOICE: Disregard that call.

HOST: Not sure who that is, Pine decides to try again in a few minutes. Outside, cops load Mafia employees into the first wagon.

AUDIO: crowd mix of boos and cheers

HOST: Craig shouts,

CRAIG RODWELL: Get the Mob out of the bars! Gay power!

VILLAGERS: Gay power! Gay power!

AUDIO: crowd quiets down

HOST: Bartenders, coat check boys, and the men's room attendant John come out of the bar.

AUDIO: applause, one person singing "We Shall Overcome," people join in.

HOST: Next, the drag queens and trans women.

AUDIO: applause

HOST: Bob Kohler walks by with Magoo and sees his young friends in Christopher Park, surrounded by hundreds, watching the arrested queens wave goodbye.

STREET QUEEN 2: Have a good rest, darling! She needs a good rest.

VILLAGERS: [laughter]

AUDIO: a push, a trip

HOST: An officer shoves a queen.

AUDIO: thud

HOST: She turns and hits him over the head with her purse—

AUDIO: clubbing

HOST: He clubs her.

VILLAGERS: *Boo!*

VILLAGER 1: Turn the paddy wagon over!

AUDIO: hitting on wagon

STREET QUEEN 5: Oh, Lily Law's got you, girl!

OFFICER 2: Get back! Move back.

HOST: A guy in a dark red t-shirt shouts,

RED T-SHIRT GUY: Nobody's going to fuck around with me. I ain't going to take this shit.

HOST: People run over to the pay phones.

AUDIO: payphone dialing, ringing

QUEER 4: Jerry, you're not gonna believe this.

QUEER 3: Doug, you've gotta come down to the Stone Wall. Tell Carol, too.

QUEER 5: There's a bust on the Stone Wall!

HOST: Others run down the cross streets, announcing the raid to the Villagers.

OFFICER 1: Everyone, please go home. Back up and go home!

HOST: Someone shouts back,

MICHAEL FADER: Pig!

HOST: The cop grabs him, and brandishes his nightstick.

OFFICER 1: Just say that again!

MICHAEL FADER: That would be rather silly.

HOST: The cop shoves him back. Pennies come flying.

AUDIO: pennies hitting the wagon

SYLVIA RIVERA: You already got the payoff, and here's some more!

HOST: A beer can hits the Stone Wall's front door.

QUEER 1: Who else is still in there?!

QUEER 3: Anybody still getting their ass kicked in there?

QUEER 2: We want Tommy, the blond drag queen!

HOST: Suddenly, the doors open and out comes **Tommy**, also known as **Tammy Novak**, in her blonde wig. She walks coolly into the crowd.

AUDIO: cheering

CRAIG RODWELL: Get the Mafia out of the bars! (distant)

HOST: Then comes **Maria Ritter**, a young trans girl who just turned 18 tonight. She's hauled into the car by a flirtatious police officer.

OFFICER 3: Jesus, I can't even believe you're a boy!

MARIA RITTER: I'm not a boy! You don't understand, I'm a girl, but it's real hard for me to explain to you.

OFFICER 3: Come on, let's go.

HOST: He puts her into the wagon with the other queens.

AUDIO: doors close

HOST: Maria knows it's gonna be tough at home if she's on the news or if her photo is in the paper—wearing her mom's dress. The wagon is already packed, but the doors open again to bring in more queens. Maria politely steps out of the way to allow more room for others to enter.

MARIA RITTER: Excuse me.

HOST: She quietly walks away. The flirty officer sees her.

OFFICER 3: Hey, you! Come over here!

MARIA RITTER: Please! It's my birthday; I'm eighteen. And my mother's gonna kill me!

HOST: Her mascara is running. The cop looks the other way and gives her a motion to keep walking. Maria runs for it.

DIESEL DYKE: Don't be so rough!

HOST: The Stone Wall doors open again and **a lesbian is brought out in handcuffs**. She doesn't come out bowing. She's furious. Clearly she's been fighting with the police inside, likely because they're arresting her for not wearing three pieces of clothing matching her assigned gender.

AUDIO: crowd boos

HOST: She's short, in pants, with short hair, pulling away from the officers, who tug at her very tight handcuffs. They're using the type of Spanish cuffs that tighten the more someone struggles. *She might* be the drag king, **Stormé DeLarverie**, from the Jewel Box Revue. If this woman wasn't Stormé, Stormé is at least in the crowd tonight. The woman slips away from the cops, and one hits her over the head with his club. Blood runs down her face as she's pulled back up. A few more cops join to pull her to the paddy wagon and she fights every step of the way. Finally, they get her into the car, closing the door, and it

comes flying open again. She slides back out and runs. Officers jump on her, and she fights them all the way back to the Stone Wall doors.

DIESEL DYKE: Fuck off! Get off me!

GINO: Let her go! Leave her alone!

DIESEL DYKE: Why don't you guys do something!

AUDIO: pennies

STREET QUEEN 2: Let's pay them off!

BOB KOHLER: Stop throwing your money!

STREET QUEEN 5: Dirty copper!

HOST: The cops pull her back to the wagon and push her inside.

AUDIO: doors, same as before

HOST: She gets out again and a cop pushes her back inside.

AUDIO: doors slam

VILLAGERS: [boos, screams]

QUEER 4: Let her go!

AUDIO: Sylvia Rivera snaps

HOST: The crowd pushes forward.

QUEER 5: Let's turn it over!

QUEER 1: Police brutality!

QUEER 3: Pigs!

HOST: Pine gives his orders.

SEYMOUR PINE: Get these three cars and the wagon out of here immediately. Hurry back. Just drop them at the Sixth Precinct and hurry back.

VILLAGER 2: I'm gonna slice up those motherfuckers' tires. You got a knife?

AUDIO: tires slashed

HOST: The paddy wagon stops.

AUDIO: crowd murmuring

HOST: A cobblestone comes flying—

AUDIO: cobblestone landing on car, it screeches

HOST: —landing on the trunk of a police car. The cop next to it jumps.

VILLAGERS: Yeah!

QUEER 5: Let's get 'em!

HOST: Uniformed and plainclothes police move into the crowd. Some officers use their billy clubs to trip people and plainclothes cops start pushing back on the crowd. **Jackie Hormona** punches a cop. **Ray Castro** is handcuffed and shoved up against the police wagon. The officers open the doors to put him inside. He puts both feet on the doors and springs back into the crowd, knocking four cops to the ground. They jump back up and Villagers try to pull Castro away from the officers, all while are prisoners escaping from the patrol wagon.

VILLAGERS: [cheering]

HOST: The Skull and Blond Frankie, handcuffed together, jump out of the wagon and run for it. They take a taxi to Keller's, an S&M bar, where a dominatrix uses her key to get them out of their handcuffs.

Somehow, the half-empty patrol wagon finally pulls away from the Stone Wall. And the cops are left behind, waiting for a ride out.

AUDIO: sirens, which slowly fade away; pounding on cars

OFFICER 4: Move back. Move back.

QUEER 1: Push it over!

AUDIO: pennies

HOST: The massive crowd now reaches back to 7th Avenue South. There's possibly a construction site there, possibly with a pile of bricks. Inspector Pine is left with 8 plainclothes cops, including the two women who went into the bar first, and an officer from the Sixth Precinct – the last remaining uniformed officer. Pennies hit the reporter, Howard Smith. He backs up against the Stone Wall's door. Ten feet of space separate the reporter and the officers from the crowd.

AUDIO: nickels

HOST: Nickels come flying. Then quarters.

AUDIO: glass breaking

HOST: A glass bottle.

AUDIO: more glass breaking

HOST: A few more glass bottles.

AUDIO: coin flip

HOST: A famous folk musician **Dave Van Ronk** flips a coin into Officer Weissman's face, clipping him under his right eye. Dave, a hetero, just happened to be having dinner at the Lion's Head and decided to join in. Officer Weissman covers his face, now bloody from the coin. Three cops charge for Dave.

AUDIO: beer can hits head

HOST: A beer can hits Inspector Smythe on the head, as Dave Van Ronk almost slips away, but Pine dives on him, grabbing Van Ronk by the waist. Pine and Van Ronk fight while two officers grab hold of Dave, and drag him, his head banging against the ground, all the way into the Stone Wall. They handcuff his left hand to the radiator, near the floor, and kick him over and over. Inspector Pine goes back outside.

AUDIO: pennies, quarters, bottles breaking, crowd murmuring, a punch, *Gay Power!*

HOST: His officers look panicked.

SEYMOUR PINE: Let's get inside. Lock ourselves inside; it's safer.

HOST: Howard Smith looks down at his press card.

SEYMOUR PINE: You want to come in? You're probably safer.

HOST: The other reporter must be somewhere out in the crowd. Howard thinks, I've been standing here with the cops, so if I stay outside, will the crowd assume I'm a plainclothes cop, too? Or will they see my press card? *Should I cover the story from the inside?* Reinforcements are supposed to be coming soon, so... why not.

HOWARD SMITH: Oh, I'll go inside.

SEYMOUR PINE: Fine. Come on. Right now.

HOST: Into the Stone Wall go Inspectors Pine, Smythe, and Tatem, Officer Weissman, six plainclothes officers, reporter Howard Smith, and a few remaining prisoners, including a bartender and musician Dave Van Ronk. They shut the big oak doors behind them.

AUDIO: doors slamming — dulled silence

HOST: Inspector Pine had wanted to join the FBI, but his dad said Jewish people don't get into the FBI. When Pine was drafted into the war, he improved the military's training methods in hand-to-hand combat fighting. Pine actually wrote the manual for the Army. As a captain he survived a mine explosion in the Battle of the Bulge, the same battle **Frank Kameny** served in. Pine and Kameny both felt shells drop as they laid in foxholes. Pine kept cool, helped keep his troupe stay calm. Now, he barricades behind a gay bar's doors, pushing tables up against the plywood on the window. He'll later say it's the most terrified he's ever felt. Inspector Smythe also fought in the war, alongside Pine. Tonight, he's shaking, and he'll still be shaking tomorrow.

The reporter, Howard, is surprised by how dark it is inside the Stone Wall. And it reeks of beer.

SEYMOUR PINE: I need a backup at 51 Christopher.

AUDIO: radio silence, then bottles breaking outside, cobblestones hitting the windows, crowd yelling, first all distantly, and then suddenly we're outside.

HOST: **Back outside**— The garbage can *Village Voice* reporter Lucian Truscott is standing on outside is pulled from beneath him—

AUDIO: Lucien hitting the ground

HOST: —and thrown into the Stone Wall's west window.

AUDIO: trashcan hitting the window with a rattle, cheers

HOST: Something else hits a window on the second floor—

AUDIO: window shattering

VILLAGERS: *Ooo!*

HOST: —the lower left pane, just above the entrance. Diana Davies took a photo. The street kids move toward the bar, but Bob tries to stop one because he has a court case pending.

BOB KOHLER: Stay out of this, Billy! Don't get involved!

HOST: The kids leave Bob and Magoo to search for more empty bottles.

AUDIO: crowd swells, and sound fades. Radio static.

RADIO REPORTER: Rioting has broken out in Greenwich Village outside the Stone Wall Inn, with reports of several police vehicles leaving the scene. A crowd of—

HOST: **Dick Leitsch** forgets packing, turns off his radio, and runs to Christopher Street. **Marsha P. Johnson** and **Zazu Nova** both get to the Stone Wall and start throwing rocks.

MARSHA P. JOHNSON: You can't do that. Who the hell, who the fuck!

HOST: The bar door cracks open and an arm waves... a gun. The officer shouts,

OFFICER 2: Stay back! Stay back!

VILLAGERS: Gay power! We want freedom! [fading to distantly outside] Gay power!

AUDIO: glass breaking outside

HOST: The reporter, the arrested, and the officers watch the trash and bottles break cracks in the black plywood on the windows. They each take turns peaking out through the cracks at the crowd to see how big it's getting out there. It seems like thousands. Some people are standing on cars screaming. The faces close by are full of rage.

HOWARD SMITH: Where are the reinforcements?

SEYMOUR PINE: I don't know. There must be some mix-up.

HOST: Small scraps of paper slip through the holes in the plywood. Little puffs of smoke. Somebody's setting trash on fire with cigarette lighters. The kids slip it in the window and run, in case the police fire at them. People keep encouraging each other to go a little further, try something a little more wild. One group grabs onto a parking meter, the loose one that the street kids like to swing on. They rock back and forth on it now and pull it up from the ground. A group of guys carry it over and thrust it up against the doors.

AUDIO: parking meter battering ram

HOST: —using it as a battering ram against the Stone Wall. The Villagers are thrilled.

VILLAGERS: [cheering]

CRAIG RODWELL: Gay power!

AUDIO: glass breaking

HOST: They batter a window, too, and ram against the plywood board.

VILLAGERS: [gasp, cheers]

AUDIO: bottles breaking, parking meter battering ram

HOST: Then they back up, all the way to Christopher Park and take a running start.

AUDIO: *Boom!*

QUEER 3: Liberate the bar!

VILLAGERS: *Liberate the bar! Liberate the bar! Liberate the bar!*

AUDIO: fire, glass breaking, battering ram continuing...

HOST: Peeking through the cracks in the plywood boards—they see a wire trashcan go up in flames on Christopher Street. People in the apartments down Grove Street, the other side of Christopher Park, start throwing their own glass bottles down at the crowd. A queen grabs a twisted piece of metal and smashes the rest of the bar's first story windows out. The doors begin to give. Howard feels the floor inside the Stone Wall shattering with every blow to the doors.

AUDIO: doors bursting open

HOST: Until the doors are busted open. In the park, people are pouring liquid into Coke bottles. The officers inside try to hold the doors shut. Every time the crowd gets them open, bottles and debris fly in.

AUDIO: bottle breaking on wooden floor, bricks landing – then, raging crowd

HOST: Outside, a queen smears oranges across a car's windshield!

MARTIN BOYCE: All right, girl, go! That's my sister! Now, that's the sister I love!

HOST: The guy inside the car opens his door.

GAY GUY: You motherfuckin' bitch!

HOST: She didn't realize the driver was gay.

STREET QUEEN 1: Oh my god, I'm so sorry, honey!

HOST: She runs away.

Craig Rodwell makes it to a payphone. He calls the *New York Post*, the *Daily News*, and *The New York Times* to make sure this is in the papers. **This is the spark** they've been waiting for. This is the rebellion.

AUDIO: raging crowd, bricks, glass, fire, the whole spaghetti

HOST: **Martha Shelley** walks by, giving two Daughters of Bilitis members from Boston a tour of the neighborhood.

WOMAN: What's going on?

MARTHA SHELLEY: Oh, just a riot. We have them here all the time. Let's go.

HOST: Bricks fly. Maybe. If there were bricks there. It's mayhem, but no one can leave. No one wants to. They have to know what happens next. The battering ram hits the bar's west window, the coat check room, almost passing right through the plywood. It gives. The officers take out their pistols and check to make sure they're loaded. The reporter backs up, terrified. He looks behind the bar for a weapon, finding the hose and fire ax on the wall. He slides the ax under his belt so he can keep taking notes. Inspector Pine laughs, nervous.

AUDIO: bottle shatters on floor, fire

HOST: A bottle flies in through the broken window, bursting into flames. The crowd outside watches the smoke drift out the window.

VILLAGERS: [cheer]

HOST: One of the officers grabs the extinguisher, and puts the fire out, but of course the extinguisher quickly runs out. The Mafia didn't even put in fire exits, just the one front door.

AUDIO: bottles breaking, bursts of flames

HOST: The Molotov cocktails keep coming. Officers grab the fire hose off the wall, but a water hose can't put out a bunch of gasoline cocktails. They wait nervously. Outside, the crowd, including Dick Leitsch now, watches as someone approaches the bar, pulls a can of lighter fluid from their pocket, and pours it all over the plywood on the front of the Stone Wall. They light a match and drop it on the wood. Blue flames sparkle across the bar. It burns out quick and it's gone. Back inside:

AUDIO: doors close

SEYMOUR PINE: I need backup at 51 Christopher!

AUDIO: radio static

HOST: Someone grabs the Stone Wall's phone to call for help. But the phone lines are dead. Inspector Pine turns to his officers.

SEYMOUR PINE: Anybody who fires their gun without me saying "Fire!" is gonna be in big, big trouble. You'll be walking the loneliest beat on Staten Island for the rest of your career.

HOST: Everyone is sweating. Pine goes down the line—placing a hand on each cop's shoulder:

SEYMOUR PINE: How do you feel, Joe?

HOST: He uses each person's first name and makes sure each person responds to him. Everyone calms down and breathes. Pine pretends this is normal, but everyone knows it's not.

SEYMOUR PINE: How do you feel, Howard?

HOST: Howard isn't taking notes anymore. He clutches the ax.

HOWARD SMITH: I'm okay, but I'd feel a lot better if you had the ax and I had the gun.

SEYMOUR PINE: [chuckles] You stand over there and don't leave that spot. You watch the door. You watch the corridor. You, I want in the back part of the bar in case there is some way in that we don't know about. You stand back there. I want two on the door, guns drawn. Nobody fires unless I say "Fire."

HOST: Pine knows that firing on a crowd will not help them. Logically, even if the cops were to open fire, the crowd would still overwhelm them—will *have to* overwhelm them. They'll be killed. Dave Van Ronk watches the whole scene from the floor, still cuffed to the radiator. Smythe, Howard, and other officers search for an escape. Some officers find a vent in the back by the roof! And they push one of the policewomen through.

SEYMOUR PINE: Go across the roof to West 10th to the firehouse. And call for more help! Send an emergency signal!

AUDIO: wood breaking

HOST: The plywood is pulled off the bar's front western window.

AUDIO: typewriter, distant

HOWARD SMITH: "One of the big plywood windows gives, and it seems inevitable that the mob will pour in."

HOST: Pine and the officers grab the fire hose, aim for the door, slip it outside, and turn the water all the way up...!

AUDIO: dribble

HOST: A weak dribble pours out and drips onto the sidewalk. Protestors dance in the small trickle of the hose.

VILLAGERS: [cheering]

STREET QUEEN 3: Grab it!

STREET QUEEN 2: Grab his cock!

STREET QUEEN 1: Yes, girl!

HOST: The officers slip on the water running back inside and Pine tells them to stop. The doors come blasting open again — as a flaming wire trashcan soars through the western window into the coat check.

AUDIO: fire, obviously

HOST: Smoke fills Bonnie's Stone Wall Inn, and billows out onto Christopher Street. The coat check room burns, the closet literally set on fire.

QUEER 1: Ooo let's get some gas!

AUDIO: bottles, bricks on plywood

HOST: Trash and debris, maybe some bricks, rain down on the rest of the boarded windows. The parking meter puts a huge hole through one. The officers try to douse the flames with the hose again, while they watch the crowd move in on the bar.

SEYMOUR PINE: Nobody fire! Nobody fire! Let's back up if we have to. Help's going to be coming.

HOST: A few more cans of lighter fluid are tossed in, along with some lit matches. Howard watches an arm slip inside a window and squirt more lighter fluid and then a lit match. Inspector Pine, standing by Howard, also notices the hand in the window setting the fire. He turns and aims his gun at the hand, puts his finger on the trigger... and then—

AUDIO: [distantly] sirens

HOST: Outside, two fire trucks circle Christopher Park, with a returning patrol wagon behind them. The crowd outside moves around the trucks. The policewoman has saved the cops from the queers. Lucky them. Howard breathes again. The officers and the arrested people all check in with one another, making sure they're all okay. They giggle with relief while Howard catches up on his notes.

AUDIO: pencil writing

HOWARD SMITH: The people around me change back to cops. They began examining the place.

HOST: Sixth Precinct officers sweep the streets, clearing the way to the Stone Wall. Inspector Pine, the reporter Howard Smith, the officers, and their arrested walk outside.

Howard stays close to Pine, worried he'll still be mistaken for a cop if he walks off to his office down the block. Patrol cars pull up. 14 officers and 3 sergeants, from the Fourth,

Fifth, and Tenth Precincts. Pine goes to one of the cars and calls for an ambulance for Officer Weissman's eye, and then he loads the wagon with the rest of the booze and people he's arrested, including Van Rock, now finally uncuffed from the radiator. Pine marches the bartender, the musician, and the queens down Christopher Street to the wagon as the crowd rages around them. At the wagon, the trans women resist the cops, refusing to get in. More girls join in the fight, and rough up the officers. Miss Major is hit over the head by a cop. They're all arrested and forced into the wagon.

AUDIO: doors shut, crowd boos

HOST: The **Tactical Patrol Force** arrives. Two buses of riot police march into formation. These elite officers are kept waiting in reserve around the city for potential riot breakouts—a big concern for Mayor Lindsay at this time. Behind their enormous shields they have tear gas. They wear large helmets with plastic visors. They march east up Christopher Street, against traffic, stopping at the corner of 7th Avenue. They watch the faeries flutter around in Christopher Park, until the faeries turn to them—throwing bottles and trash. Magoo watches from Bob's arms.

AUDIO: TPF marches

HOST: These sick fags and dykes and trannies and queers have never retaliated before. No one's ever expected them to. And even though everyone here knows and has seen on TV what the police are capable of, these queer people have had enough, and the TPF can see they're *enjoying* their retaliation. They were kicked out of the bar an hour ago and they're still playing in the park outside, screaming proudly.

AUDIO: marching

HOST: The TPF takes to the crowd with their nightsticks, breaking up groups of people. Pine is sure this is the end of the night, and he and Smythe head back to the Sixth Precinct to log evidence and process their prisoners and get to bed. Howard Smith speed walks to his *Village Voice* office on the corner and watches the rest happen from his desk. He tries to write about what he just experienced, while he's still watching it all unfold.

Craig sees a new set of TPF officers coming up Christopher, again, forming a wedge. Traffic stops. The crowd Craig stands in, they slowly back up at the same speed the TPF marches toward them. Only Christopher Park is between them. As the Patrol Force moves in on Christopher, people vanish – off, into the crowd, down the streets behind. Craig runs. The whole mob of people turns and runs up Christopher Street. TPF stops. They've scared the faeries off.

QUEER 3: Hey, sis. [kiss]

HOST: The TPF officers look back toward 7th Avenue. All the queers are there, the mob of hundreds, behind them. They had run up Christopher to Waverly, passing Julius', down 10th to 7th and are now standing behind the TPF.

QUEER 3: Oh you liked that? Pigs!

HOST: The officers turn and chase the crowd, around the block. Again, the mob turns on the TPF, running down side streets and sneaking up behind them. The officers break up into smaller pacts as the Stonewallers do, too.

QUEERS CHANTING: Gay power!

AUDIO: bottles breaking

HOST: People in cars and Village passersby stop and watch. Some people stop just to take up space and block the police. Some cars pretend to be stuck. The police can't clear the place. And if they can't clear the people, they can't bring in more cops, especially on the very narrow street outside the Stone Wall.

AUDIO: car turning over

HOST: A car is turned over, putting the main intersection, 7th and Christopher, and thus 4th, Grove, Washington, Waverly, and 10th all at a stand still.

Tonight, the whole world isn't watching—yet. This isn't a typical protest. There are no TV cameras to show the world a demonstration. This one is just for us.

HOST: Queers link arms and kick, camping up their old song, singing,
We are the Stonewall Girls,
We wear our hair in curls.
We wear our dungarees
above our nelly knees!

until—

AUDIO: fire hoses, screaming

HOST: The fire hoses are turned on the crowd. Yet the groups continue to bait the TPF down streets and around corners. From Waverly, slipping down Gay Street, and around to Christopher, and back onto Waverly.

HOST: One person grabs a TPF officer's attention. Another throws bottles at the officer from behind.

STREET QUEEN 5: [sensually] Oh, Alice Bluegown. You were expecting me?

AUDIO: bottles breaking on helmets

HOST: Kick lines defiantly tease the marching men—these cops have never seen a kick line at a protest. Nobody riots like queers. The Stonewall girls kick and kick and let the boys in blue get as close as they can, and then they run. Most of them usually get away. From above, in his friend’s apartment on Grove, Danny Garvin watches 10 cops in stances with their feet spread apart, manspreading, as about 20 boys roll up their pant legs into knickers, link arms, and kick—singing, *We are the Village girls, we wear are hair in curls, we don’t wear underwear, to show our pubic hair!*

The cops charge on them and smack them all down. They’re pulled away into cop cars. Future activist and queer film historian **Vito Russo** climbs up a tree in Christopher Park to get a better view of it all. Curious passersby are even beaten and dragged, bloody, to the police cars. Store windows are broken. All the trashcans are set on fire. There’s no sense of time, it’s just mayhem. Joyous, terrifying, angry, queer mayhem. For all of it, for everything they’ve endured.

QUEERS: Gay power! Gay power! [fading out]

AUDIO: Fading to near-silence. Smoldering fires. Sirens blip.

HOST: **Around 4AM**, the crowd thins out. The taunting of the officers slows. The game is over. Residents of the Village come outside to see the damage. Villagers gather on their corners and sit on the stoops. Small groups form as fascinated people stop Stone Wall patrons walking home, exhausted, in a daze. What happened? Cops stand around the neighborhood, too, like stormtroopers. It’s quiet, but there’s an exciting energy in the air. As everyone walks home under the full moon, Bob and Magoo sit in Christopher Park waiting for the sun to rise. The kids tend to their minor wounds with makeshift bandages. Trash cans smolder. Shattered glass covers the streets they fought on, glittering in the twilight street lamps. Word spreads across the city.

Next week, Stonewall Night 2: “Gay Power”

Learn more in the episode credits (quite a bit more about the Stonewall riot!) & at queerserial.com/s3e11