



## Periodically Queer Episode 1 – Vanguard Magazine: Prophets and Misfits

### Audio Transcript

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

So, just this year alone, over 220 bills have been introduced to attack the health, safety, and wellbeing of LGBTQIA+ kids. The conservative legislative onslaught targeting queer and trans kids has made it difficult to think about the state of things in our country, the future of our world, and what's to become of us. But we know that queer and trans kids are resilient. Kids can change the world. We, AKA the adults, may have forgotten that.

*[Music]*

In the first episode of season two of Periodically Queer, we are digging into the incredible stories around Vanguard, a movement led by queer and trans street youth in San Francisco's Tenderloin district in the 1960s. Living in poverty, on the brink of displacement, these street kids created a world when they were stripped of the very basic needs in life, housing, food, and safety. They were courageous, inventive. They made a home for each other, started an activist publication. They invented a form of queer spirituality and built a system of mutual aid. This is a not a DIY, proto-punk kind of story. This is a story about collective liberation.

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

Before we start, here's a content warning. What you're about to hear contains sexual and physical violence. So take care of yourself. Here's the story of Vanguard.

*[Music]*

### **1.0 Queer Youth Dances inside of a Church**

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

Imagine this. You're in the basement of a church. You see a sign that says "dance in the dining room." You walk in, the dining room is cavernous, chairs stacked against the walls. The ceiling light is off. A blue spotlight shines on the floor. Lit cigarettes twinkle in the dark. Behind a pile of records and a turntable is a DJ. Warm air on your face. It's the summer of 1966.

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

On the dance floor, you see couples drift across, moving through the blue shadowy



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light, like tropical fish. There's a young trans femme person with bouffant hair, large breasts, and lots of eye makeup, dancing with a young man in his 20's. Two boys of Asian descent, maybe 13 or 14 ...years old, are dancing together, kicking their feet mid-air. A middle-aged woman in a cocktail dress is doing a waltz with a masculine-presenting nonbinary person in men's clothing. A new song comes on. A few couples change partners *[Music]*. A boy who was dancing with a girl is now dancing with a boy. They are all having a fantastic time.

**Jeremy Sass:**

There was a great article originally published in a Michigan underground newspaper. *[Music fadeout]*

**traci kato-kiryama:**

What you just heard is a description based on this 1966 news article, but with updated language that we use today with gender and racial diversity in mind.

**Jeremy Sass:**

My name is Jeremy Sass. Pronouns are she/they. I was a history major at Vassar College, and while there I worked on a senior thesis focused on Vanguard and in particular the experiences of trans people within Vanguard.

I don't know why some reporter came to San Francisco to write about Vanguard, but he did. And that's one of the only accounts that I found of just an outsider just coming in and being like, I am at a meeting, I'm at a dance. Here is what I see, here is what is happening and he's very much exoticized the people he sees in ways that I don't super love.

There's even one member who Tate is sitting near at the meeting. And that member's gender just completely confuses Tate. He doesn't know what the hell is going on. It seems it started with a 21 year old Mormon missionary named Adrian Ravarour, who came to the Tenderloin.

**Adrian Ravarour:**

I'm Adrian Rafael Ravarour. When I started Vanguard, it was all about bringing people to the same state of mind because many of them didn't think they deserved equality. And the thing about the dances is it brought something I had never given Vanguard. It gave Vanguard its heart.

**Adrian Ravarour:**

You could be there with your boyfriend. *[Music]* You could be there with your girlfriend. You were able to hold hands. You were able to kiss. You were able to hug, you were able to dance with one another and, no thoughts about the reality



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that you were going to go back into in an hour or two when you left the dance.  
*[Music fades out]*

### **1.1 Glide Methodist: Larry Mamiya**

#### **Adrian Ravarour:**

Larry Mamiya. God bless him. He created the dances. He talks about being a civil rights worker before and then seeing the kids on the street and needing a place to go where they can escape the hostility that's been the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, you know, hurled at them. And so he asked the kids "Would they like a place?" And they said, "Yes." He said, "Well, what kind of activity? Would you like to dance?" And they said, "Yes." So he went to Glide and he said, "The kids would like to use the basement for a dance. Can this be?" And they said, "Yeah, if you supervise it."

#### **Larry Mamiya:**

I am Larry Mamiya. I was at Glide from 1966 through the summer of 1967. I believe these were probably the first gay dances sponsored by a church.

*[laughter]*

People have all kinds of stereotypes about street kids and all that. But they, you know, they just dance and nothing was wrong. And I basically was there kind of chaperoning the place talking to the kids and so forth.

#### **Adrian Ravarour:**

And Reverend Mamiya would be at the front door. And when the police or the fire marshal would come and try and close it down, he'd put on a snap-on caller and say, "Gentlemen, God bless you. May I help you?" And they would all say, "Yes, Father, we would like to come in," and see. And he said, oh, it's it's in the house around. Everything's been taken care of. And so they would thank him. In one of his comments, he wrote that he liked all these Irish Catholics who respected this collar.

### **1.2 Glide Methodist Church: What is Glide?**

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

So they found each other at this church. They also found a purpose to be with one another. And change was in the air. People were ready to be organized. A month after having met at Glide Methodist Memorial Church, they announced the formation of Vanguard. This all happened in a moment in history when many American civil rights were being challenged.



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**Megan Rohrer:**

My name is Meghan Rohrer, and my pronouns are he and him. I work at Glide Memorial Church and I'm the senior church communications specialist.

So in 1963, there was a group of interfaith pastors who were trying to figure out how they could be relevant to a new generation. They were like, "The church is going to die; we got to figure out how to get young people to go to church!" And they picked up hitchhikers along the road all over the country, and they said they were going to San Francisco. And Glide Memorial Church started hosting dances during that time period where it was illegal. They would hold happenings where people would write poetry all throughout the church. Allen Ginsberg would do stuff in the sanctuary.

Glide gave the Vanguard kids \$30 a month and they could choose what they wanted to spend it on. They could spend their 30 bucks on feeding the homeless or having a dance and it was this church that had sort of trusted them while they were doing things that were openly illegal. But teaching them the tools that they needed to empower themselves and to go out and protest.

**Jeremy Sass:**

So it was this safe place that they can meet in private, use the spaces for free – which is huge. The religious affiliation with Glide sort of helped the Vanguard be more acceptable. *[Music]*

## 2.0 Who Are the Kids

**Joseph Plaster:**

My name is Joseph Plaster, Curator in Public Humanities and Director of the Tapp Center, at Johns Hopkins University. So, kids on the street or street kids or the boys, the girls, like, these were all phrases that people circulated in Tenderloin districts, you know, as early as the twenties and, well through the sixties.

**Joseph Plaster:**

Most of them were white men in their early twenties, a relatively privileged subset of the street scene. Some of them had at least like a year or two of college education. There were a few people who identified as hair fairies, which was a very specific style of gender non-normative presentation.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Just in case you haven't heard of this term, a hair fairy is someone who wears men's clothes and has bouffant hair, with hair sprayed and stacked like a beehive. They often



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wear eye makeup, eyebrow pencil, rouge, some lipstick, foundation, and nail polish. Today we would call them just plain fabulous.

**Jeremy Sass:**

It's not that kids were just in the Tenderloin, it's that these kids were migrating through Tenderloins throughout the United States.

**Joseph Plaster:**

So Tenderloin is a kind of generic name for downtown districts around the country that were set aside for vice. So, these were zones of abandonment and to which a variety of marginalized people were policed. So, that included homeless populations, immigrants, racialized populations, street kids. And, you know, especially before the seventies, gay people, homosexuals, gender non-normative people.

**Jeremy Sass:**

Most of these queer street youth are kids who have either run from or been kicked out by abusive families. Generally, families who didn't accept them for being queer or were also probably abusive in other ways as well. These are kids who no longer have a place to go home to because they are queer.

**Jeremy Sass:**

They were basically policed into this small area of San Francisco to stay separate from the rest of society. But then, they have limited freedom of expression within the neighborhood.

So they would be walking around, dressing how they want. You'd have lots of drag queens and hair fairies and just generally effeminate gay boys.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

A common term back then was "street queen" which refers to trans women or feminine-presenting people who may or may not perform in drag or do sex work. Many of the Tenderloin residents did survival sex for a living. Being queer or gender nonconforming made it difficult to find other jobs. *[Music]*

**Joseph Plaster:**

Often street kids were people who performed youth to stimulate desire and potential sex work clients or, you know, the kids were people who were cared for by other queer people in the Tenderloin District who identified as mothers or fathers or aunts or uncles.

**Joseph Plaster:**



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Most of the kids were hustling, were doing sex work, but not all of them were. So there was a tension and division between the more privileged members of Vanguard and some of the other kids on the street who were trans or hair fairies or people of color.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

It's really hard to pin down a singular person who started Vanguard. It was very much a group effort where multiple individuals started organizing at a similar time for the same reasons of providing safety and empowerment for the street youth.

**Jeremy Sass:**

So like Joel Roberts, who was a key organizer of Vanguard. He only got to the Tenderloin, I think in like 1965 or 1966. Before that, he had been in New York City and in basically the equivalent of the Tenderloin and other cities where this is the undesirable dumping grounds that includes queer street youth.

**Joseph Plaster:**

One of the people I interviewed who hustled in the Tenderloin was Joel Roberts, told me that youth was what we were selling.

**Joel Roberts:**

When I first came to San Francisco, part of my life was hustling. Part of my life was being a prostitute. Quick way to make money. And I didn't have a lot of credentials and ways of making money.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

**That's Joel Roberts, from an 1981 oral history tape that we found.**

**Joel Roberts:**

And I was really being confronted more than ever before with the oppression of being in America, not just being gay but being poor, being on the street, being a kid, all of those things. And I was really angry that gay kids were being let out of social change.

There's kids on the fucking street selling their ass, there's kids sleeping eight in a hotel room at night. And you people talk about social change and you have to remember the tenor of the time when the whole civil rights movement, the peace movement.

And I was organizing, God, before there was anything called gay life in the streets of San Francisco in the Tenderloin. We'd hang out and I was organizing something that later became called Vanguard.

**2.3 Context of Organizing: Police Violence**



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**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Facing police violence was a regular occurrence for these queer street youth. This was very common back in the day, and as we know, police violence is still very present today, especially for trans people of color. *[Music]*

**Jeremy Sass:**

There's lots of accounts in oral histories and in the magazines of just very casual police violence as they are walking around near the neighborhood and street sweeps, casually being beaten and sent to prison, maybe arrested with baseless accusations of disorderly conduct. Arrested for suspicion of prostitution. For being visibly trans in public spaces. Anti cross-dressing laws had been struck down already, but they were still more or less being used to target youth like the ones in Vanguard. And they would be beaten, arrested, sent to jail, sexually harassed. Many of the youth were doing survival sex work. So they were being criminalized, especially because of that.

**Joel Roberts:**

My very first recollection is coming to San Francisco and seeing a young drag queen get his ribs broken by a cop and the cop leaves him there and I say, "How come he didn't arrest you for this?" He said, "Don't worry about me, honey. This happens all the time." *[Music]*

## **2.4 Kinship Structure / Network of Reciprocity/Mutual Aid**

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Despite not having the basic needs in life, the queer and trans youth in the Tenderloin made a home for each other. In a short amount of time, the Vanguard kids built a system to care for each other, a foundation to create change.

**Larry Mamiya:**

To a certain degree, Vanguard was family. They call themselves the street gang. But it was a family.

**Joseph Plaster:**

So all of these young organizers worked to meet the needs of street kids in the Tenderloin—food, housing and medical care.

**Jeremy Sass:**

Vanguard was providing this safe social space for kids who are otherwise either stuck literally on the street in tiny, in cramped, overpriced hotel rooms or in restaurants that are throwing them out



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**Joseph Plaster:**

Joel Roberts said,

[Joel Roberts]: “We knew if we're going to make it at all, we're going to have to help each other. The choices are to die or to create some kind of family. If Vanguard members turned to trick, you spent that money on your friends because when they turned to trick, they did the same.”

**Joseph Plaster:**

If a member was in trouble with the police, the word spread immediately among Vanguard members. If somebody needed housing and they had a place to stay, they would share that. If there was a sugar daddy who's beating someone up. They tried to provide some protection.

## 2.5 New Queer Religion

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

What's unique about Vanguard is the fusing of activism, queer sensibility, and religion. Similar to some of the Civil Rights movements of its time, religion was used as a way to fuel the imagination of a liberated future, to uplift the spirit of those who were suffering. The Vanguard organizers knew that and they channeled it in innovative and theatrical ways.

**Jeremy Sass:**

Adrian Ravarour, was one of the first people to be organizing kids into Vanguard.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

At the time, he was working at an arts and religion organization called Intersection. Here's Adrian Ravarour talking about how he approached working with the Vanguard Youth.

**Adrian Ravarour:**

The kids were all very curious why I am a Mormon Priest because my boyfriend introduced me as a priest to them. Why I, as a priest, would actually talk about their being accepted and that being gay is not a crime, and that God doesn't care about people's sexual orientation.

**Joseph Plaster:**

Many Vanguard organizers approached Christianity as a kind of radical political practice at a time when the civil rights movement, you know, the Catholic worker movement and the counterculture were kind of fusing activism and religion.

They were absolutely creating these new syncretic forms of queer religion in the Tenderloin. And they were drawing on all of the traditions from their youth,





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Pentecostalism, Catholicism. But then they were infusing queer sexuality drawing on the power of performance and ritual and faith healing ceremonies.

[Music]

### 3.0 The Role of the Magazine

**traci kato-kiryama:**

The Vanguard kids started not only a community for mutual aid and safety. They also created possibly the first magazine for the unhoused queer youth. Single issues were priced at 35 cents. Annual subscriptions for members for three dollars, and six dollars for non-members.

**Joseph Plaster:**

The magazine was intended to support the movement building, a kind of a manifestation of queer world making.

**traci kato-kiryama:**

If you happen to see a *Vanguard* magazine, you'll see a statement of purpose printed in every issue:

“We of VANGUARD find our civil liberties imperiled by a hostile social order in which all difference from the usual in behavior is attacked. We have finally realized that we can only change these processes through the strength we develop for ourselves through our own efforts. VANGUARD IS DETERMINED TO CHANGE THESE CONDITIONS THROUGH ORGANIZATION AND ACTION.”

**Joseph Plaster:**

The magazine enabled the organization to develop this kind of shared political analysis of the circumstances of their lives. People would write in to talk about what it felt like to be a sex worker in the Tenderloin.

**Megan Rohrer:**

The original *Vanguard* magazines served as a way that people could express themselves, that they could be published for the first time.

So it's like if you ask someone, like, what's it like being a homeless kid? They're like a thousand different answers that they could give you, and they might or might not feel safe or comfortable sharing that with you. But, if I show you a beautifully created poem from 1968 that also has like this weird naked drawing next to it, which was often the way the *Vanguard* magazines were, it's much easier for someone to say, I relate to this and here's why.



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It was also kind of a great space to find content that was in support of hair fairies and fabulousness and femininity in men.

### 3.1 Magazine as a creative expression

#### **Jeremy Sass:**

In the first issue, one of the poems submitted by a member of Vanguard is called "Katie the Queen," which is about a queen named Katie in the Tenderloin, walking down the street being catty, and it's very nursery rhyme style. It's very fun.

#### **[“The Fairy Tale Ballad of Katie the Queen” by Ms. Shari Kenyon]**

*She's the Queen, oh Mary, and you know it. She's the queen, my luv. And she shows it. She thinks she looks and acts so fair. But she's only a fake. And we know it. She can swing her hips like a lady. And her violet eyes are the right shady. Her blouse and her pants are so tight and she breaks her wrist just right. But her real name is Calvin, not Katy. She swishes don't work so very femme. With bracelets jangling, she shrieks at Jim. She plays and lifts and carries on like a tease when it comes to the thing. Show up and freeze because she is a her, not a him.*

*[Music]*

#### **Megan Rohrer:**

It gives someone permission to feel like maybe their poem will be read by someone, you know, 60 years into the future. And maybe their story, if it's a part of a continued movement, means more than if it's just their story.

#### **Joseph Plaster:**

I interviewed one of the editors of the magazine. His name is Keith St Clair.

#### **Jeremy Sass:**

He was a former member of the Air Force and at the time he was, probably, early twenties, ended up in San Francisco Tenderloin, joined Vanguard, ended up becoming the head editor of its magazine.

#### **Joseph Plaster:**

He told me about putting the magazine together in a small little office in the top floor of this porn theater. So, he would post signs at Tenderloin Laundromats asking for submissions and, he talked about everyone submitting their art, their literature, and their poetry.

#### **Jeremy Sass:**



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But then the poem ends with she attracts too much attention, she makes too much of a scene, and she attracts the police who then arrest her, put her in prison and rape her. And that's just how the poem ends.

**[Jeremy reading “The Fairy Tale Ballad of Katie the Queen” by Ms. Shari Kenyon]**

*So here is what happened to Katy the Queen. She came on too loud on the market street scene. She blew her mind and the vices too, because Katy in drag is not too cool. Now she keeps the fuzz happy and the gay tank clean.*

**Jeremy Sass:**

The author, Miss Shari Kenyon, was paying tribute to her identity and her friends identities while also calling attention to the violence that they face and even warning other queens who read this about the dangers of being visibly gender transgressive in public. I found that poem so powerful. *[Music]*

**traci kato-kiryama:**

The magazines are beautifully constructed with artworks submitted by Vanguard members. Each issue was thoughtfully put together with experimental and edgy aesthetics from the underground print culture of its time.

**Joseph Plaster:**

Keith told me that he used a Gestetner machine, which is a kind of duplicating machine. There are some aspects where they've hand painted some details. They're kind of bespoke. Each is a kind of unique production and I can't imagine that they created that many of them.

**Megan Rohrer:**

So, copy machines were super expensive and so Glide was like, We've got a copy machine, we've got a mimeograph machine. Let's allow radical groups who are going to make our community more diverse, use our printing materials.”

**Megan Rohrer:**

So, every copy of the magazine, they would, like, screen-print a lot of the pictures and so every copy is different because they were using the leftover paper of the bulletins at Glide. And so some of the pages are like green and blue and yellow and orange.

**Joseph Plaster:**

The paper is quite thick. It feels very sturdy, like it feels like it was made to last.



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Even if they didn't imagine that people 60 years from now would be handling them and talking about them.

### 3.2 How did they use it to organize their movement work?

#### **Megan Rohrer:**

But, they weren't just printing their own articles. They were also printing ads for the LGBTQ organizations where folk could get help. The older LGBTQ groups would, like, buy an ad in their magazine as a way to support them in their work but, it also would give ...information out. Like, the Council of Religion and the Homosexual did about how to report police violence and attacks against the LGBTQ community.

And these magazines were going out at a time when the gay and lesbian groups weren't allowed to be in the phone book yet, like, they hadn't gained that right yet. I dunno. People forget what a phonebook is, but they also forget that the phonebook wouldn't allow the gay people to be in it for a really long time. And so being able to be in those publications that the youth were passing out might have been one of the only ways that someone got a flier about where the free meal was going to be that day.

So they just were this radical group of misfits and they were publishing everything from every spectrum. One of my favorite parts of *Vanguard* magazine was a section called "Homeless Prophets," and they would just declare that they were ministers. They're like, "Hey, I'm a homeless queer youth, and I'm a minister." And they would write little sermonettes on, like, why you should do good and ethical things. It was very interfaith, kind of diverse.

*[Music]*

## IV. Street Picketing / Demonstrations

### 4.1 Street Sweep

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

Using broadcast media as a way to amplify the marginalized voice was a fairly common strategy at the time. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously deployed a similar strategy for the Selma to Montgomery March. The Vanguard youth were influenced by what they saw around them in other movements.

#### **Joseph Plaster:**

When you think of Vanguard's actions, they engaged in and pickets, they engaged in other direct actions, but probably their most iconic action was this



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“Sweep In” or “Street Sweep.” It was this really theatrical protest on the streets of the Tenderloin

This beautiful photograph in the October 66 issue of *Vanguard* magazine. You see the street kids. You see the kind of hair fairies that were involved with Vanguard.

**Jeremy Sass:**

There's this one photo with a kid near their front who is very clearly younger than the others; some flavor of trans femme. And that image really spoke to me.

**Joseph Plaster:**

They're illuminated by street lights and they're using these oversize brooms to sweep Market Street. And a lot of these young people are wearing signs that read “All trash is before the broom. So we're not the trash. We're cleaning up the trash. We want to be collaborators in the revitalization of the Tenderloin.” They were very media savvy.

**Joel Roberts:**

Instead of being the quiet, oppressed minority of mentally ill or criminals. I mean, the liberals thought we were mentally ill and the conservatives thought we were criminals. So we got bested either way and we started getting on television.

**[Archival Recording: ABC7]**

**Dick Carlson:**

Market Street has always had its share of pushers but last night, a different variety took to the streets. A group called “Vanguard” was pushing brooms, but they ended up pushing me. Market Street certainly does need some cleaning up until Vanguard gets a better sweepers, it'll probably remain the way it is now. This is Dick Carlson reporting.

**Mark Forrester:**

It's trying to symbolically demonstrate the fact that the people in the central city are tired of being human ash heap of the entire city, particularly the youth in the Tenderloin.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

This was Mark Forrester, talking on ABC7 about the purpose of the “Sweep In” on the night of the action.

**Joel Roberts:**

I very much understood very early in the game the power of media. So, we call up the radio and TV stations say, “Hey, the kids on Market Street are having a



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demonstration. You better get down there.” That was unheard of. So, that was like for shock value alone with word selling products behind it. So Channel 7 did a lot of stuff about us and before ...you know it, I don’t know how to put it except all hell broke loose, because we started getting hit from all over the country, coming in to photograph us and stuff.

## 4.2 Picketing Local Business

*[Music]*

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

The summer of 1966 gave rise to many direct actions. Some of them were demonstrations led by Vanguard members against discriminatory businesses. This series of actions, among others, galvanized the spirit behind the Compton’s Cafeteria Riot, a historically significant uprising led by trans sex workers in the Tenderloin. Many people don’t know about this action at Compton’s Cafeteria, but it happened in 1966, three years before the Stonewall Uprising.

## 4.3 Doggie Diner Riot & Dixie Russo

**Jeremy Sass:**

One important person I want to mention is Dixie Russo. She was a trans woman and was one of the key organizers within Vanguard.

**Adrian Ravarour:**

Dixie Russo was born in Brooklyn, and she was thrown out of her home when she was around 12 or so and lived on the streets and then was in San Francisco.

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Dixie Russo’s identity has been documented in a number of different ways: a queen, a hair fairy, or a trans woman. She was the head of Vanguard’s “Street Queen Coalition,” and her presence was key to some of the major uprisings at the time.

**Adrian Ravarour:**

So my mate and I, Joel Thomas Williams, and I, are sitting in the Doggie Diner having coffee and in comes Dixie Russo, who looks a little tired and she has on makeup and a women’s blouse And so she orders something to drink and something to eat. The clerk says he will not serve her. And she says, “I want such and such.” And he then tells her “No.” And she says, “Well, why won’t you serve me?” And he said, “Go home and wash ...off your make off your make up and take off your blouse and then come back and I’ll serve you.” So she picks up the sugar shaker and throws it on the floor and it breaks. He immediately turns to his right and punches in a number on the wall phone and is talking to the police about “those kinds of people are here and they won’t leave.”



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So we're in there for hours. Now while we're in there, different Vanguard members are walking along Market Street and looking at us sitting inside this curved line of police in riot gear. And so every half hour another kid goes by or something. *[Music]*

**Adrian Ravarour:**

We had 17 people in full riot gear standing ready to pounce, you know, to to come upon us and take it away and nothing happened. So that story circulated. Everyone who was inside went and told other member—there was a grapevine continuously. And so everyone in the neighborhood in the town knew what had happened. And Dixie Russo then went to Compton's restaurant and she retold the story. So all of the people in Compton's knew the story.

According to Dixie, one of the cashiers insulted one of the transgender women and she hit the person on the head with the tray, and then things started flying from there on, something went through the window. We could see things flying out of a restaurant.

The next day, we could see the broken windows. We could see that a newspaper rack had been burned. But, there was no mention of it on the news or in the papers. That was sort of like standing up against the phantoms and there was no response. So I can understand why the transgender community sees that as a very seminal, important launch point.

#### **4.4 Purple Handprint / Liberation movement**

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

Some of Vanguard's direct actions were not only spontaneous, they were super creative and inventive. Like this one.

**Megan Rohrer:**

There was a news reporter at the time who would publish the home addresses whenever someone was arrested for being gay or for dressing in the clothing of the opposite sex. Or ...call the places that they worked to try to get people fired or evicted or worse, to take their own lives. So the Vanguard youth go down to the San Francisco Examiner's office with the purpose of trying to, like, embarrass this guy who was writing all of these terrible newspaper articles. And he went to the top of the roof while they're protesting.

They had giant picket signs. They're marching. Imagine, like giant bouffant haircuts, right, because they're hair fairies. And from the roof of the San Francisco Examiner's office, he dumps purple ink on them. When you have purple ink dumped on you where you're a homeless kid, how are you going to get this ink off of you? It's like crazy embarrassing. And if you're someone whose



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beauty is what is paying your rent, having a bunch of purple ink dumped on you could stop you in your tracks.

**Megan Rohrer:**

But instead, these kids start putting their handprints all over the San Francisco Examiner's office. So if you ever see a *Vanguard* magazine has a purple handprint right on the cover. Megan Rohrer: That purple handprint becomes the symbol of the gay liberation movement. These ragtag youth take this moment of getting things dumped on them and they turn it into a source of strength.

When I asked the San Francisco Examiner about that story, they published an apology. And so when the world dumps some crap on you. Don't give up. Keep living. Use that as power, right, and find a way that you can borrow the symbols of people who have rose out of the depths of having crap dumped on them, to inspire you to keep going forward. *[Music]*

**traci kato-kiriyama:**

I don't know about you, but the *Vanguard* story got me so inspired. Civil rights advancements can happen anywhere. Look around you. The queer or trans kid next to you, or within you, could be making the next big moves. So make space for them. Join them in making history.

You can find *Vanguard* magazine covers and contents from some issues including the poem about "Katie the Queen" by Miss Shari Kenyon, 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 Jeremy Sass, Adrian Ravarour, Larry Mamiya, Megan Rohrer, Joseph Plaster, Joel Roberts, and Mark Forrester. Special thanks to Joseph Plaster, Megan Rohrer, Jeremy Sass, ONE Archives at the USC Libraries, GLBT Historical Society, the Stanford Pride Oral History Project, and ABC7 for providing research materials.

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