



## Periodically Queer Episode 2 – ONE Magazine: Labor of Love

### Audio Transcript

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

I'm sure that you are fatigued with the news around book banning, "Don't say Gay", and all the legislative attacks on LGBTQ expressions. But did you know that saying gay or the freedom of LGBTQ speech was the basis of a series of legal battles that went all the way to the US Supreme Court in 1957?

The story begins with a group of activists who got together in Los Angeles to publish a magazine about gay and lesbian life seventy years ago. They did it to challenge the public shaming and moral panic around gay people – sound familiar?

**Joseph Hawkins:**

Someone told me once that he used to buy the *ONE Magazine*. They'd put it in a brown paper bag. He would ride home on the subway the entire way, holding it to his chest with his heart beating and wait until he had gone into his room and lock the door before he could actually open the magazine.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

They used printed words to humanize queer and gender-nonconforming folks who were criminalized for simply being themselves in the public.

**Craig Loftin:**

This was at a time when there were laws on the books. You know, you could be arrested just for being gay and basically walking down the street.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

They brought together a community of people who felt isolated, and found hope and affirmation through exchanging letters with the magazine. *[Music]*

***[Collage of Archival Letters]***

Dear ONE, I've recognized myself as a homosexual for five years. After evaluating myself I admitted to myself I was. I thought I was the "only one..."

Dear Editor: I know your magazine is not a lonely hearts magazine, but it seems my only hope...



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Dear ONE, As yet I can't leave the magazine in view around the house, but I've started leaving it in view on the seat of my car, etc. It takes courage, but that's something *ONE's* editors...

Dear ONE, Your Magazine, I am sure, will also bring joy to my parents. Even more important than what ONE does for society is what it does for us, The Homosexuals...

Dear ONE: So it has been a friendship—an affair with a cold, true, little magazine.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

In this second and final episode of season two of Periodically Queer, we're time traveling back to the 1950s to unravel the stories behind our own history around *ONE Magazine* – the first publicly distributed gay and lesbian magazine in the country. From gay civil rights to gay court clerks, here's the story of *ONE*.

I'm traci kato-kiriyama, host of Periodically Queer, a podcast by ONE Archives Foundation, that explores print media and LGBTQ world-making.

Before we start, here's a content warning: what you're about to hear contains content about self harm. So, please, take care.

## **I. History of ONE**

**Craig Loftin:**

My name is Craig M. Loftin. My pronouns are he, his, him. I work as a lecturer in the American Studies Department at Cal State Fullerton. I was starting a graduate program in history. At the same time, I was in a deep denial about my sexuality. The thing that kind of helped me accept the fact that I was gay was being assigned some LGBT history books and just being aware that there was this thing called 'LGBT history.'

*ONE Magazine* was the first openly gay publication in the United States. This was a bona fide magazine that was sold on newsstands not just across the country, but around the world. Probably 3 to 5000 copies were sold roughly every month, and it was published for a long time. The first issue was in January of 53 into the late 1960s.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

It didn't look like other magazines at the time. I mean, it was fashionable and sort of stylistic, but it was small. It was only \$0.25 to buy a copy.



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**Craig Loftin:**

Before one magazine, there had been some magazines that catered to gay readers but in a coded way. A lot of these were like fitness and health magazines that would have very homoerotic kind of imagery and-and subtext to it. But, they didn't cross the line to officially saying, "Yes, we are a gay magazine for a gay audience."

None of these people knew if they were really allowed to do this. They had a deep belief that the freedom of the press allowed them as homosexuals in the early fifties to have a kind of dialogue and conversation in print about that subject from an affirmative perspective. That was what made *ONE* quite groundbreaking, if not revolutionary, when they did this in 1953. [*Music*]

**Joseph Hawkins:**

My name is Joseph Hawkins. My pronouns are he, him. I am the director of ONE Archives at USC Libraries.

About the time that *ONE* started to be published, there was an Order 10-450 that was signed by Eisenhower. And basically what it said was that homosexuals were perverts, criminals, mentally ill, and that they were blocked from full time federal employment. That actually is what prompted the Lavender Scare.

**Craig Loftin:**

You have to remember that 1953 was the absolute peak of the anti-communist paranoia. It was the peak of Joseph McCarthy's power.

**Mike Oliveira:**

So, the whole world we're living in in the 1950s is one of, you know, you're risking your life, you're risking your job, you're risking everything to come out. My name is Michael Oliveira. My pronouns are he, him, his. I'm an archivist. I was hired back in 2006 to begin the processing of the papers of ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archive.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

I mean, if you were discovered to be a homosexual in a bar, they could publish your name in the local newspaper. And then, if that publication was found, then your employer would be identified, and then that would mean that you maybe would lose your employment. In those days, pretty much the only place that gay people could meet each other was either in cruising spaces, at house parties or in bars. It's interesting because the period during the 1920s, when there was prohibition, it drove everyone underground. And so, there was an enormous rise



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in speakeasies. And because speakeasies were places that were illegal, completely, they provided a space for gay people to be.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

There's a common misconception now that before Stonewall, all gay and gender-nonconforming people were self-loathing, unaware of themselves, or even politically regressive. Actually, this was not the case at all.

**Craig Loftin:**

The metaphor that they did use is that they saw themselves as "mask wearers." They would wear the mask but when they got home, they could take the mask off and be themselves. And, when gay people put on this mask, it was a survival strategy and a reminder of their second class status but, they weren't hiding in closets.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

This was before the term transgender was adopted. There were individuals with transgender feelings who didn't identify as transgender.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

There were silly laws in place at the time that three items of the opposite sex clothing, if you were wearing them, you could be arrested.

There's a famous case of a woman named Valdez, who was in East Los Angeles, who basically was arrested on an almost every day basis because she was wearing men's pants, men's shirts and a man's watch. And she continued to do it even though they continued to arrest her. *[Music]*

**Letter:**

Dear ONE: I could almost write a love letter to you for so many of the things I have found within your covers. When I found no answers to give the world, *ONE* said it for me. When petty people sought to defeat me, *ONE* supplied more answers.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

My name is Loni Shibuyama. My pronouns are she/her/hers. My title is the ONE Archives Librarian and I have been a part of the ONE Archives since 2007.

When you read through the magazine, you see a lot of people writing in with their concerns about different issues around homosexuality, writing little opinion pieces about certain topics, contributing their own creative work. So, whether it's poetry, or short stories, um, or also, just sending in a little bit of information about their lives and where they're coming from. Those are an amazing treasure trove of what life was like for people who want to find connection with, um, with other gay and lesbian people.



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**Craig Loftin:**

And it was the first time in American history that a gay person could get a sense of what was going on, kind of, in other parts of the country as it related to LGBT people in culture. People would send clippings of the gay bar raids. There's a scandal of some local politician that, if you read between the lines, it's obviously a gay scandal.

It created a national gay community. But, this was one of the first to make people feel like they were a part of something much bigger than they could have ever realized themselves.

**Mike Oliveira:**

The whole purpose of *ONE Magazine* was to build community. *ONE* is an outgrowth of Mattachine—first gay organization in the in the Western hemisphere, started in 1950 by Harry Hay and Rudi Gernreich, and Chuck Rowland. But, it's very insular, it's very private, it's very non-confrontational.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

There are a few different versions of the story about how the group came together. In a nutshell, members of Mattachine saw the importance of organizing people outside of their membership. So in October 1952, they formed a new organization called “ONE Incorporated.”

**Mike Oliveira:**

And they hit upon the idea of publishing a magazine and they are fortunate enough to have someone that actually has a printing press in their basement.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Magazines were the grassroots media at the time – a powerful engine for worldmaking. In January 1953, this group of activists published the first issue of *ONE Magazine*.

**Letter:** Dear ONE, As yet I can't leave the magazine in view around the house, but I've started leaving it in view on the seat of my car, etc. It takes courage but that's something *ONE's* editors...

**Joseph Hawkins:**

When they would send the magazine, occasionally the postal inspector would go through the envelopes. Many people wrote to *ONE* saying, “please don't send the magazine to me, send it to my Aunt Gertrude, and at this address and I'll go to her house and get it,” because they didn't want the Postal Service to track them down because, the word ‘homosexual’ in a publication was enough to get them barred from employment.



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**Mike Oliveira:**

The magazines are mailed out in a plain envelope with the address, and they're dropped at various mailboxes and post offices. They're not all taken to one post office and dropped because, if you're going to have any of the issues confiscated, you don't want to have *everything* confiscated. They actually drove around Los Angeles, went to different post offices, and tried to make sure that it got out to the majority of their subscribers.

People talk about either finding it on the newsstand and either stealing it by putting it in another magazine, or they go up to the to pay for it and they plop it down with half dozen other magazines and kind of bury it and then give the cashier some money and run away.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

The newsstands would often have sections where there was a covering a piece of tarp or something. And so there was a sort of dual purpose: On one side, you could go to that place and perhaps meet somebody like yourself, or you could go there and meet an officer who would, in fact, arrest you for buying indecent material.

## II. People Involved

**Craig Loftin:**

In 1955, the magazine came to J. Edgar Hoover's attention—the FBI leader.

**Mike Oliveira:**

One of the founders of Mattachine, Chuck Rowland writes an article about queer people being everywhere.

***ONE Magazine Article:***

Homosexuals have existed in all parts of the world, among all peoples and all cultures, since man's emergence in the watered valleys of our young plane. The roles they have played in the history of our Earth have varied greatly. It would take a thousand treatises to discuss his life and all the cultures in which he has participated. And this article I shall devote myself to some observations on the male homosexual in the United States today.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Chuck Rowland published this article under the pseudonym, David Freeman. The title is “How Much Do We Know about the Homosexual Male?” In this article, over two and half pages, he breaks down the three types of gay men including:

***ONE Magazine Article:***

The Tories are the elegant ones who have decided to express their social hostility



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by being more correct than the foremost representatives of the dominant (and dominating) culture. They work for *TIME Magazine* or the *New Yorker*. They occupy key positions with oil companies or the FBI (it's true!).”

**Mike Oliveira:**

Now, the story is that that little article, that magazine, ends up on J. Edgar Hoover's desk.

**Craig Loftin:**

We now pretty much recognize that J. Edgar Hoover [sigh] was not a heterosexual man himself. What I think bothered him was that there was a claim that implied that certain FBI agents might be gay themselves. So, he sent some field agents to the office in Los Angeles to get at the bottom of this. And, since there were so many pseudonyms being used, the field agents never got any straight answers. And, Dorr Legg at the desk kind of was waiting for this moment, and was able to get them to leave without any particular success. So, at some point, Hoover pretty much tells the postmaster, “there's a queer magazine operating out of L.A.; Are you going to do anything about it?” *[Music]*

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

W. Dorr Legg and Jim Kepner were the two long-term key organizers behind ONE, Incorporated and *ONE Magazine*. We found this tape of Dorr Legg being interviewed on radio:

**[Archival Recording]**

**Dorr Legg:**

*People Today* interviewed us, and it called one magazine the voice of U.S. homosexuals. And that's exactly what it was.

**David Moore:**

Dorr Legg is the one I knew best. He was very charming but, he wasn't always forthright. [Laughs] He could lead you down the garden path and you didn't realize. He definitely had his, his goals.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

That's David Moore, one of the members of ONE that we talked to.

**Craig Loftin:**

Dorr Legg had been kind of a landscape architect and had a lot of odd jobs. But, he was involved in a gay bar raid when he was living in Detroit and that kind of wrecked his career and disrupted his life. So, when he was in his forties or fifties, he came to Los Angeles and started thinking about this issue of gay



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activism. He had a conservative kind of side to him. He was very libertarian minded. He would go on to become one of the founders of the, you know, what would become the Log Cabin Republicans in later years in the 1970s.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Here's Dorr Legg again.

**[Archival Recording]**

**Dorr Legg:**

The minute we opened our doors and by opening our doors, we were the first organization in America and in Europe, I might say, to maintain a public office available on regular hours to anyone who wished to come there to inquire.

**Craig Loftin:**

So there's a constant buzz of activity. They would get visitors on almost a daily basis from their readers. People visit Los Angeles and a lot of the readers would have the address. And one would kind of say, "If you're ever in town, feel free to stop by." And they would come in and say, "Hi, I'm the subscriber, and wow, it's so neat to meet you." And Dorr Legg would say, "Hey, do you have a couple hours? There's a little filing work you can do." And, he would actually put them to work. It made them feel very like part of the family and and more connected.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Jim Kepner was Dorr Legg's counterpart in many ways. He was very left wing. In addition to *ONE Magazine*, he wrote for many Marxist publications including the *Daily Worker*.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

Jim Kepner was a very prolific writer. He loved reading and talking about LGBT issues. And he had a passion for being in all the different LGBT organizations, always being around, always documenting it. And it's partially him who we have to thank for the collection being what it is today.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

He had a visionary personality, and often talked about how things could be better. Here's Jim Kepner talking about intersectionality, using the language of his time.

**[Archival Recording]**

**Jim Kepner:**

For most of us, even though we had been around very much in gay life, we had a grab bag description of particular experiences and there were experiences we knew nothing about. Just as all human beings do not fit one heterosexual cookie cutter, one pattern. There is not a single homosexual or gay cookie cutter. And





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we don't all have the same expectations. We don't all have the same experiences.

**David Moore:**

Jim Kepner worked with Dorr. I mean, he would go back and forth between different people. Jim was interesting because he would go to different groups and converse with them and, you know, nobody threw him out. So that was...he kind of knew what was going on in all of the different warring camps [*laughs*].

**Loni Shibuyama:**

Jim Kepner is an example of this labor of love. He did a lot of like side jobs just to earn a living,

**Mike Oliveira:**

There are so many stories uh about him being a taxi driver to the stars. He would pick up people and deliver them and then pick them up later on in the evening and take them back to where they were hustling.

**Craig Loftin:**

He used to work in a milk carton factory and he...but his real passion was gay history. This was in the 1950s, and he'd, he'd already kind of thought about it a lot and started to do what would become kind of the first blueprint of what 'LGBT history' would look like. So, he was very excited about *ONE* as a vehicle to kind of publish a lot of this for the first time. [*Music*]

**Craig Loftin:**

There were some very significant women who worked on *ONE Magazine*.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

There was a woman named Geraldine Jackson who was involved in *ONE* and occasionally contributed articles or poetry. She was an early member of the Mattachine Society and *ONE* and she also invited Jim Kepner to the group.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Geraldine Jackson was a great storyteller, also a connector. Here's Jackson on tape:

**[Archival Recording]**

**Geraldine Jackson:**

It was really quite a night when we put together that magazine. And those were the days when we all got together and worked like in pioneer days when they get together to build a house. All the people pitched in. They enjoyed it. They made a game out of it, almost. My feelings of warmth toward *ONE* have continued through the years because, I remember the dream that we had in the beginning.



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**Loni Shibuyama:**

Jim Kepner credits her with inviting him to, the very first Mattachine Society meeting that he'd ever been to. She was really trying to bring in people and connect people.

**Craig Loftin:**

In the mid-fifties, a woman who went by the pseudonym Ann Karl Reed was the main editor.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

Ann Carl Reed a.k.a. Irma Quirky Wolf who basically ended up doing illustrations for the cover and writing for the magazine, as did Stella Rush, who was also known as Sten Russell.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Here's Sten Russell from a 1962 tape, talking about mustering up the courage to participate in *ONE*.

**[Archival Recording]**

**Sten Russell:**

In the beginning, I was too afraid to even come near the place. I would read the magazines over at their house. I contributed anonymously from the side. Since thunder and lightning did not strike me, I became braver and I contributed articles. Um. I find one thing rather fascinating in this point: if they were going to destroy us, they should have done it soon because, now it's too late. *[laughter]*

**Joseph Hawkins:**

Stella Rush was interestingly quoted saying that she was classified as a 'Chi-Chi' because she didn't conform to either butch or feminine roles when going into lesbian bars. And so she was often kicked out.

Eve Elloree was one of the big illustrators for *ONE Magazine*. Sten Russell was the other and they did a lot of the covers. It was really cleverly done because it was black and white with one other color, and that was to keep the cost of the magazine down.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

For many folks, it wasn't safe to publish under their real name. So using a pseudonym became a common political strategy for the contributors to *ONE Magazine*. Jim Kepner



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had dozens that he wrote under: Gene Arnold. John Arnold. Arthur Dalvin. Jack Mueller. Lynn Patterson. The list goes on and on. Of course, let me not forget, Dr. Fecal Chevaux—Doctor Horse Shit.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

So even though you'd see multiple names, there might be a couple of articles by the same person contributing to one issue in the magazine.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

At that time, Patricia Highsmith was writing. She wrote "Salt" under a pseudonym. Gore Vidal wrote under a pseudonym as Edgar Box, I think.

**Mike Oliveira:**

The most well known is Lorraine Hansberry, who went by a pseudonym—Emily Jones. And the first article that she sent *ONE Magazine*, she didn't sign it, she didn't provide any contact information. So they just had this great little short story and the editors immediately read it, put it in the next issue, and then put out a little blurb in the back of a magazine: "Please contact us! We want more!"

**Joseph Hawkins:**

And the articles that she wrote are really interesting because they're about women's empowerment, about women. They're very subtle. They're very beautifully written.

**Mike Oliveira:**

This was before *Raisin in the Sun* was a hit Broadway, and she was also writing for *The Ladder*. I think she understood that she was a queer person.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Besides the white men and women behind *ONE*, there were regular contributors who were of African American and Latinx descent. "Tony" Reyes was a founder of *ONE*. In addition to illustrating for the magazine, he was a well-known dancer on Olvera Street in downtown LA. Marvin Edwards, partner of Dorr Legg, wrote many articles. And the name – *ONE* – actually came from Bailey Whitaker, AKA Guy Rousseau.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

Bailey Whitaker suggested it from a poem, "a mystic bond of brotherhood makes all men ONE." 'The Mystic Bond' was a way of skirting the kind of idea at that time about homosexuality being about sex only. And it was a Carlyle quote.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

*ONE Magazine* provided serious content like news, politics, and science, but it was also



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a place to find fun, lifestyle content about gay life in mid-century America. It made people feel like they belonged to something larger than what they already knew.

**[Gretta's Letter]**

Dear ONE, At Fire Island this last weekend, I had the fun of inventing a new cocktail, made the same as a Pink Lady, but substituting vodka for gin and called a 'Lesbia.' She's still a lady but tantalizingly different. The ingredients, incidentally, require rebalancing to taste. If after testing the recipe you like it, why not print it in *ONE*? Gretta, New York City.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

My favorite parts are the little kinds of drawings that are in between the articles that are in the magazine. For instance, you'll just see a young woman sitting at a desk writing a letter, or there'll be a picture of two guys walking, holding hands. There was also an issue that had like gay animals in it, like an elephant and zebra, and they were sort of playful, cartoonish kind of drawings. By the way, there was no nudity ever in *ONE Magazine*. There was no image that would be offensive in moral terms.

### III. Magazine as an Organizing Platform

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Think about it, if you lived in a small town, and you think you may be the only queer person around you, where can you find your people? This magazine could be a lifeline to folks, especially those living in remote places. Readers wrote about isolation quite frequently in their letters to *ONE*. *[Music]*

**[Ray's Letter]**

Dear Mr. Schneider, You see, I'm a homophile, and I'm 16 years old. This is not just a figment of my imagination that I'm gay. Last year, with the help of the school principal, we saw a psychiatrist with my parents knowledge. Anyway, the psy told me that I was a true homosexual. For a long time. I was unhappy with my lot in life—no pun intended—as part of the lavender set. But after discovering that we were not uncommon or queer, I've come to accept it more or less. Yours, Ray.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

So when people wrote letters to the magazine, it was often to find out if there was help for people like them, especially psychological help. There were some people who took to being queer positively and said things like, "do you know, anybody else in my neighborhood that I can reach out to" or something like that. *[Music]*



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**[Miss S.'s Letter]**

Dear Editor: I know your magazine is not a lonely hearts magazine, but it seems my only hope. I am very unhappy. I'm desperate to write to a lady who will write to me. I am 26 and I don't like men. - Miss S. Sydney, Australia

**Loni Shibuyama:**

One of the early supporters of *ONE* was a doctor named Blanche Baker who was a psychologist, who essentially served as kind of like a "Dear Abby" column in the magazine. Readers would write letters to Blanche Baker specifically asking about certain issues that they're going through. *[Music]*

**[Letter to Dr. Baker from PHS]**

Dear Dr. Baker,

I am from Mexico. I hope you will understand my letter. Since I was a child, my feelings have been very feminine. And for this reason, the boys in school used to laugh at me and often made me the victim of cruel jokes. My youth was spent in being afraid of meeting people. Afraid to talk. Afraid of everything. Alone in tears and more tears. About a month ago, I saw the magazine *ONE* on the newsstand. I had not known the existence of a magazine of this kind. I found it very interesting, especially for me, where a terrible complex of inferiority has ruined my life. I'm still very shy. My family does not mention my manners anymore, but I feel so lonely without a friend and with this guilty feeling.

Please tell me, does a homosexual have the right to love and be loved as any other human? Is it a crime to love a man with all my heart? - P.H.S.

**[Blanche Baker's Response]**

Dear P.H.S.,

Yes, certainly.

Every human being has the right to experience a full, rich love life. And I hope you have the courage to overcome the inhibitions and oppositions thrust upon you by your family in order to know the fullness of life with another person. The answer to your first question is yes to the other question, no. And as you continue to read the articles in *one*, you will learn more than I have space here to tell you. Always remember that homosexuals are human beings too. May you know, many, many years of rich and happy fulfillment, love and understanding.



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Many good wishes, Blanche Baker.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

And she would respond in a very, you know, empathetic and progressive, um, way for that period of time.

**traci kato-kiryama:**

Dorr Legg described her as “something from outer space of a perfectly fantastic woman.” This is Blanche Baker herself from a 1955 recording that we found:

**[Archival Recording]**

**Blanche Baker:**

Well, I went home that day after she kissed me the first time, and I said to my dad, “Dad, what does it mean when a girl kisses you better than anybody ever kissed you?” But, I didn't particularly care for her and she had another girl that she was very, very fond of. And I shared with them their love life, I being the inquisitive scientist even then, which also complicates the picture.

**Loni Shibuyama:**

The editors at one were very appreciative of the fact that, you know, you have somebody who's a doctor, who has the training to support LGBT folks who are going through a bad time.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

There was even a column for a while called “Men Behind Bars,” it was a column for men who were incarcerated to write to each other.

**[Archival Letter read by Craig Loftin]**

Dear sir,

I am 21 years old. I am a patient at the Norman Beatty State Hospital, state of Indiana. I am here as a homosexual and legally classified as a “criminal sexual psychopath.” The fact that I am a homosexual does not embarrass me. Nor, am I particularly proud of my alleged, quote, “pathological condition.” This factor has existed in my life since a very young age. I am not aware of living in any other manner, nor do I feel that I care to live otherwise.

**Joseph Hawkins:**

People were incarcerated even and wrote from jail to say, “Can you send me the number of an attorney so that they can help me to get out of jail?” People wrote to say that they were completely isolated. They had no one. They were very lonely, that they needed help. If you really think about ONE Incorporated, when it first began, it was everything to the gay community. And they also had an



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Institute for Homophile Studies that they eventually opened, which gave accreditation for people doing gay studies. *[Music]*

#### **IV. Supreme Court Case**

##### **traci kato-kiriyama:**

While the magazine was doing its thing – building a community – the *ONE* team was busy behind-the-scenes working on a seminal legal case. They brought in Eric Julber, a young, ally attorney. Julber's job was to read every single issue from cover to cover to make sure that *ONE Magazine* was not going to violate the Comstock Act, which said that it was illegal to mail anything that might be obscene. He would regularly send letters like this to the *ONE* staff:

##### **Julber's letter:**

Dear Mr. Jennings, I am returning the November 1953 issue of *ONE*, and the following are my comment: On page two. Delete the words "orgasm or" in the first paragraph; it sounds too extreme the way it is. On page four in the last paragraph eliminate the word "bedsiding." If this means what I think it means, it should never have been permitted to appear.

##### **Joseph Hawkins:**

*ONE Magazine* actually began publication in 53, but by 1954 it was already being attacked by the post office supervisor here in the City of Los Angeles, because he felt that the magazine was obscene and he wanted it to stop being published.

##### **Mike Oliveira:**

And then the Los Angeles postmaster confiscates one of the issues. Ironically, it's the issue on homosexual marriage. I mean, that's August of 1953. And the second issue is confiscated is its title. The cover story is "You Can't Print it."

##### **traci kato-kiriyama:**

The October 1954 issue, with the cover story "You Can't Print It" happens to be the same issue as the one that has the goofy, outlandish looking gay animal illustrations. Definitely one to check out!

##### **Mike Oliveira:**

When it was confiscated lawyers that read it, they were trying to get it pulled. There was a lesbian love story in it, and one of the more intimate moments was a woman brushed the hair off of another woman's forehead.

##### **traci kato-kiriyama:**

So after the Los Angeles Postmaster Otto Olesen confiscated the issues, *ONE Magazine* took the LA Postmaster to court. In lower courts, the judges argued in



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defense of the Postmaster. Working pro bono, representing ONE Incorporated, Eric Julber filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court on June 13, 1957, about 66 years ago this month.

**[Archival Recording]**

Unknown Speaker: Since that time, ONE has itself faced legal problems and one in the highest court of the land, the United States Supreme Court. An important legal victory for the rights of public discussion in print.

**Mike Oliveira:**

It is just submitted to the Supreme Court and it is the Warren Court. They reviewed the material as an entire group and ruled unanimously to overturn the lower court's ruling. So, we never actually appear in front of the Supreme Court. So, there's never any oral arguments.

**Craig Loftin:**

The thinking right now is that a couple of those Supreme Court justices probably had gay clerks. And behind the scenes, some of these gay court clerks saw this as something that the court should clarify, that there is a free speech, right, for homosexuals just under the First Amendment. And some of them basically put it in the to do pile for the actual Supreme Court justices. And, perhaps, wrote the summaries and briefings in a way to kind of nudge the Supreme Court towards a decision that would favor *ONE Magazine*.

**Joseph Hawkins**

That lawsuit was won by the organization ONE, Inc., in 1958, in a per curiam decision which reversed the decision of the Ninth Circuit, and it was the first time that basically anyone said in a free speech case in the United States that homosexuality was not obscene, was not something that could be, um, attacked simply by its very existence.

It's always ironic to me that the Supreme Court case that ONE fought ended up clearing the way for *Playboy* to be sent through the mails, because prior to that time, indecent material was, in fact, not allowed to be sent. And because of the ruling, for ONE, they were allowed finally to send it. *[Music]*

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

From gay civil rights to gay court clerks - quite a movement, right? So 11 years after this landmark victory in the *ONE, Inc vs. Olesen* Supreme Court Case, Stonewall Uprising happened in New York City, which incidentally was 54 years ago today. So, *happy pride*, folks.





ARCHIVES FOUNDATION

**Joseph Hawkins:**

I think there is a Playboy Foundation, and I've thought about going there and asking them for some money.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

You can find *ONE Magazine* covers and contents from some issues on our website at [onearchives.org/periodicallyqueer](http://onearchives.org/periodicallyqueer).

This episode of Periodically Queer is produced by Umi Hsu and assistant-produced by Shei Yu; edited by Quincy Surasmith; scripted by Umi Hsu, Shei Yu, and Rozanna Leo-Fields; theme music by Analog Tara; episode music by Matthew Ivler, Umi Hsu, and Jacob Alden Sargent. Research by Sela Kerr. Graphic design by Saphir Davis and Maxwell Fong. Story consultation by Sayre Quevedo.

This episode contains the voices of Joseph Hawkins, Craig Loftin, Michael Oliveira, Loni Shibuyama, Dorr Legg, David Moore, Jim Kepner, Geraldine Jackson, Blanche Baker, and Sten Russell. Voice acting by Trevor Ladner, Sadie Buerker, Sela Kerr, Rozanna Leo-Fields, and Tony Valenzuela. Special thanks to David Hensely, ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, and Pacifica Radio Archives for providing research materials.

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*[Music]*

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

It's Periodically Queer, by ONE Archives Foundation. And I'm traci kato-kiriyama. Listen to Periodically Queer anywhere you get podcasts.