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stonewall, night, gay bars, police, lesbian, stonewall inn, years, homosexual, drag queens, gay, cops, women, hit, felt, village, bar, deputy inspector, judy garland, randy, west

SPEAKERS

Buddy Johnston, Jimmy Carper



00:15

KPFT Houston.



Buddy Johnston 00:17

Okay, girl, now we've done everything legal.



Jimmy Carper 00:21

Oh, okay.



Buddy Johnston 00:22

And if I had a man here I'd do something illegal. Anyway, this is from the Pacific archives, and it was spared to us over the satellite. Just like my Pamela Stanley piece. Isn't that remarkable what we get off the satellite?



Jimmy Carper 00:37

Yes



Buddy Johnston 00:37

it's broadcast on the satellite, June 9 1989, produced by David Isay. And I'm not really certain whether David's in New York or San Francisco or woods, I'm pretty sure he's in New York. Yeah, because this is all interviews with people who will who were actually at the Stonewall during the

uprising, but this is what it's all about boys and girls. If you want to march in the parade, I'm sorry. What were you gonna say it's called Remembering stone. Yeah, if you want to march in the parade, call us five to six 4005 to six KPFT. We'll be back in a little bit. programs called Remembering Stonewall.



01:26

Today, this white, two storey building across from Sheridan Square in Greenwich Village, is a clothing store and a closed Chinese restaurant 20 years ago. This was the Stonewall Inn. I'm Michael shirker and I'm working on the first comprehensive history of the Stonewall riots. In 1969, the Stonewall was one of the most popular gay bars in New York City. And, like all other gay bars was routinely raided by the Vice Squad. The patrons of these bars, many of whom were frightened and having their identities revealed, would quietly submit to any orders coming from the police. Yet, on June 27 1969, that all changed. The patrons of this bar with the drag queens at the forefront decided to fight back against the police. What happened here on that night would spark a revolution.



02:24

My I'm Jean Harwood, and my age is at



02:32

Bruce Merrill,



02:33

he wants to he also would like to know what your age is. So



02:37

my age 78? Yes,



02:41

I don't, I don't, I don't know if it's really true. But now people do refer to us as the two oldest gay men in America. We do have I think, have maybe a record relationship of almost 60 years together. Bruce's memory started going bad in 1984 Fortunately, we have we have our music together, which we've, which we've done over the years, we've we've written any number of of songs, Bruce remembers the melodies very well and the lyrics for the songs. When you would judge me, when you took my hand something happened. I had never being gay before Stonewall was was a very difficult proposition because we felt that in order to survive, we had to try to look and act as as straight as possible because the attitude the general attitude of

society as far as employers were concerned, and landlords, all of these people were very hostile and and to protect ourselves. We had to act as rugged and manly as possible to, to get by and my name



04:16

is Randy. I was the first openly gay person to appear on radio in 1962. And on television in 1964, as a self identified homosexual in the air before Stonewall people felt a need to hide because of the precarious legal position they were in, they would lose their jobs. There was a great hostility socially speaking in the sense of people found out you were gay. They assume you were a communist or a child molester. Any of another dozen stereotypes are rampant in the public media at the time.



04:49

I'm Jerry fair, and I'm 80 years old. I started a gay lifestyle in 1948 when I was around 3940 I At that time if there was even a suspicion that you were gay, that you were a lesbian. You were fired from your job. And you were in such a position of disgrace that you slunk out without saying goodbye even to the people that like during your life, never even bothered to clean your desk. You just disappeared. You just disappeared. You went quietly, because you were afraid that the wreck ruminations that would come if you even stood there protested would be worse than just leave. My name is



05:42

Sylvia Rivera. My name before that was Bray Rivera until I started dressing in drag in 1961.



05:52

There are before us now more bizarre hider there was always the gay bash and under drag queens



06:02

by heterosexual men, women and the police. We learned to live with it because it was part of the lifestyle at that time, I guess. But none of us were very happy about it.



06:19

My name is Seymour pine. In 1968, I was assigned as Deputy Inspector in charge of public morals in the first division in the police department, which covered South Manhattan from 38th Street to the battery, including the Greenwich Village area. It was the duty of public morals to enforce all laws concerning vice and gambling, including prostitution, narcotics, and laws and

regulations concerning homosexuality. The part of the penal code which applied to drag queens, was section two four 0.35 section four, being masked, or in any manner disguised by unusual or unnatural attire, or facial alteration, loiters remains or congregates. In a public at



07:20

that time, we looked at the Arista hotel with the sky, except around. Try to figure out when and when this masquerade, harassment would come to an end, when knowing and we would always dream that one day, it would come to an end when such and we prayed and we looked for it wanted to be human beings



07:57

My name is Rob Mahoney. I've been hanging out drinking, partying and working in the gay bars for the last 30 years. In the era before Stonewall, all, all of the boys 90% of the boys were mafia controlled. They were controlled because the mafia had the right connections. There wasn't there wasn't that many gay bars, you'd have maybe one two uptown. In the Upper East Side, they would get closed down and they'd be one or two in the west side, they get closed down and midtown they'd be 123, maybe open. As they would get closed down. They'd move around. And they would dump.



08:44

I'm Joe Nestle, co founder of what is now the largest collection of lesbian culture in the world. The police raided lesbian bars regularly. And they did it. They both did it in the most obvious way, which was hauling women away and paddy wagons but they there was regular weekend harassment, which would consist of the police coming in regularly to get their payoffs. And in the sea colony, we had a back room with a red light. And when that red light went on, it meant the police would be arriving in around 10 minutes. And so we all had to sit down at our tables. And we would be sitting there almost like schoolchildren. And the cops would come in now depending on who was on which cop was on. If it was some that really resented the bush women who live with many times very beautiful women. We knew we're in for it because what would happen is they would start harassing one of these women and saying hi you think you're a man come outside we'll show you and the woman would be dragged away. They throw up against a wall and they'd say so you think you're a man? Let's see what you got in your pants and they would put their hand down her pants a stone Whoa, that



09:57

was good. That was just To get into the stone wall, you'd walk up and you'd knock on the front door. In knocking door opening a Mary sent me good cleaning girls, you know, when you walked in to your right was your boy wrong to know, windows down at the far end of the bar was an opening in the wall going into the dance room with the jukebox in that room, and no one does in that room either. The stone wall, like all gay bars at that time with painted black, charcoal

black. And what was the funny part, the place would be so dimly lit. But as soon as the cops are gonna come in, to collect their percentage or whatever they were coming in for, from it being a nice, dimly lit dump. The place was lit up like Luna pa



10:56

felt, well, two guys, and that's very often all we sent in would be two men could handle 200 people. I mean, you tell them to leave, and they leave. And you say show me your identification and they all take out their identification and file out and that's it and you say okay, you're not a man, you're a woman, or you're vice versa and you wait over there. I mean, this is a kind of power that you have. And you never gave it a second thought a drag



11:30

queen took a lot of oppression and we had to we we were at a point where I guess nothing would have stopped us. I guess, as they say or as Shakespeare says we were ladies in waiting, just waiting for the thing to happen. And when it did happen, we were there.



12:02

On Friday night, June 27 1969. At about 1145 eight officers from public morals First Division loaded into four unmarked police cars. From their headquarters on 21st Street and Third Avenue. They headed downtown and then west towards the Stonewall Inn here at Seventh Avenue and Christopher Street. It was the second time the bar was raided that week. The local sixth precinct had just received a new commanding officer who kicked off his tenure by initiating a series of raids on gay bars. And New York was in the midst of a mayoral campaign. Always a bad time for homosexuals. Mayor John Lindsay had good reason to agree to the police crackdown. He had just lost his party's primary and needed a popularity boost. And the Stonewall Inn was indeed an inviting target. Operated by the Gambino crime family without a liquor license. This dance bar drew a crowd of drag queens, Hustler's minors, and more masculine lesbians known as Bulldogs. Many were black or Hispanic. It was a warm night in New York City and a somber day for many. Judy Garland, who had died earlier in the week was buried that morning. It was almost precisely at midnight that the moral squad pulled up to the Stonewall Inn, led by Deputy Inspector Seymour pine.



13:26

There was never any reason to feel that anything of any unusual situation would occur that night.



13:35

He could actually feel it in the year. You really cut it. I guess Judy Garland stuff just really helped us Billy had to pray. And for some



13:45

reason things were different this night. As we were bringing the prisoners out. They were resisting.



13:52

People started gathering in front of this shuttered square park right across the street from Stonewall. People were upset. No, we're not going to go and people started screaming and hollering



14:11

one drag queen, as we put her in the car, opened the door on the other side and jumped out at which time, we have to chase that person. And he was caught put back into the car made another attempt to get out the same door the other door and at that point we had to handcuffs the person from this point on things really began to get crazy.



14:44

My name is Robert Rivera. My nickname is Bertie and I think cross-dressing All of my life. I remember the night of the riots. The police were escorting the queens out of the barn into the paddy wagon and There was just one particularly outrageously beautiful claim stacks and stacks of allegedly style was just tail style hair. And she was asking them not to push her. And they continued to push her and she turned around and she matched the cop with her high heels. She knocked them down. And then she proceeded to frisk him for her the keys to the handcuffs that she got them and she handed herself and pass them to another queen that was behind her.



15:29

That's when all hell broke loose. And then we were, we had to get back into the stone.



15:38

My name is Howard Smith. On the night of the Stonewall riots, I was reporter for The Village Voice locked inside with the police covering from my column. It really did appear at that crowd. Because we could look for little pupils in the plywood windows, we could look out, and we could see that the crowd Well, my guess was within 510 minutes, it was probably several 1000 people to the 2000 Easy, and they were yelling, kill the cops. Police brutality. Let's get them we're not going to take this anymore. Let's do it



16:18



16:55

as a group of persons attempting to uproot one of the parking meters in which the in which they did succeed. And they then use that parking meter too, as a battering ram to break down the door. And they did in fact, open the door. They crashed it in. And at that point was when they began throwing Molotov cocktails into the place. It was a situation that we didn't know how we were going to be able to control



16:57

remember someone selling a Molotov cocktail. I don't know who the person was, but I mean, I saw that and I just said to myself in Spanish I said oh my god the revolution is finally here and started screaming freedom. We're free at last did our it felt really good.



17:16

There were a couple of cops stationed on either side of the door with the pistols like in a combat stance aimed in the door area a couple others were stations and other places behind like a whole nother one behind the bar. All of them with their guns ready. I don't think up to that point I ever had ever seen. Cops that scared.



17:37

Remember, these were pros. Everybody was frightened.



17:41

There's no question about



17:43

it. I was frightened. And I had been in combat situations. There was never any time that I felt more scared than I felt that



18:01

I'm gonna do it was just, you know there was no place to run.



18:06

When the moral squad officers barricaded themselves inside the Stonewall Deputy Inspector pine put in a 1041 call an emergency help request which can only be placed by a high ranking officer. That call was mysteriously canceled, and the telephone inside the Stonewall went dead.

It took nearly 45 minutes for the riot police to get to the Stonewall and rescue the moral squad from the smoldering bar.



18:35

Once the tactical police force showed up. I think that really excited us a little bit.



18:47

My name is Martin boys. In 1969. I was a drug known as misma. I remember on that night, when we saw the writers, all of us directors we linked arms like The Rock heads and sang the song used to say we are the village girls. We were our hands and girls. We were a dog and goodies are above our Nellies and the police went crazy hearing that and they just immediately rushed as we gave one kick and fled.



19:18

My name is Rudy and the night of the Stonewall I was 18 and to tell you the truth. That night I was doing more running and fighting. I remember looking back from 10th street and there wherever the street there was a police I believe on His cop on his on his stomach in his tactical uniform and his helmet and everything else. With a drag queen straddling she was beaten the hell out of him with her shoe. Whether it was a high heel or not, I don't know. But she was beaten the hell out of her sister.



19:55

My name is mama Jean. I'm a lesbian. And I guess you We labeled me as I remember on that night I was in the gay bar women's bar for cookies. We were coming out of the gay bar going toward Eighth Street. And that's when we saw everything happened blasting away people getting beat. Please come from every direction hittin women, as well as men within nightsticks. Gay men running down the street, all over their face. We decided right then and there with the scanner. Now, we didn't think about it, we just jumped in. But here,



20:32

the screen is going completely bananas, you know, jumping and hitting the windshield. And next thing you know, taxi cab was the cause of the entire dough busting. Windows was shattering all over the place. Fires were burning around the place. It was a beaut, it was beautiful. It really was.



20:53

I mean, everyone kept coming at me, hitting me with the nightstick in the back of my legs. I broke loose I went after again. I grabbed this nightstick. My girlfriend went behind him. She was

a straw 70 I wanted to feel the same pain I felt. And I kept on saying to him, I like the pain. Do you like it? Do you like I kept on hitting him and hit when I was angry. I want to kill. At that particular minute I want I wanted



21:19

to do every destructive thing that I could think of at that time to hurt anyone that had hurt us. Years.



21:31

Like just when you see a man protecting his own life. They weren't the Queen's that people call them. They were men fighting for their lives. And I fight alongside that there was



21:43

a lot of heads. But it didn't hurt their feelings they all came back when you could tell that nothing could stop us. But anytime in the future.



22:11

The media covered the riot extensively. The Daily News featured it on its front page. There were reports on all the local television and radio stations. By the next day graffiti calling for gay power had appeared on buildings and sidewalks all over the West Village hastily worked up flyers distributed on street corners touted the night as the Hairpin drop heard round the world. And the next night 1000s of men and women converged on the West Village. They came here back to the Stonewall to see what would happen next. While trash cans were set on fire stones were thrown and sporadic fighting broke out between police and gays, the more than 400 riot police milling around the village ensure that the previous night's violence would not be repeated. But on this night, for the first time, gay couples could be seen walking hand in hand or kissing in the streets just by being there surrounded by reporters and photographers and onlookers. 1000s of men and women were proclaiming to themselves and the rest of the world that they were gay. And the crowds grew and came back the next night. And for one more night the following week. What happened here on those nights helped to usher in a new era, both personally and politically for gay men and lesbians.



23:33

When when Stonewall happened, Bruce and I were still in the closet. And we're where we had been for nearly 40 years. But we realized that this was this was a tremendous thing that had happened at Stonewall and it gave us the feeling that we were not going to be remaining closeted for very much longer. And soon thereafter, we did come out of the closet.



24:06



My name is JR Prusa. In 1969, I was in the convent. I was in the Sisters of Charity. And when Stonewall hit the press it hit me with a bolt of lightning. It was as if I had an incredible release of my own outrage at having to sequester so much of my life. I made white my way down I seem to recall in subsequent nights being down on the you know, kind of just in the periphery looking observer, clearly an observer clearly longing to have that courage to come out and was a matter as I recall was only a matter of weeks. Before I left the convent and started a new life,



25:04

I'm Henry Baird, in 1969. I was in the US Army, a specialist three stationed at long been post near Saigon in Vietnam. I remember I was having lunch in the army mess, reading the Armed Forces news summary of the day. And there was a short paragraph describing a riot, led by homosexuals in Greenwich Village against the police. And my heart was filled with joy. I thought about what I had read frequently, but I had no one to discuss it with. And secretly within myself, I decided that when I came back stateside, if I should survive to come back stateside, I would come out as a gay person. And I did



25:44

for those of us in public Marvel's. After the Stonewall incident, things were completely changed from what they had previously banned. They they suddenly were not submissive anymore, they now suddenly had gained a a new type of courage. And it seemed as if they didn't care anymore about whether they were whether their identities were made known. We were now dealing with human



26:17

beings. My name is Jim four. And I'm in the mid 60s along with Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin as one of the founders of the of the hippie movement. I remember the third night of the riots, there was this meeting called by Madison society at St. John's Church on West on Waverly Place. We went and Randy wicker was running the meeting.



26:38

For 10 years, I've been gone on television, as Randy wicker, the respectable homosexual, dressed in dark suit and tie, explaining to people that most homosexuals look like everybody else and behave like everybody else. And when Stonewall began happening, you had chorus lines and queens kicking their heels up at the police and bonfires burning in the corner, trash baskets, and throwing bricks and stones at the police. I was horrified because this violated everything that we thought of as responsible behavior, that this was not the way respectable citizens behaved.



27:13

Evelyn Hooker was a sociologist, I believe Randy hit introduced her and she got up and she

suggested that we should have a candlelight March that we should turn the other cheek because gay people were really different. We were really nice. And we had to show how nice we were and stop all this riding because people are going to get hurt. I remember I stood up. And I said, No, we are not going back. And people felt the same thing I felt, and we marched out of that room. And that was the night that the Gay Liberation Front was born.



27:54

Today, I live in a senior citizen apartment building. What's different now is that I can be free. I have a daughter who's a senior citizen and my son is 58. They know about my homosexuality. My three grandchildren in the 30s know about their grandmother. I have a great granddaughter who at the age of 10 learned that grandma Jerry was a lesbian, and she thought that was most interesting. And yet, I still don't have the personal courage to not care if these yentas in the building note at Jerry's a lesbian.



28:43

Well, I retired from the police department in 1976 20 years have passed I'm going to be 70 in a few months. I still don't know the answer is I would still like to know the answer. I would like to know whether I was wrong or whether I was right. In ever thinking that there was a difference. And ever thinking that maybe you shouldn't trust a homosexual because something is missing in his personality archives



29:13

of lesbian culture, which surrounds us now and was created four years after Stonewall owes, at least from my part, its creation to that night and the courage that found its voice in the streets. That night in some very deep way. We finally found our place in history. Not as a dirty joke. Not as a doctor's case study. Not as Creek but as a people



29:55

in my way hear from you remembering Stonewall was engineered by spider blue. It was produced by David Isay with a grant from the Pacific a national program fund. I'm Michael shirker.



30:15

Ah, de I'm a 38 year old. I can keep my long hair I can pop by eyebrows and I can work wherever the hell I want. And I'm not going to change Friday. If I change that I feel that I've said I'm losing what 1969 brought into my life and that was to be totally free.



30:46

How can



30:55

the