

**MATTACHINE: A SERIALIZED STORY IN GAY HISTORY**  
**EPISODE 6: "ARE YOU NOW OR HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A HOMOSEXUAL?"**



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.

Last week on *Mattachine*, we heard the FBI begin a rigorous hunt for communist homosexuals in the Mattachine Foundation, if only to prove to the country that communists and homosexuals can be conflated into one group. The Bureau needs a scapegoat, as Washington wants to show the nation that officials are fighting Red infiltration in the government. The mass firings of homosexuals give the general community something to see as progress. But most of the growing membership of the Mattachine are not communists. They're just following an organization run by former communists and sympathizers, anonymous leaders called the Foundation. The mysterious structure of their secret homosexual society has been inspired by the communist party, but now the membership seeks change. They fear conspiracy charges coming down on them as the FBI closes in. The disagreements on how to proceed with secrecy tear the Foundation leaders apart, because remaining anonymous to protect gay people from losing their jobs and families *also* means not assimilating to "normal" society and it seems like an excuse to keep their community in the closet. On one side, Harry and Chuck still believe in declaring the homosexual community a legal minority with rights and its own culture. This culture, by their assessment, is created by gay people seeing the world differently than straight people – by the way we think, our beliefs, our traditions, our ideology and relationships work differently because our relationships aren't based on the need to reproduce. And oftentimes once we question what sex is about without reproduction, and how gender roles control us, we really do see the world differently. But on the other side, Dale and Bob believe in assimilating to major society, essentially saying that gay people are exactly like anyone else aside from who we take to bed.

And even though Chuck is on Harry's side in this fight, he's willing to take the organization public to avoid a battle with the FBI and the potential crumbling of what they've built. Harry, the creator of the entire organization, stands firm on his position to keep the organization's structure secretive in order to protect members and leaders from the government's infiltration. Understanding both sides of the fight to be valid, Chuck Rowland insists on calling a convention in Los Angeles to decide which direction to take the secret society. A decision that must be determined by all members of the organization. This week, join me in attending the first Constitutional Convention of the Mattachine.

**April 11, 1953.** Some reports will note that 110-160 people show up at First Universalist Church, others will say differently. Harry Hay will recall 500. He'll say, *"Now, mind you, this was 1953, and five hundred gay people show up in one place, as representatives of gay organizations each delegate presumably representing up to ten people. Can you imagine what that was like? This is the first time it's ever happened in the history of the United States. There we were, and you looked up and all of a sudden the room became vast—well, you know, was there anybody in Los Angeles who wasn't gay? We'd never seen so many people. And in each other's presence you can't shut 'em up. This isn't the period when you hugged much yet—but nevertheless there was an awful lot of hugging going on during those two days."*

Outside on the streets, pretty flower boys are hawking roses and pansies as conservatively dressed men and women gather to come inside.

At 2PM, **Jim Kepner** walks down the sidewalk with **Ken Burns**, along with members from the Laguna Beach group. Jim had been brought into the Mattachine the previous year through a lesbian friend who had left her husband for a wife. He attended Bob Hull's discussion group. That discussion had bothered Jim, because he remembered someone in particular saying, *"What do we do about these swishes that give us all a bad name?"* He understands this organization around him is often conservative and interested in conforming to social norms, assimilating with what they consider respectable society. Jim Kepner attends this convention as a sort of spectator, alongside Ken Burns, again, not the filmmaker. Burns is a handsome safety engineer in his late 20s from that same discussion group.

Jim notices Foundation member **Dale Jennings** arrive. Most people don't know Dale is on the secretive Foundation, but everyone notices him. They can't miss him, arriving at the convention with a uniformed Marine Jim will say, *"everyone else assumed he'd just picked up and brought into the holy of holies."* Dale stands against his co-founder Harry Hay and the secrecy of the Mattachine.

Friend of the Foundation **Gerry Brissette**, who we met in the previous episode at a party with Allen Ginsberg, arrives at the convention to represent the Bay Area up north.

**Hal Call** and **David Finn**, also from the Bay Area, show up right behind him. Hal is confident on where he stands on the issues – pro-assimilation, and against the Foundation's secrecy. Hal is ready to go public, to assimilate. Hal wants to see discrimination and ignorance about homosexuality eliminated, and then he wants the Mattachine to disband. He spent two years fighting against Japan for this country, so he's perfectly fine with assimilating to the major society for which he fought. And he certainly doesn't want to follow the communist leadership, the leaders on the Foundation that he's been investigating on his own time. Hal is experienced in operations and intelligence in war, and will later recall, *"When I met Harry Hay at the organizing convention I thought he was an erudite man way out there in the land of poetry. I didn't think he had any practical sense about what to do with the movement."* David Finn, Hal's friend, agrees, and is prepared to work alongside Hal to commandeer the organization.

Everyone has their credentials examined three times before being allowed inside. There is fear of infiltration by police or FBI. Jim Kepner enters the convention full of chattering people. He's overjoyed. Most of them assume this large gathering of homosexuals is a first-time event. And it is, in the US. Kepner looks around the room, and will later remember, perhaps embarrassed, *"Part of our excitement flowed from our pride that most of us 'didn't look gay.' Most of us still expected a crowd of gays to look effeminate and somehow disreputable."* They're joined by **Reverend Wallace de Ortega Maxey**, whose church is hosting the event.

**2:45**, the gavel hits the stand, calling to order the “California State Constitutional Convention of the Mattachine Society.” **Chuck Rowland** welcomes everyone and begins with a keynote:

Because of you and our work together—because of this Convention and all is signified—I say with pride, *‘I am a Homosexual!’*

The room remains quiet. Jim Kepner feels the optimism and unity begin to evaporate.

Of what does this **pride** consist? Is it made up of the idea that we are of finer clay, that we are more intelligent or have produced more geniuses or actors or writers or poets or musicians than other groups? No, it is none of these things. It is, rather an expression of our new confidence that **we are a minority**, with a culture we can create, work, and produce in the interests of society.

I know that there are some here who believe we should stop talking about our separate culture and strive instead only for integration. But I did not create this separate culture nor did any of you. **Actually it’s society which created our culture by excluding us.** As a result of this exclusion, we have developed differently than have other cultural groups. This is a fact. This is given. We cannot change this anymore than we can transform ourselves into heterosexuals or mountains or trees. Let us accept it, then, and move forward to the outermost boundaries of culture. We face the challenge of developing a new pride—a pride in belonging, a pride in participating in the cultural growth and social achievements of the homosexual minority. Once we accept this challenge, the prospect is not at all bleak, for with this pride will come a new confidence that we can make our own, significant cultural contribution to the world in the interests of humanity.

We must disenthral ourselves of the idea that we differ only in our sexual directions and that all we want or need in life is to be free to seek the expression of our sexual desires as we see fit. Whether we like it or not, the fact is that we are a minority with a minority culture, with minority drives and interests, and we have no alternative but to use these minority characteristics in the interests of humanity. We may not have planned or intended it; we may not even particularly want it, but we have no alternative. The hand of history beckons us and we can but fulfill our destiny.

It would be nice, I admit, to imagine we could achieve our goals without smear, without investigations, without accusations, without criticisms, but this is not the way of history, and it is not our way. Anyone who thinks we can do what we are doing—can organize the homosexual minority without a fight—had better forget the whole project.

Most of all, please remember that this is a free, open, democratic convention where all ideas are to be aired, analyzed, accepted or rejected according to the will of the majority. It may be that we will not make any decisions of profound import at this convention, but if we do nothing else we will have made a beginning, and that in itself is historical.”

A few people stand and cheer. Jim Kepner looks around at all the people sitting, some of them in stunned silence, some politely clapping. Many disagree with Chuck completely and don't stand in pride.

Chuck calls for an election for chair of the first session. This first motion is immediately challenged and a man dramatically crosses to center stage and announces in great camp, *"Oh dear, I hope this isn't going to be too perfectly boring!"* The audience stares back at him, shocked, and the motion is quickly denied. Ken Burns is elected to lead the afternoon session. He motions to unanimously adopt Chuck Rowland's convention rules, which is immediately challenged as well, and the attendees spend about 75 minutes fighting and verbally assaulting each other as they pick apart the 18 rules, which are almost entirely adopted as Chuck had written them anyway.

Chuck announces that in a few minutes, the convention will hear a report from the Foundation, the leaders of the Mattachine. He reminds the attendees that the Mattachine does not run the Foundation, unless the Foundation is willing. And he also reminds them that the Mattachine can function without the Foundation if they decide so, but disadvantages would follow this schism.

On one side of the aisle, there are culturalists, who believe that homosexuals see the world in a unique way. Harry Hay, Chuck, and Gerry, among others. They believe in the Foundation's structure for Mattachine that keeps members anonymous and safe from a government that allows them to be arrested for looking gay while using a public bathroom. But many of these culturalists are former communists, and that anonymous structure for the Mattachine is too similar to the Communist Party's structure for members on the other side of the aisle: the assimilationists. They fear the FBI will take them all down for working with the former communists. Because as Washington conflates being gay and being communist, they will all look guilty. These assimilationists – Dale, Bob, Boopsie, Hal Call, and David Finn – believe that homosexuals are no different than anyone else, aside from who we take to bed, and so we should assimilate to greater society's social norms. There would be disadvantages for the organization if they all split up. There would be too many conflicting voices, making an argument for equal rights difficult to win. Everyone wants to start a movement. Everyone has an idea for how to begin. But everyone has a different opinion on what they're fighting for.

And at times, this fight today will seem almost tedious. Monotonous. And silly. But people don't just take to the streets without a united purpose. One day, because of the tedious arguments in groups like this, people will take to the streets, united by purpose. Riots and marches and picket lines, eventually rioting on LA freeways after Trump's election, gathering in intersections of identities screaming out against all types of social injustice at the Women's March. But the Mattachine isn't prepared for intersectionality yet, clearly. They're not ready for picket lines or marches or riots. First and foremost, a movement must know what it fights for.

Harry Hay takes the stage and looks out at the convention of the society he anonymously started just over two years ago on the hillside with Bob, Chuck, Dale, and Rudi. This crowd of people gathered from an idea he had more than four years ago, when no one would listen to him for so long. Now, even though many members don't know he's their founder, he speaks to them directly in a speech that's designed to answer their questions about communist influence in the leadership, without taking a side on what he believes personally. But that just draws more suspicion to the Foundation.

He explains the Foundation's intention to protect members, telling the convention attendees that Mattachine leaders will refuse to testify before government agencies, even at the risk of losing support from potential professional recommendations for homosexuals – because they want to protect the safety of Mattachine members. He says, *"It would be pleasant, if the social and legal recommendations of the Foundation could be found impeccable both to the tastes of the most conservative community as well as to the best interests of the homosexual minority. But since there must be a choice...the securities and protections of the homosexual minorities must come first."*

Gerry Brissette's East Bay Area following seems to support Harry Hay, though they work up against Hal Call and David Finn's neighboring San Francisco group. Brissette is more so on Harry Hay's side, but he agrees with Hal about keeping sex conservative. They agree that Harry really just wants a group of likeminded homosexuals to enjoy literature and gay history. But they're all torn on the same issues that Henry Gerber and other past gay activists struggled with: assimilate to society or fight for our own culture?

Boopsie stands and announces, *"We are first and foremost people,"* though Harry is explaining that the oppression they've suffered has created a unique perspective of the world that other people can't have. But it seems that over the various ideologies of the Mattachinos who agree and disagree on various topics, each person at the convention could look at the homosexual on either side of them and see someone who disagrees completely on their moral values. Perhaps we do only have one thing in common...

As the convention goes on, another member named Harriet Stanley watches as each member of the Bay Area group is taken off into a corner for consultation. She sees leaders against Harry Hay trying to convince members to, essentially, change teams. Gerry Brissette will write, *"They offered us lodging and even proposed delights of the bed to win us over."*

Jim Kepner sees the alliances forming, too. *"It soon became obvious to me that the villains we were to protect ourselves from were actually closer to my own way of thinking!"*

The convention continues with Chuck leading the conversation. Everyone remains stubborn in their opinions. A member of the Foundation's Administrative Council resigns from the Mattachine amidst fighting. Hal is certain to get friendly with Ken Burns and the Laguna group, who might be conservative allies for him, as they all risk trouble associating with former communists. The alliances are becoming clear.

The final speaker before dinner is the Reverend Wallace de Ortega Maxey. He warns against perfectionism, explaining, *"This is particularly brought into discussion when the member of the minority has a perverted sense of what is religious. Their reaction generally is to set up such a high moral and ethical standard for themselves, in order to be received back into the accepted social order, they have to live even far more abnormal lives than that which society says they are already living."* In other words, the reverend means don't try so hard to be accepted that you aren't living your authentic life.

They break for dinner. It's **8:45PM** when they reconvene. Chuck Rowland presents the Foundation's constitution, which explains anonymous leadership in each city. Those leaders would go to a state committee for guidance. The state committee would be governed by the Foundation at the annual convention. Classic communist clandestine cell system, used to keep members safe.

Ken Burns and his group stand up. He holds up a document of his own. The San Francisco group had already prepared an alternative constitution, in contest to Chuck Rowland's. Their constitution for the Mattachine has more of a corporate structure, complete with one board of publicly known officers running the whole society, and local chapters will ask the board for charters and elect their own local officers. Two hours after the dinner break, the discussion carries on. Ken Burns delegates various pieces of the two constitutions to committees to examine until tomorrow, and they adjourn for the evening.

The members leave the church for the night, likely meeting with fellow members who agree with their own opinions, and solidifying their arguments for tomorrow. These discussions are too important to put to bed, because Mattachine has yet to peak. What they decide tomorrow will affect the future of the Mattachine, and the future of the movement. The organization actually will have over 300 members paying dues in local chapters in major cities that will print newsletters and hold discussion groups, lectures, and events. Mattachine will publish a quarterly national magazine that can be purchased at city newsstands. It'll host an annual Labor Day national conference, and appear in national newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV programs. But what ideals will they push? How will they unite or divide the queer community? Their human rights will be at risk if they descend into what one Mattachine will refer to as *"bitchery and butchery."* But let's put a pin in all that until the coming episodes.

**4PM Sunday.** The convention reconvenes. Everyone takes their seats. Ken Burns remains chair of the convention. Committees present conflicting ideas, of course. A new name to replace “Mattachine” is discussed. There’s a Preamble Committee, who can’t decide on a new name for the society. Some ideas are Dorian, Olympian, or Promethean. Then the State Organization Committee likes the idea of one board, but suggests three conferences to meet down the California coast. There’s even a Committee on Committees, which likes the pro-Foundation plan. Yeah. It’s getting out of hand.

**8PM.** The Preamble Committee presents their final report, recommending Dorian Fellowship as the society’s new name. In the actual preamble, though, they disagree with Harry Hay and Chuck Rowland’s language, which says: *“We, the members of the Dorian Fellowship, in full awareness of our social obligations hold it necessary that a highly ethical homosexual culture be integrated into society...”*

The trouble is that word ‘culture’ and what that implies. Yet again, the schism deepens. Gerry Brissette will report that some assimilationists wondered *“if there was a homosexual culture and, if so, whether it was to be maintained or whether it was to be integrated into society.”* Delegates vote the preamble down to a few lines and reject the Dorian name. Unable to choose a new name other than Mattachine, the issue is tabled, including the rest of the preamble, and its line about ‘an ethical homosexual culture.’ Chuck believes that the name Mattachine and the associated ideas have caught on, and Gerry compares the Mattachine name to the “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval.” They do settle on a twice-yearly convention, and vote on various meeting strategies with various councils. Jim Kepner can tell that many of them haven’t been in an organization of debates like this before. Some are shy or easily swayed. He says, *“Few knew parliamentary procedure, which some used with infuriating skill.”*

CONSTITUTION

Preamble

We, the members of the \_\_\_\_\_ in full awareness of our social obligations as members of the human community hold it necessary that a highly ethical homosexual culture be integrated into society; and, whereas, the present laws of many lands are discriminatory and limit the best expression of the culture; and, whereas, we are resolved that those people shall find equality; and, whereas, we desire to spread knowledge of the aims and aspirations of this \_\_\_\_\_ through mutual education of its membership and of society, we, therefore, hereby resolve:

ARTICLE I

- Section 1. The name of this organization shall be the \_\_\_\_\_.
- Section 2. The society shall be comprised of persons who are duly initiated members of a chartered chapter.
- Section 3. Members shall be admitted regardless of race, color, or creed.
- Section 4. No provisions shall be made to destroy the anonymity of any member without his permission.

ARTICLE II

- Section 1. The General Convention shall be the supreme governing body of the organization.
- Section 2a. The General Convention shall be composed of all officers elected by the previous convention and delegates from each chapter.
- Section 2b. Guests of the convention may be invited only at the discretion of the Coordinating Council.
- Section 3. The General Convention shall elect a convention chairman who shall preside until the election of permanent officers for the following year.
- Section 4a. The General Convention shall elect a Chairman, two vice-Chairmen, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and chairmen of the Standing Committees.
- Section 4b. The General Convention shall have the following Standing Committees: Research, Legislative, and Publications.
- Section 5a. Voting in convention shall be on the following basis: Each Chapter shall have one vote for every five (5) members, but each Chapter shall have at least one (1) vote.
- Section 5b. Each Chapter may divide its votes on a numerical basis to increase delegate participation.
- Section 5c. The members of the Convention as provided by Article II, Section 2a shall have one vote each. No officer as provided by Article II, Section 2a shall serve as a Chapter Delegate.
- Section 6. The General Convention shall retain the power to permanently grant and revoke Chapter Charters.
- Section 7. The General Convention shall have the power to levy dues.

ARTICLE III

- Section 1a. The Coordinating Council shall be composed of the Officers elected by the General Convention, the Chairmen of the Area Councils, and the Chairmen of the Standing Committees.
- Section 1b. The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, of the General Convention shall be the Executive Secretary, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Coordinating Council.

- Section 2a. The Coordinating Council shall correlate and coordinate reports and Activities of all Area Councils.
- Section 2b. The Coordinating Council shall record Chapter Affiliations within Area Councils.
- Section 2c. The Coordinating Council shall call the Semi-annual Convention.
- Section 2d. The Coordinating Council shall meet not less than once every three (3) months.

ARTICLE IV

- Section 1. Each Area Council shall include at least one (1) delegate from each Chapter within the Area. Beyond this, each Area Council shall determine its own composition and structure.
- Section 2. The Treasurer or comparable officer shall file a quarterly financial report with the Coordinating Council.
- Section 3a. The Area Council shall be responsible for Area Legal Aid, Education, Public Relations, Publications, and may establish necessary committees.
- Section 3b. The Area Council acts upon all legal problems affecting the general membership within its Area.
- Section 3c. The Area Council temporarily grants Chapter Charters pending ratification by the General Convention.
- Section 3d. The Area Council temporarily suspends Chapter Charters subject to final ratification by the General Convention.
- Section 3e. In the event of the dissolution of a Chapter by revocation of its Charter by the General Convention, the Treasury of the Chapter shall revert to the Treasury of the Area Council.
- Section 3f. In the event of the temporary revocation of a Chapter Charter by the Area Council, the Chapter Treasury shall be held in trust by the Treasurer of the Area Council pending the decision of the next General Convention.
- Section 3g. The Area Council shall meet not less than once a month.
- Section 3h. The Area Councils by joint resolution may call such General Conventions as may be required.

ARTICLE V

- Section 1. The Chapter shall consist of not less than four (4) duly initiated members.
- Section 2a. Each Chapter shall elect a Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer.
- Section 2b. The Treasurer shall send a quarterly financial report to the Area Council.
- Section 3. The Chapter shall have full autonomy within the limits of the Preamble and the Constitution.
- Section 4. The Chapter shall have regularly scheduled meetings.
- Section 5. Election and expulsion of members shall be determined by the Chapter within the limits of the Constitution.

ARTICLE VI

The Constitution may be amended at any General Convention by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Convention.

May 24, 1953  
Los Angeles, California

**10PM.** Everyone is exhausted. An interim committee is chosen to finish the constitution and call another convention in six weeks. The entire goal of this gathering was for the Foundation to adopt a constitution, reorganize the system, and move *forward*. Without the completed constitution, it's still impossible to decide whether or not the Mattachine will remain anonymous or go public. So the Mattachine can not move forward. The Red-baiting continues. Some people want to attend discussion groups, but refuse to go until the FBI investigates the whole Mattachine. The Foundation needs to nip this in the bud or it may destroy the movement.

On the other hand, Gerry Brissette's East Bay Area group up north is flourishing over the course of just two months, and he needs help managing it. His closest help in the Bay Area, though, is Hal and David in San Francisco, whom he saw as *"a real evil minority at the convention."* He writes, *"When I get this way I turn upon the homosexual minority and hate them for their cheapness, their tinsel glamour, their basic inadequacy to love freely, passionately, and honestly. For I feel that they have debased what I firmly believe to be a beautiful, sacred relationship with all of their shallow traffic in sensation-seeking and ego-aggrandizement."*

Jim Kepner saw the convention in a more positive light, despite disagreements between the conservatives and the founders. To him, it felt like a start, however rough. Organizational details slow the process, but it feels like the beginning of a viable homophile movement. It makes them more determined than ever.

Between that first convention and the next one, other Bay Area leaders rise up, including more women and straight men. Ida Bracy and her husband Paul lead Oakland. **Harriet Stanley**, a mother of six, also takes on leadership alongside poets **Jack Spicer** and Rod McKuen, and psychologist Bob Maxey, among others. Gerry Brissette is the council's chairman, and despite disagreeing on whether or not to support the Foundation, he tries to work with the other side of the Bay while holding onto alliances in LA. Hal Call and Jack Spicer are secretaries for the San Francisco group, and Hal's cruising buddy David Finn manages to nab a seat as treasurer of the area council, where he puts his own plan into motion.

People who had disagreed with the Foundation had an opportunity to finally meet at the convention, and now they're able to band together. Marilyn Rieger and Ken Burns in LA meet and vet others at the convention, finding their connection in San Francisco, Hal Call.

This conservative group feels that pointing out their homosexuality would make society more hostile, and the only way to be safe is to integrate as people into society, *"whose homosexuality is irrelevant to our ideals, our principles, our hopes and aspirations."* Historian John D'Emilio, who wrote a huge portion of the source material for this podcast, argues against the flawed stance of the conservative group.

Working *against* their assimilation position are laws, government policy, religion, medical opinion, and popular prejudice. But, he explains, at this time, when homosexuals truly feel like the “other” of society, when Marilyn got up at the convention and said, “we are first and foremost people,” she was affirming their humanity. The side that wants to assimilate to society just doesn’t want to be separated even more.

And how will future queer generations see the world? Will they be separated by cultural lines or welcomed out of the closet and into society? Will they celebrate their queer perspective or will their queer behavior be conditioned out of them in order to be considered normal? Perhaps both. Perhaps legal marriage will bring heteronormative expectations to all homosexual people. Perhaps gender roles will then be expected of them. Maybe assimilating limits the possibilities of queer culture, limits relationships, limits identity. Maybe we should defy the precedent established by cisgender heterosexuals – who drew the rules up when they didn’t know we existed. Because however accepting of us they might one day be, our own rules are just as ethical.

But under the particular circumstances, perhaps Harry Hay’s idea of “a highly ethical homosexual culture” won’t stand up. Not in court. Not when the government is using homosexuals as a scapegoat for communism. It’s easier to accept society’s norms onto gay life than to bust out of the closet as militantly, self-lovingly queer.

And other differences deepen. Some members of the Bay Area groups are upset with the financial aspects of membership contributions, particularly when Gerry Brissette suggests sending the money to the Foundation in LA. They even continue to fight over the Mattachine’s name. David Finn and other conservatives refuse to discuss Mattachine blackballing known gay bars for racial discrimination, but they insist on an anticommunist stance. David Finn’s behavior pisses off some of the liberal members in the East Bay. They begin to dig up dirt on him.

They don’t have to dig very deep. The Foundation and Gerry Brissette quickly discover that David Finn is close with Attorney General Edmund Brown, who’s on track to become governor. They go to Finn, confront him, and Chuck Rowland writes in ONE Magazine that David Finn *admitted “that he had been closely associated with the FBI for many years and would consider it his duty to report the activities of the Convention”* if they do not “reaffirm” the new principles of the Mattachine. David Finn has them cornered. He announces that he’s reporting “*everything that was happening during these meetings*” to the State Attorney General’s office. Gerry and, even more so, the very liberal members are ready to take down David Finn as, once again, paranoia spreads throughout the Mattachine. As the second convention grows closer, Finn insists on attending, which many people fight. Jack Spicer boldly labels him a “crypto-Fascist” and suggests immediately removing him from the society and exposing him as an FBI agent.

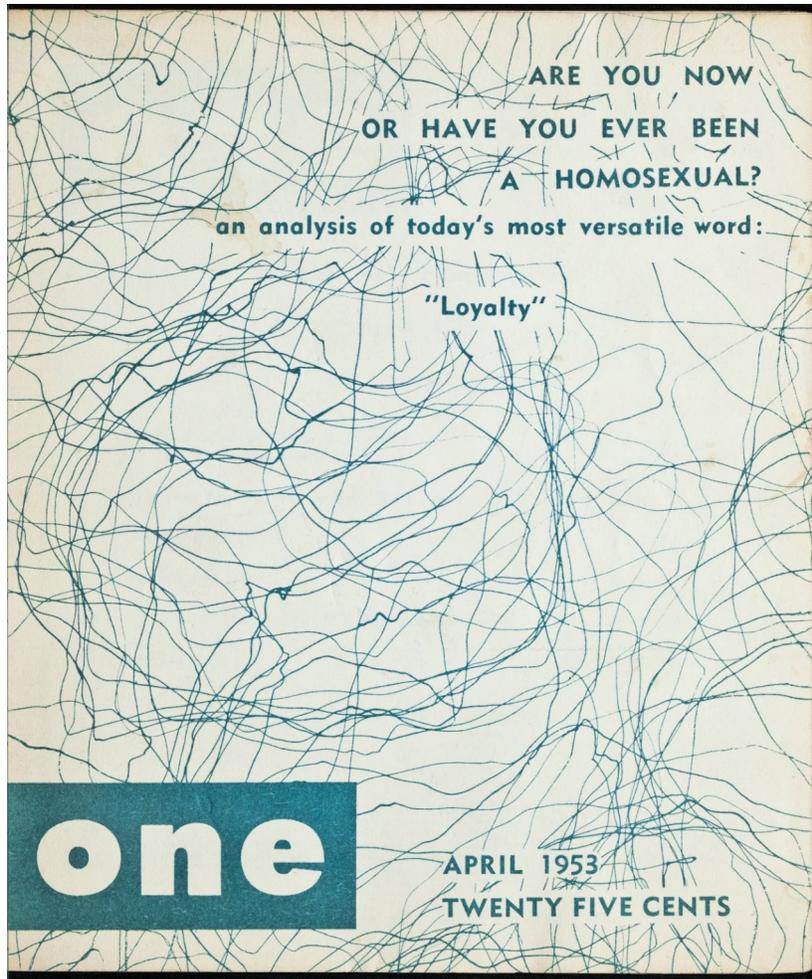
Ken Burns writes to Gerry, *"I believe that it was Dr. Kinsey who made the statement that the homosexual could never be successfully organized. At times, I have wondered if he was not right."*

Harry Hay's convention speech, which didn't clearly strike down communist influence in the Mattachine, is soon published anonymously in Dale's newest issue of ONE Magazine. His speech is titled "Are You Now or Have You Ever Been a Homosexual?" playing on the question HUAC asks of suspected communists, "Are you now or have you ever been a communist?" The article is passed through its usual rounds in Mattachine discussion groups. In a San Diego group, an FBI informant picks up the issue and sends it to the Special Agent in Charge. He reads over the article, which describes the FBI's supposed tactics of digging up the sexual history of airline employees and presenting the evidence with the employees' signed loyalty oaths in order to fire them. The Special Agent in Charge thinks the anonymous writer – which of course is Harry Hay – is at least pro-communist, and because the magazine was found at a Mattachine meeting, the FBI again assumes that ONE Magazine is published by Mattachine. And, most importantly, in that speech, Harry doesn't deny communist influence over Mattachine.

The next month, an informant simply listed in FBI records as "female informant," reports to Director Hoover that two members of the military attended a Mattachine meeting. She also reported that Mattachine members believe the *"FBI would eventually investigate them"* and they should go public. She gives the Bureau a list of Mattachine members in the San Francisco branch, a copy of the Mattachine's much-discussed constitution, and a schedule of meetings and activities. Hoover quickly contacts the Coast Guard and Marine Corps. The Director and his FBI are closing in on the Mattachine as it begins to crack from within.

Because as Hal Call's close friend David Finn threatens the leaders of the Mattachine, and demands for this minority to reject its culture, publicly name its leaders, or face FBI infiltration, one might wonder if he is now or ever has been a homosexual.

Gerry in San Francisco writes to Chuck in Los Angeles, *"Many of my friends have remarked to me about a change which has come over me since I have started working for the Mattachine. I feel so weak and overwhelmed by it all I wish I could have you with me right now to help me. If I am given a task to perform on this earth, I will try with everything I've got to fulfill it. But MY desires, my deepest yearnings might very well go on unanswered during the whole course of my life, and this is what torments me. I hate being alone as homosexual."*



*From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.*

Office Memorandum

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO Director, FBI  
FROM SAC, San Diego (100-0)  
SUBJECT THE PUBLICATION "ONE"  
SECURITY MATTER

DATE May 21, 1953

On May 19, 1953, Confidential Informant [redacted] of known reliability who is a sex deviate contacted SA [redacted]. The Informant made available a copy of a Publication entitled "ONE".

b2  
b7D  
b7C

Review of the Publication reflects it is published in Los Angeles, California. The mailing address is P.O. Box 5716, Los Angeles.

Further review of the Publication indicates it is written for Sex Deviates.

The Bureau's attention is directed to Pages 9 and 10 of the publication. The article is entitled "Are You Now or have you ever been a Homosexual". The paragraph in question reads in part as follows: "An example will help to illustrate this. In one of our West Coast Cities, a year or so ago, one of the airlines companies employed the FBI to do a thorough investigation of the private lives of its employees. A large percentage of the office staff were suspected of being homosexual. Called in to face an investigator and management one at a time, each employee was asked point blank "Is it true you're a homosexual?" When several refused to answer without being given definite proof of accusation, the FBI investigator simply referred to the loyalty signed by the employee on his application form and said, "Will you re-affirm this oath?" When the victim re-affirmed it, then he was smugly informed that he had waived his rights under the constitution to refuse to answer concerning his alleged homosexuality."

UNCLASSIFIED

[redacted] suggested that evaluation of the entire article, a part of which is quoted above, indicates that the writer of the article at least is pro-communist.

b2  
b7D

The publication is enclosed for the Bureau's information. A copy of this letter is designated for the Los Angeles Office for its information since the publication is apparently published within that Division.

No investigation is being conducted by this office.

Registered Enclosure  
CC Los Angeles  
EJK

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"The Bureau's attention is directed to Pages 9 and 10 of the publication. The article is entitled 'Are You Now or have you ever been a Homosexual.'"

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.