

RECONCILING MINISTRIES BIBLE STUDY

2022

STUDY MANUAL

VOLUME ONE – PLACING THE ISSUE OF LGBTQ+ INCLUSION IN ITS BROADER CONTEXT: A HISTORY OF LGBTQ+ PEOPLE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

INDEX AND CLASS CALENDAR

<u>DATE</u>	<u>PAGES</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
May 5	1 - 47	LESSON 1 Oppression
May 12	47 – 103	LESSON 2 Liberation
May 19	104 – 164	LESSON 3 The Greatest Challenge
Bibliography	164	

LESSON 1 Oppression

I. The Impact of World War II

In his decade-by-decade account of LGBTQ+ lives and communities in the United States, The Gay Metropolis: The Landmark History of Gay Life in America, Charles Kaiser begins with World War II and its dramatic impact on “gay life in America”:

Kaiser, ix, xxi-xxii, xxv-xxvi, 27-9, 32, 46-50: “World War II was the roaring engine that made all the modern liberation movements possible. It did this in several ways. First it gave women, blacks, gays and lesbians vital new paths toward self-esteem, by becoming everything from factory riveters to fighter pilots. Black soldiers proved they were the equals of everyone; women left the hearth to thrive in the jobs their husbands had vacated; and gay men and lesbians who had thought they were uniquely afflicted discovered a vast new gay world beyond Kansas. After the war gay veterans often resettled together, revitalizing big-city

neighborhoods that would become the nuclei of our movement twenty-five years later.

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“The fact that the Nazis seized power from a regime that had tolerated homosexuality would color American attitudes toward sexual permissiveness for thirty years afterward. *American writers would regularly compare the Weimar period [that preceded Hitler’s rise to power] to the debauchery of ancient Rome—and then conclude that any culture that permitted gay life to flourish was obviously doomed to catastrophe.*

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“... American journalists and historians neglected altogether ... the vicious persecution that gay people suffered at the hands of the Nazis *Historians of the Holocaust estimate that during the Third Reich at least ninety thousand homosexuals were arrested, more than fifty thousand were sent to prison and between ten thousand and fifteen thousand ended up in concentration camps where they were identified by pink triangles.*

“Most Americans considered Hitler’s obliteration of the German Jewish population so horrifying that it did more to discredit anti-Semitism than any other single event. But *Nazi oppression of homosexuals failed to increase sympathy for them in the United States or anywhere else, until many decades later.*

“*Although World War II did not immediately change how most Americans viewed homosexuality, it had a dramatic effect on the way thousands of lesbians and gay men viewed themselves....* That is why this volume begins with World War II.

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“... Six months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, 14,000 men were entering 250 different training centers every day. The wartime draft pulled all kinds of men together from every hamlet and metropolis. The army then acted like a giant centrifuge, creating the largest concentration of gay men inside a single institution in American history. Volunteer women who joined the WACS and the WAVES enjoyed an even more prevalent lesbian culture. The army’s attitude toward homosexuals during World War II created a new kind of official

stigmatization. But it also provided gay men and lesbians with a dramatic new vision of their diversity and ubiquity. To a few, it even suggested how powerful they might one day become.

“The combination of friendship and discrimination experienced by homosexuals in uniform created one of the great ironies of gay history: this mixture made the United States Army a secret, powerful, and unwitting engine of gay liberation in America. The roots formed by this experience would nourish the movement that finally made its first public appearance in Manhattan twenty-four years after the war was over. World War I did not have a comparable effect because it was not the same kind of mass experience in America; by the end of our relatively brief involvement in Europe, only 1,200,000 American troops were stationed in France. During World War II, about twenty million Americans were in uniform.

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“Because the war brought women into factories and offices for the first time in large numbers to replace the men who departed for the front, it was at least as important to the eventual liberation of women as it would be to the liberation of gays. The overwhelming success of women who became workers and soldiers, and gay men who became warriors, proved the falseness of centuries-old stereotypes.

“To win their rightful place inside the armed forces, gay men theoretically had to evade a whole new set of barriers. Before 1940, the army and navy had only prosecuted acts of sodomy, rather than attempting a systematic exclusion of homosexuals from their ranks. It was only after the beginning of the draft in 1940 that the psychiatric profession began a campaign to convince the Selective Service System to perform psychiatric as well as physical examinations of all draftees.

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“...By the middle of 1941, the army and the Selective Service both included ‘homosexual proclivities’ in their lists of disqualifying ‘deviations.’

“At a series of government-sponsored seminars at Bellevue Hospital in Manhattan in 1941, psychiatrists expanded on their theory of homosexuality as a mental illness. Homosexuality was discussed as ‘an aspect of three personality

disorders: psychopaths who were sexual perverts, paranoid personalities who suffered from homosexual panic, and schizoid personalities' who displayed gay symptoms. In 1942, army mobilization regulations were expanded to include a paragraph entitled 'Sexual Perversions.'....

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"Of the eighteen million men examined for military service, fewer than five thousand were excluded because of their sexual orientation. No records were kept on the exclusion of lesbians. Once inside, many gay soldiers were astonished to discover how common their orientation was....

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"Although the Army trained its officers to be on the lookout for men who had 'feminine body characteristics,' or who had demonstrated 'effeminacy in dress and manner,' there were no instructions to exclude masculine women from the armed forces. Johnnie Phelps, a woman sergeant in the army thought, 'There was a tolerance for lesbianism if they needed you. The battalion that I worked in was probably about ninety-seven percent lesbian.'

"Sergeant Phelps worked for General Eisenhower. Four decades after Eisenhower had defeated the Axis powers, Phelps recalled an extraordinary event. One day the general told her, 'I'm giving you an order to ferret those lesbians out. We're going to get rid of them.'

"I looked at him and then I looked at his secretary, who was standing next to me, and I said, 'Well, sir, if the general pleases, sir, I'll be happy to do this investigation for you. But you have to know that the first name on the list will be mine.'

"And he was kind of taken aback a bit. And then this woman standing next to me said, 'Sir, if the general pleases, you must be aware that Sergeant Phelps's name may be second, but mine will be first.'

"Then I looked at him, and I said, 'Sir, you're right. They're lesbians in the WAC battalion. And if the general is prepared to replace all the file clerks, all the section commanders, all of the drivers—every woman in the WAC detachment—and there were about nine hundred and eighty something of us—then I'll be happy to make that list. But I think the general should be aware that among those women are the most highly decorated women in the war. There have been no

cases of illegal pregnancies. There have been no cases of AWOL. There have been no cases of misconduct. And as a matter of fact, every six months since we've been here, sir, the general has awarded us a commendation for meritorious service.'

"And he said, 'Forget the order.'

"It was a good battalion to be in.'

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"As the nation's manpower needs mushroomed, the armed forces were continually adjusting their regulations governing the treatment of homosexuals. The balance of power in determining how they should be handled shifted back and forth between psychiatric consultants and hard-line bureaucrats. Part of the time psychiatrists encouraged reform by opposing routine court-martials and imprisonment for homosexual soldiers; at other points in the debate they supported 'the stigmatization of homosexuals with punitive rather than medical discharges,' ... because they worried that heterosexual soldiers would pretend to be gay if they knew they could get out with an honorable discharge.

"A 1943 policy published by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson provided an exception for a soldier who had a homosexual experience but was not a 'confirmed pervert.' After psychiatric examination and if 'he otherwise possesses a salvage value,' this type of offender was to be reclaimed and returned to duty after 'appropriate disciplinary action.' But periodic witch-hunts continued, and gay soldiers were routinely interrogated to obtain the names of anyone else they believed was gay.

"In 1944 a new directive required hospitalization for suspected homosexuals. And it was no longer necessary to commit sodomy to be targeted as an undesirable.... 'Now merely being homosexual or having such 'tendencies' could entrap both men and women, label them as sick, and remove them from the service.' A psychiatrist interviewed each suspect, and a Red Cross worker wrote up his life history and contacted his family. If he refused dishonorable discharge, he could be court-martialed and imprisoned.

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"All those who received a dishonorable discharge paid a huge price when the war was over, because they were automatically denied the lavish benefits of

the GI Bill, which financed the education and subsidized the mortgages of millions of other veterans....

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“Although psychiatrists believed they were improving the plight of gay soldiers by lobbying for hospitalization rather than imprisonment, their efforts would have a decidedly negative effect on gay life in America over the next three decades. Practically everything psychiatrists urged the army to do—‘forced hospitalization, mandatory psychiatric diagnosis, discharge as sexual psychopaths, and the protective sympathy of psychiatrists’—reinforced the notion that homosexuals were sick.

[Compare **Bronski**, pp. 165-67,170-71: “AN ARMY OF LOVERS

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*“At the same time that it was distributing *Psychology for the Fighting Man* [a guide for young men new to the service [that] forthrightly and calmly addressed men’s fears about homosexual impulses,] the military was beginning to purge homosexuals. In 1941 secretary of war Henry Stimson ordered all ‘sodomists’ be court-martialed and, if found guilty, sentenced to five years of hard labor. The courts-martial quickly became too costly. In 1942 Stimson allowed Section 8 discharges—called ‘blue discharges,’ after the color of the paper on which they were printed—for homosexuals. A Section 8 discharge was not a dishonorable discharge, issued after a court-martial, but neither was it an honorable discharge. The Veterans Administration quickly determined that a Section 8 discharge precluded a former service member from entitlements. These included access to health care at a VA hospital and accessing the numerous benefits of the GI Bill, such as college tuition, occupational training, mortgage insurance, and loans to start businesses. Worse, a Section 8 discharge often meant that the former service member was unable to get a job in civilian life.*

“The army alone issued between forty-nine thousand and sixty-eight thousand Section 8 discharges. As the war drew to a close, section 8 discharges were given more frequently. Homosexuals were not the only ones affected. African Americans were discharged, often for protesting civilian and military Jim Crow laws, in such disproportionate numbers—22.2 percent for a group that

made up only 6.5 percent of the army—that the national black press started a campaign against the practice.

“For homosexuals, receiving a Section 8—which essentially indicated mental illness—could be devastating. Women and men were often committed to hospital psychiatric units for examinations, grilled about their sexual thoughts and practices, and forced to give names of their sexual partners. Many men were physically and sexually abused, and public humiliation was commonplace. In some places, homosexual servicemen were rounded up and placed in ‘queer stockades’ until they could be processed. More than five thousand homosexuals were released with Section 8 discharges from the army, and more than four thousand from the navy. Margot Canady notes that the military stepped up purges of lesbians after the war, when women were supposed to go back into the home.

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“Such events [as the suicide of a lesbian servicewoman whose interrogators threatened to tell her parents she was gay if she didn’t give up names of her friends] illustrate an ongoing struggle between legal principles, which categorized homosexual behavior as a crime, and the more ‘enlightened’ principles of medicine, which viewed homosexuality as an illness. As medicine’s power to define homosexuality grew, so did the implications of what it meant to be homosexual. Psychiatry, which had once defined homosexuality simply as a sexual act, now defined it as a psychological state, present with or without physical acts. Many psychiatrists believed that homosexuality should not be punished, but as a profession, they believed it could be cured” [Emphasis added].

Kaiser (cont’d): “A handful of psychiatrists who studied the gay experience in the armed forces reached remarkably enlightened conclusions. But this minority view received very little publicity, and negligible support from colleagues.

“Immediately after the war, Clements Fry and Edna Rostow examined the records of 183 servicemen. These Yale researchers concluded that the military had rarely enforced its official discharge policy and permitted most gay personnel to remain in the army and navy.

“Inside, most soldiers kept their sexual behavior secret. They had performed just as well as heterosexuals ‘in various military jobs,’ including combat. The

researchers also found no reason to believe that homosexuality alone ‘would make a man a poor military risk.... Homosexuals should be judged first as individuals, and not as a class.’ Their report even suggested that military officials should ‘examine the question as to whether the military service should be interested in homosexuality as such, or only in the individual’s ability to perform his duties and adjust to military life.’

“This study was the first in a Pentagon series that contradicted the military’s official prejudice. *A Defense Department committee in 1952 and the Navy’s Crittenden Board in 1957 both rejected the idea that gays represented exceptional security risks. But like the report of Fry and Rostow, these studies and nearly all the others devoted to homosexuals in the military were either suppressed or destroyed.* In 1977, the army announced that its files revealed ‘no evidence of special studies pertaining to homosexuals,’ and the navy couldn’t locate any either” [Emphasis added].

Kaiser also included in his book a vivid description of gay life in New York City during World War II. As depicted by Kaiser, there were actually two radically-different gay lifestyles in New York during the war years, lifestyles that were separated by wealth and by class:

Kaiser, pp. 12-14, 17-19: “Fifty years later, like many men of his generation, [Otis] Bigelow resisted unpleasant memories of gay life in the 1940s—and deplored its more democratic style in the 1990s. After he finally acknowledged to himself that he was gay, he never worried about becoming an outsider because ‘gay society at that point was so hermetic and so safe and so wonderful. Everybody was very classy in those days. There was no trade. There were no bums.... Everybody that you met had a style of elegance. It was not T-shirts and muscles and so on. It was wit and class. You had to have tails and be polite. Homosexuality was an upscale thing to be. It was defined by class. There was no dark cruising.’

“On this subject, Bigelow was wholly misinformed. Across town from the Park Avenue swells who entertained him so lavishly in their duplex apartments, a completely different kind of gay life was thriving in Times Square. Obvious ‘fairies’ (many of them heavily made-up) created their own flamboyant culture in the theater district. On either side of Broadway, there were gay bars, gay restaurants and even gay cafeterias. Automats were especially popular with the gay

demimonde and even ‘the largest cafeterias in the Child chain could be ‘astonishingly open,’ according to the historian George Chauncey. Some proprietors encouraged their reputation as ‘gay hangouts’ to attract late-night sightseers.

“Soldiers and sailors swarmed through this teeming crossroads, and gay men pursued them with abandon....

“Unlike the hermetic existence Bigelow enjoyed, which was protected by enormous wealth, the lives of ordinary lesbians and gay men were much more precarious. Because they had to be clandestine, the gay speakeasies that flourished in the twenties and thirties were usually very safe places to congregate. *After Franklin Roosevelt ended Prohibition in 1933, the speakeasies were replaced by a continually changing constellation of gay bars. These saloons tended to be more open, but that meant they were also subject to much more harassment.* Even inside gay bars, plainclothes policemen would practice entrapment, actually displaying erections in the bathroom to trick customers into propositioning them—a practice that continued in New York until the end of the 1960s. Payoffs to policemen by bar owners were frequent and utterly brazen....

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“The ‘respectable’ (and deeply closeted) gay men whom Bigelow knew were honest about their homosexuality only among themselves; they were horrified by the brazen displays of the Times Square crowd. Despite enormous changes, the same syndrome is sometimes still apparent today [in 1997, when this book was first published], as closeted Park Avenue lawyers and wealthy Wall Street investment bankers cringe at the flamboyance of anyone less inhibited than themselves.

“In the forties, money protected the wealthy from most forms of harassment....:

Kaiser, pp. 17-19: “The degree of protection some American aristocrats enjoyed in the forties was demonstrated most dramatically by Sumner Welles, a confidant of FDR’s (and a page boy at his wedding) who became undersecretary of state in 1937. Roosevelt relied on Welles as his main ally at the State Department, an arrangement that enraged Welles’s superior, Secretary of State Cordell Hull.

“In the fall of 1940, Welles was part of a huge Washington delegation that

attended the funeral of House Speaker William Brockman Bankhead (Tallulah's father), who had died of a heart attack on September 15. On the special train back to Washington, Welles got very drunk and then retired to his compartment. There, he repeatedly rang for the black porters attending the passengers and made brazen advances at several of them.

"One of the porters complained to his employer, the Southern Railway Company, which was headquartered in Philadelphia. William Bullitt, who had been FDR's ambassador to France, lived in Philadelphia. He heard the story and immediately started to spread it. Bullitt was a friend of Hull and an enemy of Welles, and he viewed Welles's indiscretion as the perfect opportunity to get rid of the undersecretary.

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"When Bullitt visited the president to urge him to fire Welles, Roosevelt acknowledged the accuracy of the allegations against the State Department man. [FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover had investigated the allegations and determined that 'Mr. Welles had propositioned a number of the train crew to have immoral relations with them']. But [Roosevelt] refused to do anything about [Welles's misconduct]. He told Bullitt there would be no publicity because the story was too scandalous to print [, a prediction that proved to be accurate]. Welles would never behave this way again because he [Roosevelt] had taken the precaution of assigning a bodyguard to watch over him day and night. Bullitt said he considered Welles 'worse than a murderer,' but the president insisted that he still needed his old friend at State.

"Frustrated by Roosevelt's recalcitrance, Hull and Bullitt leaked the story ... to a Republican senator ... [who] then went to Roosevelt's attorney general and threatened to hold hearings on the matter unless Welles was fired. Roosevelt could not hold out any longer, and Welles announced his resignation on September 25, 1943, three years after the original incident.

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"While a very famous man might occasionally enjoy the protection of the president, homosexuals barely had any **public** advocates in the forties. Even Roosevelt was not consistently broad-minded on this issue. When New York newspapers reported in 1942 that Senator David I. Walsh had allegedly visited a

male brothel near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Roosevelt told Senator Alben Barkley that the army handled this sort of thing by discreetly offering an offending officer the opportunity to commit suicide.

“The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was already well established, and some northern college campuses witnessed civil rights demonstrations protesting the treatment of African Americans, but *gays remained outside any liberal’s agenda*—and remained there *for the next three decades. Virtually every politician considered their orientation unspeakable and their cause indefensible*. As a result, when the New York State Liquor Authority declared that the mere presence of homosexuals in a bar made it disorderly and bar owners posted signs reading ‘If You Are Gay, Please Stay Away,’ no one even tried to challenge them.

“Before the Second World War it was easy to grow up in America without ever seeing any public reference to gay people. This invisibility was the sad product of society’s toxic prejudice and a persistent self-hatred among homosexuals. ‘Biblical condemnations of homosexual behavior suffused American culture from its origin,’ the historian John D’Emilio observed. ‘A society hostile to homosexual expression shaped the contours of gay identity.’” [Emphasis added].

This silence about the subject of homosexuality was broken by the newspaper coverage of a very lurid, high-society murder that made it to the front page of the *New York Times* in October 1943. See **Kaiser**, pp. 19-26. The victim was Patricia Burton Lonergan, the heiress of a \$7 million fortune accumulated by her grandfather, a Manhattan brewer. The murderer was her estranged husband, Wayne Thomas Lonergan, “a tall, powerfully built and undeniably handsome youth” from Toronto who had arrived in New York in 1939 at the age of 21 “with no more equipment than his good looks,” according to a contemporary account. Shortly after arriving in New York, Lonergan began an affair with Patricia’s 43-year-old playboy father, William Burton. This affair was cut short, however, by Burton’s untimely death from heart failure. “Faced with imminent separation from Burton’s fortune, Lonergan made a dramatic shift in his affections; he became the fervent suitor of his dead lover’s daughter, Patricia.” **Kaiser**, p. 20. Understandably, Patricia’s mother “violently disapproved of this union.” So she spirited her daughter off to California. Lonergan followed, and in the summer of

1941, just four months prior to Pearl Harbor, the couple eloped to Las Vegas. “Their marriage produced one son and endless rows, as Lonergan continued to see at least one wealthy male friend on the side. Less than a year after their marriage, Wayne and Patricia separated, and Wayne was cut out of her will.” *Id.*

Kaiser described the events immediately leading up to Patricia’s death as follows:

Kaiser, pp. 20-21: “On October 23, 1943, Lonergan flew to New York on a weekend pass. He stayed out all night Saturday and well into Sunday, club-hopping. Separately, his estranged wife Patricia did the same, arriving home at 6:00 a.m.

“... At 8:45 a.m. on Sunday morning, Lonergan climbed the stoop of Patricia’s ‘lavish’ triplex at 313 East 51st Street.... ‘He knocked at the master bedroom door. Mrs. Lonergan heard him and opened the door for him.’

“... The estranged couple fell into bed, where passion quickly turned into uncontrolled violence. While performing fellatio on her husband, Patricia tried to bite off his penis. Lonergan responded by attempting to strangle her. When Patricia began to gouge his face with her fingernails, he grabbed a huge candlestick and bludgeoned her to death....”

Two days after Lonergan confessed to this murder, Hearst’s *Journal-American* printed a lengthy feature to clarify “this perplexing condition” (the homosexuality of Lonergan, William Burton and others mentioned in the newspaper accounts) for its “normal” readers. “The article, which bore no byline suggested the popular wisdom in 1943. *Like most pieces published on the subject during the next twenty-five years, it gave a lurid picture of a deeply threatening sexual minority.*” **Kaiser**, p. 23. Excerpts from the article, which is printed in full at **Kaiser**, pp. 23-24, follow:

“PSYCHIATRISTS GIVE VIEWS ON LONERGAN
REFER TO HISTORY IN DISCUSSION OF CHARACTER

“Throughout the pattern of the Lonergan murder case are woven the deep purple threads of whispered vices whose details are unprintable and whose character in general is unknown to or misunderstood by the average normal person.

“Well known, however, to both history and psychiatrists are the types of

some individuals whose presence in the Beekman Hill slaying resulted in a rash of such loosely applied expressions as 'twisted sex.'

"In the standard popular histories the activities of these individuals are glossed over, the damage they have done to numerous civilizations merely incorporated with descriptions of broader social declines.

"And in the current history of our day, because of the sordid nature of the facts, little public light is shed upon the social cancer feeding in our midst.

"Yet it is there, in all walks of life, a monster whose growth always prefaces social collapse of one kind or another—whether in ancient Rome or pre-Hitler Germany.

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"Generally speaking and contrary to a popular conception, persons who engage in unnatural relationships with others of their own sex are not all of the same type although the law makes no distinction.

"To experts in the medical profession, one of the two basic types is nothing more or less than a moral leper, deserving of condemnation because his actions are largely the result of his own decision.

"This type, known as a bi-sexual or pervert, is a degenerate in the moral sense....

"Such persons—both men and women—have nothing distinctive about their physical appearance or public behavior to set them apart. They are frequently very attractive to persons of the opposite sex.

"Included in the type are often married persons, of the so-called sophisticated set. Possessed of too much money, jaded by normal activities, they turn to the unnatural for diversion.

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"Because this basic type usually does have money and leadership, the behavior of its members tends to become a more or less accepted part of society, particularly in world centers like New York City.

"Placed beyond the law through position, clever, unscrupulous, contemptuous of decent people, their influence is sinister and profound. No accurate estimate of their number can be determined.

"Those of the second basic type, from a medical viewpoint, are far more to

be pitied than condemned, are in need of treatment rather than the imprisonment so many receive.

“Members of this type are known as sex inverters, or sex-variants, and are degenerate in the physical rather than the moral sense. Such persons are beyond self-help when their cases are pronounced.

“The cause of their condition is widely believed to be an upset in the normal secretion into the blood stream of hormones governing secondary sexual characteristics and behavior.

“All persons have both female and male hormones in their blood streams, with the more female hormones present, the more feminine the individual and vice versa.... When the variations reach a danger point, a person of one sex will begin to think, feel and act almost entirely like one of the opposite.

“In such physiological disturbances, men will develop mincing walks, unnatural timidity and feminine emotions while women similarly affected become rough, aggressive and impatient of such womanly attributes as long hair.”

Kaiser commented as follows on this article:

Kaiser, pp. 24-25: “These, then, were the words and phrases associated with homosexuality: ‘vice,’ ‘damage,’ ‘social cancer,’ ‘monster,’ ‘unnatural,’ ‘moral leper,’ ‘pervert,’ ‘degenerate,’ ‘evil,’ ‘unscrupulous,’ ‘contemptuous of decent people,’ and ‘sinister.’

“The piece neatly summarized the panoply of prejudices facing lesbians and gays a quarter of a century before the beginning of the modern gay liberation movement. And its class distinctions were a malignant version of Otis Bigelow’s view of the wealthy world in which he lived....

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“The majority of people just thought we were the worst characters in the world,” remembered William Wynkoop, who was twenty-seven in 1943. ‘But among those who were enlightened, we were sick. Sick and abnormal.’”

II. The Post-War Years: Crime and Punishment or Mental Illness and Treatment

Opinions as to how to handle the problem of homosexuality were all over the place in the late 1940’s, although everyone agreed that homosexuality was a

“problem” that had to be “handled.” The most highly publicized case that arose in the post-war period was handled in the traditional way, through the criminal justice system:

Kaiser, p. 52: “In 1947, America was shocked by a contradiction of one of its most strongly held prejudices—the idea that great athletes could never be homosexuals. William ‘Big Bill’ Tilden was a national hero, a larger-than-life tennis player who had been the American champion from 1920 to 1925 and a three-time winner at Wimbledon. Along with Babe Ruth, Red Grange, Johnny Weismuller, Jack Dempsey and Bobby Jones, he was one of the giants of the golden era of American sports.

“But at the age of fifty-three Tilden was sentenced to five years probation in Los Angeles after pleading guilty to a charge of contributing to the delinquency of a fourteen-year-old boy. ‘You have been the idol of youngsters all over the world,’ said the sentencing judge. ‘It has been a great shock to sports fans to read about your troubles.’ Later his probation was revoked when the police found him with a seventeen-year-old boy, and Tilden was forced to serve seven and a half months in jail.”

In the military, policies toward gay men and lesbians swung back from the relatively lenient war-time position, heavily influenced by psychologists, to the pre-war hard-line positions, which had been heavily influenced by the viewpoint of law-enforcement personnel:

Faderman, p. 32: “After World War II, there was a sea change in military policy. From 1947 to 1950, the number of military personnel shrank by almost 90 percent of what it had been at the height of the war, but the number of homosexuals who were discharged tripled. Serious screening began soon after the war....

“In October 1949 the newly established Department of Defense issued a memorandum that left no doubt about how rigid the policy regarding homosexual men and women would be. ‘Homosexual personnel, irrespective of sex, should not be permitted to serve in any branch of the Armed Forces in any capacity, and prompt separation of known homosexuals from the Armed Services is mandatory.’

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“But in June of [1950], America entered the Korean War, and bodies were

again needed. The number of discharges shrank and remained low until the armistice was signed in 1953. Then it soared. The years that followed saw the most brutal homosexual-hunts in US military history” [Emphasis added].

Meanwhile, the policy-makers who shaped the laws governing the handling of homosexuals were moving in a wholly different direction:

Faderman, pp. 3-5: “Dr. Carleton Simon was an enlightened man. Though special deputy police commissioner for New York State since 1920, he opposed the death penalty and he advocated the rehabilitation of criminals. He opened a psychiatric clinic to serve the mentally disturbed down-and-out of the Bowery;

“But Dr. Simon had his idiosyncracies and prejudices.... His 1947 lecture to the International Association of Chiefs of Police on ‘Homosexualists and Sex Crimes,’ a model of bigotry and flawed logic, passed for science that lay people accepted uncritically. The ‘born-male homosexualists,’ he asserted, are easy to spot by their female characteristics: their walk, body contour, voice, mannerisms, texture of skin, and also their interest in housekeeping and theatrical productions. The ‘women homosexualists’ are fickle, always eager to add to their list of conquests, and are extremely jealous of the object of their lusts.

“Though Simon granted that some homosexualists live as ‘decent members of society,’ many, he insisted, have psychopathic personalities, are indifferent to public opinion, and become ‘predatory prostitutes.’ *He extolled the state of Illinois’s treatment of ‘homosexualist psychopathic individuals’ and recommended it be adopted everywhere. In Illinois, convicted ‘homosexualists’ would be held as psychiatric prisoners until they ‘recovered.’ If they ‘recovered,’ they were then tried for having committed sodomy, which was punishable in that state by up to ten years in prison.*

“Dr. Simon had influential counterparts all over the country, such as Dr. Arthur Lewis Miller, a Nebraska physician who was state health director. From that position of authority, Dr. Miller disseminated his theory about the homosexual’s cycles of uncontrolled desire, which were as regular as women’s menstrual cycles. ‘Three or four days in each month, the homosexual’s instinct [for moral decency] breaks down and he is driven into abnormal fields of sexual practice.’ ‘Large doses of sedatives or other treatment’ were what Dr. Miller recommended to help the homosexual ‘escape from performing acts of

homosexuality.’

“When Dr. Miller was elected to the US Congress, he brought his ideas with him to Washington. As Congressman Miller, he authored a Sexual Psychopath Law for the District of Columbia. *The Miller Act, as it was called, passed both the House and the Senate without difficulty. It made sodomy punishable by up to twenty years in prison. It also mandated that anyone accused of sodomy (defined as either anal or oral sex) had to be examined by a psychiatric team. The psychiatrists would determine whether the accused was a ‘sexual psychopath’—one who through ‘repeated misconduct in sexual matters’ had shown himself to be unable to control his sexual impulses.* If a man was picked up several times by the DC police for cruising in Lafayette Park, for instance, *the psychiatric team could diagnose him to be a ‘sexual psychopath,’ and he could be committed to the criminal ward of the District of Columbia’s St. Elizabeth’s psychiatric hospital, even before being allowed his day in court. Under section 207 of the bill, he would remain there until the superintendent of St. Elizabeth’s ‘finds that he has sufficiently recovered.’* The Senate Committee on the District of Columbia called the Miller Act a ‘humane approach to the problem of persons unable to control their sexual emotions.’

“President Harry Truman signed Dr. Miller’s bill into law in June 1948. Five months earlier, Alfred Kinsey’s *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* had been published.... [See below at pp. 49-52].

“Even those who chose to believe that Kinsey’s numbers were inflated had to admit the likelihood that vast numbers of the male population were having sex with other men. But in a stunning disconnect, lawmakers and the medical doctors who influenced them preferred to insist that people who engaged in such acts comprised a tiny distinct group, different from the rest of humanity. These ‘homosexuals’ were lawbreakers and loonies, and they must be controlled” [Emphasis added].

III. The Fifties

In his book on LGBTQ history, Charles Kaiser describes the Fifties as an era of “conformity” in which “nonconformity” was “penalized”:

Kaiser, pp. 65-66, 68-69: “Most Americans who lived through the fifties—the triumphant warriors of World War II and their teeming progeny—remember this

decade with affection. Millions of returning GIs (with honorable discharges) received subsidized college educations, good jobs in a growing economy and cheap mortgages for their new houses in the suburbs. Inflation was low, gasoline was cheap—less than thirty-five cents a gallon—and white middle-class American families became the best-fed, best-dressed and best-sheltered bourgeoisie in the history of the world. By the end of the decade, millions of Americans seemed as self-confident as Detroit’s consummate symbol of conspicuous consumption: a 1959 Cadillac with four headlights, dual exhaust pipes and towering tail fins.

“Mass entertainment was careful to promote the values of what remained a remarkably puritan and (publicly) innocent place. Even after the loosening effects of World War II, sex and death remained unmentionable, abortion was illegal, divorce was difficult for anyone who couldn’t afford a quick trip to Nevada, the segregation of public schools was still legal, and the Lord’s Prayer was a morning staple in most of those public schools. The suburban family with three children, a barbecue and a two-car garage was good for business—and almost no one was questioning the notion that whatever was good for General Motors was also good for the United States.

“Conformity of every kind was king.

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“These postwar tendencies toward conformity and obedience were sharply reinforced by the dreadful morality play staged throughout the decade in congressional hearing rooms and federal courts. In a frightening replay of the Red Scare that had gripped the country after the First World War, Americans in nearly every profession learned that the penalty for even momentary nonconformity could be the termination of their careers—sometimes decades after their alleged indiscretions.

“Congressional Republicans—joined by quite a few Democrats—began their anti-Communist crusade in earnest after Mao Tse-tung defeated Chiang Kai-shek in 1949, and President Harry Truman was accused of ‘losing China.’ Ruthless investigators decreed that even the oldest and briefest flirtation with the Communist party should be incapacitating for nuclear physicists and Hollywood screenwriters alike. For members of Hollywood’s elite, the cost of continuing their career often included the annihilation of some of their colleagues—because only

those who revealed the ancient party memberships of their former ‘comrades’ were deemed fit to continue in their chosen professions.

“Joseph McCarthy was a Wisconsin Republican who was first elected to the Senate in 1946. He was a heavy drinker and compulsive gambler, and the Senate press gallery named him America’s worst senator three years after his election. In February 1950, McCarthy pretended to have a list of 205 Communists working in the State Department and known to the secretary of state. It was the first in a long series of charges for which no serious evidence would ever be forthcoming.

“The Communist witch-hunt conducted by McCarthy and his cohorts is the nightmare remembered by most liberals who lived through this period. But a parallel persecution of lesbians and gay men began in 1950, with devastating effects....

“What one liberal columnist described (ironically) as Washington’s ‘homosexual panic’ began after a State Department official shocked a congressional committee by disclosing that ninety-one employees had been dismissed between 1947 and 1949 because they were homosexual—far more than had been fired for being suspected Communists” [Emphasis added].

These revelations led to two Congressional committee investigations, one of which resulted in the following Congressional report:

Kaiser, pp. 78-80: “At the end of 1950, the Senate Subcommittee on Investigations issued a lengthy report on the ‘pervert problem.’ These were some of its conclusions:

‘Homosexuals and other sex perverts are not proper persons to be employed in government for two reasons. First, they are generally unsuitable, and second, they constitute security risks. Aside from the criminality and immorality involved in sex perversion such behavior is so contrary to the normal accepted standards of social behavior that persons who engage in such activity are looked upon as outcasts by society generally....

‘Law enforcement officers have informed the subcommittee that there are gangs of blackmailers who make a regular practice of preying upon the homosexual. These blackmailers often impersonate police officers in carrying out their blackmail schemes.... There is an abundance of evidence

to sustain the conclusion that indulgence in acts of sex perversion weakens the moral fiber of an individual to a degree that he is not suitable for a position of responsibility.... Eminent psychiatrists have informed the subcommittee that the homosexual is likely to seek his own kind because the pressures of society are such that he feels uncomfortable unless he is with his own kind.... Under these circumstances if a homosexual attains a position in government where he can influence the hiring of personnel it is almost inevitable that he will attempt to place other homosexuals in government jobs.'

"The committee noted approvingly that the Civil Service Commission had stepped up its efforts against homosexuals, and acted in 382 'sex perversion' cases during the previous seven months versus a total of only 192 during the three years before that. The senators also berated the Washington, D.C. Police Department for failing to turn over automatically the names of the 457 government employees who had been arrested in 'perversion cases' during the previous four years. And it noted that Washington's municipal judges had promised to halt the 'slipshod practice' under which most homosexuals were booked on charges of disorderly conduct, and then allowed to make 'forfeitures of small cash,' instead of being brought to trial.

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"Most damaging of all to gay government employees was a new executive order signed by President Eisenhower shortly after his inauguration in 1953. For the first time, 'sexual perversion' was listed as sufficient and necessary ground for disbarment from all federal posts—and all federal contractors.... [T]he person responsible for [adding this] destructive language [to the executive order] was ... Robert 'Bobby' Cutler Jr. ... an Army general during World War II, Eisenhower's special assistant for national security affairs—and a closeted gay man.

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"Over the next decade, Cutler's amendment of the executive order would result in the firing of thousands of federal employees, whose only crime was their sexual orientation.

"....Every year in the early fifties, the State Department fired more than twice as many homosexuals as it did suspected communists. During the three and

a half years ending in July 1953, 381 employees at State lost their jobs because they were gay, compared with 150 who were considered security risks for other reasons” [Emphasis added].

See also **Faderman**, pp. 25-26: “McCarthy’s tactics were disturbing even to some conservative Republican politicians such as Harry Cain, senator from Washington State, who’d been a friend and early supporter of Joseph McCarthy and had even served on the Subversive Activities Control Board. By the mid-1950s, Cain was disgusted.... Investigations of government employees who were ‘messenger boys, grain inspectors, and cancer specialists’ were ‘sheer foolishness,’ Cain warned. In an article in the mass-circulation magazine *Coronet*, he objected that ‘any suspicion of sex deviation’ was bringing on a corps of security investigators and even a full-scale FBI check... *[H]e pleaded that the government come to its senses and stop hounding people who were not even employed in sensitive positions.* Cain’s protests in a national magazine had no effect whatsoever. Investigations for homosexuality spread far outside the Beltway.

“Tens of thousands of people lost their jobs. The firing of homosexual workers from government positions was so ubiquitous, and their chances of being hired after losing a job so slim, that by 1956 the incipient homophile press was lamenting the ‘tragic plight’ of many of its readers. They’d come to the end of their unemployment benefits, their savings had run out, and no matter their talents or training or work experience, they couldn’t get a job because ‘their character investigation didn’t stand up.’

“Investigation fever seized even small businesses that had not the slightest connection to the government. National companies sprang up whose sole function was to serve employers by snooping into the background of employees or would-be employees and reporting anything that hinted at homosexuality or other undesirable traits such as drunkenness and dope addiction.... America had succumbed to ‘morality’ hysteria.” [Emphasis added].

Senator McCarthy’ campaign was not the only “witch hunt” directed against gays and lesbians during the 1950s. Chapter 4 of Lillian Faderman’s [The Gay Revolution](#) tells the story of a nation-wide campaign to rid schools and universities of homosexuals and in particular of an investigative agency that was a leader in that campaign, the Florida Legislative Investigation Committee (the

FLIC), which was also known as the Johns Committee. The following excerpts are taken from Chapter 4:

“A mass hysteria hit Boise, Idaho, in fall 1955; almost 10 percent of the male population—bank vice-presidents, high school teachers, shoe repairmen—were accused of having seduced young boys. It was symptomatic of bogeyman fears all over America. An article in the popular *Coronet* magazine titled ‘New Moral Menace to Our Youth’ warned, ‘No degenerate can indulge in his unnatural practices alone. Each year thousands of youngsters of high school and college age are introduced to these unnatural practices by inveterate seducers.’ Professors and teachers whose jobs threw them into regular contact with ‘youngsters’ were suddenly being scrutinized for degeneracy.... Witch hunts spread to colleges and universities across America: UCLA, the University of Michigan, the University of Wisconsin, Smith College, the University of Massachusetts, the University of Texas. *The uber-witch hunt which targeted Florida educators and students was carried out from 1958 to 1965 at the cost of millions of dollars to state taxpayers.*

“Florida state senator Charley Johns billed himself as a populist, a supporter of the much put-upon ‘little man.’.... Eventually he became leader of the ‘Pork Chop Gang,’ a group of twenty segregationist Democratic senators from northern Florida....

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“In 1956, in the midst of the Negro bus boycott in Tallahassee, Senator Johns announced that there were subversive organizations that were violating the laws of the state by carrying on Communist-influenced activities. He proposed that a Florida Legislative Investigation Committee be formed to investigate those organizations.... FLIC (or the Johns Committee, or ‘Florida’s Little McCarthy Committee,’ as it came to be called by those who finally fought it) began by investigating the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) for its subversive support of the bus boycott....

“But the Johns Committee hit a snag with the NAACP when it demanded that the head of the Miami chapter, black Episcopalian minister Theodore Gibson, and the white vice president, librarian Ruth Perry, hand over membership lists. They refused. Perry informed Senator Johns, ‘This committee’s demand

constitutes an invasion of the rights of free speech and association of the NAACP, its members and myself—all of which I claim and assert.’

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“The NAACP fought Johns all the way to the US Supreme Court, and it won.... [As a result, Johns] was sitting on a pile of money earmarked for investigations, and as long as the Supreme Court was telling civil rights groups they didn’t have to answer his questions, he had nothing to investigate.

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“In the fall of 1958, the senator’s son, Jerome, who had been a student at the University of Florida, told his father that he’d observed quite a few homosexual professors on campus. Coincidentally, when Johns’s chief investigator, R.J. Strickland, a former head of the Tallahassee vice squad, went to the University of Florida the following week to investigate Communist professors, he was told by his informants that there weren’t many of those but the place was packed with homosexual professors. Strickland called Johns to relay what he’d learned.

“‘Well, get back there and take care of the problem!’ the excited Johns ordered. *Here was a fine use for the money the legislature had given the Johns Committee. Florida had a ‘crimes against nature’ law, which made all homosexuals criminals.... Hundreds of homosexual professors, university students, and public school teachers were summoned by the Johns Committee to be interrogated; no one came to their defense—not even homosexuals themselves. They couldn’t say, as NAACP vice president Ruth Perry did, ‘This committee’s demand constitutes an invasion of my rights, which I claim and assert.’ They knew that under Florida law, there was no ‘right’ to be homosexual.*

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“In 1965, after nine years of hunting for witches (seven of those years focused especially on homosexuals), the committee disbanded because the legislature cut off its funding. But the demise of Charley Johns’s committee was not the end of the persecution of Florida homosexuals. Richard Gerstein, the state’s attorney ... worried that the public might think he was soft on deviates. In

July 1964 he announced a drive to rid Miami of homosexuals, claiming it was because *Life* magazine ... had identified the city as one of six in the United States that had 'established homosexual societies.' 'Homosexuals recruit youth,' Gerstein proclaimed, echoing Charley Johns. 'It's a growing problem, and anyone who says it isn't is ignoring the obvious.'

"Gerstein's drive to rid Miami of homosexuals succeeded no more than did FLIC's drive to rid education of homosexuals.... But those Floridians who wanted to get rid of them wouldn't give up. In the next decade, they spearheaded a hysterical campaign, [led by singer and former Miss America runner-up Anita Bryant and] dubbed with the heart-tugging moniker 'Save Our Children,' which spread throughout America. [See below at pp. 42-43]. Its message was culled from Charley Johns's rhetoric: the lifeblood of homosexuals depended on their seduction of innocent youngsters" [Emphasis added].

Many other gays and lesbians also encountered persecution and oppression during the rigidly conformist Fifties. In *The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle*, Lillian Faderman recounts some of their stories, as follows:

Faderman, pp. 5-8, 11-12, 27-31, 33, 37-39:

Thomas Ferry and Jim Cannon

"About ten o'clock on the evening of September 4, 1959, Thomas Ferry, a strikingly well-built young man in tight jeans and a form-fitting T-shirt, walked into Tiger's, a beer-and-wine bar on Los Angeles's Sunset Strip. The routine wasn't new to him; he'd been in Tiger's five times in the last weeks. He sat down at the end of the long bar so that he could see the action, and he ordered a beer.... Ferry hadn't taken more than a few sips of his beer before the bartender placed in front of him another full glass. The bartender nodded in the direction of a man sitting a few stools away. The man, in his thirties perhaps, was smiling at Ferry. Ferry had been in Tiger's no more than ten minutes, but he knew he'd already caught his fish.

"Ferry got up and walked over to where the man was sitting. 'Thanks for the beer,' he said. 'Do I know you?' 'No, but I'd like to know you,' the man said. He introduced himself as Jim Cannon and offered his hand. Ferry shook hands warmly, and then pulled a business card from a back pocket and gave it to Cannon. The card said that the affable young man was Tom Ferry, a salesman....

“‘Let me buy *you* a drink now,’ Ferry said, standing close to Jim Cannon’s bar stool.

“Two of Jim Cannon’s friends who had just come back from San Francisco walked into Tiger’s and, spotting Cannon, came over to chat.... Ferry stood there patiently, listening. ‘Why don’t you sit down,’ Cannon suggested, and Ferry took the stool next to him. In the dark of the bar, Cannon, still talking with his friends, put a hand on Ferry’s knee. Ferry sat there. Cannon squeezed his thigh, stroked his pubic area, and Ferry still didn’t move away.

“After Cannon’s friends went off to find a table, Ferry said casually, ‘Well, it’s too dead in here for me. I think I’ll leave. Do you want to go? My car’s across the street.’

“‘Yeah, swell!’ Cannon said, flattered by the buff young man’s willingness. They left and crossed the street together. Officer Martin Yturralde, who was waiting in the unmarked car, got out to witness Thomas Ferry flash his officer’s badge at James Cannon, pull out his handcuffs, and make the arrest. Officers Ferry and Yturralde deposited the stunned Cannon into the back of the car and drove him to the Hollywood police station.... James Cannon was charged under Penal Code 647.5: Vag-lewd, which covered vagrancy as well as lewd and lascivious conduct.

“Ferry’s report was added to the record the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control had been building for months—reports of dozens of visits to Tiger’s by undercover agents and officers. After the deputy attorney general of California examined their testimonies, he affirmed the ABC’s recommendation. The bar’s license was revoked.

“The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control had actually been created because of homosexuals.... In 1951 the California Legislature authorized and pledged to finance a four-year study of ‘Sexual Psychopath Legislation’ in twenty-three states and the District of Columbia. Four years later, horrified (as they had expected to be) by what the study told about homosexuals and their ‘victims,’ the legislators passed a constitutional amendment that created a Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control and added a section to the Business and Professions Code that said that a liquor license could be revoked if a place was a ‘resort’ where ‘sexual perverts’ congregated.

“The newly created ABC was charged with maintaining public safety in establishments that served alcohol—and homosexuality, the legislature and most of America agreed, was intensely injurious to the public. Undercover agents and vice squad police were sent out on fishing expeditions, to find any evidence that the ABC could use to close the doors of homosexual bars....”

Lorinda Pereira and Dorothy Gardner

“Lesbians were less likely than homosexual men to make a sexual move on a stranger after a brief conversation, but women agents and undercover officers were sent into lesbian bars as spies. Almost as soon as the Alcoholic Beverage Control was established in 1955, vice squad officer Marge Gwinn was sent with another undercover policewoman, Helen Davis, to do surveillance on Pearl’s, a lesbian bar that catered mostly to Latinas, for whom the place was like a social club. Gwinn passing for butch in boy’s pants and short pomaded hair, and Davis passing for femme, hit pay dirt after only a few nights. Lorinda Pereira, a young woman in a dress and high heels, plopped herself down on the lap of short-haired Dorothy Gardner, who was decked out in a man’s shirt and fly-front trousers. Gardner petted Pereira’s leg and then rested her hand somewhere near Pereira’s pubic area—and Officers Gwinn and Davis quietly summoned their Oakland Police Department colleagues for a 1:30 a.m. raid. With a nod to the raiding police, the two officers identified the two women whose behavior was ‘injurious to public welfare and morals.’ Pereira and Gardner were the first to be taken out to the paddy wagon. At the station, they were charged under Penal Code 647.5, ‘vag- lewd,’ and were given suspended sentences of thirty days. Their ‘misconduct’ was the heart of the ABC case to revoke Pearl Kershaw’s liquor license and shut the bar down.

“At a time when bars were the only public place where homosexuals could congregate, the loss of any gay bar was no small thing. Yet there was almost no public protest among gay bar-goers when Pearl’s was lost; nor when the North Coastal Area administrator of the ABC, Sidney Fineberg, declared a ‘vigorous’ campaign to revoke the licenses of all gay establishments in the region.... [T]o protest, homosexuals would have had to admit they were part of a group called ‘perverts’ and ‘psychopaths.’ Everywhere, homosexual anger was tamped down by shame and fear” [Emphasis added].

[See also Kaiser, p. 84: “Gay life in New York City in the 1950s was by turns oppressive and exhilarating, a world of persecution and vast possibilities. Plainclothesmen tried to entrap men, even inside gay bars in Manhattan, and uniformed officers harassed women dressed like men because women were legally required to wear at least one article of women’s clothing whenever they appeared in public. Knowingly serving a drink to a gay person automatically made a bar disorderly under state law, and it was illegal for two men to be on a dance floor together without a woman present.

“Blackmail of the closeted was a constant danger, and in some cases criminals impersonated corrupt policemen to extort money from the frightened. A man robbed by someone he had brought home for sex never reported such an incident to the police. And gay murder victims were among the police department’s lowest priorities....”]

Faderman cont’d:

Sally Taft Duplaix

“Sally Taft Duplaix was a sophomore in 1956 at Smith, the rich-girl’s college. Classy all-American girl looks, stylish, and smart too, Sally had even been valedictorian at her posh high school. She seemed to fit perfectly into the Smith environment, until another student reported to the dean that she’d caught Sally and her roommate *in flagrante delicto*. Though wealthy whites, especially females, didn’t generally get arrested and committed to state hospitals for being homosexual..., they weren’t unscathed by the widespread assumption that homosexuality was a sickness and needed curing. A few years earlier, in 1952, that assumption had been made official in the American Psychiatric Association’s first *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, the psychiatrist’s bible. Homosexuality was ‘pathological behavior,’ the *DSM* stated. Sally Duplaix was sent to the Smith College doctor, who informed her parents that they must put their daughter under a psychiatrist’s care.

“Duplaix’s parents weren’t uneducated, but they knew no more about homosexuality than did most other straight people at midcentury. Their knowledge on the subject came mostly from popular media.... A flood of books and popular articles by psychoanalysts such as Irving Bieber, Charles Socarides, and Edmund Bergler promised that rescue was possible. With enough

psychoanalysis (and the money to pay for it) homosexuals could be transformed into heterosexuals. Duplaix's parents found a psychoanalyst for her in Manhattan, and five days a week, she was to take the train in from the suburbs in order to be cured.

"Duplaix showed up dutifully but she was uninterested and uncooperative, the doctor said. He told her parents she'd do better in a residential facility. He recommended Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, Connecticut, a place that looked like a five-star hotel on a country estate. As well off as Duplaix's parents were, they had to take out a second mortgage on their home to afford the treatment.... *[T]he doctor thought Duplaix would benefit from the multihour seven-day-a-week regimen of private and group therapy. She didn't. She refused to stop saying that she was a homosexual and was not ashamed.* The Silver Hill staff recommended that she be sent to a private mental hospital, the Elmcrest Psychiatric Institute in Portland, Connecticut.

"There Duplaix was heavily medicated. She received both insulin-shock and electroshock treatments. She was told that if she didn't behave, she'd be transferred to Littleton, the state asylum in the next town, which was far worse. She'd heard that lobotomies were sometimes performed to cure people of homosexuality, and she feared that she would be lobotomized....

"One evening Duplaix managed to escape, running through the autumn fields in search of a pay phone. She found one in a café not far from the hospital.... But the café was the first place the Elmcrest attendants looked for her. Before she could tell the telephone operator she wished to make a collect call, the attendants had bundled her into the hospital van and brought her back. From that point on, she was allowed to dress only in nightgown, bathrobe, and slippers, to assure she wouldn't attempt another escape.

"In December 1956, after five months of shock treatments and heavy medication, Duplaix was released to her parents, who again put her in psychoanalysis. *She died in July 2012, at the age of seventy-six, still a lesbian*" [Italicized emphasis added].

Retired Rear Admiral Selden Hooper

"For weeks during the winter of 1957, four agents from the Office of Naval Intelligence commandeered a house on Coronado, a little island off San Diego.

They were engaged in a security mission, they told the owners. Through holes in a fence, the intelligence officers peeked beyond the bird-of-paradise plants and bougainvillea bushes in the neighboring garden and spied into the suspect's living room. To see what was happening in the apartment above the garage, they went up to the second floor of the home they'd taken over and used binoculars and periscopes to peer through windows.

"What they saw the first night was a fine foretaste of what they'd hoped to see: not a rogue sailor selling state secrets to the Russians, but a retired rear admiral, Selden Hooper, dancing with Roscoe Braddock, a twenty-two-year-old seaman who lived with Hooper when Braddock wasn't at sea. The two men kissed. Then Hooper turned off the lights.

"The intelligence agents agreed it was worth coming back a second night. They were disappointed that nothing of interest happened that night, or the following one; but their job entailed infinite patience. On the fourth night, they were rewarded. The slim and still-dashing six-foot-tall Hooper was having dinner with two young men: Braddock and enlisted sailor John Schmidt.

"Roscoe Braddock left after dinner, and the sailor and Hooper went out to walk Hooper's dog. The four intelligence officers waited patiently. Then the sailor and Hooper came back and had a few drinks. Then they watched television. The four intelligence officers waited some more. Finally, Hooper and Schmidt kissed, and undressed, and turned off the lights. That was quite a bit already, but the intelligence officers wanted even more. They returned night after night, peering through cracks and binoculars and periscopes, and taking notes and pictures.

"In April retired admiral Selden Hooper was officially notified by navy counsel that the commandant of the Eleventh Naval District, Rear Admiral Charles Harman, was filing charges against him for having violated the Uniform Code of Military Justice. He was being charged under Article 125 (sodomy), Article 134 ('conduct of a nature to bring discredit on the armed forces') and Article 135 ('conduct unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman').

"Three weeks later, Hooper was called to the US Naval Station on the mainland, where he had to sit in the courtroom and listen as one witness after another testified in front of a court-martial board. *Hooper was making history. Retired admirals had never before been brought up in front of a court-martial*

board and prosecuted under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

“The military had been Hooper’s life since 1921, when at the age of seventeen he left his San Francisco high-society mother and stepfather to enlist in the National Guard. Two years later, the handsome and gentlemanly Hooper entered the US Naval Academy in Annapolis. Upon graduating, he joined the US Navy as an ensign; he made lieutenant in good time.... [When America entered the war, he] was made commander of the newly built naval destroyer *Uhlmann*, and he saw action in Okinawa, Formosa, and the Philippines.

“On August 12, 1944, on a moonless, overcast night, Japanese bombers and torpedo planes attacked Hooper’s task group in the waters around the Philippines.... Under his command, seven Japanese aircraft were downed during that one night. Captain Hooper was credited with having averted a crippling attack on a crucial fleet of American amphibian ships that were supporting allied positions. *Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal pinned the Silver Star on Hooper’s chest, which took its place among two bronze stars, an American Defense medal, a Philippine Liberation medal, and a rainbow of commendation ribbons and valor ribbons....* At his retirement in 1948, at the age of forty-four, Selden Hooper was bumped up to the rank of rear admiral, a ‘tombstone’ recognition, as the military called it, of his exceptional performance in active combat and his twenty-five years of distinguished service.

“But a few years later, a young sailor, caught by the law in one of the usual ways—entrapped in a bar or on a street or spied on in a men’s room—was grilled by the authorities and made to name names. In a familiar scenario, one of the names he named was a man of some prominence. The young sailor’s inquisitors were thrilled. A big fish would be caught—a rear admiral who threw parties in his home for ‘persons known to be sexual deviates.’

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“An officer of flag rank, as Hooper was, cannot be court-martialed without the agreement of a Military Board of Review and the Court of Military Appeals. Both bodies affirmed the decision of the court-martial panel. Even retired officers form a vital segment of our national defense, the chief appeals judge agreed in explaining his court’s 3-to-0 decision. ‘The salaries they receive are not solely

recompense for past services but a means devised by Congress to assure their availability and preparedness in future contingencies.’ *That meant that Hooper could be stripped of his pension and all other veterans’ benefits, too.*

“The final decision rested with the commander in chief of the armed forces, president and former general Dwight Eisenhower. But he’d declared ‘sexual perverts’ enemies of the nation’s security within his first months in office; his opinion was predictable. [See above at p. 20]. *Selden Hooper became the only admiral of the US Navy to be convicted by court-martial*” [Emphasis added].

Fannie Mae Clackum and Grace Garner

“Women made up only 2 percent of the postwar military. But the percentage of lesbians among the women who did serve was huge. For obvious reasons: the social climate of the 1950s indoctrinated females to strive for 3.4 children and a house with a white picket fence. Few straight women were willing to serve their country instead. And women who were already married or had children under the age of eighteen weren’t allowed to enlist. Most lesbians had none of those disqualifications. Also, they knew they’d never have a man to support them. The military offered training that could be used to make a living in civilian life; it offered the GI bill for advanced education, too....

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“Fannie Mae Clackum was a Georgia girl—pretty and feminine, friends said of her. Soon after she graduated from Marietta High School in 1948, she entered the air force as a reservist and was sent to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. There she met Grace Garner, and they became inseparable. They were promoted together from privates to corporals, and by 1950, they were seen so often together around the base that they aroused suspicion. The Korean War had started, and witch hunts of homosexuals had slowed, but they hadn’t stopped entirely. When an obvious ‘pair’ such as Clackum and Garner came to the attention of the Office of Special Investigation, the Office pursued with fervor.

“In this case, OSI staged a sting operation using a decoy, another air force woman who befriended Clackum. The decoy and her ‘partner,’ one of the other reservists, were going to visit an aunt in Dallas for the Easter holiday. She invited Clackum and Garner to come along....

“Soon after the Dallas trip, the decoy supplied the OSI with testimony that Clackum and Garner were a pair. *They were called before their commanding officer and an OSI investigator and accused of violating the military’s prohibition against homosexuality. Clackum and Garner denied they were a couple and denied they were homosexual. Denial didn’t help. The OSI began its obsessive investigation of them, tearing apart their rooms looking for incriminating evidence, summoning them for repeated long and brutal interrogations.*

“In October, their commanding officer told Clackum and Garner they must resign. They refused. They stuck to their story. They were friends and not homosexual lovers. *They demanded to see the documented evidence against them. When it wasn’t forthcoming, Clackum, the feistier of the two women, called the OSI’s bluff. She demanded a court martial.... It was a breathtakingly bold move: she’d grabbed the upper hand by challenging the OSI. Nobody had dared to do it before.*

“*In November, the commanding officer demanded that Clackum be examined by a psychiatrist. After twenty or thirty minutes, the psychiatrist concluded that Clackum was ‘a sexual deviate manifested by homosexuality latent.’ She and Garner were both demoted back to private; and, on the same day, January 22, 1952, they were given dishonorable discharges. Clackum demanded a hearing before the Air Force Discharge Review Board.*

“At the hearing, she brought in witnesses—acquaintances, clergymen, past employers. They testified to her ‘ladylike manner’ and claimed it was ‘impossible to believe that she is a homosexual.’ *The OSI countered that it had solid evidence of her homosexuality. But except for the psychiatric report, it presented nothing....* [Clackum’s lawyer] scoffed at the ‘absurdity’ of the ‘oracular’ psychiatric pronouncement that Clackum was a homosexual on the basis of a twenty- to thirty-minute exam. *But the Air Force Discharge Review Board confirmed that both women were to be given dishonorable discharges.*

“The two women left Barksdale Air Force Base and went to live in Clackum’s hometown of Marietta. As though they had nothing to hide..., or as though they really were lovers, the two got an apartment together and then waged war on the air force.

“Eight years later, still living together, their case finally went to the United

States Court of Federal Claims. Judge J. Warren Madden tore into the discharge board. Due process had been violated, he rebuked them. “The evidence upon which the case was decided was not present at the hearing, unless the undisclosed dossier which contained it was in the drawer of the table at which the board sat,’ Judge Madden declared sarcastically in his written opinion. The women won their suit. They were granted back pay and all veterans’ benefits.

“But homosexual witch hunts continued. *The Clackum case was no victory for the right of lesbians and gay men to serve in the military. The judge’s major complaint was that Clackum was, without evidence, ‘officially branded as an indecent woman.’ If the OSI had presented credible proof that she and Garner were lovers, the Court of Federal Claims’s judge would have upheld the discharge board’s decisions.*

“The outcome of *Fannie Mae Clackum v. United States* does prove, however, that the witch hunters didn’t always have proof that could stand up under scrutiny. *Those who were discharged were almost never caught in flagrante delicto; someone had been frightened into naming names, or they hung out with suspicious company, or they wore their hair the wrong length. But to challenge the Office of Special Investigations took more confidence than most young lesbians or gays had at a time when the government, the law, the church, the psychiatric profession all colluded to tell homosexuals they were guilty just by being who they were. There was no one to encourage them to believe that they were innocent because homosexuality in and of itself is innocent*” [Italicized emphasis added].

IV. The Sixties

In Charles Kaiser’s “history of gay life in America,” the author describes the Sixties as a very different decade from the Fifties:

Kaiser, pp. 135-37,145, 148-49, 156-58, 160-62: “*All the crosscurrents flowing beneath the prevailing calm of the fifties—the black civil rights movement in the south; the books and poems of the Beats; the satire of Tom Lehrer, Mort Sahl and Lenny Bruce; the subversive rhythms of Chuck Berry and Buddy Holly; the explicit sexuality of Marlon Brando, Paul Newman, and Elvis Presley; even the outrageous looks of Liberace and Little Richard—all these converged to create the necessary prologue for the sixties, a ten-year-long convulsion that would electrify the connections between culture and politics in America.* For a fleeting moment,

millions of members of a new generation would sense synergy between artists and politicians—between Bob Dylan and John Kennedy, rock and roll and the antiwar movement, Aretha Franklin and Martin Luther King, even Janis Joplin and the women’s movement.

“As the new decade began, John Kennedy was the first person to shatter a significant American taboo when he became the [first] Catholic ever to capture the presidency....

“The triumphs of the black civil rights movement in the first half of the decade—especially the March on Washington in 1963 and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964—provided the blueprints for a much broader national liberation, first for women, then for gays and eventually for practically every other oppressed group in America. As Audre Lorde has pointed out, *the civil rights movement was ‘the prototype of every single liberation movement in this country that we are still dealing with.’*

“‘I think the connections between black liberation and women’s liberation and gay liberation are very deep,’ said Grant Gallup, a priest who was active in the civil rights movement. ‘Many of us who went south to work with Dr. King in the sixties were gay. I remember a plane going down from Chicago. There were six priests, and three of us were gay. A lot of gay people who could not come out for their own liberation could invest the same energies in the liberation of black people.’

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“The civil rights movement also provided the impetus for the radical student movement, which first got national attention in Berkeley in 1964, exploded at Columbia in 1968, and transformed hundreds of other once somnolent campuses in between and thereafter.... Student communities in Greenwich Village, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and San Francisco ‘provided a concrete image of a way of life which touched the imagination of students throughout the country.’

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“*Vietnam was the corrosive that dissolved America’s confidence in every kind of conventional wisdom.* The student movement was galvanized by the growth of the antiwar movement in 1967 and 1968. *The fight to end the war in*

Vietnam introduced millions of Americans of all ages to the concept of mass political action—and the kind of power that could be wielded in the streets, especially when the national press became mesmerized by such actions....”

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“Two other contradictory strains nurtured the atmosphere which gave birth to the modern gay liberation movement. One was the sentimental embrace of peace and love, which began to attract national attention on January 14, 1967, when twenty thousand celebrants joined [poet Allen] Ginsburg, anti-war activist Jerry Rubin and [LSD guru] Timothy Leary for a Gathering of the Tribes in San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park. A press release explained that political activists would join forces with ‘the love generation’ to ‘powwow, celebrate, and prophesy the epoch of liberation, love, peace, compassion and the unity of mankind.’....

“The other leitmotif of the sixties was a feverish violence, which peaked in April 1968 after Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in Memphis. The assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy bracketed King’s....

“After King was killed, 65,000 troops were needed to quell riots in 130 cities across the country. The fires that swept through Washington were the worst since the British had burned the White House in 1814, and machine-gun nests sprouted on the steps of the Capitol. The Johnson administration worried that it might actually run out of troops to calm the uprisings. Thirty-nine people were killed and nearly twenty thousand were arrested across the country...

“But these disturbances had a very different effect on another group of disenfranchised Americans. They planted seeds of disobedience inside the hearts of millions who were finally about to assert their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” [Emphasis added].

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“The loudest reverberation from the collapse of the old order was a revolution in the way Americans thought about sex. *The widespread use of the Pill at the beginning of the sixties* made sex simpler, more accessible and seemingly less consequential. It also *encouraged public acceptance of a truly radical notion for a prudish nation: the idea that sex might actually be valuable for its own sake. That idea represented a sea change in the way millions of Americans of all*

orientations thought about copulation; in fact it was the fundamental philosophical leap, the indispensable step before homosexual sex could gain any legitimacy within the larger society. By definition, until sex was given a value unconnected to procreation, sex between two people of the same gender could only be worthless and 'unnatural.' ... [O]nce the Pill gained widespread acceptance, the defense of heterosexual intercourse as the only 'natural' act became increasingly difficult because 'modern technology was obstructing the 'natural outcome' of that act' [Italicized emphasis added].

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"In 1963 *The New York Times* published a landmark piece about homosexuality on its front page. The article was inspired by the convictions of the man who would dominate the news department for more than twenty years. His opinions would often have a decisive effect on the way gay employees were treated and gay issues were covered by the *Times*.

"A.M. Rosenthal was a brilliant, ambitious, volatile and fiercely opinionated newsman. The son of Russian Jews who first settled in Canada before moving to the Bronx, he started his career at the *Times* while still an undergraduate at City College.... [I]n 1977, he became executive editor, a job that gave him control of the entire news department. He held that position until 1986.

"One of the first things Rosenthal noticed after he returned to New York after a long absence was how obvious homosexuals had become on the city's streets. To explain this phenomenon, he assigned the kind of story he would become famous for: a huge attention-getting account that purported to tell the reader everything he needed to know about a particular subject.

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"This was the headline at the bottom of the front page on December 17, 1963:

GROWTH OF HOMOSEXUALITY
IN CITY PROVOKES WIDE CONCERN

"The story ... began with a routine report about the closing of two more 'homosexual haunts,' but quickly declared its main purpose: *'The city's most sensitive open secret—the presence of what is probably the greatest homosexual population in the world and its increasing openness—has become the subject of*

growing concern of psychiatrists, religious leaders and the police.'

"The article was a breakthrough simply because of the amount of attention it devoted to a sexual subject, since any explicit discussion of sex was generally discouraged in the gray pages of the *Times*. It was most startling because of its length: five thousand words on the growing angst of the city's fathers over this disturbing phenomenon. Homosexual bars, it explained 'are only a small part of the homosexual problem in New York.... The city's homosexual community acts as a lodestar, attracting others from all over the country.' *It was the kind of derisive treatment from which Jews, blacks, and Puerto Ricans were protected in the pages of the Times. But none of the reporters in the newsroom challenged its appropriateness for homosexuals. Unlike these other minorities, gay people were a 'curable' problem, as the story made clear right from the start:*

'The old idea, assiduously propagated by homosexuals, that homosexuality is an inborn, incurable disease, has been exploded by modern psychiatry, in the opinion of many experts. It can be both prevented and cured, these experts say....'

"The story acknowledged that a 'minority of militant homosexuals' were 'agitating for removal of legal, social and cultural discrimination against sexual inverts' and 'fundamental to this aim is the concept that homosexuality is an incurable, congenital disorder.' But it immediately added that this idea was 'disputed by the bulk of scientific evidence.' *Psychiatrists*

have what they consider to be overwhelming evidence that homosexuals are created—generally by ill-adjusted parents—not born.

'They assert that homosexuality can be cured by sophisticated analytical and therapeutic techniques.

'More significantly, the weight of the most recent findings suggests that public discussion of the nature of these parental misdeeds and attitudes that tend to foster homosexual development of children could improve family environments and reduce the incidence of sexual inversion''

[Emphasis added].

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"Two years after the *Times* article appeared, 'CBS Reports' began researching its own documentary about male homosexuals. The principal

interviewer on the program was Mike Wallace. The CBS veteran was already well known as a network reporter, but not nearly as famous as he would become after '60 Minutes' began its marathon run in 1968.

"It took two years of filming, editing, and fierce internal debate before 'The Homosexuals' was finally broadcast on March 7, 1967. 'No sponsor wanted anything to do with it,' Wallace recalled, and the breaks were filled by public service spots provided by the Peace Corps and the Internal Revenue Service....

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"Although the one-hour broadcast repeated many of the prejudices, quoted several of the same psychiatrists, and even used some of the same words as the article in the *Times* ('there is a growing concern about homosexuals in society—about their increasing visibility'), the making of the CBS documentary was an extraordinary development for a medium that had generally avoided any discussion of homosexuality. It was also a crucial event for gay people: *by reaching forty million prime-time viewers, it probably gave more Americans more information about homosexuals than any journalistic effort (or artistic endeavor) had ever provided before.*

"The documentary was heavily weighted toward the traditional view of homosexuality as a debilitating and incurable illness.... But the specific impact of [early gay activists] and the general effects of the sixties were evident throughout. Not only did CBS acknowledge the existence of more than one point of view about homosexuals; it also opened the program with a strikingly handsome, happily adjusted, twenty-eight-year-old blond homosexual. For millions of viewers, this young man was probably the first they ever had heard declare, 'I am a homosexual.'

"The attractive interviewee was identified as Lars Larson....

"Larson had first seen gay life up close in New Orleans, and after seven days 'without experience,' he decided that homosexuality was 'furtive' and 'ugly,' and he wanted no part of it. But then he met another young man in the service, and they spent the weekend together. For nearly everyone who tuned in to CBS at 10:00 that evening, Larson described his initial encounter with an attitude that must have sounded revolutionary. 'It was just a grand, grand experience. It was the first moment in my life where I was open, where I didn't have to hide, where I

could lower all my barriers, where I could be absolutely me—without worrying about it. I had all the freedom in the world to be Lars Larson.’

“Wallace explained that Larson was a member of ‘the most despised minority in the United States’ and ‘not typical’ because of his willingness to appear on television. The reporter gave the results of a newly commissioned CBS poll: ‘Americans consider homosexuality more harmful to society than adultery, abortion, or prostitution.... Two out of three Americans look upon homosexuals with ‘disgust, discomfort, or fear.’ One out of ten says ‘hatred.’ A vast majority believes that homosexuality is an illness; only ten percent say it is a crime; and yet—here is the paradox—the majority of Americans favor legal punishment, even for homosexual acts performed in private between consenting adults. The homosexual responds by going underground” [Italicized emphasis added].

V. The Seventies

Both Kaiser and Bronski depict the Seventies as a time of turbulent upheaval for LGBTQ individuals and communities:

Kaiser, pp. 205-06: “No other civil rights movement in America ever had such an improbable unveiling: an urban riot sparked by drag queens [see below at pp. 79-88]. But *while many gay people remained ignorant of Stonewall and others reacted to it with discomfort, this 1960s version of the Boston Tea Party would do more than any other event to transform gay life in America.* The thick bottle that had contained an entire culture was uncorked in 1969; within a few years it would be shattered into a thousand pieces.

“...Although millions would remain in the closet, within a year after Stonewall, thousands of men and women would find the courage to declare themselves for the first time: to march and lobby and ‘zap’ [fn. ‘To demonstrate disruptively’]—and even to be identified as gay in their local newspapers [see below at pp. 84-85].

“Never again would American children baffled by this mystery within themselves grow up without seeing any manifestation of it in the world around them. The ancient conspiracy of cultural invisibility was finally over.

“In 1969, the only gay organizations with any significant public identity were the Mattachine Society and the Daughters of Bilitis [see below at pp. 52-63

& 67-76]. Just four years later, one could join a radical Gay Liberation Front, Radicalesbians, a more mainstream Gay Activists Alliance, the National Gay Task Force [later the National Lesbian and Gay Task Force], the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, and hundreds of other groups in New York, across the country, and around the world. ‘It was like fire, you know,’ said Jim Fouratt, a founder of the Gay Liberation Front in New York. ‘Like a prairie fire: let it roar.... People were ready.’ Fouratt joined a group that traveled around the country to create other GLFs. ‘I think we set up about forty chapters, most of them on university campuses,’ he recalled....

“‘It’s amazing when you suddenly find pride,’ said Arthur Laurents. ‘When you suddenly stand up’” [Emphasis added].

See also **Bronski**, pp. 214-16, 218-19: “COUNTRY IN REVOLT

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“The exciting, confusing, and often contradictory whirlpool of LGBT[Q+] politics in the years after Stonewall helped, along with other forces, to shape the movement. It is striking, however, to realize that the numbers of people actively involved in these organizations were miniscule. *As with the Mattachine, the Daughters of Bilitis, the Women’s Liberation Front, and the Black Panther Party, the work of a few people in small organizations touched the lives of large numbers of people and changed the world. One way the LGBT[Q+] political groups did this was through their enormous influence on mainstream culture, now that homosexuality was more openly discussed than ever before.* Publishing, film, TV, and the press reached millions of Americans.

“Much of the mainstream press was implicitly positive. On October 31, 1969, just four months after the Stonewall conflict, *Time* had a cover story called ‘The Homosexual in America.’ The article inside featured photos of gay liberationists on a picket line and a drag queen in a beauty contest. A discussion sponsored by the magazine among a panel of ‘experts,’ including psychiatrists, clergy, liberals, and gay activists, was clearly won by the latter two. *As Time* noted, ‘the love that once dared not speak its name now can’t keep its mouth shut.’.... The December 31, 1971 issue of *Life* included an eleven-page spread titled ‘Homosexuals in Revolt.’ It was decidedly affirmative, featuring numerous

upbeat photos of lesbian and gay activists.

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LIBERATION, SOCIAL PURITY, AND BACKLASH

“Social, political, and cultural changes were happening on such a wide and visible range of fronts that many Americans, including the ever-expanding LGBT[Q+] community, did not know what to expect next. *Between 1969 and 1979, more than thirty thousand gay people, the majority of them men, moved to San Francisco. Like other great migrations, such as southern African Americans moving north, this shift—which continued into the 1980s—was vital in remaking a minority culture and formed one of the most important gay political and cultural centers in the United States....*

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“...In December 1973 ... the American Psychiatric Association, after being lobbied by lesbian and gay activists and professionals within the organization, voted to formally drop homosexuality from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). [See below at pp. 100-04]. The twenty thousand members were deeply divided, but the board voted 13-0. A highly public discussion ensued ... [in which some psychoanalysts such as Irving Bieber vigorously disagreed with the APA vote and warned of dire consequences for those children who would no longer be receiving treatment].

“It was in this ambivalent social context, in which homosexuality was being simultaneously depathologized and viewed as the source of newly articulated threats to the family, that legal change began to happen.... [A]fter Stonewall, gay rights activists ... began to lobby to repeal sodomy laws and pass statutes outlawing discrimination against gays. *By 1979, twenty states had repealed their sodomy laws, some willingly and others after legal battles....*

“In 1975, voters in Massachusetts elected Elaine Noble to the state’s House of Representatives, making her the first openly lesbian or gay state legislator in U.S. history. Around the same time, activists were introducing nondiscrimination bills, misnamed in the press as ‘gay rights bills,’ in towns, cities, and counties across the country. These laws—modeled on the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which forbids discrimination based on ‘race, color, religion, sex, [or] national origin’—

targeted discrimination based on actual or perceived sexual orientation. Liberal university cities passed the first such laws, starting with East Lansing, Michigan, in March 1972.... *By 1976, twenty-nine such laws had been passed in the United States.*

“The fight over the ‘gay rights’ bill in Dade County, Florida, which includes Miami, became a pivotal turning point. On January 18, 1977, the county commission passed, by a 5 to 3 vote, an ordinance that would make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, or public services, including both public and private schools. Local Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Jews, along with other conservative groups, immediately rallied a movement to fight for repeal. Included in this coalition was Save Our Children, a newly formed Christian group founded by Anita Bryant. Bryant was a minor celebrity—a singer, entertainer, and former Miss America runner-up—and deeply religious. At Save Our Children’s first press conference on February 11, Bryant, backed by clergy from all of Miami’s major churches, announced that she had proof that gays were ‘trying to recruit our children to homosexuality.’ Because this was the first time that an ordinance prohibiting discrimination against gays was under appeal, and because Bryant was a colorful figure whose statements became increasingly outrageous, the fight in Dade County gained national attention. On June 7, in a special referendum with record-breaking voter turnout, the ordinance was repealed, 69.3 percent to 39.6 percent.

“After the win, Bryant announced that she was going to start a national campaign against ‘gay rights laws.’ But the energy generated by the Bryant campaign had already begun to spread. *In April and May 1978, laws protecting gays from discrimination were repealed in St. Paul, Minnesota; Wichita, Kansas; and Eugene, Oregon, even though Bryant did not personally campaign for their repeal.*

“The tide turned a bit, back to favoring the rights of lesbian and gay people, when in November 1978 California’s Proposition 6—also known as the Briggs initiative, after its author, state senator John Briggs—was defeated.... It sought to prohibit lesbians and gay men, as well as any teacher who was found ‘advocating, imposing, encouraging or promoting’ homosexuality, from teaching in public schools. Lesbian and gay activists—including Harvey Milk—spent months

organizing the ‘No on 6’ campaign, which successfully defeated the proposition by a 58.4 percent to 41.6 percent margin.

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“These battles ... marked the beginning of a conservative political and religious backlash that is still happening today....

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“The legal and cultural wars of the late 1970s brought LGBT[Q+] communities across the nation together in powerful ways, including massive rallies and campaigns against this new wave of political repression. When the repression took a violent turn—as it did with the June 24, 1973, firebombing of a New Orleans gay bar, in which thirty-two people were burned to death, or the assassination of San Francisco mayor George Moscone and city supervisor Harvey Milk in 1978—the diverse LGBT[Q+] community was able to put aside its internal differences to fight a common enemy” [Emphasis added].

Kaiser, pp. 209, 212-13: *“The spirit of the sixties was born in the big cities on both coasts, and peaked on the East Coast in 1969—when three hundred thousand kids gathered to celebrate the magic of peace, love, music, marijuana and mud at Woodstock in Bethel, New York. In the following decade, the ethos of the sixties gradually spread through the American heartland. Members of the Vietnam generation consumed vast amounts of grass, cocaine, mescaline, LSD, and other stimulants that fueled the most unbridled sexual freedom ever seen in a modern Western society. Writing in Esquire at the end of 1969, Tom Burke described the new homosexual as ‘an unfettered, guiltless male child of the new morality in a Zapata moustache and an outlaw hat, who couldn’t care less for Establishment approval, would as soon sleep with boys as girls, and thinks that ‘Over the Rainbow’ is a place to fly on 200 micrograms of Lysergic Acid Diethylamide.’ Without the constraints of religion, the fear of contagion, or (in most cases) the slightest desire to seek the counsel of psychiatrists, promiscuity replaced Puritanism with a vengeance” [Emphasis added].*

. By the end of the decade, disco had replaced the massive rock festivals of the early seventies and gay life had changed dramatically, but gay men in particular had become, if anything, even more promiscuous:

Kaiser, pp. 253-60: “The first place that hip Manhattan patronized to pay homage to the glitzy part of the gay world of the seventies was an abandoned television studio that had been built as an opera house a half century earlier. When it opened in 1977, its location was the least fashionable one could imagine: 254 West 54th Street, near Eighth Avenue, on the fringes of the theater district, twelve blocks north of the Port Authority Bus Terminal.

“Technically, only Thursdays and Saturdays were ‘gay nights,’ but the crowd was always mixed—and progressively gayer every night after 2:00 a.m. The bar stopped serving booze at 4:00, and the club closed at 6:00.

“Studio 54 was the brainchild of Steve Rubell, the thirty-three-year-old gay owner of a string of suburban steak houses who survived the demise of his first discotheque in Queens to become the most famous nightclub impresario of his generation.

“Rubell had a straight partner, Ian Schrager, but it was the five-foot, six-inch Rubell who was out front every night, deciding who was cool enough to get in, carefully excluding all the men in ‘double-knit three-piece suits’ and favoring ‘dancers and Broadway actors’ because ‘they’re loose and fluid.’

“‘I look at it like casting for a play,’ Rubell explained. His goal was to make it not too straight and not too gay: ‘we want it to be bisexual.’

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“Depending on which story you read, Rubell and his partners had invested \$1.1 million (*New York Times*), \$800,000 (*People*) or \$400,000 (*Money*) to install four hundred light programs, long leather couches, a man in the moon with a (coke) spoon who descended from the ceiling, and a continually changing décor, ranging from a re-creation of Peking for restaurateur Michael Chow’s birthday party to a farm with pigs, goats and sheep for Dolly Parton—all of which produced an atmosphere that Rubell boasted was ‘something out of Fellini.’ The club could handle two thousand revelers at a time.

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“Inside the club were Andy Warhol, Bianca Jagger, Halston, Liza Minelli, Margaux Hemingway, Michael Jackson, Farrah Fawcett, Warren Beatty, O.J. Simpson, Moshe Dayan, Gina Lollabridgida, and Baryshnikov—and anyone close to Roy Cohn, because Cohn was the lawyer for Rubell and Schrager, a fact that

fueled never-confirmed rumors that the club was close to the Mob...

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“Cohn’s law partner, Stanley M. Friedman, remembered the scene this way: ‘Here are people from normal walks of life going out at midnight. The music was blaring, the lights were blitzing, dozens of beautiful people dancing. Men and women, men and men. Crazy clothes some of them: the tight clothes, the cutoff clothes. The bar: six deep, people getting drinks. I didn’t see the coke snorting in the bathrooms. Roy [Cohn] was treated like royalty—Steve and Ian and Andy Warhol and whatever other beautiful people or jet-setters he would be with.’

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“[Ethan Geto recalled the following:] ‘From [the first night I went there], it was the greatest thing in the world. I went to Studio 54 five hundred times.... Inside it was an enormous amount of drugs. People used to do cocaine openly. They had a lounge upstairs....

“‘You would sit around in this lounge and people would just put out lines of cocaine. This wasn’t the VIP lounge! This was an open, public lounge with a massive amount of pedestrian traffic and people sitting around drinking and talking. And in the middle of this lounge was a big, black, glossy table. And people would put lines of cocaine on the table and start snorting....’

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“As well as movie stars on the dance floor, there were future movie stars eager to serve them. Waiters at Studio 54 were beautiful boys of about twenty with prominent muscles, satin gym shorts, tennis shoes—and no shirts. Bartenders were slightly older, in black tank tops and blue jeans. In 1978 [future movie star] Alec Baldwin was a twenty-one-year-old waiter in the balcony at Studio 54.

“Was he hit on continuously by members of both sexes?

“‘Usually men,’ Baldwin remembered.

“‘Gay men would go up to the balcony and fondle one another. Usually couples. Very distinguished, wealthy, well-dressed, *well-heeled* gay men would go up to the balcony and ‘discuss things.’ And they’d ask your boy here [Baldwin] to go downstairs and, quote unquote, ‘fetch them’ a pack of cigarettes. They’d give me \$10 and I’d get a pack of cigarettes. Cigarettes at Studio 54 were probably like

eight dollars. And they'd say, 'Well, keep the change.'

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"Everything about the ambience of Studio 54 made it the antithesis of the spirit of the sixties. There was nothing democratic about it. Frank Rich remembered that 'to be there as a peon, as I was on a few occasions, was to feel that the Continental Baths crowd had finally turned nasty toward the intruding straights and was determined to make them pay (with over-priced drinks and condescending treatment). [NOTE: at the time, the Continental Baths was renowned for drawing mixed gay and straight audiences who would come to see entertainers like Bette Midler and Barry Manilow]. Even as everyone was telling you that this was where the action was, you felt that the real action, not all of it appealing, was somewhere in the dark periphery, out of view—and kept there, to make you feel left out.'

"The excluded establishment took revenge on Rubell and Schrager at the end of 1978 when a squad of Internal Revenue agents descended on the club, seized its records, and arrested Schrager for cocaine possession. Federal agents told reporters that they had raided the club because they believed it had been financed by the Mob, an accusation that Cohn heatedly denied. But six months later Rubell and Schrager were indicted on twelve counts of systematically skimming \$2.5 million—or more than sixty percent of the club's daily receipts—during its first two years.

"... Rubell and Schrager [eventually] pled guilty to charges of tax evasion. Both men were sentenced to three and a half years in jail after conceding that they had evaded more than \$400,000 in taxes.

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"Later the club owners' sentences were reduced to twenty months after they cooperated with another investigation that revealed widespread fraud among their competitors in the discotheque industry. During their prison visit, the club was sold to the hotel owner Mark Fleischman. It closed in 1983.

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"Five years after young muscle boys had become standard-issue Studio 54 waiters, Calvin Klein brought this aesthetic into the mainstream with his first underwear ads, most of them photographed by Bruce Weber. Then he went

further with a huge billboard of a young man who looked to many like a forty-five-by-forty-eight-foot gay pinup in the heart of Times Square. Klein had ‘consummated the country’s previously unheard of love affair with the male torso,’ as Frank Rich put it.

“It was a consummation, but it was hardly ‘unheard of.’ It had started with Brando’s bare chest on Broadway in 1947 ... and reached its culmination with Mick Jagger’s bare-chested (and bisexual) looks and leaps.

“‘The gay physical ideal, once rigidly enforced by the culture, could be as cruel to those who didn’t match it as straight conformity was to gays,’ Rich wrote. *‘The Klein style excluded unpretty men, zaftig women, the imperfect, the overweight, the square.’ What had been a magnificently inclusive culture in the sixties suddenly seemed very exclusive indeed....*” [Emphasis added].

LESSON 2 Liberation

I. The Post-War Years

In his history of America’s LGBTQ+ population, A Queer History of the United States, Michael Bronski characterizes the dramatic growth of urban homosexual communities on both coasts of the United States following World War II as one of the most significant events in American LGBTQ+ history:

Bronski, pp. 177-79: “BRINGING THE WAR HOME

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“Meanwhile, lesbians and gay men—terms that were beginning to be used with more frequency, first within the homosexual community and then in popular speech—were understanding their relationship to American society primarily through cities. *Lesbians and gay male veterans frequently decided not to return to their towns of birth; instead, they moved to large cities, where they knew they could live more openly. Homosexuals had undergone a sexual revolution during the war. This revolution contributed almost immediately to a new sense of community, first in the armed forces and then in civilian life. Large cities across the country—especially those on the East and West coasts, where women and men from overseas disembarked on their return—saw enormous growth in the number of lesbians and gay men.* While these urban homosexual communities were not entirely new, their numbers were now much larger....

“... In contrast to communities organized around the biological family, the new homosexual communities needed smaller living spaces for single people or couples, but a much larger space for community activities. These social spaces included restaurants, theaters, bars, coffeehouses, and parks. Most large cities had neighborhoods that accommodated these needs. Many of them, such as San Francisco’s North Beach, the west side of Boston’s Beacon Hill, or New York’s Greenwich Village, were neighborhoods that had previously been occupied by newly arrived immigrants, who required vibrant public social space in which they could sustain their own culture” [Emphasis added].

See also **Kaiser**, p. 51: “In the late 1940s, thousands of lesbian and gay soldiers who had streamed through New York City on their way to Europe settled in Manhattan, bolstering what was already the largest gay community in America. In 1945, they founded the Veterans Benevolent Association, one of the first gay organizations ever incorporated in New York State.

“The group met monthly and then twice a month on the fourth floor of a building on Houston Street near Second Avenue. Jules Elphant attended its meetings right from the start, when he was twenty-two. ‘A lot of it was uncomfortable because in those days we weren’t ‘gay.’ I think we were just ‘queer.’ Or ‘sissies.’ *Sissy* was the word that took care of everything, but so many of us were so far from being sissies....

“The association’s dances attracted nearly two hundred men. The dances also attracted a couple of the veterans’ wives, including the woman married to James Lang, who founded the association and did most of the work that kept it together until 1954. ‘The women were all straight, but they knew their husbands were gay and they just went along with the husbands,’ said Elphant.”

The other significant event during the post-war years, according to both Bronski and Kaiser, was the publication of the Kinsey Report:

Bronski, p. 183: “VISIBLE COMMUNITIES/INVISIBLE LIVES

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“There is a commonly held belief that the 1950s were marked by national economic prosperity, traditional family life, sexual restraint, and a well-meaning conservatism, in clear contrast to the 1960s, a decade of radicalism and violent

social change. Such simplistic categorization is misleading.... Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, homosexuality was far from being ‘unspoken,’ as popular thinking has it; America was increasingly obsessed with it.

“SEX AND THE BEGINNINGS OF A MOVEMENT

“Key to this obsession was the publication of Alfred Kinsey’s Sexual Behavior in the Human Male in January 1948, permanently changing how Americans discussed sexuality. The Kinsey Report, as it was commonly known, was a detailed, scientific study of American male sexual activity. Kinsey, who had made his reputation studying the anatomy, biology, and behavior of gall wasps, recruited a team of trained interviewers to gather data from twelve thousand men, then used the data from 5,300 of them to produce preliminary conclusions about male sexual behavior.... Kinsey was interested only in his informants’ behavior, not in how they understood their identity.... *As the United States attempted to readjust to an overtly heterosexual paradigm after World War II, Americans found Kinsey’s findings on homosexuality the most shocking....*

“The Kinsey Report was a media sensation, joked about in popular songs, Broadway plays, and television shows. The mainstream press carefully, and accurately, extracted some remarkable statistics: 37 percent of all males had some form of homosexual contact between their teen years and old age; 50 percent of males who remained single until the age of thirty-five had overt homosexual experiences to orgasm; 10 percent of males were more or less exclusively homosexual for at least three years between the ages of sixteen and fifty-five; 4 percent of males were exclusively homosexual throughout their lives.

“Five years later, in 1953, Kinsey released *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female*. This study received less attention, perhaps because Kinsey estimated that the incidence of homosexual behavior in women was half of what he found in men....

“Americans now understood that homosexuals were everywhere, even if you could not see them....

“Kinsey’s findings were vilified by clergy, conservative journalists, and traditional psychoanalysts. Although some Americans were outraged, most were fascinated....” [Emphasis added].

Kaiser, pp. 52-58: *“Two books published at the beginning of 1948—a short novel [Gore Vidal’s *The City and the Pillar*] and a giant scientific treatise [the Kinsey Report]—sparked a huge debate about sex in America. Both of them were controversial partly because they were so nonjudgmental. Precisely because each volume emphasized the sheer ordinariness of being gay, in the coming decades they would play a crucial role in a very long campaign to convince Americans that homosexuality wasn’t really an illness at all.*

“The longer and more important book did more to promote sexual liberation in general and gay liberation in particular than anything previously published between hard covers. Because it was a dense scientific study, the publisher ordered an initial printing of only 5,000 copies. But just weeks after it first reached bookstores, there were an amazing 185,000 copies in print.

“Sexual Behavior in the Human Male, by Alfred Charles Kinsey and his associates ..., was an 804-page tome, nine years in the making, which drew its conclusions from detailed interviews with twelve thousand Americans. No one had ever seen anything like it before. It was crammed with tables and graphs, and its statistics startled nearly everyone, including its authors. The accuracy of those numbers has been debated continuously ever since they were first published. But while the book’s estimates about the prevalence of different kinds of sexual behavior captured most of the headlines, over the long term those numbers were much less important than the authors’ radical approach to their subject.

“What made Kinsey’s book revolutionary was its insistence that scientists had to divorce their judgments about sexuality from the ‘religious background’ of the culture that had dominated ‘patterns of sexual behavior’ for many centuries. ‘Ancient religious codes are still the prime source of the attitudes, the idea, the ideals, and the rationalizations by which most individuals pattern their sexual lives,’ Kinsey declared.

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“... Kinsey’s most surprising conclusion was that ‘at least 37 percent of the male population has some homosexual experience between the beginning of adolescence and old age.’ He described himself as ‘totally unprepared to find such incidence data,’ but he added that the data about homosexual activity had been ‘more or less the same’ in big cities and small towns all across the country.

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“... [T]he conclusions he drew from these statistics [about the incidence of homosexual experiences] were even more devastating to traditional prejudices than the numbers themselves:

‘In view of the data which we now have on the incidence and frequency of the homosexual, and in particular on its co-existence with the heterosexual in the lives of a considerable portion of the male population, it is difficult to maintain the view that psychosexual reactions between individuals of the same sex are rare and therefore abnormal or unnatural, or even that they constitute within themselves evidence of neuroses or even psychoses [emphasis added]. If homosexual activity persists on as large a scale as it does, in the face of the very considerable public sentiment against it and in spite of the severity of the penalties that our Anglo-American culture has placed upon it through the centuries, there seems some reason for believing that such activity would appear in the histories of a much larger portion of the population if there were no social restraints.

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“‘Homosexuality was thought to be a very rare phenomenon,’ said Evelyn Hooker, who would do some groundbreaking research of her own a few years later. Before Kinsey, ‘There was nothing in the literature that concerned well-functioning gay males.... Kinsey gave great hope.’ Gay people realized for the first time ‘that they were not a tiny minority but actually a very sizable proportion of the population.’

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“Some of the initial criticism of the book was quite mild, but it built steadily through the spring....

“In June the attacks grew harsher. Henry Van Dusen, head of Manhattan’s Union Theological Seminary, called Kinsey’s statistics evidence of a ‘degradation in American morality approximating the worst decadence of the Roman era,’ while the president of Princeton compared the report to ‘the work of small boys writing dirty words on fences.’

“But no one was angrier than the psychiatrists, because Kinsey’s conclusions struck at the heart of their notion that all gay men and lesbians were sick. By

suggesting that homosexuality alone should not be considered evidence of psychosis or neurosis, Kinsey had implied that the entire psychiatric profession was guilty of massive medical malpractice.

“Lawrence Kubie was the prominent Manhattan psychiatrist who six years earlier had expanded the army’s mobilization regulations to include a paragraph on sexual perversions. [See above at p. 4]. Now he led the attack on Kinsey’s conclusions....

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“Some of Kubie’s sharpest comments were aimed at Kinsey’s conclusions about gays and lesbians: ‘The implication that because homosexuality is prevalent we must accept it as ‘normal,’ or as a happy and healthy way of life, is wholly unwarranted.’ This was undoubtedly his conviction, but it was also the inevitable point of view of a man with numerous patients who were paying him large sums to alter their sexual orientation” [Emphasis added].

II. The Mattachine Society [1950—early 1970s]

The Creation of the Mattachine Society

Chapter 5 of Lillian Faderman’s historical treatise tells the story of the rise and fall of the first significant American gay rights organization, the Mattachine Society. *The Mattachine Society was founded by seven gay men from the Los Angeles area, who collectively became known as the Society’s Fifth Order. The undisputed leader of the group was Harry Hay, a union organizer of migrant farm workers and longshoremen and a devout member of the Communist Party.* Although he had known that he was a homosexual since adolescence, Hay bowed to the dictates of the Communist Party; he married and adopted two daughters. Ten years later, he came to the realization that, “despite his dutiful attempts to blend into society, he too belonged to a minority [whose] members were underdogs, just as surely as were racial and ethnic minorities.” In 1948, during Henry Wallace’s campaign as the Progressive Party’s candidate for president of the United States, Hay became convinced that homosexuals had to organize and fight for their rights. Although he wrote a ten-page treatise and call to action that was captioned Bachelors for Wallace, he was unable to find anyone among his friendship circle of homosexual progressives who was willing to become involved.

Two years later, however, in July 1950, he met and entered into a relationship with Rudi Gernreich, an Austrian Jew who had escaped Hitler's annexation of Austria as a teenager in 1938. [Gernreich later catapulted to fame in the 1960's as the fashion designer who designed the thong and the single-piece topless monokini]. Hay and Gernreich, who was fully supportive of Hay's gay rights agenda, later recruited Bob Hull, a pianist who gave up his career to make a living as a chemist; Hull's former lover and current roommate, Chuck Rowland; and Hull's 'sometime lover,' screenwriter Dale Jennings, to join their venture:

"... Hull and Rowland had been active in Communist organizations; Jennings was a libertarian, but a sometime fellow traveler. All had spent years fighting for the underdog and against injustice. Hay's call for the oppressed homosexuals to organize, they now agreed ecstatically, resonated with their sentiments exactly."

When Rowland asked "What is our theory? What is our basic principle that we're building on?" Harry Hay responded that "We are an oppressed cultural minority." The others agreed, and this became their operating principle. They also agreed to meet regularly in discussion groups and to invite others to join them. In April 1951 two motorcyclists showed up at a discussion group: Jim Gruber, a twenty-four-year-old ex-marine who was studying for his teaching credential at Occidental College and his lover Konrad "Steve" Stevens, a twenty-six-year-old photographer.

"The two of them brought with them a youthful vigor that energized the five regulars" and they became the final two members of the leadership group, the Fifth Order. They named the group Mattachine Society after a secret fraternity of the medieval and early Renaissance eras in France. They also adopted an organizational plan that Hay had concocted in July 1950, "when Mattachine was still only a glint in Hay's eye":

"The group would be a secret society, a cross between the Masons and the Communist Party cell structure of the 1930s. There'd be five degrees, Hay decreed, each having its own insignia.... The cell structure would not only optimize secrecy but also define the working groups.... People would use made-up names, too. That way, everyone would be kept safe....

"To throw hostile forces off the track even further, when members of the

Mattachine Society's Fifth Order decided to register the organization with the state of California as a nonprofit corporation, they changed its name to Mattachine Foundation, Inc and listed as its board of directors three heterosexual women. The president of the board was ... Harry Hay's widowed mother, Margaret.... [and] Konrad Stevens's supportive mother and sister were the other 'board members.' The three women had no role at all in the group other than to help mask its membership and purpose....

"Secrecy and convolution had a purpose. They helped insure Mattachine's safety at a time when mighty enemies—from the Federal Bureau of Investigation down to the local vice squad—made it dangerous to be a homosexual.... No one even got as far as attending a cell meeting unless he or she was invited by the Fifth Order members...." [Emphasis added].

An Entrapped Homosexual Fights Back

"... [T]hough the Fifth Order was out scouting, membership that first year remained sparse. *What happened in the spring of the second year changed everything.*

"Mattachine's Fifth Order member Dale Jennings was a slight, studious-looking man.... One evening he left his Echo Park apartment and went on foot in search of a good movie to fill a few empty hours. There were several theaters a couple of miles away, bordering Westlake Park.... [T]he first two theaters he passed were showing movies that didn't interest him. He cut across Westlake Park and headed to a theater on the other side. But Jennings had been walking for a while, and nature called. He stopped off at one of the park's public toilets—to do nothing, he claimed subsequently, other than what 'the city architect had in mind when he designed the place.'

"Jennings's version of the story, which he told in court, was that when he left the toilet, he was followed by a big, rough-looking man who caught up with him and wanted to know if he had a light, and wasn't it a nice night, and where was he heading. Jennings answered, 'No,' 'Yes,' and 'To the movie theater right over there.' But the movie that was posted on the marquee was one that Jennings had already seen, and it wasn't worth a second viewing.... [H]e turned around and headed home. He felt panic, he told the jury, when he saw that the same thuggish-looking man who'd tailed him out of the restroom was still right behind

him. Jennings was sure he'd be robbed. He walked fast, he took detours, but he couldn't lose the fellow. Finally home, Jennings fumbled to unlock his apartment door. The man ran up and pushed his way in.

"The scene that followed was surreal, as Jennings described it. The man sprawled on Jennings's divan, touched his own private parts, and made lewd proposals.... When the man finally strolled to the back bedroom, Jennings thought, 'Now I can telephone the police,' but the man commanded him loudly, 'Get in here!' and Jennings obeyed. The man was sprawled on the bed, his jacket off, his shirt unbuttoned.... He slapped the bed, ordering Jennings to sit down.

"'You have the wrong guy,' Jennings claimed he said.

"'Hey, I know you're a homosexual. Let down your hair,' the man told him. 'I was in the navy. All us guys played around.'

"'You have the wrong guy,' Jennings repeated. That was when the man grabbed Jennings's hand and tried to force it down the front of his trousers. Jennings struggled to pull away, he recalled for the jury. *And that was when a badge loomed in his face, and then the undercover officer pulled out his handcuffs and locked Jennings's wrists together.* 'Maybe you'll talk better to my partner outside,' the officer said.

"The partner wasn't outside. The officer led the handcuffed Jennings through the streets for eight to ten blocks.... The partner was found on a dark side street near the park, sitting with another policeman in an unmarked car. Jennings was forced into the backseat.... The three policemen carried on shop talk and laughed a lot while they sat in the parked car with their handcuffed prisoner....

"Finally, the driver started the car. It crept along the streets at ten miles per hour, toward the nearby Lincoln Heights jail, and then past it; then the driver doubled back, and then passed the jail again.... But again the driver doubled back toward the jail. 'Plead guilty, and you'll be all right,' all three officers advised him as they led him in to be booked. The ordeal in the car had taken almost ninety minutes.

"Jennings refused to sign anything. He demanded to know the specific charges against him. He said he would make no statement without a lawyer. By now it was eleven thirty. He asked to be allowed to make a telephone call. At two in the morning, he was finally permitted to use the phone.

“It was Harry Hay whom Jennings called.... ‘They’re asking me fifty dollars for bail,’ Jennings told him.

“Hay showed up with the money at six thirty that morning. *‘Let me take you to breakfast at the Brown Derby over on Wilshire Boulevard,’* he told Jennings— *because he’d recognized already that this incident could be the start of something momentous for Mattachine.* They sat in a small booth at the café.... Hay put heavy hands on Jennings’s shoulders and spoke in hushed solemn tones, ‘You’d have nothing to lose, Dale. You’re working in your family’s business. They won’t fire you.’ The courts had already decided that wiretapping and speed entrapment violated a citizen’s Fifth Amendment rights. Jennings could argue that sexual entrapment violates those same rights. Mattachine would be standing behind him every minute.

“Jennings wasn’t sure he wanted to be made a cause célèbre....

“But Hay went on. They’d demand a jury trial. Jennings would admit he was a homosexual. But he would contest the charge that he’d made advances to the undercover officer.... *Mattachine would do something that had never been done before: ask other homosexuals for money to support a homosexual cause. Mattachine would point out that in the past it had been impossible to find a homosexual with courage and conviction who would stand and fight. But such an opportunity was now being offered....*

“Jennings, suspicious as always of Hay, nevertheless said yes” [Emphasis added].

That night an emergency meeting of the Fifth Order was held at Jennings’s apartment. They all agreed to make Jennings a test case, to print leaflets and distribute them in homosexual bars and other locations where homosexuals went, and to send the leaflets out to homosexuals throughout the country. “NOW Is The Time To Fight,” the leaflets proclaimed. “The issue is CIVIL RIGHTS,” they declared, even though almost nobody before had even “dared to suggest” that this was the case. “Pledges of funds poured in. Mattachine hired George Shibley, a liberal lawyer from nearby Long Beach, who’d defended labor unionists and a dozen young Mexican Americans in the famous Zoot Suit murder cases in the 1940s.”

The 1952 trial of Dale Jennings proved to be a turning point in the history of

the Mattachine Society:

*“It had been universally true: when a man was arrested under ‘vag-lewd,’ he would plead guilty or nolo contendere. Then he’d pay his fine and walk out of the police station with the fervent hope that he’d put the awful incident behind him. **But not this time.** ‘Yes, my client is a homosexual,’ attorney Shibley said in his opening statement to the jury on June 23, 1952. ‘But homosexuality and lasciviousness are not the same thing.’ He declared that his client was innocent of lasciviousness. ‘The only true pervert in this courtroom is the arresting officer,’ Shibley proclaimed, and he described Jennings’s version of the man’s bizarre attempts to get Jennings to have sex with him. The trial went on for three days. Shibley called one witness after another to tell the jury at length what it was like to be a homosexual in the sociopolitical climate of 1952.*

*“The jury deliberated for thirty-six hours and ended in deadlock. Eleven jurors found Jennings innocent. The chairman of the jury ... dissented.... *The city attorney*—frustrated by the hung jury and reluctant to put the city through the expense of another trial—*declared he would not continue prosecuting so trivial a case, and he moved for dismissal, which the judge granted.**

“But the case was not trivial: Jennings had actually admitted to a court to being a homosexual—and still he went free. It was the first time in California history that an admitted homosexual was exonerated after being charged as ‘vag-lewd.’ Mattachine knew it must use that fact to make political hay immediately, and it worked. Hundreds of people began attending Mattachine discussion groups. Many were selected to be Mattachine members. Groups sprang up all over Southern California, and then Northern California, and then Central California. Homosexuals in Saint Louis, Chicago, and New York wrote to Hay to say they were interested in establishing Mattachine discussion groups there, too....” [Emphasis added].

The Decline and Fall of the Mattachine Society

“The success of Harry Hay’s group led directly to its failure. Mattachine had been cast into prominence at the height of the government’s hunt for subversives [See above at pp. 18-21]. When no one was paying attention, it didn’t matter much that its founding members were politically as well as sexually subversive. But now as a result of their victory a spotlight was beating down on them....

“So when an article appeared in a Los Angeles newspaper naming Harry Hay as a Marxist, the others in the Fifth Order called a meeting. To Hay’s dismay, they asked him to stop representing the Mattachine Foundation in public.... In February 1953 the Fifth Order published an official policy statement: ‘The sole concern of the Mattachine Foundation is with the problems of sexual deviation. The Foundation has never been, is not now and must never be identified with any ‘ism,’ political, religious or otherwise.’

“The Jennings win and Mattachine’s mushrooming fame had whetted the Fifth Order’s appetite. They decided to take another unprecedented step. They’d remind politicians that homosexuals were legion, and that they were voters, and that they wanted their rights as citizens. During campaign season for the 1953 Los Angeles city elections, Mattachine Foundation sent letters to city council candidates to introduce the organization and ask them about their views on civil rights for homophiles. They sent letters to school board candidates, too.... These plucky (and touchingly foolhardy) moves were the beginning of the end.

“One of the letters fell into the hands of Paul Coates, a columnist for the Los Angeles tabloid the *Daily Mirror*. Coates specialized in lurid topics.... ‘The already harassed and weary candidates for office were whacked with a broadside from a strange new pressure group,’ Coates wrote now with sensationalistic flair. Though ignorant of the Communist histories of the founders, he’d learned that Fred Snider, the attorney who’d drawn up the articles of incorporation for the Mattachine Foundation Inc., had been called before the House Un-American Activities Committee when it met in Los Angeles in October 1952. Snider had taken the Fifth, a sure sign he was hiding Communistic activities, Coates implied. *It didn’t matter to Coates that just a month earlier the Mattachine had disavowed all ‘isms.’ What mattered was that the organization claimed there were as many as two hundred thousand homosexuals in the Los Angeles area—and they were in bed with a Red....*

“Marilyn Rieger, nicknamed Boopsie, was a large, energetic businesswoman, a recent recruit to Mattachine, who’d brought a number of lesbians with her....

“... [W]hen Marilyn Rieger read Paul Coates’s statement about a ‘well-trained subversive’ moving in and controlling Mattachine, she—a successful

entrepreneur who had no quarrel with capitalism—was personally offended. She'd attended about twenty-five Mattachine discussion group meetings, she informed Coates in an outraged letter the day after his piece appeared, and she could vouch that 'there is no political aim of the Mattachine Foundation Inc. other than to fight for the right of man.... It is definitely and absolutely non-partisan.'

"But Coates's allegations troubled her.... Why, for instance, was there such an emphasis on secrecy? Eight days after the Coates editorial appeared, her Beverly Glen discussion group met again. With Rieger's urging, the eighteen men and ten women voted to set aside the scheduled topic and talk about the editorial instead. She found that others in the group were likewise troubled. They authorized her to write to the Mattachine Foundation on their behalf and demand some answers....

"Three weeks later, Rieger got a reply from 'Mrs. Henry Hay.' Writing again in his mother's name, Harry Hay assured Rieger that the true purpose of Mattachine was just as its literature stated, and that the board was in no way subversive—and then 'she' added, 'Personally, I have been a Republican for over fifty years. Incidentally, my husband was once a partner of Herbert Hoover, and we often visited the Hoovers in New York.' *An idiot might have been taken in by this comically bogus letter; but Rieger was no idiot, and she now set out in earnest to rip the mask from the Wizard of Oz.*

"She was joined by a slew of other Mattachine members, such as Ken Burns, a well-spoken, formal young man who favored Brooks Brothers suits and worked as a safety engineer for the Carnation Company. Burns and the Mattachine group he presided over were bothered from the beginning by the secrecy of the organization's leaders and the rumors that they were subversive. *Burns's group also questioned, as Rieger did, Mattachine's most basic precept: that homosexuals were a 'cultural minority.'* *They scoffed at the simpleminded notion that there was a 'culture' all homosexuals shared.... The only difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals was that homosexuals chose romantic and sexual partners of the same sex.*

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"In the San Francisco Mattachine, too, there were pockets of rebellion. Hal

Call, a businessman, had come to San Francisco only the year before.... After graduation, he'd worked out of the *Kansas City Star's* Chicago office, but he lost his job when he was arrested on a vag-lewd charge.... Call joined the Mattachine in San Francisco because Dale Jennings's victory had cheered him. But he'd always been distrustful of the Mattachine hierarchy. The new rumors about Communists in the leadership, who could endanger the very existence of the organization, riled him. *He, Marilyn Rieger, and Ken Burns soon formed a troika of the discontented, and they led a mutiny.*

"The organization that Harry Hay and the others of the Fifth Order had started was morphing beyond recognition. Hay, still reeling from his comrades' silencing of him, wasn't up to bloody battles with other homophiles and neither was the rest of the Fifth Order. Evolution wasn't unhealthy, they agreed. They'd bend a bit to the pressure. They'd end secrecy and identify themselves to the entire membership.... Using their real names, they'd call a 'Constitutional Convention' where the members could ratify a democratic constitution for Mattachine.

"The progressive ministries of LA's First Unitarian Church had always welcomed people that the rest of the world judged outré, so it wasn't astonishing when Reverend Steve Fritchman opened the ... [church] to Mattachine's constitutional convention. *April 11-12, 1953, was the first time in America that a hall full of homosexuals came together for political purposes.* Harry Hay was at first tickled by the number of homophiles who showed up But the fate of the old order was soon sealed. Ken Burns was elected chair of the constitutional convention by acclamation. Marilyn Rieger was eventually elected secretary.

"Chuck Rowland was the convention's first speaker. Tattooed and wearing a crew cut, he stuck out among the many male delegates who were dressed in business garb and sported man-in-the-gray-flannel-suit-type haircuts. Rowland adhered still to the theory that had gotten everything started in Harry Hay's Silver Lake home in 1950. He compared homosexuals to Negroes, Jews, Mexican Americans, Japanese Americans. *'Whether we like it or not, we are a minority!' he proclaimed with a tremor in his voice, because he knew that new members had no interest in being part of a 'minority culture'; they wanted only that homosexuals be allowed to integrate with the straight world. His passionate oratory prefigured*

gay militant rhetoric by fifteen years: 'I say with pride, 'I am a homosexual!' Rowland shouted. He was eerily prophetic, too: 'The day will come,' he declared, 'when we will march down Hollywood Boulevard arm in arm, proclaiming our pride in our homosexuality.' But the majority of the middle-class convention delegates were not roused.

"In 1953 they, like most homosexuals, couldn't imagine ever marching to proclaim homosexual pride.... They just wanted to get on with their lives without having to worry about being entrapped by a vice squad cop, fired from their job, thrown out of their apartment. They wanted to be allowed to live just like any other citizen, and not to be told they were different from their fellow Americans. They'd joined Mattachine because the organization had made the Jennings victory possible, and they wanted more such victories.

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"Leery of the politics of the old order, suspicious of its past secrecy, disliking its doctrine that homosexuals are different from the rest of humanity, the delegates debated on and on and no constitution was approved before the weekend came to an end. The only consensus the delegates arrived at was that they'd meet again within six weeks.

"May 23-24, 1953: The Burns-Rieger-Call camp came to the next convention meeting armed with an alternate constitution that cut the *Foundation* out of Mattachine altogether. Hal Call, angry and persuasive, spoke about 'a free society,' which was necessary for homosexual 'integration.' 'Where are the laws against homosexuals 'the most brutal and restrictive'?' he asked rhetorically. In Russia, under Communism! He answered, and he proposed a resolution that Mattachine would not be infiltrated by 'the extreme left.' It passed.

"Marilyn Rieger's contribution that day was to circulate a statement she'd penned that attacked everything the old order had stood for.... 'We know we are the same, no different than anyone else. Our only difference is an unimportant one to heterosexual society, unless we make it important.'

"Outraged still by the old order's secrecy—and its silly mendacities—*Rieger also proposed that homosexuals must 'come out into the open.'* The purpose of 'coming out,' she said was not to flaunt the homosexual's differences before the

world but rather to upend misconceptions by showing homosexuals to be simply 'men and women whose homosexuality is irrelevant to our ideals, our principles, our hopes and aspirations.' Like Rowland's call to feel 'pride,' Rieger's call to 'come out' was revolutionary—although who could do it in 1953, when homosexuals were persecuted as 'moral perverts' and 'sexual psychopaths'? But realistic or not, Rieger moved the delegates as Rowland and Hay had failed to.

“The Fifth Order understood by that evening that Mattachine was no longer theirs.... On Sunday afternoon, when the delegates reassembled, the seven men marched up on the stage, identified themselves as the once-clandestine Fifth Order, and announced their resignations.

“Ken Burns became the president of Mattachine, and when Hal Call succeeded him in 1956, he moved Mattachine headquarters to San Francisco.... In 1961 Hal Call declared that Mattachine would cease to be centralized. A few independent groups around the country continued to use the name Mattachine and hung on into the early 1970s.

“Harry Hay went through a period of deep depression. He withdrew from those with whom he'd 'been through hell and paradise,' as Chuck Rowland described their three-year journey. In 1979, in the wake of a radical gay revolution, Hay founded the Radical Faeries, which, to this day, embraces 'faerie culture' and resists the notion that homosexuals are 'no different from anyone else.'....

“The riots at the Stonewall Inn [summer of 1969], the birth of the radical Gay Liberation Front [later that same summer], Hay's Radical Faeries—these were to him beloved heirs to what he had started. He disdained, to his death in 2002, the 'assimilationist' goals of the successors to Mattachine. *That bitter clash in 1953—radicals who'd regarded homosexuals as a different species from heterosexuals, versus assimilationists who'd insisted homosexuals and heterosexuals were almost exactly the same—augured the big internal clashes that would divide lesbian and gay communities even into the twenty-first century*” [Italicized emphasis added].

See also **Kaiser**, pp. 122-29, 131: “For lesbians and gay men coming of age in [the fifties], the Kinsey Report made an enormous difference. Despite all the emphasis on conformity, for the first time in the country's history, there was at least a

muted minority point of view about what it meant to be a homosexual.

“Three other events of the fifties were crucial to the birth of the gay liberation movement at the end of the following decade, and two of them occurred in 1951. The first was the founding of the Mattachine Society in Los Angeles by Harry Hay, whose political awakening had started when he joined the Communist party and participated in a general strike in San Francisco in 1934.... In the summer of 1950, Hay tried to accumulate names for a gay rights organization by circulating a petition against the Korean War on gay beaches in Los Angeles. But when he raised the subject of growing federal harassment of homosexuals, the petition signers were far too fearful to join an avowedly gay organization....

“After months of discussion with four cofounders, in the winter of 1951 Hay decided to model the society’s organization on the structure of the Communist party, with strict secrecy and a carefully defined hierarchy. The first goal would be to change the self-image of gay people to produce a ‘new pride—a pride in belonging, a pride in participating in the cultural growth and the social achievements of ... the homosexual minority.’ A New York chapter soon followed, but it would take another twenty years before that pride became the common goal of thousands of gay Americans.

“After the founding of the Mattachine Society, for the first time sophisticated heterosexuals had somewhere to go when they wanted to find gay American men who considered themselves well-adjusted. The first person to take significant advantage of this opportunity was Dr. Evelyn Hooker, an iconoclastic psychologist at the University of California Los Angeles. Dr. Hooker had plenty of gay friends, including W.H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood, and his lover, Don Bachardy. Isherwood described her in the same way that many people had described Kinsey, which may explain why she and Kinsey reached such dramatically different conclusions from other scientists of this period. ‘She never treated us like some strange tribe,’ said Isherwood, ‘so we told her things we never told anyone before.’

“Hooker had been invited to attend some of the first public meetings of the Mattachine Society, and some of her gay friends urged her to analyze their behavior. *She decided to apply for a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health to study homosexual men. To her astonishment, despite the wave of*

McCarthyite attacks coming out of Washington, her grant application was accepted....

“The Mattachine Society helped her to recruit thirty gay men; then she found another thirty heterosexual men to act as her control group, including policemen and firemen. The two groups were matched in IQ, age, and education levels. All of the men were given three standard personality tests, including the Rorschach inkblot test. Because nearly all psychologists and psychiatrists in this period believed that homosexuality was a symptom of mental illness, ‘Every clinical psychologist ... would tell you that if he gave these projective tests he could tell whether a person was gay or not,’ Dr. Hooker said. ‘I showed that they couldn’t do it. I was very pleased with that.’

“The psychologist presented her findings to a meeting of the American Psychological Association in 1956 and published them the following year in ‘The Adjustment of the Male Overt Homosexual’ in The Journal of Projective Techniques. The conservative psychoanalytic establishment immediately attacked her and tried to prove that she was ‘crazy.’ But her gay friends were thrilled.... Using widely accepted standardized tests, she had proved for the first time that ‘gay men can be as well adjusted as straight men and some are even better adjusted than straight men.’

“Although it would be years before she convinced many of her colleagues of the accuracy of her findings, Dr. Hooker’s work provided the framework that made it possible for the American Psychiatric Association to rethink its position on this subject seventeen years later. It also gave gay men hope, when they needed it most, that the psychiatric establishment might some day change its attitude toward their orientation. Dr. Hooker’s work made her one of the earliest and most important heterosexual allies of lesbians and gay men in America. In the seventies, eighties, and nineties, she would be the star of many gay-pride events. She died at her home in Santa Monica in 1996, at the age of eighty-nine.

“The third critical intellectual event for homosexuals in the 1950s was the publication of a book that would become the bible of the early gay movement....

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“The book was called The Homosexual in America, and it was the first essential document of gay liberation in the United States. It was published under

the pseudonym Donald Webster Cory. The author was a man with a wife and son, whose family knew nothing about his secret life as a gay oracle. His real name was Edward Sagarin, and he lived in Brooklyn....

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“[Nobody ever attempted to block publication of] *The Homosexual in America*. ‘It was well accepted all over the country,’ [the book’s editor] remembered forty-four years after he published it. There were seven printings of the book between 1951 and 1957. For the thousands of gay readers who discovered it at stores across the country, it was a revelation. *Sagarin had participated in ‘American life as a homosexual’ since the 1920s, and he provided the most comprehensive description of gay male life in America ever written. He also sketched a broad plan to revolutionize American attitudes on the subject....*

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“Sagarin’s preface recorded the author’s typical, tortured journey.... He recounted his first attraction to another man, his complete ignorance of ‘any facts about homosexuality,’ and his ‘deep shock’ when a teacher in high school took him aside and explained to him that there were people ‘called invert.’....

“He felt ‘deeply ashamed of being abnormal and was aware of the heavy price that must be paid if anyone were to discover my secret....’....

“... Sagarin’s experience with men discouraged him from believing in the possibility of a long-term homosexual relationship.... So when he discovered at twenty-five that he was ‘capable of consummating a marriage,’ he married his childhood sweetheart. His final solution was typical of his generation—a marriage that lasted until the end of his life, and a simultaneous love affair with a black boyfriend.

The Homosexual in America was a call to arms, an attack on every anti-homosexual prejudice. As the historian John D’Emilio pointed out, it ‘not only provided gay men and women with a tool for reinterpreting their lives; it also implied that the conditions of life had changed sufficiently so that the book’s message might find a receptive audience.’

“Sagarin declared that being homosexual ‘is as involuntary as if it were inborn,’ and he decried the fact that homosexuals were the only significant minority without ‘a spokesman, a leader, a publication, an organization, a

philosophy of life,' or even 'an accepted justification' for their own existence. 'There is surely no group of such size, and yet with so few who acknowledge that they belong.'

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"Dozens of his declarations foreshadowed themes that would dominate gay political debates for the rest of the twentieth century. For example, he attributed the promiscuity of many gay men to the lack of any 'social, legal or ecclesiastical pressure to bind together the homosexual union,' a precursor of subsequent arguments in favor of gay marriage....

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"Sagarin was also one of the first to describe what would later be widely labeled as internalized homophobia:

'The prejudice of the dominant group, seen everywhere ... is most demoralizing when we homosexuals realize to what extent we have accepted hostile attitudes as representing an approximation of the truth.... A person cannot live in an atmosphere of universal rejection ... without a fundamental influence on his personality.... There is no Negro problem except that created by whites; no Jewish problem except that created by gentiles... and no homosexual problem except that created by the heterosexual society....' [Emphasis added].

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"The publication of *The Homosexual in America*, the founding of the Mattachine Society, the pioneering work of Evelyn Hooker and the first tentative moves toward public lives by a handful of lesbian and gay artists [such as Audre Lord, Allen Ginsburg, Truman Capote, Jack Kerouac, Gore Vidal and Tennessee Williams] all moved the gay cause cautiously forward. *Although Sagarin would gradually be left behind by his more militant followers, he had been among the very first to identify the potential for a movement that would finally burst into the streets in the coming decade.*

"... 'In the millions who are silent and submerged,' he saw 'a reservoir of protest, a hope for a portion of mankind. And in my knowledge that our number is legion, I raise my head high and proclaim that we, the voiceless millions, are human beings, entitled to breathe the fresh air and enjoy with all humanity, the

pleasures of life and love on God’s green earth.’ If an appeal were made ‘to the American traditions of fair play and equality of opportunity, I am personally convinced that American attitudes will change.’....” [Italicized emphasis added].

III. The Daughters of Bilitis [1950-1966]

Chapter 6 of Lillian Faderman’s historical treatise tells the story of the first significant lesbian rights organization in the United States, the Daughters of Bilitis (“DOB”):

Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon

“In 1950 Del Martin had just been hired as an editor for a Seattle trade journal, *Daily Construction Report*, and she moved up to Washington from San Francisco. She was a stocky woman with thick black hair, who wore gabardine suits and open-toed high-heel shoes and carried a briefcase to work. She was twenty-nine years old and not at all unhappy to leave the city where she’d been born. She’d recently given up custody of her eight-year-old daughter to her ex-husband and his new wife because they’d convinced her that a child needed a normal home and the presence of both a mother and father. Martin would eventually become a fierce advocate for the rights of lesbian mothers—but now she was still reeling from her painful decision. It was good to get away.

“Phyllis Lyon, another displaced San Franciscan, was an associate editor at a sister trade journal, *Pacific Builder and Engineer*, which shared a suite of offices with *Daily Construction Report*.... [S]he regarded herself as a straight lady—long haired and lipsticked—and was dating men (though she was already twenty-six years old and had never been married)....

“... [T]he two women became friends. They liked to go to the Seattle Press Club after work and sip martinis together. One evening over martinis the subject of homosexuality came up, and Martin expiated like an expert. ‘How do you know so much about it?’ a third woman in their party wanted to know. ‘Because I am one,’ Martin told them. That truly grabbed Lyon’s attention. But nothing more came of it until 1952, when she invited Martin to her apartment for dinner.... Sitting together on the divan, they recalled later, Martin ‘made a half-pass’; Lyon ‘completed the other half.’ That evening they became lovers.

“They moved back to San Francisco the next year....

“But their lives were lonely. They felt isolated.... Hoping to make friends,

the two women started going to bohemian North Beach's lesbian bars, 'gay girls' hangouts,' as such places were called.... But they were ignored by the other gay girls, who all seemed to be in airtight cliques.... Even worse, Martin and Lyon had heard that homosexual bars could be raided. It wasn't easy to relax if you thought a paddy wagon might pull up in front of the place any minute. Nor was it easy to relax when straight tourists invaded the bars to ogle the queers, as often happened.

"But having no place but the bars to be at least in the proximity of other lesbians, that summer they ventured into still another 'gay girls' hangout,' Tommy's on Broadway.... [Through the chatty male bartender and his partner, a female impersonator,] Martin and Lyon finally met another lesbian, Rose Bamberger, a short, brown-skinned woman who came from the Philippines and wanted to be known in those dangerous times as 'Marie.' At the end of the summer she telephoned Lyon and Martin to say that she and five other lesbians were tired of being gawked at by straights and worrying that they would be swept up in a bar raid. They were putting together a group, a secret lesbian society. Would Lyon and Martin like to be part of it? Of course they would. It was what they'd been looking for since they settled together in San Francisco.

"Four lesbian couples showed up at the home of Rose and her partner, Rosemary Sliepen, for that first meeting.... Most of the women were in their twenties; Lyon and Martin, both in their thirties, had *gravitas*. Martin was elected president. Lyon was elected secretary....

"The fourth meeting, a month later, was in the small Fillmore Street apartment of a couple who wanted to be called 'Nancy' and 'Priscilla.' 'Nancy,' the biggest reader among them, although she worked in a factory, whipped out a book. It was a translation of collected works by the French author Pierre Louys, and it included a cycle of 143 poems called 'Songs of Bilitis.' In 1894, when Louys first issued these poems, he'd [falsely] claimed they'd been found by an archaeologist on the walls of a tomb in Cyprus ... [and written] by a Greek courtesan, a contemporary of Sappho who like the poet of Lesbos, had had romantic and sexual relations with both men and women....

"Nancy was reading a 1951 edition. 'Why don't we call ourselves Daughters of Bilitis?' she suggested. None of the other seven women at the meeting had

read the poems, but they liked the name...

“The name Daughters of Bilitis was one of the very few things on which the eight founders agreed. When Martin and Lyon thought about it later, they decided the conflicts had been along class lines. The women who were blue-collar workers wanted a secret social club, like a sorority, with rites and rituals, open only to lesbians, but they definitely didn’t want dress regulations... The white-collar workers, particularly Martin and Lyon, were uncomfortable with that. They wanted an official dress code that declared, ‘If slacks are worn to meetings, they must be women’s slacks.’ They were soon thinking, too, that maybe the club’s purposes shouldn’t be limited to holding dances and chili feeds and going horseback riding. They’d found out about Mattachine a few months after Daughters of Bilitis started.... Maybe they could have public forums together with Mattachine. Maybe Daughters of Bilitis could publish a newsletter, too.

“Those plans scared the others who’d signed up for a secret social club.... By the end of the first year, there were fifteen members, but of the original eight, only three remained.

“By then, they’d formulated their purpose: first of all, they would educate ‘the variant,’ their euphemism for ‘lesbian,’ ‘to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society.’ They’d advocate to her ‘a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.’ To educate her, they’d maintain a library; and they’d have public discussions in which ‘leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious, and other professions’ would address her.... *It was a goal similar to that of post-Harry Hay Mattachine_....*

“Like Mattachine, too, Daughters of Bilitis pledged it would work to support changes in the penal code ‘as it pertains to the homosexual.’ But that sort of battle wasn’t what Daughters of Bilitis did best. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon took personally another DOB aim, ‘to help the individual lesbian overcome isolation and fear.’ Before there was such a thing as LGBT[Q] community centers, the Lyon and Martin house high on a hill in Noe Valley became a sort of lesbian center.

“In 1956, to reach lesbians outside of San Francisco, the Daughters began publishing a magazine. They chose the name *The Ladder* to suggest the magazine’s purpose—to encourage the lesbian to strive to pull herself up the

ladder of social tolerance; the magazine would show her how, too. Martin and Lyon were very aware that putting out a lesbian magazine at a time when homosexuals were being witch hunted was a very scary proposition. Simply receiving a copy of *The Ladder* could trigger panic. A Tacoma, Washington, woman had carelessly put her friend, a WAC, on the mailing list—and then had to write a hasty, pleading letter to Del Martin: ‘Please do all you can to keep the next issue from being sent to Marion Bales. There is a big investigation going on at Fort Lewis.... It is very serious as every possible suspect may be ousted from the army.... It would be very incriminating to have the magazine in her possession.’

“In that atmosphere of justified worry, Lyon decided that as editor she’d use the name ‘Ann Ferguson.’ Her anonymity lasted three issues. In the fourth *Ladder* she announced, ‘Ann Ferguson is dead!’ and told readers her real name. She accused her ‘other self’ of not having ‘practiced what I preached’—but *she knew she didn’t dare ask other lesbians to use their real names.... Lesbians who feared they had too much to lose, such as those with professional jobs, seldom subscribed to The Ladder or joined DOB, even under a false name.*

“Phyllis Lyon, desperate to bring readers to the magazine, promised that the mailing list would never ‘fall into the wrong hands.’ ‘Your name is safe!’ she wrote repeatedly in editorials. But that promise proved false. *The FBI was contacted about Daughters of Bilitis by ‘a confidential source who has furnished reliable information in the past.’ Whoever the woman was, she kept Bureau agents regularly apprised of all the organization’s doings. She also forwarded to the FBI copies of The Ladder. FBI agents read them cover to cover.... They also declared, without an iota of evidence, that Daughters of Bilitis ‘appears to have been infiltrated by certain Communists.’*

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“Despite its fixation, the Bureau really didn’t have much to worry about in Daughters of Bilitis. The founders had never had a romance with the Left. ‘We are not a political organization,’ Phyllis Lyon assured DOB members and *Ladder* readers.... Martin and Lyon had envisioned a serious lesbian organization. But in those early years, they were ambivalent about politics.

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“In the early years, [Del Martin] tried to rev up Ladder readers and DOB members. In her editorials, she protested raids on gay bars, urged revision of the vag-lewd and sodomy laws, and declared that homosexuals ‘are citizens of the United States, and as such are entitled to those civil rights set forth in the Constitution.’ But *the women who joined DOB wanted to stay out of the bars; and the vag-lewd laws and sodomy laws, it seemed to them, affected gay men, not lesbians. Martin backed off militancy when it became apparent that most members were less interested in fighting for civil rights than in Gab ‘n’ Java meetings: ‘rap sessions’ that she and Lyon hosted in their living room.*”

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“May 1960, the first Daughters of Bilitis National Conference: The organizers were exhilarated to see over one hundred lesbians gathered in the Vista Room of San Francisco’s genteel Hotel Whitcomb, waiting to be addressed by a psychiatric authority, a minister, a legal expert, and a high representative of the law. [However, each of these ‘experts’ expressed views in their presentations that ranged from condescending to openly hostile to lesbians and lesbianism].”

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“Despite insults from the experts, DOB continued on its course. Del Martin insisted in 1962 that DOB was not formed as ‘a crusade’ to change laws.... It was about giving the lesbian ‘knowledge of herself’ by encouraging researchers to study her, so she could ‘move into the world at large as a more secure, self-assured and productive citizen.’ It was about helping her climb a ladder. It was not about antagonizing the public with ‘the beating of the drums—and gums.’”

“*But the following year, 1963, The Ladder got a new editor. To Martin’s and Lyon’s discomfort and even fury, she scorned DOB’s notions about climbing ladders, using lesbians as research guinea pigs, and stifling beating drums and gums. She helped shift the homophile movement in a whole new direction*” [Italicized emphasis added].

Barbara Gittings

“Barbara Gittings was a bright young woman with a mellifluous voice and beautiful diction. She was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1932, the daughter of a US diplomat of Social Register forebears, who brought his family back to the United States at the dawn of World War II. Big-boned, pale, serious, and serious-looking,

Barbara Gittings had been troubled before she entered Northwestern University as a freshman in 1949; she suspected she was homosexual and knew only that this was something one was not supposed to be. She spent her freshman year looking in the card catalog under ‘abnormal’ and ‘perversion’ and then haunting the library stacks, determined to find out what the taboo was all about. She was so busy searching for answers, she forgot to go to her classes and flunked out at the end of the year.

“Gittings returned home to Delaware, but she couldn’t bring herself to tell her family what had happened. When her father caught her reading [English novelist Radclyffe Hall’s 1928 novel] *The Well of Loneliness*, he **wrote** her (though they were living in the same house) an unpleasant letter demanding that she burn the book. Burn was underlined because, he wrote, any other way of getting rid of the book might mean that someone else could find it and be infected....

“Gittings escaped to Philadelphia. There she found work as a music store clerk, lived in a boarding house, and subsisted on boiled eggs and plain cooked vegetables, which she fixed on a hot plate. Disguised as a boy, she hitchhiked every weekend to Greenwich Village, where she’d discovered the ‘gay girls’ bar scene.... About this time, she [also] discovered Donald Webster Cory’s 1951 book, *The Homosexual in America*. [See above at pp. 65-67]. It was Cory’s book that made her think homosexuals ought to be defining themselves as a legitimate minority; they ought to start demanding their rights, just as other minorities were doing.

“Her conception of how that might be done was vague, but her determination was robust. Soon after reading *The Homosexual in America*, she wrote to Donald Cory, asking where the organized homosexuals were. He referred her to ONE magazine in Los Angeles, and on her vacation from the music store in the summer of 1956, she hurried west. Through ONE, she found her way to Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin in San Francisco, and they invited her to a Daughters of Bilitis meeting the same day she arrived, rucksack still on her back.

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“Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon were quick to see that the outspoken newbie wasn’t a typical recruit. Here was an unusually well-read, energetic young person

who was looking for a way to combine her intense personal interest in the ‘homosexual condition’ with a cause that would allow her to focus her considerable energies.... They suggested she start a Daughters of Bilitis group in New York. Gittings was living in Philadelphia, but New York sounded like the sensible choice to her, too.

“She found that New York already had a Mattachine Society, started in 1955 by two men: Cuban-born chemist Tony Segura, who’d also been fired up by Cory’s book, and psychologist Sam Morford, who’d learned of California’s Mattachine through fellow psychologist Evelyn Hooker. In a small loft building on Sixth Avenue, in one of their postage-stamp-sized offices, Mattachine Society New York made space for the little group that Gittings pulled together. Starting in 1958, she was taking the bus twice a month from Philadelphia to New York ... to run the first East Coast chapter of Daughters of Bilitis.

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“Del Martin had been editing *The Ladder* since Jaye Bell replaced her as DOB president in July 1960. After two and a half years, Martin thought it was time to hand over her mantle. Barbara Gittings was the most literate person Martin knew, but Gittings was busy ‘Okay,’ she finally told Martin, ‘I’ll do it for a few months, until you find someone who can take it over permanently.’

“But a few months into her editorship, she attended a conference of the new East Coast Homophile Organization (ECHO). Its founder, and main speaker at the conference, was Frank Kameny, the head of Washington, DC’s Mattachine. [See below, starting at p. 74]. Gittings thought him the most brilliant theoretician of homosexual rights she’d ever heard or met or read. Finally, she had a blueprint for how to begin doing what she had dreamed of doing since she’d read The Homosexual in America. Now that she had something to say, she would stay on as editor of The Ladder, Gittings decided. She quit her paying job and lived on a small trust fund; she’d been right that the unpaid editorship was a full-time position.

“Under Gittings’s editorship, *The Ladder* was transformed inside and out. In place of the insipid art that usually graced the cover, Gittings ... [published photographs taken by her partner Kay Tobin of] actual, healthy, happy-looking homosexual women....

“[Gittings and Tobin were unsuccessful in their attempt to get rid of the magazine’s title The Ladder, but Gittings ‘bypassed’ the ‘DOB powers’] by adding to the cover a bold subtitle, A Lesbian Review....

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“Even more important than the changes Gittings made to The Ladder’s covers were the changes she made to the content. She continued to run lesbian book reviews as well as poetry and fiction; but the political shrewdness of articles soared. Her opinion pieces hit hard at the experts that the Daughters had so revered. For example, ... she sent the Academy of Medicine a letter, reprinted in ... The Ladder, calling the authorities to task for their failure to substantiate their claims that homosexuality is an illness, and bringing to their attention the fact that there were other ‘experts,’ such as psychologist Dr. Evelyn Hooker, who disagreed with [such claims].

“Gittings also opened a forum in The Ladder for her militant mentor, Frank Kameny.... Gittings gave room in the magazine, too, to a lengthy leaflet written by Kameny, who was organizing homosexuals to picket the White House, the Civil Service Commission, the Department of Defense, the United Nations, and Independence Hall: ‘Homosexual American citizens have appealed repeatedly to their federal government for redress for their grievances,’ the leaflet announced. To Gab ‘n’ Java’s annoyance, Kameny and his group demanded redress....

“To prod her readers along, Gittings also ran a Cross-Currents column, in which she reported on homosexuals who were principals in court cases that homophiles had thought could never be fought—such as Bruce Scott, a homosexual man who had been denied employment by the Civil Service Commission and had filed suit in the US District Court. Gittings reveled in such legal confrontations, in making political demands, in action....

“The coup de grace to the relationship between Gittings and the DOB founders came over issues of picketing. Gittings and Tobin worked at Kameny’s side in organizing the pickets, and the three of them hoped to increase the number of protestors through ECHO, the coalition of organizations Kameny had started in order to bring homophile groups together for joint action. Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, who kept seats on DOB’s governing board, soon informed

Gittings that Daughters of Bilitis was withdrawing from ECHO....

“The relationship between Gittings and the DOB leadership had become irreparable. *Despite the growth in circulation and distribution of the magazine under Gittings, Martin and Lyon were waiting for an excuse to axe her. They got it in the months before the 1966 national DOB convention—she was missing deadlines, she wasn’t providing enough lead time for publicizing the convention.* Martin and Lyon’s governing board fired Gittings just after the August 1966 issue went to press” [Italicized emphasis added].

Robin Tyler

“At the height of McCarthy-era persecution, the founders of Daughters of Bilitis couldn’t dream there’d be a time when lesbians would demand serious civil rights. Daughters of Bilitis existed mostly ‘to help the individual lesbian overcome the isolation and fear that are her worst enemy.’ Nor did Daughters of Bilitis ever have more than a few hundred members, including those in the small chapters of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Fanwood, New Jersey. Its value, however, ought not to be underestimated. Through its magazine, The Ladder, it reached lesbians in the most unlikely places.... Its existence had a ripple effect that kept going long after the organization died.

“Lesbian activist Robin Tyler tells the story of herself when she was seventeen-year-old Arlene Chernick, born in Winnipeg, Canada, whose large Mennonite population set the tone of the city. She’d had a crush on girls for as long as she could remember, but without a name to put to her feelings she worried that she was a singular species. Then in 1959 Arlene happened into a small secondhand bookstore and there, inexplicably—in the social wilds of Canada—was a copy of The Ladder. The magazine told her that there was a name for her feelings, and that it didn’t matter if people said those feelings were wrong, as long as they were right for her. That message was exactly what she needed, at a time when she really needed it. It beckoned her to the big cities of the United States, where she could live as a lesbian more easily. When she finally got to San Francisco, Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon were there at the airport to greet her. They welcomed and cosseted her, just as they had the many other lesbians whose lives had been changed by their organization and magazine.

“In 1979, twenty years after she’d discovered The Ladder, Robin Tyler, a

well-known lesbian activist by then, called for the first March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. It drew a hundred thousand people. In 1987 she was the rally producer of the second March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights, which drew over six hundred thousand people. She was also a producer of the rally of the third march in 1993. That one drew almost a million.”

IV. The Mattachine Society of Washington

According to Kaiser, “[t]he pace of social change during [the sixties] was unprecedented in modern American life, and nearly all the social, political and spiritual movements of the sixties contributed to the gestation of gay liberation. In the fifties, the silent generation had venerated conformity; in the sixties, the Vietnam generation celebrated diversity: every type of experimentation, every kind of adventure.” Kaiser, pp.137-38. He begins his discussion of the most significant events of the sixties on the path toward gay liberation with the founding of the Mattachine Society of Washington in November 1961:

Kaiser, pp. 138-44, 147, 171-72: *“The two men most responsible for infusing the gay movement with the spirit of the sixties were Franklin Kameny and Jack Nichols, two activists from different generations, with little in common apart from a determination to avoid convention.*

“Kameny was a man of absolute convictions and unrelenting intensity. Born to Jewish parents in New York City in 1925, he entered Queens College when he was sixteen. Kameny joined the army in 1943 and saw combat in Holland and Germany....

“He was not sexually active during his army service, so he ‘missed out on all sorts of endless opportunities.’ He finally had sex with another man on his twenty-ninth birthday....

“Kameny earned his PhD. in astronomy from Harvard in 1956 and went to work for the U.S. Army Map Service in July 1957. He was fired five months later when the government learned of a previous arrest for ‘lewd conduct.’ He filed one of his first lawsuits challenging the exclusion of gay people from federal employment, but all of his efforts ended in failure when the United States Supreme Court refused to hear his case four years later. During this period he was unemployed, and nearly destitute.... ‘After that I got a series of jobs as a physicist.’ However, without a security clearance, the only companies he could

work for were those without any government contracts, so they were ‘not financially stable,’ and they often folded while Kameny was working for them.

“In 1960, the same year that John Kennedy was elected president, Kameny met Jack Nichols, a Washington native who had come out to himself and his FBI-agent father when he was still in high school. Nichols had been radicalized by reading *The Homosexual in America* when he was fifteen.... In November 1961, Nichols and Kameny founded an independent chapter of the Mattachine Society in Washington. [fn. ‘Although it took the name of the older organization, it had no connection to the national, which had dissolved itself the previous spring.’ See above at p. 62]. The two men had a completely different attitude from the quiet dissidents who had preceded them.

“As we got into things it became very very clear that one of the major stumbling blocks to any progress was going to be this attribution of sickness,’ Kameny remembered. ‘An attribution of mental illness in our culture is devastating, and it’s something which is virtually impossible to get beyond. So the first thing was to find out if this was factually based or not.... So I looked and I was absolutely appalled.’ Everything that Kameny encountered was ‘sloppy, slovenly, sleazy science—social and cultural and theological value judgments, cloaked and camouflaged in the language of science without any of the substance of science. There was just nothing there....’

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“I take the stand that not only is homosexuality ... not immoral,’ said Kameny, ‘but that homosexual acts engaged in by consenting adults are moral, in a positive and real sense, and are right, good and desirable, both for the individual participants and for the society in which they live.’

[INSERT from **Kaiser**, p. 147: “In the summer of 1968, Frank Kameny explicitly emulated the example of radical blacks after he saw Stokely Carmichael on television leading a group of protesters in a chant of ‘Black is beautiful!’ Kameny said, ‘I understood the psychodynamic at work here in a context in which *black* is universally equated with everything that is bad.’ He realized at once the need to do something similar for gays.

“In July 1968, Kameny coined the slogan, ‘Gay is good.’ He said, ‘If I had to specify the one thing in my life of which I am most proud, it is that.’ He described

the phrase as a direct response to the ‘unrelieved, relentless barrage of negativism coming to us from every source’].

“Kameny and his Washington cohort forced federal officials to meet with them to discuss their exclusionary policies as early as October 1962, the same month as the Cuban missile crisis. They didn’t change any minds, but they made the bureaucrats aware of their existence. In the summer of 1963, Kameny, Nichols, and five others formed their own (unidentified) gay contingent in Martin Luther King, Jr.’s, March on Washington. *A few months later, Kameny recruited his first significant ally from the liberal heterosexual community. In March 1964, he persuaded the local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to challenge the Civil Service Commission’s regulations excluding gays from federal employment.* Five months later, the D.C. ACLU condemned the government’s exclusion of homosexuals as ‘discriminatory’ and urged an end to the policy of ‘rejection of homosexuals.’ Then the ACLU took the case of Bruce Scott, who had been rejected for a federal job because of ‘convincing evidence’ of gay conduct. *At its convention in 1964, the national ACLU adopted the position of its Washington chapter, a major victory for the gay movement.* [Prior to that, since 1957, the ACLU had explicitly supported the constitutionality of sodomy laws and federal regulations denying employment to gay men and lesbians]. In July 1965, the United States Court of Appeals in Washington ruled that the charges against Bruce Scott were too vague to disqualify him for federal employment.

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“Jack Nichols continued to articulate the need to reject the medical establishment’s view of homosexuality: ‘The mental attitude of our own people toward themselves, that they are not well—that they are not whole, that they are less than completely healthy—is responsible for untold numbers of personal tragedies and warped lives. By failing to take a definitive stand ... I believe that you will not only weaken the movement ten-fold, but that you will fail in your duty to homosexuals who need more than anything else to see themselves in a better light.’

“This was the fundamental philosophical insight that was necessary to the formation of an effective fighting force among gay men and women....

“Kameny echoed Nichols in his speech to the New York Mattachine Society

in July 1964. *'The entire homophile movement is going to stand or fall upon the question of whether homosexuality is a sickness, and upon our taking a firm stand on it,'* he declared. And he was right. *The following spring, the Washington chapter overwhelmingly adopted this revolutionary statement: 'The Mattachine Society of Washington takes the position that in the absence of valid evidence to the contrary, homosexuality is not a sickness, disturbance or other pathology in any sense, but is merely a preference, orientation, or propensity, on par with, and not different in kind from heterosexuality.'*

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"On July 4, 1965, Kameny and Nichols organized the first of a series of annual pickets outside Independence Hall in Philadelphia, a tradition that continued through 1969. Kameny believed the sight of people identifying themselves as homosexuals in public had a decisive impact on the movement: 'These demonstrations created the necessary mind-set for gays demonstrating in public.' Without them, he thought the crucial Greenwich Village explosion at the end of the decade might never have occurred" [Emphasis added].

V. The Stonewall Riots [June 28-July 2, 1969]

Chapter 11 of The Gay Revolution tells the story of the Stonewall Riots, the pivotal, transformational event that is widely regarded as marking the birth of the modern gay liberation movement. The following excerpts are taken from Chapter 11 (supplemented by additional excerpts from Kaiser, pp. 197-202):

The First Night

"The blacked-out windows and heavy door of the Stonewall Inn at 53 Christopher Street in Greenwich Village recalled a speakeasy—even to the coverhole covered with a slide bar and a bouncer's eye that suddenly appeared to check whether a knock on the door was hooligans or the fuzz come to raid the place. The door opened easily for homosexuals with the three dollars to pay for tickets that could be exchanged for a couple of watered-down drinks. The cover charge was not trivial for the gay youngsters who were among the Stonewall Inn's main habitués; but they found a way to pay it because no gay bar in the Village had such a good dance floor, or such a varied and lively clientele.... Except for the chicken hawks, practically everyone there was in their teens or twenties and having an uninhibited ball in a place they could almost think of as home, if they

forgot that the Genovese family held the deed and made the house rules—and couldn't keep the Stonewall safe. [**Kaiser**, p. 198: "According to the historian Martin Duberman, this obscure venue was an unlikely gold mine: the weekend take often approached \$12,000, the weekly payoff to the precinct was always \$2,000 and the rent was just \$300 a month"].

"About one in the morning on June 28, 1969, the bouncer was summoned to the peephole. He looked out and saw 'Lily Law, Betty Badge, and Peggy Pig,' as policemen were called by campy Village queens, and when police shouted, 'Police! Open up!' a bouncer had to open up. Six officers of Manhattan's First Division Public Morals Squad invaded the place. Two undercover policewomen were already inside. For more than an hour they'd been sitting at the bar, pretending they were lesbians, and keeping their eyes open in the hopes of spotting homosexuals who were selling or using drugs.

"The Stonewall's dimly lit rooms, jammed with two hundred revelers, were suddenly flooded with harsh light. The jukebox whirred to mute. The patrons knew what that meant and they froze. 'Line up. Get your IDs out and in hand,' one of Deputy Inspector Seymour Pine's men ordered. Those whose IDs showed they weren't minors or 'masquerading' as the opposite sex were shooed out the door. Several 'drag queens' said they were 'ladies' and were taken by the two policewomen to the toilet, where it was determined they'd violated New York Penal Code 240.35, section 4, against 'unnatural attire or facial alteration.' 'You're under arrest,' they were told. A small knot of lesbian patrons were also singled out for special attention when a couple of them got feisty, back-talking to the officers, yelling, 'We have a right to be here!'

"Police actions like this one were not uncommon in the gay bars of Greenwich Village. The New York Court of Appeals had ruled ... that even homosexuals must be served in drinking establishments, but in the two weeks before the Stonewall raid the Public Morals Squad had found reasons to raid the Snake Pit, the Tele-Star, the Checkerboard, and the Sewer. The excuse for the June 28 raid was that though the Stonewall claimed to be a private club requiring membership ..., liquor was being sold there and the bar did not have a liquor license. Regardless of the reasons for a raid, the history of police harassment of gay bars was old enough so that gay people knew what to do. If they were so

lucky as to be shoed outside instead of carted off to the police station and booked, they quickly skedaddled.

***“But on this night, they didn’t.** As patrons were released by the police, they stood on the sidewalk in front of the bar waiting to see if friends still inside would be set free; and as each new person came through Stonewall’s door, those who waited applauded and cheered....The festive crowd was soon swelled by Greenwich Village weekend tourists who came to see what the excitement was about.*

“A few doors down from the Stonewall, Village Voice reporter Howard Smith ... was working late in his office because he had a deadline to meet. Smith saw the commotion from his window and wondered whether there was some sort of story to be had. He wandered over to the scene. A rookie Village Voice reporter, Lucian Truscott, was already there....

*“Howard Smith observed that when he first arrived the mood of the crowd had been a sort of ‘skittish hilarity.’ Then several violators of the masquerading law, as well as the Stonewall’s bartender, the hatcheck girl, the doorman, and the men’s room attendant, who was an elderly straight black man, were led outside in handcuffs and herded into a waiting paddy wagon. A few onlookers booed the policemen. But *the real turning point, Smith and Truscott agreed, came after several policemen dragged a butch lesbian out of the bar. They’d handcuffed her because she’d struggled with them. The paddy wagon was full, so the officers pushed the hefty, dark-haired woman who was wearing a man’s dress suit into one of the squad cars that were lined up on the street. But she wouldn’t stay put. Three times she slid out the driver’s-side back door and tried to run back into the Stonewall.... The last time, as a beefy policeman wrestled her back toward the squad car, she yelled to the crowd, ‘Why don’t you guys do something?’**

“It was as though her question broke the spell that had, for generations, held gays and lesbians in thrall. ‘The crowd became explosive,’ Truscott jotted in his notepad. ‘Police brutality!’ ‘Pigs!’ they shrieked. They pelted the police with a rain of pennies (dirty coppers). Someone threw a loosened cobblestone. Beer cans and glass bottles followed. Bricks from a nearby construction site were hurled at the squad cars with baseball-player skill. A black drag queen, Marsha P. (for ‘Pay It No Mind’) Johnson stuffed a bag with the bricks, then shinnied up a lamppost

despite her high heels and tight dress. Taking aim at the windshield of a squad car parked below, she let fly and heard the satisfying shatter of glass. *Gays surrounded the paddy wagon and shook it as though they would rescue the prisoners trapped inside by pulling it apart. If some among the crowd suggested it was time to cut out, others answered—as purportedly did drag queen Sylvia Rivera—‘Are you nuts? I’m not missing a minute of this. It’s the revolution!’*

“... Two officers handcuffed twenty-eight-year-old Raymond Castro and pushed him into the paddy wagon. Hyped by the crowd’s shouting, ‘Let him go! Let him go!’ Castro sprang back and knocked both policemen down, superhero style. A butch fellow set fire to a nearby trash can, and when it blazed red and gold, he threw it through one of the Stonewall’s plate-glass-and-plywood-backed windows. People rushed to phone booths to call other gays to join the fight; or they ran through the streets like Paul Revere, drawing gays and straights alike—and especially the Village radicals who had long been hoping and waiting for this night” [Emphasis added].

[**Kaiser**, p. 200: “William Wynkoop, who had first been radicalized a quarter century earlier, was awakened by the noise; ‘I got up and looked out the window and really, it was amazing. They were coming from east of here, from Sixth Avenue. In droves! Not only on the sidewalk, but on the street.... I stuck my head out and I saw a *big* crowd over on Christopher Street. It was two o’clock in the morning.... And *I think it’s wonderful that the ones who started it were drag queens. Young, young, tender drag queens. Flaming faggot types. They were the ones who started the rebellion. And I think maybe this is ordained because those who had been most oppressed were they.*

“No doubt; Oppressed, despised, laughed at, scorned” [Italicized emphasis added]].

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Faderman, cont’d: “Inspector Pine wanted to collar the perps and haul them off—but the paddy wagon and squad cars were already filled to capacity. *He was astounded. He’d never seen a horde of fighting homosexuals. The officers of the Public Morals Division had always said that homosexuals were ‘easy arrests. They never gave you any trouble. Everybody behaved.’* How had things changed so dramatically?” [Emphasis added]. [**Kaiser**, p. 197: “Deputy Police Inspector

Seymour Pine, who led the raiding party, would never forget it. ‘I had been in combat situations,’ he said, but ‘there was never any time that I felt more scared than then.... You have no idea how close we came to killing somebody’; p. 199: “At the very moment that the cops were preparing to shoot the next demonstrator who came through the door, the policemen finally heard the distant sirens of the Tactical Patrol Force, the helmeted veterans of countless antiwar demonstrations who had finally arrived to rescue them’; p. 201: “By four a.m., the first night’s riot was finally over, with four policemen injured and thirteen demonstrators under arrest.”]

Faderman, cont’d: “Howard Smith attributed the gay violence in the early hours of June 28 to the full white moon that illumined the night sky. The summer heat might have had something to do with it, too: the black riots in New York and Philadelphia in 1964, in Watts in 1965, the 1966 riots in Cleveland and Omaha, the 1967 riots in Detroit and Newark—all of them took place in summer heat. Or perhaps gay people rioted at the Stonewall that June night because throughout the decade violent clashes with the police had been dramatizing the frustrations felt by the powerless of various stripes, including protesters against the Vietnam War and even students on college campuses. Riots brought media attention to the gripes of the disenfranchised as nothing else could. Emotions might have been stoked, too, by the multiple raids of Greenwich Village gay bars in the previous weeks, and by the circulars that John O’Brien’s group had plastered all over Greenwich Village. [NOTE: O’Brien was the 20-year-old leader of approximately half a dozen radical and militant gay activists who posted his circulars in the weeks immediately prior to the riots. The circulars carried the following messages: ‘Gays Must Resist!’ ‘It’s Our Streets!’ ‘Gays Must Fight Back Against the NYPD!’].

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“The full moon, the heat, the police pulling the plug on the jukebox—all came together to create a perfect storm that brought on the riots at the Stonewall. *But surely gay people would not have rioted that night if they hadn’t watched for almost the entire decade as oppressed minorities angrily demanded to be treated like human beings and American citizens. Righteous ire stoked, irate*

gay rhetoric formulated, they understood the time had come for them to make demands just as other minorities had, and in the same way” [Emphasis added].

The Second Night

“During the day on Saturday, exhausted rioters slept. But many gays who had not been there heard of the riot that morning on the ‘alternative’ radio station, WBAI, which had been sympathetic to gays since the early 1960s. It was through WBAI that Frank Galassi, a closeted young college professor, learned that there’d been a riot in his favorite gay bar. Galassi had been fired from St. John’s College a couple of years earlier because it was suspected that he was gay, and since then he’d tried to be very careful out in the world. But on nights when his partner, a male nurse, had to work, Galassi donned jeans and went to the Stonewall to dance.... Now, at about eleven o’clock on Saturday morning, Galassi hurried across town to the Stonewall. The WBAI commentators said the riots had been quelled, but Galassi was drawn to the site—just to see what was happening now, just to be there.

“There were traces of the riot—the shattered window, the broken door, the rubble on the street, the gray wooden sawhorses that announced ‘Police line. Do not cross.’ But there were no rioters, only a bunch of gays, ignoring the sawhorses’ warning, walking in front of the Stonewall with signs that demanded ‘Equality for Homosexuals.’ Across the street at Sheridan Park, gay people were holding hands and kissing in broad daylight. Policemen were standing, hands on hips or arms crossed, watching it all. *A couple of days earlier, the gaze of the police would have worried Frank Galassi. He’d never even dared to participate in one of Frank Kameny’s pickets. Now he took up a sign and marched.*

“Though the riot had been led by young street people, Galassi wasn’t the only middle-class or professional gay person soon to feel liberated by it. Dr. Howard Brown lived in Greenwich Village, not far from the Stonewall. He’d served under Mayor Lindsay as the New York City health commissioner but resigned in 1967, when he heard that columnist Drew Pearson intended to out him in the pages of the New York Times. Two years later, in the heat of the June night, Brown had heard through his open windows the rioters’ roar. He went out to discover what the hubbub was about. The homosexuals he saw in front of the Stonewall were nothing like him.... ‘obviously poor, most of them sort of limp

wristed, shabby, or gaudy gays that send a shiver of dread down the spines of homosexuals who hope to pass as straight.'

"But, he had to admit the scene brought to mind every civil rights struggle he'd ever witnessed. *It was the riot that eventually 'broke the spell' of his fears, Brown realized. It enabled him sometime later, at a conference of six hundred medical people ... to take the microphone and say, 'I am publicly announcing my homosexuality in the hope that it will help to end discrimination against homosexuals.'* And to end silly stereotyping, too: 'I have met more homosexual politicians than homosexual hairdressers,' he informed his audience ..., 'more homosexual lawyers than homosexual interior decorators.'

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"That evening, they gathered again at the Stonewall. 'Fat Tony' Lauria, the Stonewall's Mafia owner, had had a clean-up crew working all day, repairing whatever damage they could, though the main room was still charred and blasted and the only lights were dim, naked bulbs. The jukebox had been destroyed, so a sound system was brought in and speakers placed around the room. To entice customers back, the management announced there would be no cover charge that night—and though liquor could not be sold until they straightened out the misunderstanding about a license, sodas would be free. The Stonewall was soon jammed, as was the street in front of it—not only with gays but also with the curious that had come to see the riot site.

"What developed spontaneously was at first nothing more than a block party, with queens camping and posing for pictures and some gays shouting, 'Gay power!' 'We want freedom now!' 'Equality for homosexuals!' But as the crowd grew, it spilled over from the sidewalk into the street and overflowed to Sheridan Square Park, and soon the streets were mobbed over a five-block area. A bus driver, bringing his empty vehicle back to the car barn for the night, loudly honked his horn. Someone tore off a big cardboard advertisement from the bus's side and blocked the windshield with it. It was like a signal. The crowd beat on the bus thunderously and yelled.... The bus was finally allowed to pass, but other vehicles were stopped and mounted by gays who danced on their roofs and hoods. When police cars arrived, rioters pelted them with garbage and a concrete block,

pounded them with fists and feet, and knocked the flashing red light off one of the cars. *Four precincts were summoned for backup. By then, the crowd was about two thousand strong.*

“By the time the busloads of Tactical Police Force showed up, the second full-scale gay riot of the weekend was under way. TPF officers, riot visors already covering their faces, jumped from the buses, linked arms, and formed a flying wedge. They pushed the crowds before them until they got the rioters onto Tenth Street and Sixth Avenue. But some rioters circled back—and they showed up behind ‘Alice Blue Gown,’ as the queens jeeringly called their adversaries, taunting them with the Rockettes dance they’d perfected the night before. The Tactical Police Force pushed the crowds forward again, and again a troop of queens circled round the block, showed up behind the TPF, and kicked high in time to ‘We are the Stonewall girls / We wear our hair in curls...’

“Some officers broke off from the wedge, and brandishing billy clubs, pursued rioters down side streets.... It lasted until five thirty in the morning, when finally the TPF captain deemed the area ‘secured,’ and the officers could pile back into their buses and go home” [Italicized emphasis added].

The Third Through Sixth Nights

“Sunday night: the Stonewall management again advertised a ‘free store.’ Hundreds of gays went inside the bar or milled around outside. Police were under orders to head off trouble and avoid a third night of riots that had already cost the city big bucks. With considerably more tact than they’d practiced in the preceding days, they tried to get people off the streets. ‘It’s okay, go on in,’ they urged those who stood outside the Stonewall....

“There were many more toughs in the Sunday night crowd, including a large ‘leather’ contingent. A bunch of people tried to overturn a police car, and several were arrested. But the energy to riot was not what it had been the previous two nights. Gays seemed to know they’d already won and now it was time to enjoy the fruits of winning. Many did go inside the Stonewall and reveled in a victory dance....

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“On Monday and Tuesday the streets of Greenwich Village were quiet. But

the mood changed on Wednesday. The Village was overrun by Yippies and Up Against the Wall/Motherfuckers and Crazies (two New York-based anarchist groups), Black Panthers, and young toughs from street gangs all over New York and New Jersey—all ready to rumble: though it wasn't clear if they were there to fight the police or play 'the old game of beating up queers'; and businesses that most Village gays would have protected were looted, such as a toy shop, the Gingerbread House, run by an elderly woman who was beloved on Christopher Street. Beer cans and bottles were again thrown at the police. Fires were set in trash cans. Again, the Sixth Precinct and the Tactical Police Force were called out to control the streets. The conciliatory mood of Sunday night was gone. *People were beaten so badly that Dick Leitsch[, the executive director of Mattachine Society New York,] writing for the New York Mattachine Newsletter, observed that Seventh Avenue from Christopher to West Tenth Street 'looked like a battlefield in Vietnam.'*

"But Leitsch wasn't alone in concluding that, despite cracked heads and broken limbs, victory belonged to the gays. Craig Rodwell [, who had opened the first gay and lesbian bookstore in America, the Oscar Wilde Memorial Bookshop in Greenwich Village, in 1967], and his lover, Fred Sargeant, printed up five thousand leaflets ... proclaiming that the riots would 'go down in history [as] the first time that thousands of Homosexual men and women went out into the streets to protest.' The government and the police had been 'put on notice that homosexuals won't stand being kicked around.'

"However, the heady significance of the riots was clear mainly to those who'd been on the spot, rioting, and to a few gay newspapers. Outside New York, the Stonewall riots had been largely ignored—and even in New York, when the riot stories weren't relegated to the back page in mainstream newspapers, they were mocked with headlines such as 'Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees Are Stinging Mad.' It would be a huge challenge to figure out how to spread the word about what gay people had done in a little corner of New York at the start of the summer of 1969. Before that summer was over, Jack Nichols[, who called himself 'the second charter member of Mattachine' (Washington, D.C.), [see above at pp. 76-79] and his lover and coauthor, Lige Clarke, were nervously asking readers of a gay newspaper, 'Will the spark die?'" [Emphasis added].

VI. Say It Loud and Proud: New Gay Politics [1969-79]

Chapter 12 of Lillian Faderman's historical treatise tells the story of the Gay Liberation Front, the first radical activist, anti-assimilationist national organization of the post-Stonewall era and of other LGBTQ+ political groups that followed in its footsteps. The following excerpts are taken from Chapter 12:

The Passing of the Old Guard

"July 4, 1969, one week after the start of the Stonewall riots: In Philadelphia, in front of Independence Hall, about forty lesbians and gay men marched in an oblong single file, just as they had every Fourth of July since 1965. [See above at p. 79]. It was the Annual Reminder Day Demonstration, sponsored by the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO), which included the Janus Society and the Homophile Action League of Philadelphia, the Mattachine Society New York and New York Daughters of Bilitis, and Frank Kameny's Mattachine Society, Washington. The name of the event itself, Annual Reminder Day, hinted at the infinite patience of these homophile groups. Yet again, they were reminding the country that things were still not right for some of its people.

"As usual, the picketers handed out leaflets that decorously stated that July 4 was 'a day for serious, solemn, and probing thought ... a day to properly ask if we are guaranteeing to all our citizens [the promises inherent] in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.' As usual, too, they were dressed ... to 'look like they were going to church.' And they marched in silence, as usual. **Except that something had changed.**

"The forty homophiles were joined by about thirty-five young demonstrators from New York. No one had told the young people that there was a dress protocol at the Annual Reminders—and they probably wouldn't have given up their jeans and T-shirts anyway. They'd come to Philadelphia because they'd seen circulars posted on the streets of Greenwich Village or an ad in the July 3 *Village Voice*. The announcement had been paid for by Craig Rodwell in the name of his Homophile Youth Movement in Neighborhood (HYMN), a small group he hadn't before been able to get off the ground: 'Gay Is Good,' the announcement began and promised that HYMN would be chartering buses to Philadelphia so that New York gays and lesbians could support the Fifth Annual Reminder Day Demonstration.... *The*

young people who showed up in Philadelphia with Rodwell were a different breed from the homophile picketers.

“When Frank Kameny saw sandaled, bearded, and Zapata-mustachioed homosexuals jump down from the buses and run to join the picket line, he restrained himself from commenting other than to shout at them ... ‘No talking or chanting!’ and ‘Walk in single file!’ They obediently got in line with the homophiles, a rag-tag band trailing the mirror image of Middle America.

“The older homophiles didn’t know it yet, but the parameters of daring had been expanded exponentially by the events of June 28 to July [3] [as described above in the preceding section]. After thirty minutes or so, two T-shirt-clad lesbians broke out of single file. Not only did they walk side by side—they held hands. Kameny could no longer hold his tongue. Screaming, ‘You can’t do that! You can’t do that!’ he rushed over to them and slapped their hands apart.... Craig Rodwell, who’d been walking just behind the two women, was so furious with Kameny that he pulled his group into a caucus and got twenty of the young people he’d brought with him from New York to break ranks and march in couples, holding hands. Frank Kameny may have fathered ‘Gay Is Good.’ He may have fought Uncle Sam and squeezed crucial concessions from the US Civil Service Commission. But he was a product of the repressive midcentury and he was stodgy in his dress and manner. He hadn’t experienced the joyful intoxication of the Stonewall riots. He didn’t understand that what happened there had already changed the world—or at least the world of urban gays. As far as Rodwell and the young people were concerned, the ways of the father were dead.

“Most of New York Mattachine Society was as bemused as Frank Kameny about what had suddenly made homophiles irrelevant. ‘What did the young ones mean by ‘gay power’ and ‘gay liberation?’ [asked Dick Leitsch, writing under the pseudonym ‘Price Dickerson’ in the New York Mattachine Newsletter]. He concluded that what young gays were asking for was nothing more than what ‘us doddering oldsters who had been working quietly and steadily in the homophile movement for lo these many years had been striving for’: But in style and substance, ‘gay power’ seemed to be beyond the understanding of Mattachine’s newsletter editor with his heavy-handed ‘doddering oldsters’ quip and his naivete in imagining that what these militant young people wanted could be reduced to a

simplistic list of civil rights demands.

“Yet Dick Leitsch ... seemed to understand how Stonewall had changed the meaning of gay. He’d said as much the day after the first riot, when he coined the campy moniker ‘the hairpin drop heard round the world’ [the title of an article he wrote for the *Mattachine* newsletter]. Leitsch had on occasion seen himself as much more radical than his fellow homophiles. He’d been critical from the start about the style of Frank Kameny’s orderly tactics....

“He also told Kameny to stop pretending [that] all gays wanted to meet the criteria of middle-class respectability and [that] their only problem was that the federal government wouldn’t give them security clearances.... ‘The homosexual’s concerns are wider.... The homosexual freedom movement,’ he insisted (coining a phrase that augured ‘the gay liberation movement’), ‘is an attack on conformity’” [Italicized emphasis added].

The Birth of the Gay Liberation Front

“... Michael Brown had been part of John O’Brien’s group who’d met at Alternate U [see above at p. 83] and had tried to get some radical gay action going in the weeks just before the explosion at the Stonewall. Now Brown read ‘The Hairpin Drop Heard Round the World’ and came to [Dick] Leitsch’s *Mattachine* office with praise—and an idea. ‘*Mattachine* needs to build on the energy of the Stonewall riots,’ he told Lietsch, and offered to distribute copies of ‘The Hairpin Drop’ all over the Village. The twenty-eight-year-old Brown, an activist with proud left-wing credentials, had spent years in the black civil rights movement and the antiwar movement. He told Leitsch he would help bring into *Mattachine* young gays and lesbians who’d honed their skills, as he had, by working for left-wing causes and who would apply what they’d learned to the homosexual movement.

“His radical spiel about how gays needed to aid in a complete overhaul of society made Leitsch uncomfortable. Despite Leitsch’s own dabbling on the Left, for him *Mattachine* had only one purpose: to procure the rights of homosexuals. Nevertheless, Brown’s idea of bringing energetic new blood into *Mattachine* had obvious appeal.... For that reason, he agreed: Michael Brown would bring together young activists like himself and start a group called the *Mattachine* Action Committee, which would meet at Freedom House, where all *Mattachine* meetings were now held.

“Brown invited his friends, people in his own image, [including radical lesbian feminist Martha Shelley, a veteran of the antiwar and feminist movements]....

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“... [D]istrust and dislike of Mattachine’s executive director [Leitsch] was built into the Mattachine Action Committee; and other young radicals absorbed those opinions. The young people agreed that the committee should use Mattachine’s paper and mimeograph machine, but they should have nothing else to do with the decrepit organization.

“If Leitsch suspected that Brown’s group was brewing something inimical to Mattachine, he tried to ignore it. He had visions of expanding Mattachine through a great influx of the gay youth who’d been excited by the riots, and he planned to use the next Mattachine ‘Town Meeting’ to reel them into his organization. Flyers were distributed all over the village announcing a ‘Homosexual Liberation Meeting’ on July 9 and touting the ‘new spirit’ that had been born out of Stonewall. The flyers invited all the ‘homosexual community’ to ‘come to this meeting and express yourselves about what we can do to secure our rights.’

“The meeting room in Freedom House was packed with 125 young people (and two police informants). As Mattachine’s executive director, Dick Leitsch ran the meeting. Things went south quickly when Michael Brown announced that gay people needed to show up in ‘power-to-the-people solidarity’ at a forthcoming Black Panther demonstration. Leitsch blanched. Mattachine was formed to fight for the rights of the homosexual—period; ... [the struggles of other minorities] were absolutely not the concern of Mattachine Society New York. When Martha Shelley raised her hand, Leitsch knew he had reason to worry again....

“Shelley waved her hand in the air until Dick Leitsch finally called on her.... She stood up and proposed a ‘Gay Power’ rally in Washington Square Park to protest police treatment of homosexuals. It would be followed by a march to Sheridan Square Park, across from the Stonewall.

“Leitsch had himself called for ‘dramatic action’ on behalf of the movement a few years before—but was a march and rally the right sort of action now? Hadn’t he been making fine headway in the last years by cultivating liberal alliances in the ‘Establishment’ who gave him an ‘in’ at city hall? Under his

leadership, Mattachine had gotten the police commissioner Howard Leary to order his officers to cease entrapping homosexuals. He'd gotten the State Liquor Authority to reverse its policy of prohibiting licensed bars from serving homosexuals. ...[H]e and Mattachine had forced the Department of Social Services to reverse its decision against hiring two homosexual men as welfare case workers; and ... the New York Civil Service Commission had agreed that homosexuality 'was no longer a barrier for all jobs under its jurisdiction.' *Leitsch's methods had been undeniably effective for the last three years.*

"He had great misgivings about Shelley's proposal—yet he had no choice. 'How many are in favor of a march and rally?' Dick Leitsch asked the crowded room.

"Martha Shelley looked around and saw that every single person there was holding a hand in the air.

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"Dick Leitsch suggested that those interested in organizing a march and rally go off into a back room of Freedom House and come up with a plan. Perhaps Leitsch had hoped thereby to get a disruptive element out of the meeting. **But it was the beginning of the end for homophile organizations.**

"The people who congregated in the back room—all in their twenties and all radicals—were of one mind. ... [T]hey thought the homophiles were like the NAACP, and as gay radicals, they preferred to emulate the Black Panthers. To begin, they wanted to give themselves a title that would truly characterize them: something bold—something as politically confrontational as the 'National Liberation Front,' a name that had been used by revolutionary socialist and Communist movements all over the world since World War II.

"Somebody blurted out, 'Gay Liberation Front!' Martha Shelley, perched on a table because there weren't enough chairs in the small room, cried, 'That's it! That's it! We're the Gay Liberation Front!' her palm banging the table on which she sat....

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"Dick Leitsch put as good a face on things as possible. *Mattachine, together with Daughters of Bilitis, placed an ad in the Village Voice announcing (in*

language not at all characteristic of either organization) *that they were sponsoring a 'Gay Power' march and rally in July to commemorate the one-month anniversary of the Stonewall raid.* Of course, neither organization had control over the tenor of the event. *A crowd of about two thousand showed up that day in Washington Square Park. It was the largest planned congregation of gays and lesbians to that date....*

"In tune with the burgeoning women's liberation movement, the Gay Liberation Front practiced gender parity. Martha Shelley was the woman chosen by the GLF to speak... 'We're tired of being harassed and persecuted. If a straight couple can hold hands in Washington Square Park, why can't we?' ...

"Marty Robinson, the male rally speaker, proudly called himself 'a hard hat'; a journeyman carpenter, though in hippie garb.... 'Gay power is here! Gay power is not a laugh!' he shouted to his Washington Square Park audience. 'There are one million homosexuals in New York City, and we will not permit another reign of terror.... We've got to stand up. This is our chance!'

"The fired-up crowd marched toward Sheridan Square behind a big lavender banner decorated with both double male sex signs and double female sex signs. A young gay led a cheer for gay power: 'Give me a G! Give me an A! Give me a Y! Give me a P!' Traffic ground to a halt on Sixth Avenue as the marchers passed. Facing the Stonewall Inn, they bellowed out the words to 'We Shall Overcome.' *New York had never yet seen anything like this*" [Emphasis added].

Conflict and Turmoil Within the Gay Rights Movement

"The next month, August, the Gay Liberation Front showed up in Kansas City at the annual meeting of the North American Conference of Homophile Organizations [NACHO]. The homophiles had no notion that Stonewall had been the gays' storming of the Bastille and their Boston Tea Party all wrapped into one. The GLF-ers were there to let them know it....

"GLF's Stephen Donaldson presented to the forty other NACHO delegates at the Kansas City meeting a scathing criticism in the form of a manifesto that let the doddering oldsters know just how antediluvian they were. 'The Homophile Movement Must Be Radicalized!' the manifesto was titled. The homophiles' long and dogged fight for homosexual rights was ineffectual and naïve. 'Our

enemies’—organized religion, business and medicine were specifically named—‘will not be moved by appeasement or appeals to reason and justice, but only by power and force,’ the manifesto lectured the homophiles.... Every part of [this manifesto]—even the language in which it was couched—was over the top and insulting to NACHO. Members refused to adopt the radicals’ position.

“But by the following year, there were radical gay groups, inspired by Stonewall and the Gay Liberation Front, all across the country. At the 1970 NACHO convention in San Francisco, the ‘radical caucus’ decided that the time had come simply to declare that it was NACHO—and to take over the organization.... On the third day of the convention, the radicals marched into the plenary session waving banners with gay-power-to-gay-people messages. Most of the homophile delegates walked or ran to the nearest exit, and NACHO’s chairman, Bill Wynne, adjourned the conference. The radical caucus took over the gavel and continued anyway. The first motion from the floor was that NACHO officially declare its support for the Black Panther Party.

“The motion passed. But that 1970 meeting was NACHO’s last one. The 1971 convention was canceled, and in 1972 NACHO disbanded.

“Radical gays also descended on the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations [ERCHO]. Jim Fouratt, a colorful twenty-four-year-old GLF-er with a leonine mane of blond hair, was their most hostile spokesman. He was disgusted with fogeys. (The feeling was mutual).... To Fouratt, there was not much difference between Wall Street types and the ERCHO bunch. ‘Lackeys of the Establishment!’ and ‘Dinosaurs!’ he bombastically dubbed ERCHO’s chief leaders Frank Kameny and Barbara Gittings. [See above at pp. 72-75, 76-79 & 88-90]. (Kay Tobin, Gittings’s partner, had small stuffed dinosaurs made up as soon as possible, which the trio displayed with glee.)

“A scathing battle ensued when the radicals tried to get ERCHO to go on record as urging all homosexuals to participate in the antiwar Moratorium March on Washington. Homophiles popped up to the microphone to shout, ‘We can’t do that! No one group can dare speak for all homosexuals!’ ‘ERCHO deals with the problems of homosexuals, not the problems of the world!’ ERCHO would not take a stand on the Moratorium.

“But one radical resolution did get passed at the ERCHO convention. It was

drafted at a little dinner party in the Greenwich Village apartment that Craig Rodwell shared with his lover Fred Sargeant. A young lesbian couple, Linda Rhodes and Ellen Broidy, ... had been the dinner guests; and over dessert and coffee, the four wrote a resolution to be presented at ERCHO.

“Rodwell had spearheaded the writing of the resolution, but he knew that by now he’d made himself so controversial among the homophiles that if he were the one to bring the resolution to the floor they’d see only the messenger and be deaf to the message. So he asked Broidy, an attractive, dark-haired twenty-three-year-old, to stand up and present the resolution on her own. *There on the floor of the convention of the eastern region homophiles, Broidy called for an official end to the Fourth of July Annual Reminder Day demonstration in Philadelphia.*

‘Reminder Day has lost its effectiveness,’ she proclaimed, ‘because it’s become just one of many demonstrations held at Independence Hall on that day.’ *In its place, every year on the last Saturday of June there should be ‘Christopher Street Liberation Day’ demonstrations nationwide to commemorate the 1969 Stonewall riots.* And—very important to the four radicals who wrote the resolution—‘no dress or age regulations shall be made for this demonstration.’

“Not even those four could have predicted their resolution’s enduring power, which would still be working decades later to mobilize hundreds of thousands of lesbians and gays in Pride Parades across the country every year, and to pull them out of the closet.

“ERCHO, however, soon disbanded.

“By the end of July 1969, Gay Liberation Front members formulated a statement of purpose whose tone mirrored the uncompromising militancy of groups such as the Black Panthers, with whom many of the GLF-ers, especially the men, had a spiritual romance. GLF defined itself as a ‘revolutionary group of men and women’ that had formed with the realization that ‘sexual liberation for all people cannot come about unless existing social institutions are abolished.’ GLF would do that, the statement of purpose declared, by creating new social forms based on ‘brotherhood, cooperation, human love, and uninhibited sexuality.’ But those peaceable forms couldn’t be realized yet because ‘Babylon’ (that is, ‘Amerika’) was corrupt. So for the time being, GLF would be ‘forced to commit ourselves to one thing: revolution!’

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“To avoid hierarchy and hegemony, which GLF-ers despised, there were no official leaders of the Gay Liberation Front. The group grew quickly, but there were no membership rolls. Anyone who showed up (and wasn’t dressed bougie) was a member in good standing and had a voice in making decisions. *The plethora of voices at general meetings—the passionate pontificating, endless theorizing, disputatious debating—produced chaos.* [New York GLF-er] Lois Hart argued that the group’s ‘many mentalities, disparities, and persuasions’ needed to be accommodated. That could be done, she suggested, by creating ‘cells,’ a structure based on the Communist model of carrying out tasks in small working groups.... Everyone agreed.

“But then the cells fought one another ferociously....

“There was contention between affiliated GLF groups, too. The Street Transvestite Action Revolutionaries (STAR), which was formed by Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera[, two of the ‘stars’ of the Stonewall riots,] couldn’t be in the same room with the Radicalesbians. STAR stood up for the rights of effeminate street kids to be as girly as they pleased, but Radicalesbians complained that their girly-ness mocked women because they flaunted the worst stereotypes of femininity—and that violated GLF’s supposed principles to fight against sexist oppression” [Emphasis added].

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“Despite such dissensions, the idealistic image of revolutionaries banding together caught the imagination of young gays and lesbians who were brought up on the nightly news of civil rights and antiwar struggles. *Gay Liberation Fronts sprang up not only in the coastal areas of the east and west but also in places such as Iowa City, Louisville, Atlanta, and Tallahassee (and in England, Germany, Denmark, and New Zealand, too).* Some of the groups, less theoretical and philosophical than the parent GLF, were more focused as they went about the job of creating a more just world. The Los Angeles Gay Liberation Front, [for example], enraged by both the Vietnam War and the armed forces’ mistreatment of gays in the military, encouraged all gay service members to get out as quickly as possible....” [Emphasis added].

Bronski, p. 211: “COUNTRY IN REVOLT

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“By November 1969, after a discussion of donating money to the Black Panthers, some GLF members decided to start the Gay Activists Alliance (GAA). This new organization would, according to its constitution, focus only on achieving civil rights for gay people, ‘disdaining all ideologies, whether political or social, and forbearing alliance with any other organization.’ Although GAA disdained official political ideologies, it was forthright in confronting antihomosexual bias in media, legal, and social venues. *Much of its power came from its ‘zaps’— high-profile public confrontations of people and institutions that promoted antihomosexual sentiments—which garnered enormous attention and brought LGBT[Q+] issues into the media.*

“GLF and GAA coexisted until GLF’s demise in 1972. As GAA grew and some of its leaders began to have political ambitions, their agenda became more reformist and conservative.... By 1974 GAA was crumbling, and prominent members such as Bruce Voeller left to start the National Gay Task Force (now the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force)....

“The split between the pragmatism of GAA and the idealism of GLF echoed the earlier division within Mattachine. [See above at pp. 60-63]....”

Kaiser, pp. 261-62: “... Two of [Ethan Geto’s] best friends were Morty Manford, a founder of the gay students organization at Columbia who became president of the Gay Activist Alliance; and Bruce Voeller, who left GAA to help found the National Gay Task Force. ‘Bruce was in GAA and he thought GAA had become, by 1973, too ideological, dogmatic, left-wing, fringy, too militant, too radical for him. We were never going to get legislation in Congress, unless we had a respectable mainstream civil rights organization like the NAACP. So Bruce led a walkout from GAA. He got up on the floor in GAA and said, ‘Anybody that wants to meet with me so that we can have a mainstream NAACP-like civil rights organization. We’re having fun here making ourselves feel good with all these zaps and militant actions. But no one recognizes us. No one takes us seriously. We’re a fringe group. We have to have professional staff, fund-raising, lobbyists!’

“GAA had no staff, but it had a fine sense of theater and a knack for gaining the attention of the media. ‘It was really the ACT UP of its time,’ said Geto. ‘So

Voeller founded the NGTF, and he and Jean O’Leary[, the founder of Lesbian Liberation Front, one of the first lesbian activist groups in the women’s movement,] became the first co-executive directors....”

A Triumphant Bi-Coastal Celebration

Faderman, ch. 12 cont’d: “The resolution presented by Ellen Broidy at the final meeting of the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations in 1969 had killed the Annual Reminder Day pickets in Philadelphia and replaced them with a march in New York to commemorate the Stonewall riots. [See above at p. 95]. June 28, 1970, was the first march. It was to start at Christopher Street and end up at Sheep Meadow in Central Park. The organizing committee had no idea what to expect. Would anyone show up? Craig Rodwell’s partner, Fred Sergeant, was at the front of the march, and as the parade began to move up Sixth Avenue, he looked back. As far as he could see, [there were] solid throngs of marching Gays and lesbians.... To get a better perspective, Sergeant shinnied up a light pole. Stretched out to infinity, it seemed, were marchers, thousands and thousands, like a powerful army. *Never in history had so many gay and lesbian people come together in one place and for a common endeavor.* The Tactical Police Force that menaced gays on the night of the Stonewall riots were there too—at the tail end of the parade, three busloads of them, assigned to protect the marchers.

“For the fifty-one blocks of the route, the marchers screamed the same chant over and over: ‘Say it clear! Say it loud! Gay is good! Gay is proud!’ It was a talisman to drive away the years of hateful propaganda, when the church, the cops, the priests, the government all colluded to tell homosexuals they were pariahs. It was a message to the straight world that gay people weren’t buying that disinformation anymore. It was nose-thumbing to the dozen Bible-thumpers who gathered on the route with signs that shouted ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ or proclaimed that homosexuals were going to hell. It was a call to other homosexuals to come out of the closet and help fight the lies.

“Craig Rodwell—who’d been waiting for years for the spark that would light the fire and who recognized immediately that the riot at Stonewall was what he’d been waiting for—had hoped there’d be sister parades all over America. Rodwell called gay leaders in big cities everywhere imploring them to commemorate

Stonewall. But only media-savvy Morris Kight[, the de facto head of LA's Gay Liberation Front,] jumped on the idea. 'Christopher Street West,' the parade in Los Angeles would be called. At the same time as New York gays and lesbians marched down Sixth Avenue, Los Angeles gays and lesbians would be marching down Hollywood Boulevard, sending the same message to the straight world and making the same call to other homosexuals to come out [as prophesied by the Mattachine Society's radical activist Chuck Rowland 17 years earlier, see above at p. 61].

"But the Los Angeles parade almost didn't take place. The parade committee was obliged to obtain a permit from the Los Angeles police commissioner. They sent Reverend Troy Perry—who'd recently founded the gay Metropolitan Community Church—downtown to request it. Decked out in his clerical garb, Perry hoped for respect for the collar at least. He didn't get it. Chief of Police Ed Davis—'Crazy Ed,' he was called by the homosexuals for his rabid use of the LA Vice Squad in bar raids and entrapments—snarled at Reverend Perry: 'Do you know that homosexuality is illegal in the state of California?'

"It wasn't—only certain sexual acts were illegal, and the reverend told the police chief so. They argued the point, until Davis, fed up with the facts, looked for an insult. 'Well, I'd sooner give parade permits to a bunch of robbers and thieves than to a bunch of homosexuals,' he grumped.

"The police commissioners were just as hostile. 'There'll be violence if homosexuals parade,' one of them said. The others agreed and decreed that Christopher Street West would have to put up [a] \$1 million bond to cover the 'personal damages' that would result from the riots, and a \$500,000 bond to cover property damage. Plus, before a parade permit would be given, they'd have to put up the money it would cost to hire extra policemen to protect the homosexuals from the anticipated outrage of the citizens.

"Perry immediately got in his car and drove to the office of ACLU attorney Herb Selwyn, a heterosexual who'd been helping gay men fight unfair arrests since the early 1950s.... With only a few days left before the parade was scheduled to happen, Selwyn took Christopher Street West's case before Superior Court judge Richard Schauer.

"At noon on Friday, two days before the parade, *the judge lit into the police*

*commissioners for their glaringly discriminatory double standards. No, Christopher Street West would not be obliged to post any bond nor pay any monies that were not required of other groups, Judge Schauer declared. And yes, the police must protect the marchers. Because homosexuals are citizens of the state of California, and all citizens are entitled to equal protection under the laws” [Emphasis added]. [See also **Kaiser**, p. 216: “On June 28[, 1970,] between five thousand and fifteen thousand newly minted gay activists marched up Sixth Avenue from Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village to the Sheep Meadow in Central Park for a ‘Gay-In’ to celebrate the Stonewall anniversary. This gathering was by far the largest public display of homosexuality Manhattan had ever seen, and it made the front page of the Times. Even notoriously blasé New Yorkers reacted with silent astonishment. The marchers carried bright red, green, purple and yellow silk banners, and shouted ‘Say it loud, gay is proud!’ and ‘Join us!’ at the curious; occasionally a passerby filed into the parade. A tall attractive girl carried a sign reading ‘I am a lesbian’ to the applause of some of the bystanders. ‘Not long ago the scene would have been unthinkable,’ Lacey Fosburgh wrote in the *Times*, ‘but the spirit of militancy and determination is growing so rapidly among the legions of young homosexuals that last weekend thousands of them came from all over the Northeast”’ [Emphasis added]].*

The American Psychiatric Association Reverses Its Position

There can be little doubt that the action taken by the APA in December 1973, see above at p. 42, was one of the most significant, if not *the* most significant, advances for the gay rights movement in the seventies. [The other key event in the seventies in terms of LGBTQ+ progress was the defeat of the Briggs initiative in November 1978, which essentially stemmed the tide created by Anita Bryant’s anti-LGBTQ+ crusade, see above at pp. 42-43]. In his “landmark history of gay life in America,” Kaiser gives a detailed account of the events leading up to the APA’s decision:

Kaiser, pp. 235-40: “Frank Kameny had been among the first to point out in the early sixties that ‘an attribution of mental illness in our culture is devastating’ and that this accusation of sickness [directed against LGBTQ+ people] was going to be ‘one of the major stumbling blocks’ to real progress. *He recognized that this battle would be more important than any single election or the passage of any piece of*

legislation. Most importantly, it turned out to be a battle that could be won.

“In 1970 Kameny overcame the initial resistance of the Gay Activists Alliance in New York and convinced them they needed to persuade the American Psychiatric Association to reverse its position on homosexuality. For nearly a century, the APA had listed homosexuality as an illness and Kameny and his cohort were determined to change that.

“As usual, there was a two-prong strategy. Privately, Dr. Charles Silverstein, a GAA activist, met with Dr. Robert Spitzer, a psychiatrist at the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons who was in charge of the APA’s *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Publicly, the activists invaded the APA’s annual convention at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington in 1971 and demanded the right to challenge the association’s position on homosexuality. The following year a panel discussion included Barbara Gittings, [the] veteran lesbian activist from Philadelphia; Frank Kameny; and a psychiatrist from Philadelphia who wore a mask and used a microphone that disguised his voice....

“At this point Kameny did not know any openly gay psychiatrists within the organization: ‘In those days gay psychiatrists were not out. Period. End. That’s why the one gay psychiatrist wore a mask.’ But the gay activists did have many important heterosexual allies. Probably most important were Evelyn Hooker, the researcher who had done groundbreaking work confirming the sanity of gay men [see above at pp. 63-64]; and Dr. Judd Marmor, who was an officer of the APA. Each of them played a heroic role in changing the official psychiatric orthodoxy on homosexuality.

“In 1969, Hooker was part of a panel of the National Institute of Mental Health which recommended the repeal of all laws prohibiting sex in private between consenting adults, and Marmor had always been open-minded on the subject of homosexuality.

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“.... Right from the start Marmor was ‘appalled by the stereotypic generalizations being made about homosexuals’ by the psychiatrists he knew.... To correct some of these misconceptions, in 1965 he published *Sexual Inversion: The Multiple Roots of Homosexuality*. In it he argued that ‘our attitudes toward homosexuality were culturally determined and influenced.’ At the time, the

statement was considered ‘relatively revolutionary,’ from a member of the American Psychiatric Association.

“In the third year of the activists’ campaign, the APA met in Hawaii. A formal debate about the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual’s* listing for homosexuality was scheduled. The participants included Richard Green, Robert Stoller, Charles Socarides, Irving Bieber, and Judd Marmor. ‘It was a very, very dramatic debate,’ said Marmor, and one of the association’s largest meetings ever, with ‘several thousand psychiatrists’ in the audience. Marmor argued eloquently that it was time for the organization to end a policy that misused psychiatry and had detrimental ‘social and legal consequences’ for gay people. He said the association categorized homosexuality as a sickness mostly because ‘society disapproved of this behavior.’ Psychiatrists who labeled it as an illness were merely acting as agents of a cultural value system. And he reminded the audience that only one hundred years earlier, medical authorities were certain that a dependency on masturbation was evidence of a serious mental disturbance.

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“Marmor thought his side had won the debate, and the activists left Hawaii filled with optimism. But they would not know the final outcome until the APA’s Board of Trustees met in Washington seven months later. *On December 15, 1973, an enormous burden was lifted from every gay American: the board announced its 13-0 vote to remove homosexuality from its list of psychiatric disorders. The news was reported on front pages all over the country.*

“Across America there was exhilaration within the community—and gigantic relief. A single action had removed the official psychiatric curse that had hung over every homosexual. Robert Spitzer said the APA had acted because homosexuality did not ‘regularly cause emotional distress’ or generally create ‘impairment of social functioning.’....

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“Psychiatrists like Charles Socarides and Irving Bieber had not only based their professional lives on the doctrine that all homosexuals required treatment; that idea had also been their ticket to celebrity. When the Board of Trustees repudiated them, they were apoplectic....

“For the first time in the history of the APA, Socarides demanded a referendum of the membership to overturn the trustees’ action, because he was certain that most psychiatrists would be ‘aghast’ at the decision.

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“The referendum was held simultaneously with the election for a new president of the APA, and Marmor was one of the candidates. Both of his opponents—Herbert Modlin and Louis West—were also strong supporters of gay rights, and all three of them signed a letter urging APA members to confirm the action of the trustees....

“On April 9, 1974, Frank Kameny and Bruce Voeller..., were present in the APA boardroom in Washington to hear the outcome of the vote.... Nervousness turned into optimism after the announcement that Marmor had become the APA’s new president. Then the crucial news was finally announced: 58 percent had voted to remove homosexuality from the list of illnesses, and 37.8 percent had voted against.

“‘We were ecstatic,’ Kameny recalled.

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“For Frank Kameny and the rest of the movement, the action of the APA was a stunning achievement. It came just nine years after Kameny and Jack Nichols had been forced to wage a battle within the movement to convince gay people to think of themselves as healthy human beings. The psychiatric establishment had been one of the biggest roadblocks to that early victory. Now, in less than a decade, Kameny and his friends had converted the movement’s most potent enemy into an important ally.

“We stated that there was no reason why ... a gay man or woman could not be just as healthy, just as effective, just as law abiding and just as capable of functioning as any heterosexual,’ said Marmor. ‘Furthermore, we asserted that laws that discriminated against them in housing or in employment were unjustified. So it was a total statement, and I think it was a very significant move.’

“The Stonewall riot had served as the movement’s de facto Declaration of Independence. Just four years later, psychiatrists had become the wildly unlikely ratifiers of its Constitution” [Emphasis added].

LESSON 3 The Greatest Challenge

I. The Eighties

Kaiser describes the eighties as a decade that, with some exceptions, got off to a very bad start for LGBTQ+ America:

Kaiser, pp. 270-75: “The Seventies had been a time of amazing progress and almost nonstop celebration for much of the gay community. By the end of the decade, gay invisibility was just a distant memory, with the proliferation of gay characters on network TV sitcoms and frequent political battles over gay civil rights laws. Even damaging defeats, like Anita Bryant’s successful campaign to overturn a gay rights ordinance in Miami, were not without incidental benefits. Such reversals proved once again how much the movement could be strengthened by adversity.

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“But while thousands of lesbians and gay men responded to these changes by publicly declaring who they were, thousands more still assumed that safety, comfort, and prosperity would continue to flow from inside a closet. *And most gay people still believed that a public declaration of their homosexuality would mean losing the chance to rise to the pinnacle of their profession....*

“Mixed messages from all kinds of American institutions encouraged this timidity....

“... [T]he silent convictions of the senior executives at CBS News became clear when CBS Reports presented ‘Gay Power, Gay Politics’ in April 1980. Narrated and coproduced by George Crile, this ‘documentary’ about gay political power in San Francisco ... bore little resemblance to objective journalism. This was straightforward, antigay propaganda, with a heavy emphasis on drag queens and sado-masochism, including a description of an S and M parlor where the sexual activities were ‘so dangerous that they have a gynecological table there with a doctor and nurse on hand to sew people up.’

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“Randy Alfred, a freelance reporter in San Francisco, spent three hundred hours researching ‘Gay Power, Gay Politics’ after it aired.... Then he filed a formal protest detailing its inaccuracies to the National News Council, a short-lived effort at self-regulation by the news industry....

“The council found that ‘by concentrating on certain flamboyant examples of homosexual behavior,’ Crile’s program ‘tended to reinforce stereotypes.’ It also ‘exaggerated political concessions to gays and made those concessions appear as threats to public morals and decency.’ In October, CBS reported the council’s verdict on the air, and acknowledged that in at least one instance there had been a violation of the network’s ‘own journalistic standards.’ This was the first time a major news organization had issued a formal apology to gay activists.

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“To everyone who still cherished the generous spirit of the sixties, two events at the end of 1980 made it feel as though America was entering a bleak new era, while a third incident sent a tremor through the gay community in Manhattan.

“The first omen was the landslide victory of Ronald Reagan on November 4, coupled with the arrival of the first Republican majority in the Senate in more than a quarter century. The Republican gains marked a sharp turn to the right, and sparked a new reverence for all kinds of conspicuous consumption. In the age of Reagan, no one would be encouraged to worry about anyone less fortunate than himself. The new president’s sole preoccupations would be lower taxes and a bloated defense budget.

“The election also meant a greatly expanded political role for Evangelical Christians. Robert J. Billings, a cofounder of Jerry Falwell’s Moral Majority, had served as Reagan’s liaison on religious issues during the campaign, and fundamentalist Christians were given major credit for the Republican sweep....

*“When Massachusetts Senator Edward Kennedy unsuccessfully challenged [the sitting President] Jimmy Carter for the [Democratic] presidential nomination in 1980, Kennedy became the first significant major party candidate to actively pursue gay voters. A total of seventy-six gay delegates and alternates attended the Democratic National Convention that year in New York, and the party’s platform acknowledged their growing influence. It said, ‘We must affirm the dignity of all people and ... protect all groups from discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex or sexual orientation.’ *Though almost unnoticed by the national media at the time, this modest statement of nondiscrimination gave the Republicans another opportunity to exploit antigay**

prejudice in a national campaign.... Twelve days before the election, Christians for Reagan, a supposedly independent lobby organized to capture the fundamentalist vote for the Republican nominee, announced that it would pay for a barrage of advertisements throughout the south, which attacked President Carter for ‘catering’ to homosexuals.... On one spot, an announcer intoned, ‘The gays in San Francisco elected a mayor; now they’re going to elect a president.’ Before the ads began, polls had shown that Carter, a born-again Christian, still had considerable support among the Evangelicals. But the hard-hitting TV spots were extremely effective, and they helped Reagan carry every Southern state except Georgia, where Carter had been governor. Partly because the commercials were never aired in New York or Washington, most people outside the South were never aware of them....

“The second lacerating event at the end of 1980 was the murder of [former Beatle] John Lennon. New Yorkers had proudly claimed the Liverpoolian as one of their own.... The late-night shooting by a crazed ‘fan’ on December 8, in the doorway of the Dakota apartment building on West 72nd Street, was the most depressing murder that Manhattan had endured in decades.

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“... The confluence of Lennon’s death with the impending inauguration of a deeply reactionary president filled millions of Americans with a feeling of foreboding.

“Another senseless shooting was the third incident to traumatize the gay community in New York City and spark fears of a backlash against its growing visibility. In the middle of November, Ronald Crumpley, a former New York City transit policeman, stole his father’s year-old white Cadillac and drove it to Virginia. Outside Richmond, he stole an Uzi submachine gun and three other weapons from a sporting goods store. Then he drove thirty miles away and robbed a bank.

“The following evening, Wednesday, November 19, 1980, Crumpley took the car to Greenwich Village and went on a shooting spree at three different locations, firing forty bullets from three guns [and in each instance targeting groups of men who were standing together on sidewalks]. Two men were killed

and six were wounded.

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“[When he was arrested,] *Crumpley immediately admitted to the killings. He told the police that he had committed them because he hated homosexuals. ‘I want to kill them all,’ he told detectives. ‘They’re no good. They ruin everything.’*”

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“*Although gay men had often been beaten on the streets of Greenwich Village, nothing this violent had occurred within any resident’s memory.* The night after the shootings, more than four hundred demonstrators gathered in Sheridan Square, wearing black armbands. One carried a sign reading, ‘There is no justice in America if you are gay.’ Then they marched down Christopher Street, singing ‘We Shall Overcome’” [Emphasis added].

II. Gay America Gets Hit By a Plague

In her comprehensive history of the LGBTQ+ liberation movement in America, Lillian Faderman captioned chapter 23 “The Plague.” She began the chapter as follows:

Faderman, pp. 415-16: “PARIAHS

“The disease appeared out of nowhere. In June 1981 a thirty-three-year-old physician and assistant professor of medicine at UCLA, Michael Gottlieb, reported in the Centers for Disease Control’s *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* [MMWR] that between October 1980 and May 1981, there’d been five cases in Los Angeles hospitals of previously healthy young men whose biopsies had confirmed a rare illness, pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, which, he wrote, had been seen before only in severely immunosuppressed patients. All the young men were active homosexuals. By the time Dr. Gottlieb wrote the report, two had already died.

“The following month, the Centers for Disease Control reported that twenty-six homosexual men had been diagnosed with Kaposi’s sarcoma, a rare cancer that shows up as skin lesions. Twenty of those men were in New York, and six in Los Angeles and San Francisco—three cities that had led the gay revolution of the preceding decade. Eight of the men were already dead. The *New York Times* article that announced the sudden appearance of this ‘gay cancer’ emphasized that in most cases the men had been promiscuous, having ‘as many

as ten sexual encounters each night, up to four times a week.’ The *Times* revised the figures upward a year or so later. Many of the infected had had ‘sex with fifteen to twenty deliberately anonymous men’ per night on a typical visit to a gay bathhouse, the country’s most widely read newspaper reported.

“The Far Right did not waste the shock value. Paleoconservative Patrick Buchanan gloated in his [May 24, 1983] syndicated column that AIDS was a sign that ‘Nature is exacting retribution’; but now, he wrote, not only were these homosexuals a ‘moral menace’ they were a ‘public health menace,’ too. Buchanan reported that policemen were so worried about getting AIDS and bringing it home to their families that they had to don masks and gloves when dealing with homosexual lawbreakers; landlords were so worried about the spread of AIDS on their premises that they had to evict infected homosexuals from their property. Because of homosexuals’ morally irresponsible and unhealthy sex practices, they were the spreaders of a host of other diseases, too, that could infect innocent heterosexuals, such as hepatitis. Therefore, Buchanan ranted, they must not be allowed to work in restaurants or any job in which they handled food. ‘Gay rights’—homosexuals’ demands to live and work wherever they wanted—were dangerous to heterosexuals.

“In his column, Buchanan called for the total undoing of the bits of progress that gays and lesbians had been slowly making toward civil rights, and the undoing of the Democratic Party along with them....”

In *And the Band Played On: Politics, People, and the AIDS Epidemic*, Randy Shilts gives a far more detailed account of the early days of the AID epidemic, focusing on the rapid and often mysterious spread of and the continually changing nature of the disease and the frantic efforts of doctors and scientists to discover its cause:

Shilts, pp. 42-43, 68-71, 74-77, 82-83, 102-03, 126, 146, 164-65, 167-68, 212-13, 237-38, 592-93: “**November 1980 University of California, Los Angeles.** Dr. Michael Gottlieb’s four-month career as an associate professor at UCLA had proved anything but scintillating ... so he put out the word that his residents should beat the bushes for something interesting—some patient that might teach them a thing or two about the immune system.

“It didn’t take long for an eager young resident to come back with the story of *a young man who was suffering from a yeast infection in his throat that was so severe he could hardly breathe. Babies born with defects in their immune systems sometimes suffered from this florid candidiasis, as would a cancer patient who had been loaded down with chemotherapy, Gottlieb knew, but he’d never seen such a thing in a thirty-one-year-old who appeared perfectly healthy in other respects.*

“Gottlieb and his residents examined the young man and collectively scratched their heads.

“Two days later, the patient, an artist, complained of shortness of breath. He had also developed a slight cough. On a hunch, Gottlieb twisted some arms to convince pathologists to take a small scraping of the patient’s lung tissue through a nonsurgical maneuver. *The results presented young Doctor Gottlieb with the strangest array of symptoms he’d ever heard of—the guy had *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia.*

“Gottlieb walked a tube of blood down the hall to a lab immunologist who, like himself, was always on the lookout for something that broke the routine. This researcher was specializing in the new science of T-cells, the recently discovered white blood cells that are key components of the immune system. *Gottlieb asked for a T-cell count on the patient.* There are two kinds of T-lymphocyte cells to look for: T-helper cells that activate the specific disease-fighting cells and give chemical instructions for creating the antibodies that destroy microbial invaders, and the T-suppressor cells that tell the immune system when the threat ended. *The colleague ran his tests on the patient’s blood.... He was floored by the outcome: There weren’t **any** T-helper cells.* Figuring he had made a mistake, he tested the blood again, with the same result.

“... *What kind of disease tracked down and killed such specific blood cells?* Gottlieb brainstormed with residents, colleagues and anyone with a spare hour. *Nobody had a clue....* In a conversation, the patient mentioned that he was gay, but Gottlieb didn’t think any more of that than the fact the guy might drive a Ford.

“After weeks of fruitless investigation, Gottlieb was still stumped....”
[Emphasis added].

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*“On **Friday, June 5, 1981**, the Centers for Disease Control Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report published what would be the first report on the epidemic, based on the Los Angeles cases of *Pneumocystis* that Drs. Michael Gottlieb and Joel Weisman had seen in the previous months. In the week before publication, skittish CDC staffers debated how to handle the gay aspect of the report. Some of the workers in the venereal disease division had long experience working with the gay community and worried about offending the sensibilities of a group with whom they would clearly be working closely in the coming months. Just as significantly, they also knew that gays were not the most beloved minority in or out of the medical world, and they feared that tagging the outbreak too prominently as a gay epidemic might fuel prejudice....*

*“The report, therefore, appeared not on page one of the MMWR but in a more inconspicuous slot on page two. Any reference to homosexuality was dropped from the title, and the headline simply read: *Pneumocystis pneumonia—Los Angeles*.*

“Don’t offend the gays and don’t inflame the homophobes. These were the twin horns on which the handling of this epidemic would be torn from the first day of the epidemic. Inspired by the best intentions, such arguments paved the road toward the destination good intentions inevitably lead.” [Emphasis added].

“June 9, 1981 Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, New York City. ‘What’s going to happen to me?’

“Dr. Jim Curran stared at the patient who was such a reflection of himself. Like Curran, the man was thirty-six years old and the product of an Ivy League education. He was even raised near Detroit, Curran’s hometown. And he was a successful professional, having carved a career in New York as an entertainer. The man wasn’t like Curran at all in that he was homosexual and had live in Greenwich Village for the past fifteen years.

“Married and the father of two, Curran’s decade in the Centers for Disease Control had forced him to shift from city to city before landing in Atlanta, where he headed up the CDC’s venereal disease prevention services. That was why it was *only yesterday he had attended the first meeting of an ad hoc task force*

hurriedly put together to investigate the outbreaks of Pneumocystis and Kaposi's sarcoma. He'd taken a morning flight to New York City to talk to Alvin Friedman-Kien and see some of these patients for himself. The performer was the first victim of this unlikely new battery of diseases Curran had ever met.

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“He felt embarrassed to be examining the man, stripped down to his underwear, as if he were a lab animal. The lesions, however, got him back to business. *Whatever this was, Curran thought, it wasn't the benign African KS in all the textbooks. This disease was far more aggressive.*

“Curran was also struck by how identifiably gay all the patients seemed to be.... [They seemed to] put a high personal stake in their identification as gay people, living in the thick of the urban gay subculture. They hadn't just peeked out of the closet yesterday.

“It was strange because diseases tended not to strike people on the basis of social groups....To Curran's recollection ..., no epidemic had chosen victims on the basis of how they identified themselves in social terms, much less on the basis of sexual life-style. Yet, this identification and a propensity for venereal disease were the only things the patients from three cities—New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco—appeared to share. There had to be something within this milieu that was hazardous to these people's health” [Emphasis added].

“July 1 San Francisco General Hospital.

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“After three years at the retrovirus lab at UCSF, [Paul] Volberding was starting his dream job as chief of oncology at San Francisco General Hospital. He was young for such a position—thirty-one years old. He was nervous and excited and not sure what to think when the veteran cancer specialist slapped him on the back on his first day at work, July 1, and pointed toward an examining room.

“‘There's the next great disease waiting for you,’ he said. ‘A patient with KS.’

“Volberding had never heard the term ‘KS’ before. He didn't know what the old-timer was talking about. Volberding walked into the room and, for the first time, saw one of the people who would merge his interests in retroviruses and

the terminally ill into a career that would consume much of his life.

“A friendly down-home accent identified the twenty-two-year-old patient as from the South. He was an attendant in a San Francisco bathhouse and had been admitted to the hospital a few days ago with diarrhea and weight loss; the Kaposi’s sarcoma diagnosis had been confirmed just the day before. *Volberding had never seen anything like this in such a young patient. Emaciated and covered by lesions, the young man looked like someone who was, perhaps, in the final stages of a stomach cancer. It was hard to look more advanced than this fellow, Volberding thought; he looked like someone who was going to die.*

“The youth didn’t have many friends in San Francisco and lived in a lonely apartment in the seedy Tenderloin neighborhood. He was estranged from his family, and he didn’t understand why he had lost so much weight or where the purple spots had come from. He was frightened and isolated, dependent and needy. *The sight of him left a memory with Volberding that stuck with him for years.*

“Hearing that other cases of this strange cancer were appearing in New York, Volberding called Michael Lange at St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital, and the pair compared notes about treatment. *Volberding read all the papers in the medical libraries on Kaposi’s sarcoma and started the patient on the recommended chemotherapies. **None worked.** Volberding didn’t know what to do; **none of the KS experts in the country knew what to do.** In the months that followed, Volberding simply became a helpless witness to the young man’s excruciating and lonely death, the first of the hundreds to follow at San Francisco General Hospital. It truly was to be ‘the next great disease’” [Emphasis added].*

“The first official report on the outbreak of Kaposi’s sarcoma was released in the *MMWR* of **July 4, 1981** The title of the report was ‘Kaposi’s Sarcoma and *Pneumocystis* Pneumonia Among Homosexual Men—New York City and California.’ In the driest possible prose, the report outlined the common symptoms of the KS patients, twenty of whom lived in New York City and six in California....The report also announced ten new cases of PCP among gay men, including six in the San Francisco Bay Area.

“*The occurrence of this number of KS cases during a 30-month period*

among young, homosexual men is considered highly unusual,' the report reported.... That 10 new cases of Pneumocystis pneumonia have been identified in homosexual men suggests that the 5 previously reported cases were not an isolated phenomenon. In addition, CDC has a report of 4 homosexual men in NYC, who developed severe, progressive, perianal herpes simplex infections and had evidence of cellular immunodeficiencies. Three died, 1 with systemic CMV infection.... It is not clear if or how the clustering of KS, pneumocystis, and other serious illnesses in homosexual men is related” [Emphasis added].

“July 17 New York City. It had been another typical day of gay cancer studies for [CDC epidemiologist] Mary Guinan. She had awakened at 6 a.m. to breakfast with gay doctors and community leaders and asked, again and again, ‘What’s *new* in the community?’ What new element might have sparked this catastrophe?

“She had visited hospital rooms and sick beds throughout Manhattan for the rest of the morning and afternoon before returning to her hotel room at 7:30 p.m....

“... As the summer turned Manhattan hot and sticky, Guinan could feel her heart break a little more with each interview.

“It was horrible, she said. The guys were young, bright, talented people, and incredibly cooperative. They struggled to resurrect every detail that might be helpful. At the end, they’d ask, ‘What’s the prognosis?’

“Guinan would have to say she didn’t know....

“Guinan felt helpless and frightened. *This was the meanest disease she had ever encountered.* She strained to consider every possible nuance of these peoples’ lives. The CDC, she knew, needed to work every hypothesis imaginable....

“*Several of the cases, it turned out, weren’t gay men at all, but drug addicts. At the CDC, there was reluctance to believe that intravenous drug users might be wrapped into this epidemic, and the New York physicians also seemed obsessed with the gay angle,* Guinan thought. ‘He says he’s not homosexual, but he must be,’ doctors would confide to her.

“*The problem was that the drug addicts didn’t seem to get Kaposi’s sarcoma; they got the far more virulent Pneumocystis. Most of them were dead before they even got reported to the CDC.* Guinan carefully interviewed surviving

addicts about their sexual habits. *It was the most significant lead she developed in her weeks in New York City. Her drug addicts were not taken very seriously back in Atlanta, but years of syphilis interviews had given Guinan a sixth sense about when people were lying and when they were telling the truth. She didn't feel that these people, so close to death, were lying about their sex lives. Hepatitis B struck both gays and intravenous drug users, she knew; as she had believed for several weeks, it was reasonable to assume a new disease might do the same.*

“The analysis had the ring of biological plausibility. A virus like hepatitis B could spread sexually among gay men and be transmitted through blood contact among intravenous drug users. Guinan had already made a mental note to watch for cases among hemophiliacs and blood transfusion recipients. As other prime victims of hepatitis B, they could be expected to pick up this bug too through blood products” [Emphasis added].

“July 29 South-of-Market District, San Francisco. Dr. Harold Jaffe looked nervously toward the barroom door.... The Ambush looked as seedy as Jaffe had heard It was also the source of the poppers about which the gay men in San Francisco couldn't rave enough. The Ambush's own brand of poppers, sold discreetly in an upstairs leather shop, didn't give you headaches, patients told Jaffe. In fact, *virtually all the city's AIDS cases reported using Ambush poppers, leading Jaffe and Carlos Rendon, a city disease-control investigator, to the seedy leather bar on Harrison Street.*

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“Rendon returned with an unlabeled amber bottle that Jaffe tucked away for chemical analysis back in Atlanta. *Like Mary Guinan, Jaffe was out to explore every possible explanation with a focus on the two leading hypotheses: Either the syndrome came from exposure to some toxic substance, like Ambush poppers, or it was part of the spread of a new infectious agent.*

“Jaffe didn't believe he would find the solution in poppers. If the puzzle were that simple, somebody would have solved it by now, he thought.... *Like the growing numbers of doctors involved in the outbreak, he was struck by how sick the sufferers were. They were so emaciated they looked as though they had been dragged out of some sadistic concentration camp; many were so weak they*

needed to rest between questions. The thirty-five-year-old CDC epidemiologist had seen people with advanced cancer before, but they were never so young as these.

“The severity of the illness as well as the number of cases also convinced Jaffe that this was not some discrete outbreak, like Legionnaire’s, that would strike and then fall quietly back into the woodwork. *The epidemic was something novel, something that was only beginning to define itself and take shape. All his interviews gave Jaffe only two substantive leads: Ambush poppers and, of course, numbers of sexual partners. The typical KS or PCP patients had had hundreds of partners, most drawing their contacts from gay bathhouses and sex clubs, the businesses whose profits depended on providing unlimited sexual opportunity.* The vials of Ambush poppers might offer an environmental clue to the outbreak, but *the highly sexual life-style of the early victims was beginning to persuade Jaffe ... that a sexually transmitted bug might be behind the unexplained cancers and pneumonia*” [Emphasis added].

“**December 1981 Paris.** With a disposition tilted toward permanent agitation, Dr. Jacques Leibowitch lapsed into near-rapturous excitement long before completing Michael Gottlieb’s article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* about the cases of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia in gay men, and Alvin Friedman-Kien’s piece in the same issue about Kaposi’s sarcoma. He immediately recalled the stocky Portuguese cab driver whom Dr. Willy Rozenbaum had sent him three years ago. He too suffered from this pneumonia and he too was already dead, for a year now....[Leibowitch] couldn’t restrain himself from calling Rozenbaum about the Gottlieb article.

“*‘The epidemic—the cab driver,’* enthused the thirty-nine-year-old immunologist. *‘It’s already been here. For three years.’*

“‘Yes,’ said Rozenbaum. ‘I have three other patients in the hospital now.’

“Rozenbaum told him of the two gay men who had come to him in the past months with the disease, *as well as two women, a Zairian and a Frenchwoman who had lived in Africa. Whatever these diseases were, they were not simply homosexual maladies, and there had to be some link with Africa,* Rozenbaum said.

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“On a hunch, Leibowitch called his sister, a professor of dermatology at

another Paris hospital. Sure enough, she was treating two more gay men with Kaposi's sarcoma. Leibowitch talked to the two men and started reading everything from the United States about the epidemic. *He was taken aback at how little had been written in the popular press even though there were already so many dead and dying from this mysterious phenomenon. He was also curious to see that it was promoted as a homosexual disease.*

*“How very American, he thought, to look at a disease as homosexual or heterosexual, as if viruses had the intelligence to choose between different inclinations of human behavior. Those Americans are simply obsessed by sex. He had no doubt it was some kind of virus. The African connection immediately suggested a viral agent; Africa was where new diseases tended to germinate. It certainly was not the poppers the Americans kept talking about. He had never heard of poppers, and certainly his cab driver had never heard of poppers nor had those two women from Zaire. **If it was something that was already in the United States, France, and Africa, he realized, this was an event that could have global impact**”* [Emphasis added].

“In late **February [1982]**, the Centers for Disease Control reported that 251 Americans had contracted GRID across the country; 99 had died. [NOTE: GRID, standing for Gay Related Immune Deficiency, was later renamed AIDS]. **“February 25.** *The story of the first Wall Street Journal piece on the epidemic would later be cited in journalism reviews as emblematic of how the media handled AIDS in the first years of the epidemic. The reporter, it turned out, had long been pressuring editors to run a story on the homosexual disorder. He had even written a piece in 1981 that the editors refused to print. Finally, the reporter was able to fashion an article around the twenty-three heterosexuals, largely intravenous drug users, who were now counted among GRID patients. With confirmation of bona fide heterosexuals, the story finally merited sixteen paragraphs deep in the largest daily newspaper in the United States, under the headline: ‘New, Often-Fatal Illness in Homosexuals Turns Up in Women, Heterosexual Males.’*

*“The gay plague got covered **only** because it finally had struck people who counted, people who were not homosexuals”* [Emphasis added].

“April 18 Centers for Disease Control Hepatitis Laboratories, Phoenix. Don Francis was toiling to get his viral lab together on the warm Sunday afternoon when Jim Curran phoned and linked up Bill Darrow on a conference call. [NOTE: Francis, Curran and Darrow were all CDC researchers]. Darrow told Francis about Gaetan Dugas [, a strikingly attractive French-Canadian flight attendant who had been linked to several early GRID cases,] and the connections between twenty of the first GRID cases, mainly in Los Angeles. He still had some more tracking to do, but *Darrow was convinced that he had the evidence the task force had been seeking to substantively prove an infectious disease....*

“By the time Bill Darrow’s research was done, he had established sexual links between 40 patients in ten cities. At the center of the cluster diagram was Gaetan Dugas, marked on the chart as Patient Zero of the GRID epidemic. His role truly was remarkable. At least 40 of the first 248 gay men diagnosed with GRID in the United States, as of April 12, 1982, either had had sex with Gaetan Dugas or had had sex with someone who had. The links sometimes were extended for many generations of sexual contacts, giving frightening insight into how rapidly the epidemic had spread before anyone knew about it....

“From just one tryst with Gaetan ..., eleven GRID cases could be connected. Altogether, Gaetan could be connected to nine of the first nineteen cases of GRID in Los Angeles, twenty-two in New York City, and nine patients in eight other North American cities. The Los Angeles Cluster Study, as it became known, offered powerful evidence that GRID was not only transmissible, but was the work of a single infectious agent.

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“A CDC statistician calculated the odds on whether it could be coincidental that 40 of the first 248 gay men to get GRID might all have had sex either with the same man or with men sexually linked to him. The statistician figured that the chance did not approach zero—it was zero” [Emphasis added].

“June 18 Centers for Disease Control Atlanta. *Although just about every scientist at the CDC was convinced that the cluster study gave them precisely the evidence they needed to show that GRID was an infectious disease, its release came with a*

deluge of qualifiers and maybes from CDC officials.

“Ironically, it was Jim Curran and the CDC Task Force who were most terrified at the implications of the cluster study. For public consumption, however, Curran and Harold Jaffe reassured reporters that no evidence existed that GRID was an infectious disease. ‘The existence of a cluster ... doesn’t say we have evidence of one person giving [a disease] to another person, certainly.... We’re not prematurely releasing information that’s not validated. On the other hand, we’re not holding back information that might have some important health benefits.’

“Scientists accepted the information in the spirit that it was given. Most wanted to see more convincing evidence. Clinicians worried that such small clusterings could lend credence to the toxic exposure theory because it was possible that one batch of bad drugs could have gotten into one crowd....

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“In any event, the cluster study failed to resolve the transmissibility question as Bill Darrow and the CDC researchers originally had hoped it would. A handful of scientists and public health officials clearly saw the implications but nobody rushed into action because the science wasn’t then set in concrete. Although the study attracted a brief flurry of national media attention, it faded” [Emphasis added].

“July 13 Mt. Sinai Hospital, New York City. Even before Jim Curran from the Centers for Disease Control started to speak, the symposium was buzzing about the *MMWR* that had just been issued a few days before from Atlanta. *The report finally confirmed what doctors in New York City and Miami had known since last year—that this so-called gay cancer was all over the Haitian refugee communities in their cities. The MMWR documented thirty-four Haitian cases of opportunistic infections, like those striking gay men and intravenous drug users. Most Haitians suffered from either Pneumocystis or toxoplasmosis, although some contracted the deadly cryptococcus brain infection or disseminated tuberculosis. Unlike the stricken gay men, few of the Haitians seemed to be getting Kaposi’s sarcoma. However, their blood showed the same deficiencies in T-helper lymphocytes that marked all the various risk groups.*

“... The Haitians presented a new enigma in which to wrap the mystery of the growing epidemic. The worst news of the day, however, was yet to come.

“When Curran started talking, a discernible chill crept through the room. There was still another new risk group, Curran said. That week, the CDC would release the case histories of three hemophiliacs who apparently contracted the immune suppression from their Factor VIII [blood products]....

“After the lecture, somebody whispered something in the corridor to Curran about a rumored transfusion-related GRID case in Montreal. Curran’s normally cool face looked plainly disturbed at the news.

“Meanwhile, the doctors fell into little groups, seizing on the implications of GRID in hemophiliacs. First gays, then intravenous drug users, and now hemophiliacs. Those were the major risk groups for hepatitis B. They also knew that there was another risk group for hepatitis B: doctors, nurses, and health care workers.... Many doctors wondered aloud that afternoon whether the next risk group to be described in the MMWR would include themselves.

*“As of **July 15**, 471 cases of GRID had been reported to the Centers for Disease Control, of whom 184 had died. The victims now spanned twenty-four states; the pace of their diagnoses was quickening. One-third of the cases had been reported in the past twelve weeks alone. New diagnoses, which had been coming in at a rate of 1.5 a day in February, were being reported at a rate of 2.5 a day in July. **Finally, the CDC was publicly calling the outbreak of immune suppression an epidemic.***

“‘The pressure is on’ to find the cause, said Jim Curran in a Washington Post interview published on July 18 Somebody’s got to find this thing” [Emphasis added].

*“**December 17 Centers for Disease Control, Atlanta.** For the second consecutive week, the small, innocuous-looking Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report contained a bombshell in its gray pages with the report: ‘Unexplained Immunodeficiency and Opportunistic Infections in Infants—New York, New Jersey, California.’ Even in the dry prose of the MMWR, each case read like a horror story.*

“There was, for example, the black-Hispanic baby, born in December 1980, who had grown slowly in his first nine months and then stopped growing altogether. At seventeen months, he suffered thrush, various staph infections, and severe calcification of his brain. His bone marrow was swimming with ... a horrible fungal infection normally seen in birds. The baby’s mother was a junkie who seemed healthy at the child’s birth but developed candidiasis and decreased T-cells in October 1981, only to die of *Pneumocystis* a month later. The infant, now orphaned, was itself hovering near death.... *Altogether, the CDC had reports of twenty-two babies who seemed to fit no existing category of inherited immune defect; all were children of people in high-risk groups for AIDS, either intravenous drug users or Haitians.*

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“With nonhomosexual victims of AIDS to report, a spate of media attention dutifully noted the new twists in the epidemic. AIDS made rare appearances in *Time* and *Newsweek*, as well as on television networks and wire services.... In the third quarter of 1982, only fifteen stories had appeared in these eminent news organs.

“All this was about to change suddenly, of course, but *the reporting that did exist had already set a pattern for how the disease would be reported*: The focus was on the men in the white coats, who were sure to speak innocuously. *The stories were carefully written not to inspire panic, which might inflame homophobes, or dwell too much on the seamier sex histories of the gay victims, which might hurt the sensitivities of homosexuals.* The pieces always ended on a note of optimism—a breakthrough or vaccine was just around the corner. *Most importantly, the epidemic was only news when it was not killing homosexuals. In this sense, AIDS remained a fundamentally gay disease, newsworthy only by virtue of the fact that it sometimes hit people who weren’t gay, exceptions that tended to prove the rule.*

“*This is what all the talk of ‘GRID’ and ‘gay cancer’ had helped accomplish in the early months of 1982; AIDS was a gay disease in the popular imagination, no matter who else got it.* It would be viewed as much as a gay phenomenon as a medical phenomenon, even by gays themselves, although they were the last to admit it. *And the fact that it was so thoroughly identified as a gay disease by the*

end of 1982 would have everything to do with how the government, the scientific establishment, health officials, and the gay community itself would deal—and not deal—with this plague” [Emphasis added].

“February 7, 1983 Pasteur Institute, Paris. Willy Rozenbaum could hardly contain his excitement. Days before, Professor Luc Montagnier had called, saying: ‘We’ve found something. Can you come over and tell us about this SIDA [the French name for AIDS]?’

“Rozenbaum, Montagnier, Françoise Barre, Françoise Brun-Vezinet, and Jean-Claude Chermann had gathered in Montagnier’s office on the Pasteur campus. **A new human retrovirus had been discovered**, Montagnier announced. He said they would test the new virus to see whether it was HTLV [Human T-cell Leukemia Virus], but it didn’t appear to be like the leukemia at all. *It was cytopathic, dramatically killing the T-lymphocytes.*

“[NOTE: Four months later, on June 3, after completing his testing, Dr. Montagnier concluded that the new AIDS-related retrovirus was **not** a leukemia virus. He named it LAV, or Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus, due to the fact that it had first been retrieved from the lymph node of a lymphadenopathy patient. However, *Dr. Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute* in Washington, D.C., *also claimed to have discovered a new human retrovirus that could be the cause of AIDS,* and he reached the opposite conclusion, that is, that the new retrovirus **was** a leukemia virus. Dr. Gallo, who had been the discoverer of the original HTLV virus, argued that this new virus was a part of the same family and he therefore named it HTLV-III. Later, a consensus developed within the scientific community that Drs. Montagnier and Gallo had discovered **two different** retroviruses].

“Rozenbaum laid out all that he knew about SIDA, describing some of the horrible deaths that had unfolded. All he could do was watch helpless, he said. Treating one disease did no good because another disease would erupt a day later and kill the patient. Until they knew what caused the actual immune deficiency, there could be no effective treatment for SIDA.

“Although he knew the idea lacked scientific proof, Rozenbaum had no doubt that the Pasteur team had discovered the cause of SIDA. A retrovirus—it

made perfect sense” [Emphasis added].

[ADDENDUM: It would literally take years before scientific, public health, and political communities reached a consensus agreement that the new retrovirus discovered by Montagnier and his colleagues was indeed the cause of AIDS. The retrovirus he had named LAV was re-named HIV, standing for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Prior to reaching this consensus, a bitter and seemingly unending feud between the French and the Americans raged on. The Reagan Administration, through Secretary of Health and Human Services Margaret Heckler, weighed in heavily on the side of Dr. Gallo, claiming that the discovery of the AIDS virus was an American achievement, but the scientific community largely supported the French position. Randy Shilts described the ultimate resolution of this dispute, as follows:

Shilts, pp. 592-93: “The Pasteur Institute’s lawsuit against the National Cancer Institute, filed in late 1985, had threatened to bring their ugly dispute to trial in federal court. Though the suit asked only for a share of the royalties that the NCI had accrued from its AIDS blood test patent, *the scientific community understood that the French were really suing for the full recognition that had been denied them*. To be sure, the Rock Hudson affair had brought world-wide attention to the Pasteur Institute’s work on AIDS treatment. And the Pasteur continued to produce world-class AIDS research.... But *they still felt they had been robbed of recognition for their most important achievement, the discovery of the elusive AIDS virus*.

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“Facing the possibility of open court hearings, the U.S. government began to reconsider fighting the French. In the early months of 1987, Dr. Jonas Salk shuttled between the warring scientists like an ambassador at large, forging a compromise. *Ultimately, the settlement was signed by President Reagan and French President Jacques Chirac in a White House ceremony. It was one of the first times in the history of science that heads of state were called upon to resolve a dispute over a viral discovery.*

“The settlement accorded each researcher partial credit for various discoveries on the way to isolating HIV. It was from this settlement, and because none of the mainstream press had pursued the controversy in any depth, that the

pleasant fiction had arisen that Drs. Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier were ‘co-discoverers’ of the AIDS virus. To this extent, Gallo had won...” [Emphasis added].]

Other historians of the LGBTQ rights movement added their observations about the AIDS epidemic in the 1980s and its impact on LGBTQ America: Michael Bronski, **A Queer History of the United States**, at pp. 224-26, 228, 230-32: “By 2007, AIDS would claim the lives of 583,298 women, men, and children in the United States and 2.1 million worldwide. In the early stages of the pandemic, researchers did not understand, as they would by 1983, that the disease was caused by a virus that would later be called HIV (human immunodeficiency virus). At first it was largely unclear exactly how the virus was spread, and there was no easily available diagnostic test for HIV until 1985. *This lack of facts rendered AIDS particularly frightening.*

“HIV/AIDS is not specifically connected to homosexuality or same-sex sexual behavior. But *because it was first detected in gay males and rapidly spread through the gay male community, it immediately became associated with gay men in the public imagination. This quickly led to three dire consequences. First, gay male sexuality, now synonymous with a fatal disease, became more stigmatized than ever before. Second, this stigmatization led to numerous laws that discriminated against people with AIDS in insurance, the workplace, and housing. In some municipalities, children who were HIV-positive or diagnosed with AIDS were forbidden to attend school. Third, because people with AIDS were so demonized and because they were associated with outsider groups—by 1983 it became clear that intravenous drug users, Haitian immigrants, and a small number of hemophiliacs were also at high risk—the media and state and federal governments provided little in the way of basic education or even news coverage.*

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“*Occurring just three years after the repeal of the Dade County ordinance resulted in a wave of antigay sentiment across the nation, the HIV/AIDS epidemic was perfectly suited to the rhetoric of the religious and political right. Pat Buchanan, a conservative Catholic Republican leader, wrote in a 1990 column that ‘AIDS is nature’s retribution for violating the laws of nature.’ Shortly after this,*

popular televangelist Jerry Falwell stated that ‘AIDS is not just God’s punishment for homosexuals. It is God’s punishment for the society that tolerates homosexuals.’ ...

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“As much as the entire LGBT[Q+] community was under attack because of the AIDS epidemic (despite the reality that lesbians were at extremely low risk of transmitting HIV to one another), women and men formed health-focused community organizations from the moment that the first cases appeared. They continued to do so under increasingly severe conditions. The mortality rate from HIV/AIDS during the 1980s and 1990s was staggering; the total number of reported deaths was 1,476 in 1983, 11,932 by 1987, and 31,129 by 1990. Not all of these deaths were of gay men, but a high proportion were; in some urban areas, such as San Francisco, the vast majority were. The massive tide of illness and death—as Canadian poet Michael Lynch put it, ‘these waves of dying friends’—trumped the long history of divisions within the LGBT[Q+] community. Organizations such as Gay Men’s Health Crisis in New York, Boston’s AIDS Action Committee, and the San Francisco AIDS Foundation provided counseling, health care, home visits, and education, often not only for the gay community but for anyone affected by AIDS. LGBT[Q+] legal groups quickly began fighting discrimination against all people with HIV/AIDS.

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“The political and legal backlash engendered by the AIDS epidemic was tremendous, but the anger with which the LGBT[Q+] community responded was fueled by other events as well. On June 30, 1986, the Supreme Court ruled in *Bowers v. Hardwick* that there was no constitutional protection for homosexual sodomy. The decision was an affirmation of the vast legal undermining of the LGBT[Q+] community that had been happening since [the repeal of the Dade County nondiscrimination ordinance in] 1977. *Inflammatory rhetoric ran so high that the moralism and bias of the past paled in comparison.* In a March 18, 1986, *New York Times* piece, esteemed political commentator William F. Buckley urged that ‘everyone detected with AIDS should be tattooed in the upper forearm, to protect common-needle users, and on the buttocks, to prevent the victimization

of other homosexuals.’ *The Reagan administration, meanwhile, had done almost nothing in the early years of the epidemic. The president himself—in what can only be seen as a conscious, and shocking, act of indifference—had mentioned AIDS publicly only twice, briefly, before giving a speech during the Third International Conference on AIDS in Washington on May 31, 1987. This was after 36, 058 Americans had been diagnosed with AIDS, of whom 20, 849 had died.*

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“During this time, many LGBT[Q+] people began using the word ‘queer’ to describe themselves and their culture. This was partly an act of reclaiming language, just as gay liberationists had used once-pejorative words such as ‘fag’ and ‘dyke’ in a new, positive context that could change their meaning. Unlike those terms, *‘queer’ could be used to describe people with a wide range of sexual identities who were working in coalition.* For the constituents of ACT UP, using this word was a reflection of their political vision and actions. Just as ‘queer’ had been angrily shouted at lesbians and gay men in past decades, *ACT UP and other activists now shouted the word as a declaration of difference and strength.* As members of Queer Nation, a direct action group founded by members of ACT UP in 1990, would chant at their marches, ‘We’re Here. We’re Queer. Get Used To It.’” [Emphasis added].

Lillian Faderman in **The Gay Revolution: The Story of the Struggle**, at pp. 418-19, 422-24: *“AIDS could easily have meant the end of the movement for gay civil rights—not just because extremists were calling for its end, but also because gay people were paralyzed by confusion and fear. ‘Gay power’ and especially ‘gay pride’ had come to seem oxymoronic....*

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“....Scores of young gay men, seemingly healthy one day, were being laid low by a host of horrors the next. Family and friends were deserting those with the disease. In the hospitals, people with AID were pariahs. They often sat for days in emergency rooms. If they were finally admitted, terrified orderlies would let them lie in their own excrement and urine, refusing out of fear even to enter their rooms. They left the patients’ food trays piled up in the hallways. When a patient

with AIDS died, he'd be put in a black trash bag. Many funeral homes were refusing to handle their dead...

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"...In March 1983, [novelist, playwright and gay activist Larry Kramer] published a heated, hard-hitting piece in a leading gay paper, the New York Native. Maybe it would serve as a slap in the face to the somnambulists who still didn't realize the Apocalypse was almost upon them. 'If this article doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble,' Kramer declared. 'If this article doesn't rouse you to anger, fury, rage, and action, gay men have no future on this earth.'....

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"Kramer's impassioned essay drew the grand sum of fifty people to the next meeting of the AIDS Network. *He was Jeremiah in the wilderness, screaming about AIDS when everyone else just wanted to get on with his own life....* But he could get few takers for his plans for massive civil disobedience.

"It wasn't that gay people were inured in 1983. Their misery was palpable. AIDS was the leprosy of the times; and gay men, whether infected or not, were the lepers.... If gays didn't already know they were pariahs—even in a city like San Francisco where they'd recently seemed to have genuine clout—they were reminded at the 1983 Gay Freedom Day Parade by the policemen wearing rubber gloves as they diverted traffic around the marchers. And the city crew assigned to sweep up the trash after the parade was issued surgical masks and disposable paper suits. Who could be sure that you couldn't catch AIDS through street litter? *Gay depression made action impossible.*

"WAKE-UP SLAPS

"Three year later: Some alarmist estimates claimed that a million Americans had already been infected. *Homosexuals weren't just the victims of the plague, people were saying—they were also the spreaders of the plague. In June the US Justice Department declared that businesses had the right to discriminate against people with AIDS, if they believed such discrimination would prevent the spread of the disease; employers could fire those with AIDS, merely on the grounds that their presence might make other employees feel discontent or emotional distress. Brutal attacks on gay men were up everywhere. That same*

month, June 1986, in what used to be gay-friendly San Francisco, there were sixty beatings of gay men horrific enough to be reported to the police.

“It seemed that society was again agreeing it was all right to hate gay people....” [Emphasis added].

Charles Kaiser in **The Gay Metropolis: The Landmark History of Gay Life in America**, at pp. 278-29, 282-83, 285-86: *“It was a baffling and virulent new disease that would finally make it impossible for Jack Fitzsimmons [a gay Republican who briefly worked for the Reagan White House], Rock Hudson, Roy Cohn, and hundreds of thousands of other gay men to hide who they really were. **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome would have a greater impact on the shape of the gay community than all the other events of the previous forty years put together....***

“If you are a sexually active gay man in America, being alive at the beginning of this epidemic feels like standing without a helmet at the front line of a shooting war. Friends are falling all around you but no one even knows where the bullets are coming from. There are no weapons to defend yourself, no medicines for the wounded, and if you want to flee, when you start running you won’t know whether your own wounds are fatal—or nonexistent. Three years into this war, the battlefield is just as lethal, but now it feels more like a huge tunnel filled with fire, strewn with bodies and booby traps. If you’re still standing—one of the ‘lucky’ ones—you keep running faster and faster, but you can never outpace the inferno.

“At the beginning, there was nothing but terror and mystery.

“No one knew how this illness was transmitted—or even whether it could be transmitted—and no one could cure it. Although there had been a handful of stories about a mysterious new disease in the gay press earlier in 1981, most gay men in Manhattan first learned about what would become known as AIDS at the beginning of the July Fourth weekend of that year—less than six months after Ronald Reagan’s inauguration. The story that alerted them was written by Lawrence K. Altman, a physician and the senior medical writer for the Times:

‘RARE CANCER SEEN IN 41 HOMOSEXUALS

‘Doctors in New York and California have diagnosed among homosexual

men 41 cases of a rare and often rapidly fatal form of cancer. Eight of the victims died less than 24 months after the diagnosis was made.

'The cause of the outbreak is unknown, and there is as yet no evidence of contagion. But the doctors who have made the diagnoses, mostly in New York City and the San Francisco Bay area, are alerting other physicians who treat large numbers of homosexual men to the problem in an effort to help identify more cases and to reduce the delay in offering chemotherapy treatment.

[several additional paragraphs omitted]'

"The disease itself was as frightening as anything known to twentieth-century man. If it didn't kill you within weeks with a particularly virulent strain of pneumonia, it would cover your entire body with sores, sometimes blind you, addle your brain, and force you into diapers with violent diarrhea.

"More optimistic notions flowed from the description of the earliest casualties as gay men who had 'as many as 10 sexual encounters each night up to four times a week.' A federal study at the beginning of 1982 estimated the lifetime number of sexual partners for early victims of the disease at 1,200; for some, the number approached 20,000. Even in the rollicking seventies, those were figures very few gay men could match. These statistics nurtured the hope that the immune systems of the first men to get sick were being overwhelmed by overexposure to a whole variety of diseases including hepatitis, syphilis, and intestinal parasites, instead of a single new infectious agent.

"Anyone who was healthy and had been monogamous at first assumed he was safe.... But once the disease began to strike men who had been monogamous while their lovers had been promiscuous, only the celibate could retain any confidence about the future.

"Because there are only educated guesses about the number of gay people in America, no one will ever know precisely what proportion of the gay population has been afflicted by this disease. However, anecdotal evidence from doctors with gay practices suggests that at least half of the gay men in New York and San Francisco born between 1945 and 1960 were probably infected by the AIDS virus between the end of the seventies and the end of the eighties. In the earliest stages of the epidemic, some died within a month after their diagnosis; most were dead

less than three years later.

“Gay men in Manhattan from the generation born after World War II would suffer at least a fifty percent casualty rate from this scourge. (By comparison, less than three percent of the American soldiers who served in World War II died in or after battle.) Virtually every gay man in every large American city would experience the death of at least ten friends during the epidemic; for some, the number of deceased friends and acquaintances has surpassed three hundred.

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“The latency period and the initial mystery about its transmissibility led most experts to underestimate the threat AIDS posed to America’s health. And because all of the initial cases reported to the Centers for Disease Control were among homosexuals, for many months there was far less response than the government and the media exhibited after outbreaks of Legionnaire’s disease, toxic shock syndrome, or even the poisonings from a handful of tainted Tylenol capsules.

“Homophobia led many decision-makers to discount this epidemic.... The only real heroes were a few scientists inside the CDC, who lobbied early and often for more money to fight the epidemic, and a very small group of congressmen from California and New York, including Philip Burton, Henry Waxman, and Ted Weiss, whose openly gay staff members convinced them to take the epidemic seriously. Bill Kraus, a gay aide to Burton, and Tim Westmoreland, the gay counsel to a Waxman health subcommittee, were particularly important in sounding the alarm....

“Republican priorities were perfectly clear, right from the start of the Reagan government. One of the administration’s first official acts was to propose a cut of nearly fifty percent in the appropriation for the CDC—from \$327 million to \$161 million. At the same time, Reagan asked for an immediate increase of \$7 billion in defense spending and an additional increase of \$25 billion for the following fiscal year—for a new annual total of \$220 billion....

“Inside the Reagan administration—at the White House, at the Office of Management and Budget, and within the Department of Health and Human Services—there were no openly gay staffers, and therefore, very little will to attack the problem forcefully. *In public, Reagan officials routinely pretended they*

had all the dollars they needed to fight the disease, while dissidents inside the administration secretly begged for more money.

“The national press suffered from the same defect as the Reagan administration. Despite all the changes of the seventies, most newsrooms remained macho places where openly gay or lesbian reporters were almost nonexistent.... Nor were there any openly gay network television correspondents—and there still weren’t fifteen years later. *The closeted reporters who did work in big city newsrooms were almost uniformly reluctant to lobby for ‘gay’ stories, for fear of betraying their secret orientation....*” [Italicized emphasis added].

III. LGBTQ+ America Fights Back

Charles Kaiser begins his account of LGBTQ+ America’s response to the AIDS epidemic as follows:

Kaiser, pp. 284, 290-95: *“In America since World War II, only life-and-death struggles have been able to inspire mass political action on the left, and that was especially true of gay people and AIDS. The disease would convert a generation of mostly selfish men, consumed by sex, into a highly disciplined army of fearless and selfless street fighters and caregivers. Since lesbians were never at much risk of infection, the depth of their commitment to this battle was even more impressive.*

“This war transformed the survivors, leaving them alternatively awed by their strength and guilt-ridden over the mystery of their survival. Partly because just as many healthy people were forced out of the closet by this battle as sick people, for the first time in its history, the gay movement would begin to have the kind of political clout that was roughly commensurate with its size and talent....

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“In New York City, the first gay writer to become alarmed about the epidemic was neither a journalist nor an activist. Larry Kramer was a novelist and screenwriter. He had an elfin look, bouncing eyebrows, and boundless energy to excoriate enemies and friends alike.... His first important success came in 1969 when he wrote and produced an excellent film version of D.H. Lawrence’s Women in Love, which featured a famously homoerotic wrestling scene between the two male protagonists. For many years, this was his only visible contribution to the gay movement. ‘I certainly wasn’t interested in gay politics,’ he wrote in 1989....

“Most gay activists were unaware of Kramer until 1977, when he published Faggots, an inflammatory account of upper-middle-class white gay life in Manhattan. Because he had so much contempt for the movement, the novel naturally did not acknowledge its existence, much less any of its achievements. Kramer thought he was writing satire on the level of Evelyn Waugh, but gay activists considered his graphic accounts of ... every ... sexual excess of gay culture a blood libel. Others simply found the book so overdone as to be unreadable.

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“Kramer’s novel had focused on the emotional damage he thought had been inflicted by nonstop sex ... [but] something else Kramer wrote would soon sound like an ominous prophecy. Everything had to change, said the narrator of Faggots—‘before you f--- yourself to death’

*“Until the outset of the epidemic, almost everyone speaking publicly for the movement had assumed that an unfettered and unlimited sexuality was one of its most important achievements. For many, this was the main reason they were glad to be gay, and they reveled in their outlaw status. Gay people who had accepted themselves had created new lives by ignoring conventional advice. Thousands were addicted to danger; thousands more were addicted to sex. Unlimited access to sex was used like a drug to cure whatever ailed you. *These attitudes deafened many gay men to the earliest warnings about the possible dangers of their behavior.**

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“At the beginning of the epidemic, because no one knew for sure whether AIDS really was a sexually transmitted disease, anyone recommending reduced sexual activity as a sensible precaution ran the risk of being attacked for ‘internalized homophobia’ or ‘sexual fascism.’ And because Kramer had already attacked promiscuity for other reasons, he was particularly vulnerable to this criticism.

“He went to his doctor three weeks after the Times article [on the discovery of 41 cases of a rare and fatal form of cancer in homosexual men in New York and California, see above at p. 128] to ask him what he could do to avoid the new disease. ‘I’d stop having sex,’ his physician told him. One month after that appointment, [Kramer’s] first warning about the epidemic appeared in the New

York Native, a gay newspaper that pioneered coverage of the disease....

“The attacks he received for this sensible appeal set the tone for the debate within the gay community during the first few years of the epidemic. On one side were those like Kramer who believed ‘something we are doing is ticking off the time bomb that is causing the breakdown of immunity in certain bodies,’ and therefore ‘wouldn’t it be better to be cautious, rather than reckless?’ On the other side were writers like Robert Chesley, who immediately skewered Kramer in the letters column of the Native:

‘I think the concealed meaning in Kramer’s emotionalism is the triumph of guilt: that gay men deserve to die for their promiscuity.... Read anything by Kramer closely. I think you’ll find that the subtext is always: the wages of gay sin are death.... I am not downplaying the seriousness of Kaposi’s sarcoma. But something else is happening here, which is also serious: gay homophobia and anti-eroticism.’

“Kramer later credited Chesley’s attack with turning him into an activist. Kramer was the founder of two of the most important gay organizations spawned by the epidemic. The first one was Gay Men’s Health Crisis, which grew out of a fund-raising meeting in Kramer’s Fifth Avenue apartment on August 11, 1981, where he raised \$6,635. Philip Gefer attended this first gathering with Jack Fitzimmons; then Gefer volunteered to organize a follow-up fund-raiser on Fire Island over the Labor Day weekend.

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“Gefer used the Xerox machine at Forbes to make several thousand copies of a six-page brochure about the epidemic, and a copy was placed at the front door of every house in the Pines and the Grove [two large gay communities on Fire Island] in September. The response was tepid.

“‘Nobody cared,’ Gefer remembered. ‘Nobody was interested. They’d just walk by us. I was profoundly disappointed in my community at that moment in time.’ A paltry \$769.55 was collected during the whole weekend” [Emphasis added].

[See also Shilts, pp. 91-92: **“September 4, Labor Day, Fire Island, New York.**

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“The weekend was a disaster from the start. Larry Kramer, Enno Poersch,

Paul Popham, and a handful of others had stretched a banner above a card table near the dock where everybody came into The Pines. ‘Give to Gay Cancer,’ it read. With some of the money raised at Larry’s apartment, they had printed up thousands of copies of a *New York Native* article written by Dr. Larry Mass, another volunteer that weekend.... To each reprint, they attached slips explaining how people could support Friedman-Kien’s research. *The small band of organizers figured they’d be able to raise thousands from the 15,000 gay men who had congregated for the last blowout of the ’81 season.*

“They were wrong.

“‘Leave me alone,’ was one typical reaction.

“‘This is a downer,’ was another.

“‘What are you talking about?’ was about the nicest response they got.

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“... Paul [Popham] had never thought about how frivolous people could be. He wondered what it would mean for the future, when more people were dying” [Emphasis added]].

Faderman, pp. 418-19: *“In January 1982, as the epidemic galloped on, Kramer summoned prominent New York A-Gays—including medical doctor Lawrence Mass, attorney Paul Rapoport, and acclaimed writer Edmund White—to his spacious Greenwich Village apartment whose walls were decorated with glamorous pictures of his good friend Glenda Jackson, star of Women in Love. The stories of death and disaster which Kramer’s guests exchanged that evening were in stark contrast to the pleasant surroundings in which they were sitting.... Kramer had called his influential friends together, he told them, because they needed to do something to help. They agreed. They’d start a group called the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, which would do everything for people with AIDS that the rest of New York was refusing to do.*

“Gay Men’s Health Crisis advertised in the gay papers for ‘buddies’ to pay visits to people with AIDS and hold their hands, clean their apartments, walk their dogs, shop for groceries, cut up their food and feed them, take them to the doctors, read to them in hospitals. Five hundred volunteer buddies—gay men, lesbians (many who’d been lesbian separatists in the 1970s but found their

grudge against males to be irrelevant in the face of such devastation), straight women—all flocked to give succor to the sick. Gay Men’s Health Crisis also established a twenty-four-hour hotline so that people all over the country who were panicking could call in for moral support and solid information. GMHC volunteers ran therapy groups for people with AIDS and their partners. They got lawyers to work gratis to help the sick make wills or fight landlords who wanted to evict them. The old Chelsea brownstone on Twenty-Second Street that GMHC rented for its headquarters was soon cluttered with volunteers’ desks and bulging file cabinets. Telephones rang continuously; computers and typewriters were always in use. *To keep it all going, GMHC held benefits and parties in gay bars. Within the first year, the group raised \$600,000. The state and the city gave GMHC \$200,000 more.*

“In Los Angeles, where the first cases had been observed, AIDS Project LA was started in 1982 by a small group with the same charitable goals. Their proximity to Hollywood made it possible to raise substantial sums to buy food and shelter for the ill and dying. Star-studded banquets featured celebrities such as Barbra Streisand, Elizabeth Taylor, [and] Burt Lancaster... [and raised sums as high as \$3.2 million in a single evening].

“The San Francisco Bay Area, too, had its versions of GMHC and APLA..., [including] the “Shanti Project, which began in Berkeley in 1974 to help people with terminal cancer live out their last weeks or months in peace, By 1982, Shanti volunteers were mostly visiting those with ‘gay cancer’ or GRID [two early names for AIDS] ..., helping them to cope and die.

“But for all their good work, groups like GMHC, APLA, The San Francisco KS Research and Education Foundation, and Shanti could do nothing to halt the epidemic. Whole gay communities and their organizations—some [of] which had only recently gotten started—were being decimated...” [Emphasis added].

While Faderman focused her discussion of GMHC on the charitable works that that organization engaged in, Kaiser highlighted the internal conflicts within the group, as well as its charitable works:

Kaiser, pp. 298-300: *“[A]ll of Kramer’s instincts about how the community should have behaved at the beginning of the epidemic proved to be absolutely correct.*

When GMHC was founded, he felt exhilarated: ‘It was one of those rare moments

in life when one felt completely utilized, useful, with a true reason to be alive.’
But Kramer continued to behave like a volcano that was never dormant, constantly spewing lava in all directions.

“Because he was so lacking in any ability to get along with his colleagues, much less his adversaries, no one ever considered Kramer for GMHC’s presidency. That job went to Paul Popham, a beautiful, closeted ex-Green Beret, who worried that his mailman would realize he was gay if he saw an invitation for a fund-raiser with Gay Men’s Health Crisis as the return address. Popham constantly battled with Kramer about tactics and substance. Later, Kramer admitted that he had been somewhat in love with Popham.

“One of the first arguments between Kramer and Popham was over whether GMHC should tell its members to stop having sex altogether, or reduce the number of their sexual partners. Kramer was adamant that they should be warned, but Popham and the rest of the board opposed the idea. What if it was determined that there was no infectious agent? Popham asked. Then GMHC would look ridiculous.

“The infighting came to a head in April 1983, after Kramer had repeatedly accused Mayor Edward I. Koch of an inadequate response to the health crisis. After months of violent attacks from Kramer, the mayor had finally agreed to a meeting about AIDS with ten representatives of gay groups around the city. But the GMHC board refused to send Kramer as one of its two envoys. Paul Popham was terrified of how Kramer might behave in a small meeting with the mayor. Kramer was stunned—and promptly resigned from the board. After that, GMHC rebuffed all of his subsequent efforts to rejoin the organization.

[NOTE: Randy Shilts claims that, as a result of Kramer’s displacement from his position of leadership in GMHC, the focus of LGBTQ activism nationwide shifted from New York City to San Francisco:

Shilts, pp. 276-77: “It was during this [same] month of April 1983 that the momentum of movement on the AIDS epidemic shifted from New York City to San Francisco, typified, as much as anything else, by that meeting [between Mayor Koch and the NYC gay leaders] in New York City Hall. *For the next two years, AIDS policy in New York would be little more than a laundry list of unmet challenges, unheeded pleas, and programs not undertaken.* The shift was ironic, considering

that New York City was the epicenter for the epidemic, both biologically and, at first, psychologically. Because of the extraordinary reporting of the *New York Native*, the city's gay community had been exposed to far more information about AIDS than San Francisco's in 1981 and 1982. *All the ingredients for a successful battle against the epidemic existed in New York City, except for one: leadership. In San Francisco, the plethora of gay leaders created an environment in which questions of AIDS policy were debated, albeit brutally. Larry Kramer's resignation left New York City without a leader willing to take unpopular positions, whether they were favoring bathhouse closures or opposing a popular mayor. Instead, the city's gay leadership pursued its timid policy of constructive engagement with a mayor who seemed petrified of being highly identified with any gay issue, perhaps because of his status as a perennial bachelor. The New York fight against AIDS would be left to a handful of doctors and overtaxed gay organizations, and many would die there, while AIDS came to be seen as a San Francisco phenomenon because that's where the action was* [Emphasis added]. **Kaiser**, cont'd: *"Despite all the internal dissension, GMHC grew rapidly into an extremely effective social service agency and lobbying group. Anyone with AIDS could come to the agency for help. After one of Kramer's periodic complaints about inadequate press coverage of the epidemic, the Times printed a glowing three-thousand-word feature story about GMHC at the end of 1983. Written by Maureen Dowd, then a rising star on the paper's metropolitan staff, the story described the agency as a 'sophisticated social-service organization with growing political power, 12 paid staff members, an 8-member board of directors, 500 male and female volunteers, and a 1984 budget of \$900,000' which was 'currently helping 250 people with AIDS.'*

".... By this time, 1,261 New Yorkers had been diagnosed with AIDS, and forty-one percent of them had died. *The number of AIDS cases had risen forty-eight percent in the first six months of 1983, compared with the same period a year earlier.* Volunteers told Dowd a litany of horror stories—about government clerks who neglected AIDS cases 'because they are afraid to be in the same room to fill out forms,' about nurses and orderlies who refused to enter the rooms of AIDS patients, even a doctor who refused to clean off a patient's bloody face, and handed a GMHC volunteer a piece of gauze and told him to clean up the patient

himself.

“ ‘Fighting a siege of death and prejudice, the community that was once characterized by a carefree and freewheeling spirit has evolved into a more mature and politically savvy population,’ Dowd wrote. The reporter also noted another effect of the crisis on the gay community: ‘Homosexual leaders ... said it has drawn many young professionals out of the closet.’....

“Dowd’s story was one of the most favorable articles ever written about the gay community during the Rosenthal regime. (See above at pp. 36-38). ‘On the whole,’ she concluded, ‘homosexual leaders agreed the community has developed a new maturity in coping with the AIDS crisis.’” [Emphasis added].

On March 7, 1983, Larry Kramer was once again at the center of a transformative event in the history of the AIDS epidemic:

Shilts, pp. 244-45: *“March 7 New York City. ‘If this article doesn’t scare the shit out of you we’re in real trouble. If this article doesn’t rouse you to anger, fury, rage and action, gay men may have no future on this earth. Our continued existence depends on just how angry you can get.... Unless we fight for our lives we shall die. In all the history of homosexuality we have never been so close to death and extinction before. Many of us are dying or dead already.’*

“With those words, Larry Kramer threw a hand grenade into the foxhole of denial where most gay men in the United States had been sitting out the epidemic. The cover story of the New York Native, headlined ‘1,112 and Counting,’ was Kramer’s end run around all the gay leaders and GMHC organizers worried about not panicking the homosexuals and not inciting homophobia. As far as Kramer was concerned, gay men needed a little panic and a lot of anger.

“Kramer built his story around the burgeoning statistics, the fears of doctors who were at a loss as to how to handle the new caseloads, and the first rumors of suicides among gay men who preferred to die rather than face this brutal, disfiguring disease. He lashed out at the delays in grant funding by the National Institutes of Health and chided the CDC for falling behind on gathering epidemiological data....

“On the local level, Larry Kramer attacked The New York Times for its scant AIDS coverage and the ‘appalling’ job of health education conducted by city

Health Commissioner David Sencer. Kramer's sharpest barbs were directed at Mayor Ed Koch, 'who appears to have chosen, for whatever reason, not to allow himself to be perceived by the non-gay world as visibly helping us in this emergency. Repeated requests to meet with him have been denied us.... With his silence on AIDS, the mayor of New York is helping to kill us.'

"The gay community received no better marks....

"I am sick of guys who moan that giving up careless sex until this thing blows over is worse than death," Kramer wrote. 'How can they value life so little and c.... and a.... so much?'

"At the end of the story, Larry Kramer listed friends who had died ... Kramer knew twenty-one people who had died—'and one more, who will be dead by the time these words appear in print. If we don't act immediately, then we face our approaching doom.'

"Larry Kramer's piece irrevocably altered the context in which AIDS was discussed in the gay community and, hence, in the nation. Inarguably one of the most influential works of advocacy journalism of the decade, '1,112 and Counting ...' swiftly crystallized the epidemic into a political movement for the gay community at the same time it set off a maelstrom of controversy that polarized gay leaders....

"The New York AIDS Network timed the release of its own demands for city services to Mayor Koch to coincide with Kramer's piece. 'It must be stated at the outset that the gay community is growing increasingly aroused and concerned and angry,' its statement said. 'Should our avenues to the Mayor of our City, and the Members of the Board of Estimate not be available, it is our feeling that the level of frustration is such that it will manifest itself in a manner heretofore not associated with the community and the gay population at large.'

"To drive home the point, the *Native* printed a request for 3,000 volunteers to be instructed in civil disobedience such as sit-ins and traffic tie-ups to force city officials to confront AIDS concerns" [Emphasis added].

Five weeks before Kramer's "most famous piece about the epidemic," the medical writer Robin Marantz Henig wrote a six-thousand-word analysis of the epidemic that was published in *The New York Times Magazine*. Even though the

precise method of AIDS transmission had not yet been finally determined, the fourth paragraph of the article stated, ‘The mysterious AIDS organism is generally thought to be a virus or other infectious agent (as opposed to a bacterium) and to be spread in bodily secretions, especially blood and semen.’ **Kaiser**, p. 308. Based on the publication of articles such as Kramer’s and Henig’s, Kaiser reached the following conclusions:

Kaiser, pp. 309-10: “As a result of articles like [these], *by the middle of 1983, any gay man sophisticated enough to be a reader of the Times already knew that unprotected anal intercourse was probably the most dangerous activity he could engage in. The worst blunder of the federal government was its failure to use television to reach people who weren’t reading the Times, to make sure they knew about the dangers of the epidemic.*

“Reagan’s alliance with the religious right, and its squeamishness about explicit descriptions of unsafe sex, combined to prevent the comprehensive sex education that young people desperately needed to avoid infection. Members of the Moral Majority believed that it would be worse to describe gay sex to young people than it was to deprive them of the information they might require to stay healthy....

“Five years into the epidemic, one important member of the Reagan administration finally delivered a direct attack on the criminally irresponsible attitude toward AIDS education which the president’s religious allies had encouraged. In October 1986, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued a blistering report.

“Many people, especially our youth, are not receiving information that is vital to their future health and well-being because of our reticence in dealing with the subjects of sex, sexual practices and homosexuality,’ the surgeon general wrote. ‘This silence must end. We can no longer afford to sidestep frank, open discussions about sexual practices—homosexual and heterosexual....’

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“The miracle was that hundreds of thousands of men did change their sexual activities dramatically beginning in 1983—and that those changes saved their lives. In big cities and small towns across the country, there were sharp drops in the rate of anal gonorrhea infections—the most reliable indicator of safer

sex practices. And after the HIV test became available, the rate of new HIV infections among gay men declined for several years in a row” [Emphasis added]. [See also **Shilts**, pp. 376-77: “[Even in the absence of] a concerted educational effort by the city [of San Francisco], the gay community’s approach to AIDS was transformed. To be sure, tens of thousands of gay men were, quite literally, dying to know about the epidemic. They crowded lectures on safe sex and burgeoning therapy groups on ‘AIDS anxiety’ for the ‘worried well.’ They educated themselves on all things relating to the immune system....

“This collective concern fueled the most dramatic shift in behavior since the contemporary gay movement was forged in the Stonewall riots of 1969. Non-sexual social alternatives thrived.... ‘Trivial Pursuit’ and canasta....bingo.... J.O. nights in some private sex clubs....home-viewed porn videos Dating and matchmaker services enjoyed a comeback.

“At the bars, the gay men who were still cruising rarely admitted to being single. Instead, it seemed, everybody in every gay bar had a lover who was out of town. Telephone sex services also prospered.... This new toned-down gay life-style had started as a vogue in early 1983; by the end of that year, it was a trend; in the year that followed, it would turn into a full-scale sociological phenomenon.

“The gay community, however, remained at crosscurrents with itself. Even as behavior shifted for significant numbers of gay men, others managed to party on, like the revelers in Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘Mask of the Red Death,’ oblivious to the plague around them. When the summer’s intensive media blitz eased, bathhouse attendance picked up and lines formed around the sex emporiums every weekend” [Emphasis added]].

No change of behavior in American gay men proved more difficult to achieve than overcoming their addiction to bathhouses and other commercial sex clubs. Randy Shilts gives a detailed account of the lengthy and vitriolic battle over the closing of bathhouses within the San Francisco gay community:

Shilts, pp. 257-59, 303-06, 430-32, 436-38, 440-43, 446-47, 489-91: **“March 31, 1983 Pacific Heights, San Francisco.** ‘*All of you represent different constituencies in the gay community,*’ said Marcus Conant[, a dermatologist affiliated with the University of California at San Francisco,] scanning the huge room where an anybody-who’s-anybody inventory of the city’s gay politicians were seated.

'Things have to change and change fast, or you won't have any constituents left.'

"The politicians shifted uncomfortably in their chairs. By and large, they were unaccustomed to this kind of talk.... Now, however, doctors were tossing the ball squarely into the gay leaders' court, and most of the activists weren't sure what they should do, or more accurately, what was the politically correct thing to do.

"This was the mobilizing meeting Marc Conant and Paul Volberding had decided to orchestrate when they were at the AIDS conference at New York University, when Conant read '1,112 and Counting.' [See above at pp. 137-38]. These were the leaders who could ring the alarms, Conant thought.

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"Selma Dritz[, assistant director of the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control at the San Francisco Department of Public Health,] gave the latest update on numbers, reporting 207 Bay Area cases, 'as of today,' and the probability of hundreds more by the end of the year. Andrew Moss showed his census tract charts that identified Castro Street as ground zero of the local epidemic. Moss's line graphs showed a near-vertical curve of cases that wouldn't begin to level off, he noted, until well after gay men started changing their sexual activity.

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"Questions focused largely on one issue: Did the doctors really know how AIDS was transmitted? The CDC case-control study had indicated promiscuity, a word quickly denounced by gay leaders as 'judgmental,' but the doctors could offer little direct advice on which practices spread the disease. Because of federal funding shortages, no subsequent epidemiological studies had been undertaken to investigate this issue, even though they were precisely the inquiries that could most directly have saved lives. Now doctors, who were trying to urge a reluctant gay community to change, were bearing the burden of the shortfall.

"'Bodily fluids,' suggested Dr. Robert Bolan of the Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights.

"It was the first time the gay community had heard the expression; and it wouldn't be the last.

"'You have to avoid contact with bodily fluids,' said Bolan, who had emerged as the most militant AIDS fighter in the gay doctors' group. 'That would include semen, urine, saliva, and blood. And I mean avoid them. This is the big

enchilada, guys. You don't get a second chance once you get this.'

"Hearing this, San Francisco Supervisor Carol Ruth Silver, a close, longtime ally of the gay community, made what she considered a logical suggestion: 'If you're saying that this can be spread through sexual contact, it makes sense to me to have the public health department get a court order to shut down the gay bathhouses. That would probably save lives.'

"A chorus of boos and hisses greeted Silver's recommendation. The gay leaders were prepared to, perhaps, think of AIDS as a big enchilada, but they were not ready to swallow a combination plate. Such action would have profound political ramifications, they warned. The sheer volume of the heckling cowed Silver into silence, as it would every other civic leader. Not only was closing the bathhouses something that could not be done, it was something that could not even be discussed.

"As the leaders slowly filed out, they invariably told Marc Conant or Paul Volberding what fine work they were doing. Keep it up, they said. Conant had a sinking feeling as he walked down the mansion's twisting, baronial staircase to leave. He had hoped the leaders would agree on a call to arms to fight the epidemic within the gay community. Instead, they seemed preoccupied with the politically correct thing to do. Conant feared that people were going to die because of it" [Emphasis added].

"May 19 Metropolitan Community Church, Castro District, San Francisco. The Reverend Jim Sandmire was a tall, sturdy man with unquestioned integrity, a deep booming voice, and a thick shock of white hair.... Sandmire believed that the houses of God were to be found on many streets; he felt equally comfortable in all the various milieus to be found in the gay community. That was why Dana Van Gorder [,an aide to Supervisor Harry Britt,] had called him for a meeting between gay political leaders, AIDS educators, and the bathhouse owners. Van Gorder wanted Sandmire to be moderator.

"'You're the only one everybody trusts,' said Dana.

"Jim was in bed, with a severe case of shingles.... When he achingly eased himself into the conference room of the Metropolitan Community Church off Castro Street, he wished again he had said no. This discussion, he could see, was

going to need some serious moderation.

“The invitations had gone out from Harry Britt’s office a week before, signed by a broad coalition of gay leaders such as Cleve Jones, Catherine Cusic, two MCC ministers, and leaders of all the gay Democratic and Republican clubs, as well as the normally timorous Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights (BAPHR). An attorney for the police department, Lawrence Wilson, who served on the [Alice B. Toklas Memorial Democratic Club] executive committee, also signed the letter.

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“The letter said the group would discuss ways to make sure bathhouses were clean, that each patron was provided AIDS information, and that notices were prominently posted warning of AIDS. The BAPHR safe-sex guidelines were enclosed as suggested brochure material.

“Before the meeting started, Toklas Club president Randy Stallings had spread word among the bathhouse owners that Bill Kraus and his [Harvey]Milk [Gay Democratic] Club allies wanted to shut the places down. It was the logical next step in their rhetoric about changing life-styles. The incitement proved unnecessary. A number of bathhouse owners were incensed that such a meeting would even be called. The owners of one South-of-Market sleazy leather den, Animals, handed out a flier stating, ‘We do not intend to be singled out, subjected to an inquisition-like atmosphere. We find no evidence either from the medical community or health department which indicates that bathhouses are either the source of or a primary contributing factor to the AIDS threat.’

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“Other bath owners were querulous that anyone should think they owed it to their clients to post warnings.... The owner of the Liberty Baths best summed up the sex business’s sentiments on AIDS: ‘I wish the whole problem will go away.’

“The problem was not going away, Bill Kraus knew; it was gay men who were going away, dying, while the bathhouse owners did nothing. As soon as Bill walked in with Catherine Cusic, he could see there were problems. *Stallings’s allies quickly took up the call against ‘sexual fascists’ who would ‘stifle sexuality.’ And what for? Nobody really knew how AIDS got spread, they argued. Nobody could prove it really was a virus. You were as likely to get this from somebody you*

picked up in a bar as at the baths.

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“As the talk got more belligerent, a San Jose bathhouse owner announced that he was forming the Northern California Bathhouse Owners Association. *In the end, the group reached no consensus, although they put out a press release saying they had met.*

“‘They should be shut down,’ Bill Kraus said calmly to Catherine Cusic on the way out. ‘They don’t care that they might be killing people, they are so greedy. Every one of them should be shut down.’

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“... Selma Dritz had no doubts about the role that bathhouses played in the epidemic. Going to a bathhouse was not like picking someone up in a gay bar, or even a park. Picking up in a bar only gave somebody one shot at the virus. It was haphazard.... On the other hand, bathhouses ... were designed to expedite many partners, thus ensuring that everyone there had a higher chance of being infected because they were exposed to many others.

“For this reason, Don Francis had called ‘commercialized gay sex’ an ‘amplification system’ for the disease. *Virtually every study on sexually transmitted diseases had shown for years that gay men who went to bathhouses were far more likely than others to be infected with whatever venereal disease was going around, whether it was gonorrhea or syphilis, hepatitis B or AIDS. Bathhouses guaranteed the rapid spread of AIDS among gay men. To be sure, the disease would have crept through the United States without bathhouses, but these foci of sexual activity fueled the brushfire propagation of the infection more than any other single element of American society.*

“Common sense dictated that bathhouses be closed down. Common sense, however, rarely carried much weight in regard to AIDS policy. Indeed, the debates that simmered around the country over bathhouses in the next two years emerged as paradigms of how politics and public health could conspire to foster catastrophe.

[Descriptions of similar bathhouse battles in Washington, D.C., Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York City omitted]” [Emphasis added].

“March 1984 San Francisco Club Baths. Larry Littlejohn pulled a towel around his waist and began his informal inspection of the city’s largest gay bathhouse. Although he had once enjoyed weekly bathhouse romps, he hadn’t stepped into the tubs for a year. The sprawling sex palaces reminded Littlejohn of how far the city’s sex industry had come since he had moved to San Francisco in 1962. His first home in San Francisco had been the Embarcadero YMCA, a precursor to the modern bathhouse. After Littlejohn helped organize the city’s pioneering gay group, the Society of Individual Rights, in 1964, he had opened one of the city’s first private sex clubs....

*“In the years since then, Larry Littlejohn had served two terms as president of the Society of Individual Rights and was widely recognized as one of the city’s first gay activists. He had at one time or another walked into every sex club and bathhouse in San Francisco, developing a personal preference for the more leather-oriented establishments. **AIDS was a distant concern until he read Larry Kramer’s ‘1,112 and Counting.’** See above at pp. 137-38. A cursory examination of the evidence led him to believe that AIDS was a sexually transmitted disease, which drew him to one quick conclusion: The bathhouses couldn’t go on as they were without killing thousands of gay San Franciscans.*

*“Through 1983, Larry Littlejohn wrote various letters to San Francisco Public Health Director Mervyn Silverman, the board of supervisors, and the AIDS organizations, pointing out what he considered to be a rather logical argument for stopping bathhouse sex. He assumed somebody would act.... Yet, by the first months of 1984, it was clear that nobody would do anything. *Most recently, Dr. Silverman had written Littlejohn that bathhouses were valuable sites for AIDS education. That was what had brought Littlejohn to the city’s largest bathhouse in early March. He wanted to see what kind of education patrons got.**

*“Littlejohn walked out of the locker room and down the hall; he saw none of the safe-sex posters Silverman had ordered posted nine months before. At the dimly lit end of another hall, *he did find a poster—in the least conspicuous place possible.* The active orgy rooms and the squealing behind the closed doors of private cubicles at the Club Baths that night also implied to Littlejohn that patrons were not perusing safe-sex guidelines before exchanging bodily fluids.*

“Silverman obviously did not want to take responsibility for protecting the public health, Littlejohn thought. And gay politicians were still talking about whether it was permissible to talk about bathhouse closure. The day after his bathhouse inspection, therefore, Littlejohn called a friend who had been instrumental in placing initiatives on the San Francisco ballot.... *In his apartment just one block from the Club Baths, Littlejohn drew up an initiative that would ban sexual activity from the city’s bathhouses. He knew that such an initiative would force every politician in the city of San Francisco to take a stand on bathhouse sex.* And it would force Silverman to explain to the city’s electorate exactly why bathhouses were such wonderful sites for AIDS education, if such an explanation could be seriously made. *The debate had gone on long enough, Littlejohn decided: It was time to call the question*” [Emphasis added].

“March 28 San Francisco. *The morning paper carried a front-page story about Larry Littlejohn’s initiative to ban sexual activity in gay baths. The political reality that gays now confronted became instantly clear.*

“Littlejohn had five months in which to collect a mere 7,332 signatures to qualify his ballot proposition. Nobody doubted that the signatures would be collected easily. Once placed on the ballot, few doubted that it would pass overwhelmingly. No politician could afford to put his or her reputation on the line for bathhouses. Even worse, the controversy would flare through the summer, while the international spotlight shone on San Francisco during the 1984 Democratic National Convention....

“At first, Bill Kraus was furious with Littlejohn. Such a volatile issue in a citywide election could only bring disaster for the gay community, he said.

“‘But do you agree that what’s going on in the baths is killing people?’ Littlejohn asked.

“Bill Kraus didn’t answer.

“‘I’m only doing what needs to be done,’ Littlejohn said. ‘It can’t go on the way it is.’

“Still, he offered a compromise. *If the public health director, Merv Silverman, instituted the regulations that Littlejohn proposed through the use of Silverman’s quarantine powers, Littlejohn would withdraw the initiative petitions.*

“Bill Kraus’s anger dissolved in the light of the opportunity Littlejohn’s petition availed. Nobody, he reasoned, would want the measure to go on the ballot.... Obviously, the bathhouses now were doomed. The question was only who would kill them, heterosexual voters or the gay community itself. As far as Kraus was concerned, the only obstacle was Dr. Silverman, who would not close the baths without community support.

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“The newspaper report on the Littlejohn initiative set off a stampede of public officials and gay leaders, all of whom were suddenly urging Silverman to close the bathhouses. Mayor Feinstein again deferred public comment, even while a spokesman confided that she believed they should be closed. Longtime gay ally Supervisor Richard Hongisto said most eloquently: ‘I have too many beloved friends in the gay community who have died or are dying of this. I’m going to too many funerals. It’s time the bathhouses be closed.’

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“ Marc Conant called Merv Silverman.

“‘I’ve got what you said you needed,’ he said, explaining that gay leaders were ready to support Silverman in closing the baths.

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“The next morning, Bill Kraus called Cleve Jones, asking him to attend a press conference with the health director to support ‘Merv’s decision’ to close the baths. Cleve had not been gung ho about closing the facilities, but he certainly did not want the issue on the ballot, and he never considered bathhouses worth fighting for.

“‘Let’s close them and get it over with,’ he agreed.

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“By early afternoon, Silverman announced he would hold a press conference the next morning.

“Toward the end of the afternoon, Selma Dritz received an anonymous phone call in her office. ‘Silverman will be killed tomorrow if he closes the baths,’ the caller said” [Emphasis added].

“March 30, 1984 San Francisco. Marc Conant got the first indication that the

plans to close the bathhouses were unraveling when a frazzled Merv Silverman called him at home at about midnight. Silverman had just returned from the community meeting organized by opponents of bathhouse closure. He had spent hours being pulled over the coals for his decision to close the facilities. Earlier, *Conant had said he would attend the meeting, but over dinner he had changed his mind. It was clear that the forum, a congregation of closure opponents, would present all the old arguments that had stalled action for over a year.*

“‘You let me down,’ said Silverman. ‘Where were you?’

“‘Merv, there are just some meetings it’s better not to attend,’ said Conant.

“Conant was surprised that Silverman had only now discovered that opposition to bathhouse closure persisted in the community. Was Silverman going to wait until every gay leader backed him?

“Two leaders of the Bay Area Physicians for Human Rights who had enclosed Bill Kraus’s letter of support for closure had told the health director that they were withdrawing their names. [Another gay leader who had begged Silverman to close the baths just two weeks earlier turned on Silverman at the forum and denounced the plan for closure].

“Meanwhile, dozens of the gay leaders who had signed on as supporters of closure were calling Dick Pabich, begging that their names be taken off the list....

“One of the last to call Dick Pabich was Cleve Jones.... When Cleve called Pabich, he said that his boss, Assemblyman Art Agnos, had demanded that he not add his name to the list.

“Neither Dick Pabich nor Bill Kraus believed this. Bill swore he would never forgive Cleve for deserting him at this most crucial juncture. But Cleve couldn’t focus on that. Two years of gay fratricide over AIDS had thoroughly exhausted him....

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“The health department’s auditorium was crowded with journalists, cameras, and towel-clad demonstrators when Silverman arrived, nearly an hour late and escorted by plainclothes police officers.

“‘I am not discussing the opening or closing of the bathhouses at this point,’ Silverman said. He would delay that decision, he said, until he studied other facets of this issue....

“‘There are many, many complex issues. I was unaware of a number of facets,’ he said. ‘I apologize for moving so hastily. I want to make it clear this action—leaving the bathhouses open—is mine and not based on any pressure from any groups.’

“Silverman said he would announce his decision within a week.

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“On the morning of **April 9**, Dr. Silverman announced a decision that further complicated the bathhouse issue. *Flanked by twenty-two gay physicians and community leaders, the health director announced that rather than close the baths, he would propose regulations to ban high-risk sexual activity.*

“‘What we are doing today is taking steps, with the support of many community members, to eliminate bathhouses, bookstores, and sex clubs as places of sexual encounters between individuals, places where multiple sex takes place,’ he said. ‘We want these places to continue to operate, to be places for social gatherings, for exercise, for a number of things. They just won’t serve the purpose that they have served in the past. What we’re trying to do is not have sex between individuals.’

“Silverman’s move had the effect of satisfying no one. Bathhouse supporters were angry that anything was being done to impede bathhouse sex, so Silverman was denounced in the gay community as a homophobe. People who wanted the facilities shut down were dissatisfied by the fact they would remain open, and months of political dilly-dallying clearly lay ahead. Mayor Feinstein was said to be livid at the decision....

“Nationally, gay leaders turned rabid on the issue. On the afternoon Silverman announced the restrictions, New York Native publisher Charles Orleb left a message with Jim Curran’s secretary, asking: ‘Now that you’ve succeeded in closing down the baths, are you preparing the boxcars for relocation?’” [Italicized emphasis added].

“October 9, 1984 San Francisco Department of Public Health. Reporters jockeyed for position when Merv Silverman strode into the auditorium and sat before the scores of microphones. Six months before, he had walked into the same room before the same reporters for his now-famous ‘no comment’ press

conference on the baths; today he spoke with unaccustomed decisiveness, comparing the baths to ‘Russian roulette parlors.’ It might be legal to play Russian roulette at home, he said, but you can’t open a business and charge people \$5 a head to come in and play Russian roulette for profit.

“Today I have ordered the closure of fourteen commercial establishments that promote and profit from the spread of AIDS—a sexually transmitted fatal disease,” Silverman said. ‘These businesses have been inspected on a number of occasions and demonstrate a blatant disregard for the health of their patrons and of the community. When activities are proven to be dangerous to the public and continue to take place in commercial settings, the health department has a duty to intercede and halt the operation of such businesses. Make no mistake about it: These fourteen establishments are not fostering gay liberation. They are fostering disease and death.’

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“Indignant gay organizations held press conferences throughout the city that afternoon to protest the action.... In the end, the only gay group to support Silverman was the Harvey Milk Gay Democratic Club.

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“Ironically, in the weeks after bathhouse closure in San Francisco, there was little evidence that very many gays cared much about it. *Three weeks of planning for a Castro Street rally protesting the closure brought out only 300 demonstrators. The expected gay outcry that had so paralyzed the health department and intimidated politicians never happened.*

“The closure of bathhouses in San Francisco engendered a flurry of activity in other cities. In Los Angeles, Mayor Tom Bradley and County Supervisor Ed Edelman convened a task force on the subject of bathhouse closure....

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“Supporters of the bathhouses said the closure order was politically motivated. This was true, if only because bathhouses had been allowed to stay open solely for political reasons. It was historically inevitable that the authorities would ultimately move to shut them down in all the cities hardest hit by the AIDS epidemic. *Within a year of Silverman’s orders, baths were also closed in both New York and Los Angeles under pressures that were far more brazenly political than*

anything seen in San Francisco” [Emphasis added].

Larry Kramer, who had previously been the driving force behind the creation of the Gay Men’s Health Crisis, as well as the author of the impassioned essay “1,112 and Counting,” was also the founder of ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power):

Kaiser, pp. 320-21: *“The AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power was founded in New York in 1987, after Larry Kramer gave another furious speech warning of imminent doom. While the Gay Men’s Health Crisis continued to do a superb job of providing social services for AIDS patients and lobbying for more government money for treatment and research, Kramer perceived the need for another kind of organization that could focus a decimated community’s anger and take it into the streets.*

“ACT UP was an instant success, driven by the energy of a new generation of activists in blue jeans and combat boots, most of whom had barely entered elementary school at the time of the Stonewall riot. As forty other chapters formed across the country and around the world, these men and women in their late teens and twenties were joined by thousands of lesbians and gay men from preceding generations. As with the antiwar movement of the sixties, a life-and-death issue had been necessary to bring the generations together in a noble cause.

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“ACT UP’s charter described it as a coalition of ‘diverse individuals united in anger and committed to direct action’; one of its chants identified it as ‘loud and rude and strong and queer.’ As the novelist David Leavitt put it, its members were determined to disprove the idea that a community in the grip of AIDS was ‘weak, ravaged [and] deserving only of charity.’ Instead, ‘they presented an image of a community powered by anger and willing to go to almost any length in order to defend itself.

“It was a fabulous combination of the practical and the theatrical”
[Emphasis added].

See also **Kaiser**, pp. 322-23: *“...’ACT UP has been my way of taking control of my life away from the AIDS virus,’ explained Peter Staley, an ex-bond trader turned*

activist. ‘The issues couldn’t be more exciting—sexism, racism, needle exchange, homophobia, homelessness. These are the issues of our day.’

“‘The tribe,’ has given way to a ‘queer nation’ which is assertively co-ed, multi-racial and anti-consumerist,’ David Leavitt wrote. ‘The closed club has become an open meeting. *What I liked best about ACT UP was the joyousness. Here was a roomful of people who were refusing to accept the common wisdom that ... they were necessarily doomed and hopeless, their lives defined by death. From the shell-shocked landscape of the mid-1980s, they had stood up, dusted themselves off and gone to work rebuilding*’” [Emphasis added].

Lillian Faderman describes the birth of ACT UP as follows:

Faderman, pp. 424-30: “[In February 1987, the Lavender Hill Mob, a small group of AIDS activists led by Michael Petrelis; Eric Perez, a Puerto Rican jazz musician known as ‘Esquizito’; and Marty Robinson, ‘who’d perfected the ‘zap’ for the Gay Activists Alliance back in the early seventies, flew to Atlanta to conduct a zap at a conference of the Centers for Disease Control. The conference was to include a discussion of mandatory testing for AIDS. The activists ‘were irate. People would be forced to take the test, though there was no cure for the disease. What would be done with those who tested positive?’].

“The Lavender Hill Mob’s Atlanta zaps made the *New York Times*. CNN Headline News presented a clip of the ‘angry homosexuals’ every thirty minutes for most of a day. When a Mobster was also invited to appear on CNN’s *Crossfire*, Bill Bahlman, a sometime-journalist and disc jockey in the New York club scene, volunteered. Hundreds of thousands watched as Bahlman tussled verbally with William Dannemeyer, a fear-mongering and rabidly antigay congressman from Orange County, California, who’d been a proponent of the Lyndon La Rouché quarantine initiative. *The media hubbub didn’t go unnoticed by Larry Kramer....* A week later, Kramer tracked down Michael Petrelis in New York, showed up at his place with a bagful of gourmet cheeses and breads from Balducci’s, and picked his brain about the CDC zap.

“The next month, March, popular journalist and screenwriter Nora Ephron, an outspoken heterosexual advocate for gay and lesbian rights, was scheduled to be part of a lecture series for New York’s Lesbian and Gay Community Services

Center on West Thirteenth Street. When Ephron caught a cold and had to cancel, Larry Kramer, who'd never given up trying to rouse the gay community to anger, was invited to fill the spot. Since Kramer wasn't Nora Ephron, only about seventy people showed up. A lot of his talk was cribbed from his 1983 article ["1,112 and Counting"]. But perhaps now, after AIDS deaths had multiplied thirtyfold, gays were ready to listen. 'If my speech tonight doesn't scare the shit out of you, we're in real trouble,' he began. He upbraided his listeners, accused them of having a death wish. They were 'literally being knocked off man by man and not fighting back,' he told them.... He smiled only when he mentioned the Lavender Hill Mob's colorful zap on the CDC. 'But they can't do it all by themselves!'

"The Mobsters who'd been in Atlanta were all in his audience that night. They were flattered by the shout-out and came up to thank Kramer after his talk.... *Kramer was already thinking that the Mob's flair for getting attention through flamboyant zaps was just what was needed for the militant action group he'd wanted to found since 1983. Zaps were a million times more effective than mere civil disobedience. And now the time for militant action was riper than ever: AIDS deaths astronomical, no end in sight, and kooks proposing tattooing and incarceration for the plague's unlucky victims.*

"*Kramer put out a call again to start a group.* At the third or fourth meeting, which still hadn't attracted huge numbers, a male nurse suggested a name—the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power: ACT UP. That's exactly what they'd be doing: *acting up* until the government put money into research to find a cure.

"At the New York Gay Pride Parade that June, an ACT UP truck float reified the nightmare of all gay men—barbed wire surrounding prisoners decked out in concentration camp uniforms with pink triangle badges. 'Concentration camp guards' in military garb handed out ACT UP flyers. *That bit of startling theatrics was a mighty wake-up slap. The next day, at the regular Monday ACT UP meeting, there were three hundred people. Soon the number doubled, tripled—every seat was filled. Crowds standing at the walls were three and four deep. The Lesbian and Gay Services Center couldn't hold them all. Monday night meetings were moved to the Great Hall at Cooper Union, [which] seated almost a thousand.*

"In 1986 gay graphic artist Avram Finkelstein, mindful of another Holocaust, had designed a poster: 'Silence = Death' it said under a pink triangle pointing

upward, to proclaim hope—the opposite of the downward-pointing triangle of the Nazi badge. Finkelstein’s graphic became the symbol of ACT UP. Members wore T-shirts emblazoned with it to all zaps and demonstrations.

ACTING UP

“Sunday, October 11, 1987: Six hundred thousand gays and lesbians from all over America gathered in the nation’s capital for a second March on Washington. There were six times as many marchers as there’d been in 1979, see above at p. 76, because there was so much more now to be mad about and to mourn. The year before, the Bowers v. Hardwick case had gone to the Supreme Court. In the privacy of his own home, Michael Hardwick had been caught by a policeman having oral sex with another man, and in Georgia, where Hardwick lived, oral sex was considered ‘sodomy’ and was against the law. The majority of the Supreme Court justices, confirmed in their prejudices about gays by the AIDS epidemic, upheld the right of states to continue to outlaw homosexual sex. Chief Justice Warren Burger (citing the eighteenth-century British jurist William Blackstone) even deemed sodomy ‘a crime not fit to be named ... the infamous crime against nature.’

*“But the time was past when public officials could make such statements with impunity. Thousands of gays and lesbians who’d come for the march on Sunday remained in Washington till the following week so they could descend on the Supreme Court and let the justices know what they thought of their decision. The protestors were greeted by three hundred policemen holding batons at the ready and wearing Darth Vader visors and yellow latex gloves—to keep them safe from AIDS.... For six hours, demonstrators scattered pink paper triangles like confetti. They sang ‘America the Beautiful’ and ‘We Are a Gentle, Angry People,’ emphasizing the line ‘and we are singing, singing for our lives.’ They chanted ‘Equal justice under the law, that’s what it says on the wall!’ pointing to the words carved above the entrance to the court. Wooden barricades blocked off the steps that led up to the Supreme Court building, and signs on the barricades warned the protestors not to go any farther. But wave after wave of the protestors did anyway, holding hands, pushing through the barricades, running up to the building’s plaza, where it’s illegal to hold a protest. ‘Shame! Shame! Shame!’ they shouted at the marble edifice and the austere justices inside. *Six hundred**

protestors were arrested, the largest mass arrest in Washington since the Vietnam War protests.

“But it was anger and grief about the AIDS epidemic that drew most of the huge crowd to the March on Washington. More than forty-one thousand people had already died of the disease. There was no cure in sight, and the government wasn’t spending much money to find one. At sunrise on the day of the march, an AIDS quilt was unfurled at the Washington Mall—thousands of rectangular three-foot-by-six-foot handmade panels, each in memory of a person who’d died of AIDS.... Each panel was embroidered with a message [to the deceased].... The names of the dead were read by volunteers, as a sea of gay people and those who loved them walked along the fabric borders, wiping tears from their cheeks and clinging to one another.

*“The other powerful message about AIDS at the 1987 march came through the colorful and dead-serious outrage of the ACT UP-ers. Most of them were young men in their twenties and thirties, clad in jeans, black leather, macho gold-stud earrings—their tough-guy style a challenge to the stereotype of weak, womanized ‘fairies.’....The ACT UP-ers’ energy and impudence were reminiscent of the first days of the old Gay Liberation Front. Their insouciance was like thumbing one’s nose at the grim reaper. It was exciting, seductive; *it was an adrenaline rush to a people who’d been beaten down for six years.**

“After the 1987 March on Washington, autonomous ACT UP groups sprang up everywhere—just as Gay Liberation Front groups had after Stonewall: immediately in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston; soon in Philadelphia, Houston, Miami, Atlanta, Seattle, Milwaukee; eventually in places such as Shreveport, Louisiana; Louisville, Kentucky; Kansas City, Kansas; Portland, Maine; and thirty other cities as well” [Emphasis added].

Both Kaiser and Faderman described some of the earliest ACT UP “zaps”: **Kaiser**, p. 322: “The New York Stock Exchange was one of the first of ACT UP’s targets, with protesters urging investors to sell stock in Burroughs Wellcome, the drug company that owned the patent to AZT and was charging an exorbitant amount for the treatment—as much as \$10,000 a year.

“‘Die-Ins’ in the caverns of Wall Street were succeeded by invasions of

corporate headquarters. One day in 1989, four young men in business suits moved unchallenged through the front doors of the Burroughs Wellcome corporate headquarters, walked to the third floor, 'ejected the startled occupant of an executive office and sealed the doors with metal plates and a high-powered drill,' Cynthia Crossen reported on the *Wall Street Journal* front page. On another occasion, ACT UP members forced Northwest Airlines to abandon its policy of forbidding passage to AIDS patients by staging a phone 'zap,' which flooded the airline with hundreds of false reservations.

"... Less than three years after ACT UP's founding, Burroughs Wellcome had reduced the cost of AZT, and the organization's members had been invited to sit on many of the government panels they had attacked..." [Emphasis added].

Faderman, p. 439: "Big Pharma, also shamed by the activists, eventually listened, too. When Burroughs Wellcome first put a drug on the market that sounded promising, AZT, the cost to the user was between \$8,000 and \$10,000 a year. ACT UP zappers embarrassed the company by infiltrating its headquarters and inviting the media to come take pictures of a sign they hung from a second-floor window that accused the company of having blood on its hands. *Burroughs Wellcome still wouldn't lower the price of AZT, so ACT UP infiltrated the New York Stock Exchange, sneaking up to the VIP balcony and unfurling a 'Sell Wellcome!' banner. They also staged a 'die-in' in front of the exchange. Five days after the Wall Street zap, the company cut the price of the drug to \$6,400 a year*" [Emphasis added].

ACT UP's most notorious and controversial zap was one directed against the Catholic Church, and more specifically, the most prominent Catholic Church in Manhattan, the seat of Cardinal John O'Connor:

Faderman, pp.433-35: "*Sunday, December 10, 1989: Hundreds of ACT UP-ers, men and women dressed in go-to-church clothes, went to church at St. Patrick's Cathedral. There'd been a meeting of the Roman Catholic bishops under Cardinal O'Connor, at which the ecclesiastics agreed to make public declarations to the faithful that Catholic doctrine deemed the use of condoms uncatholic.... It didn't make a difference that the New York Health Commissioner said that the Church's continued prohibition would bring on a worse public health disaster. To the church it was irrelevant even that condoms could prevent the spread of AIDS to*

women through infected bisexual men. Abstinence was the only AIDS preventive that the Catholic leadership would condone.... The cardinal, for his part, reiterated that 'to the end of time,' the Church would be teaching that homosexual activity is sin.

"Before the ten o'clock morning mass, ACT UP infiltrators, smiling like church ushers, handed out 'church programs' to the faithful as they entered St. Patrick's. The 'programs' were flyers that told why ACT UP would be disrupting the service.... Despite the bitter cold outside and inside the church (worshippers kept their heavy coats on and held their hymnals in gloved hands), scores of infiltrators lay down on the marble floor of the main aisle of St. Patrick's and staged a die-in. Parishioners glared at the prone bodies. Two gay leather men who were an ACT UP couple chained themselves side by side to a pew.... The cardinal kept on with the mass while several ACT UP-ers stood and read a statement about how Church policies were making the AIDS epidemic worse.... [Michael] Petrelis ... stood on a pew and blew a whistle over and over. Then he shrieked as loud as the whistle, 'O'Connor, you're killing us! Murderer! We will fight O'Connor's bigotry!' The policemen who'd managed to squeeze through the huge crowd out front pulled Petrelis down off the pew, handcuffed him, and marched him out to the waiting paddy wagon as he kept up a banshee screech.

"At the call to take communion, ACT UP-er Tom Keane, who'd been an altar boy and whose mother still taught catechism classes, went to the front of the church and knelt with the rest of the worshippers.... [After the priest placed the wafer on his tongue, 'i]n a gesture large enough for all to see, Tom Keane spit the host out, crumbled it, and dropped the crumbs to the ground. That's what started a near riot. The police had their hands full.

"They had their hands full outside, too, with over four thousand protestors. The ranks of ACT UP had been swelled by abortion activists from Women's Health Action and Mobilization WHAM. Some ACT UP demonstrators lay 'dead' in the middle of the street; others blocked the sidewalk and the entrance to the cathedral....The police came out of the church carrying the 'dead' on stretchers because they wouldn't walk. All told, 111 protestors were arrested.... The zap made headlines all over the world for weeks. ACT UP chapters were started in Moscow, Cape Town, and big cities all over Europe" [Emphasis added].

Both Kaiser and Faderman agree that ACT UP's greatest achievement was the impact it had on the federal government's procedures for allowing access to experimental drugs:

Kaiser, pp. 324-25: *"ACT UP's most important achievement was to make experimental drugs available much more quickly to people with fatal diseases.*

Johnny Franklin told *The Wall Street Journal* that the organization had saved his eyesight by getting him access to Gancyclovir while the drug was still working its way through the Food and Drug Administration's lengthy approval process.

"Barely two years after ACT UP's founding, Anthony Fauci, the chief federal AIDS researcher, announced a new system that would permit rapid access to experimental drugs. Some researchers complained that Fauci's 'parallel track' approach would make it harder to prove the effectiveness of new drugs in traditional trials, which required some patients to take placebos while others received the real thing. But the anger of AIDS activists had convinced federal researchers that it was immoral to offer placebos to anyone with a fatal disease, 'a major shift sought by those involved in the fight against AIDS,' the Times reported.

"One of the first drugs distributed under the new system was DDI, or dideoxyinosine, an antiviral drug manufactured by Bristol-Myers. Three months after Fauci's announcement, the FDA said DDI would be made available to some patients at no cost if they could not afford it—partly because of earlier protests about the high price of AZT. Federal officials said the decision was made after discussions that included ACT UP representatives. A Bristol-Myers official said the talks were 'very polite,' although the AIDS activists had clearly indicated their 'mistrust of the pharmaceutical industry in general'" [Emphasis added].

Faderman, pp.436-40: *"Those ACT-UPers who invaded churches and television stations were the bad cops, doing the job of getting the culprits of indifference to sit up and take notice. The nice cops were a handful of ACT UP-ers who got together to learn everything they could about AIDS treatment.... They called themselves the Treatment and Data Committee of ACT UP.*

"They became much more knowledgeable about AIDS than most doctors, who'd had neither the time nor the inclination to study the disease....

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“... ACT UP’s most serious use of bad cops and good cops was on May 21, 1990, when ACT UP-ers from all over the country paid a visit en masse to the campus of the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland. The name the activists knew best at the NIH, because he’d published a lot about AIDS, was Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of NIH’s Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases....

“Fauci, as chief officer of the Institute that studies infectious diseases, had a significant influence over what drugs would be tested and what protocols would be followed. Now the ACT UP activists were targeting him, yelling beneath the window of his office, ‘Fauci, you’re killing us!’ ‘The whole world is watching, Fauci!’ When they set off smoke bombs, the National Institutes of Health police showed up right away. They were about to summon a Black Maria and have the obviously homosexual protestors dragged off. But Anthony Fauci wouldn’t let them. He wanted to hear what ACT UP had to say. He told the police to ask five or six of the protest leaders to come in, to meet with him in a conference room.

“Peter Staley, Mark Harrington, and the other Treatment and Data experts who met with Fauci lectured him on the inappropriateness of lengthy drug testing trials in the middle of a plague. Some of those at the meeting, like Peter Staley, knew they were HIV positive. ‘We don’t have the years to wait while new drugs are tested,’ they said. They talked about the ethics of using placebos in tests instead of real drugs, which might save people who were dying. The amount of information they had was astonishing to Fauci. Everything they said made great sense, as he told his NIH colleagues: ‘These guys are extremely valuable. They can give us input into how to design the trials and the kinds of needs they see in their community. We have to listen to them. How can we work in partnership with them?’

“The ‘partnership’ started a revolution in the way things were done at the National Institutes of Health. It brought about major changes in how the federal government tests and distributes experimental drugs, beginning with the Accelerated Approval process that the Treatment and Data Committee demanded. As a result of that ‘partnership’ NIH advisory committees and counsels always include activists from communities that are directly affected by NIH’s policy decisions. ACT UP changed America’s ‘scientific culture’ to profit everyone.

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“ACT UP’s more cerebral Treatment and Data Committee ... worked its magic to persuade Bristol-Meyers-Squibb to put its promising drug DDI on accelerated approval. Even more important, Treatment and Drug (which broke away from ACT UP in 1992 and became the independent Treatment Action Group) guided Roche, Merck, and other companies in developing the most potent protease inhibitors and designing and speeding along the trial process for them.

“Protease inhibitors were made widely available in 1996. In that first year, deaths from AIDS in the big cities dropped about 50 percent. Kaposi’s sarcoma lesions melted away. Michael Petrelis began taking protease inhibitors when his T-cell count dropped below 100. Like so many [others] who’d [also] been inches from the end, he went into remission” [Emphasis added].

While the AIDS epidemic’s impact on the LGBTQ community was devastating in terms of the loss of life and the pain and suffering it created, it also had some significant positive effects: see, e.g., **Kaiser**, pp. 307, 325: *“[Philip] Gefter believed that the overall impact of the epidemic had been to ‘make the community much more humane.’*

“It’s unfortunate that it’s taken something like this to bring the gay community closer together and enable it to operate from its humanity. It wasn’t going in that direction pre-AIDS. It was actually going in the opposite direction.

“We were all objects to each other. I think because of AIDS we became human beings to each other.’

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“In the program notes for one of GMHC’s earliest benefits, Paul Popham wrote, ‘I think the most impressive thing I’ve seen over the last year and a half is how affectionate men have grown. We are finding out who we are, what we can do under pressure. And that we’re not alone.... Although we’re paying a terrible price, we’re finding in ourselves much greater strength than we dreamed we had.’

“For many straight Americans, the epidemic had transformed the prevailing image of gay men—from sex maniacs into caring, ingenious and grieving human beings. As the gay author Andrew Tobias put it, ‘It’s pretty hard to hate people who have this run of bad luck.’

“Barney Frank, a congressman from Massachusetts, publicly declared his homosexuality during the sixth year of the epidemic. He told Jeffrey Schmalz of

The New York Times that while he remained in the closet, his colleagues were often sympathetic when he lobbied them on gay issues, but they rarely took him very seriously. *'The pain gay people felt was unknown,' Frank explained. 'We were hiding it from them. How the hell are they supposed to know when we were making damn sure they didn't?'*

“But once the dimensions of the epidemic became clear, many of Frank’s colleagues ‘started voting pro-gay because they saw that life-and-death issues were at stake. They had to do the right thing, even though they thought it might hurt them politically.

“Then, guess what? It turned out not to hurt them politically very much” [Emphasis added].

See also **Faderman**, pp. 440-41: “Before the plague was controlled, it killed millions worldwide and decimated gay America. AIDS took some of the community’s best leaders.... Yet the plague also brought some unexpected dividends to the gay community, if such a tragedy can be thought to have wrought anything good. *Gay men stared their mortality in the face, concluded they had little to lose, that silence equaled death, and they made a giant collective leap out of the closet.* Many who didn’t leap were shoved out by the terrible telltale signs of the disease....

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“It’s an irony that despite the horrors of the plague, the late eighties and early nineties was also a period of some collective healing in the [LGBTQ+] community. [LGBTQ+] people learned to work together a little better than they had before because their overwhelming purpose didn’t permit a plethora of petty arguments. The times were ‘full of deaths, but one of the most beautiful moments the [LGBTQ+] community ever experienced.’ Peter Staley later said of those years, ‘To be that threatened with extinction and not lay down. To stand up and fight back. The way we did it. The way we took care of ourselves and each other. The goodness we shared. The humanity we shared.’ It was excellent preparation to bring to the renewed struggle for civil rights, which had been on hold while tens of thousands were dying. Those who survived were ready to resume the war and win it” [Emphasis added].

IV. Afterward: The Nineties

Forty years after Mattachine's Constitutional Convention in the spring of 1953, see above at pp. 60-63, the same fundamental division between radical activists and conservative assimilationists that first appeared during that convention, that later re-appeared in 1966 within the Daughters of Bilitis, see pp. 69, 71, 73-75, and that finally erupted in full force in the years following the Stonewall riots, see, *e.g.*, pp. 97-98 (the GLF/GAA/NGTF splits), had spread throughout American LGBTQ+ communities all across the nation. In *A Place at the Table*, which was published in 1994, Bruce Bawer presented a comprehensive portrayal of the varying lifestyles and environmental surroundings of gay American men in the early 1990's, as follows:

Bawer, pp. 32-36: "Until very recently, there were few fulfilling options for a man who discovered himself to be homosexual. He could pretend that he was heterosexual—perhaps even marry and have children—and either (a) spend his life tormented by suppressed feelings and by the knowledge that he was living a lie or (b) lead a clandestine second life, sneaking off to one-night stands with other men, married or unmarried, who also were leading clandestine second lives. *There was a third possibility: falling in love with a man and making a home with him. Though laws and social conventions made this a difficult, even dangerous proposition, some managed to carry it off anyway. But they lived on tenterhooks; they were as secretive about their private lives as enemy spies; they risked losing everything—job, home, social position, even freedom—if someone who didn't like their homosexuality decided to make an issue of it and expose them.*

"Until recent decades, therefore, few homosexuals dared to lead such lives. *This is the central irony of gay history: that laws and social conventions regarding homosexuality have long had the effect of discouraging monogamous relationships and of encouraging one-night stands.* The Gay Liberation movement of the 1970s did much more to extend the opportunities for the practice of indiscriminate sex than it did to change the conditions that made committed gay relationships legally, socially, and professionally problematic....

"As some homosexuals gradually became more candid about their

homosexuality with friends and colleagues, however, levels of tolerance did rise gradually.... Things *have* improved.... Today, because of this tolerance and the legal safeguards that it has made possible *in some jurisdictions*, the possibilities for gay lives are somewhat less restricted. A gay man can still marry and live a lie. He can still live a clandestine second life. But he also has the option of living, either alone or with a companion, as a more or less openly gay man.

“If he does this, he will be said by some to be leading a ‘gay lifestyle.’ But this is a misleading term, for *there is no one ‘gay lifestyle,’ any more than there is a single monolithic heterosexual lifestyle. There is in fact a spectrum of ‘gay lifestyles.’* Near one extreme one might imagine a gay man whose sense of identity is centered upon the fact of his sexual orientation, and whose tastes, opinions, and modes of behavior conform almost perfectly to every stereotype. Born into a more or less ordinary family in Wisconsin or Missouri or Georgia, he lives in a small walk-up apartment in a gay ghetto like Greenwich Village or West Hollywood or San Francisco’s Castro district. He holds down a job that is marginal and at least vaguely artistic; he socializes almost exclusively with other homosexuals; he dines in gay restaurants, dances at gay clubs, and drinks at gay bars; and his reading matter consists largely of gay-oriented magazines and of novels by and about gays. His ‘lifestyle’ (if you want to use that word) would probably be considered aggressively nonconformist by most Americans, his politics uncomfortably left-wing; his manner of dress would probably draw stares on the main street of the average American town or city....

“Toward the other end of the spectrum one might imagine a gay couple that most heterosexuals would not even recognize as gay. They live not in a predominantly gay community but in an ordinary neighborhood in a big or small city, suburb, or town. One may be a doctor and the other a business executive, or one a garbageman and the other a cop. They don’t spend much time in gay bars or clubs, and they don’t read gay newspapers and magazines; they dress conservatively, and have more straight friends than gay friends. Their politics would be described by most people as conservative or middle-of-the-road.... In its essentials, their ‘lifestyle’ is indistinguishable from that of most heterosexual couples in similar professional and economic circumstances.

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“There is a broad cultural divide, and often considerable hostility, between gays who tend toward the two extremes of the spectrum. We might call them, at the risk of drastic oversimplification, ‘subculture-oriented gays’ and ‘mainstream gays’.... Politically, subculture-oriented gays specialize in confrontational activism; mainstream gays work within the system. Subculture-oriented gays ridicule mainstream gays as prisoners of the closet; mainstream gays retort that subculture-oriented gays are prisoners of the ghetto.

*“Let it be understood that *the great majority of homosexuals fall between these two extremes and combine various aspects of both.* There are radical gays who are fiercely devoted to their life partners, and publicly closeted right-wing politicians (like the late Roy Cohn) who are very promiscuous. *It’s safe to say, however, that the average gay man comes far closer, in most respects to the mainstream end of the spectrum. For the great majority of gays, as an acquaintance of mine has remarked, the subculture is not something you live in—it’s something you go to. Some may go to it several times a week, some less than once a year”* [Emphasis added].*

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