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PARENTS OF GAYS ORGANIZING



Dr. Benjamin Spock with gay activist Morty Manford and his marching mother, Jeanne Manford.

BY RANDY WICKER

New York, N.Y. Several couples, all parents of gay children, were brought together on Sunday afternoon, March 11th, in a lounge of the United Methodist Church at 13th Street and Seventh Avenue to discuss their mutual experiences and see how they could help other parents handle their relationships with their gay offspring.

Gay activists Barbara Love and Morty Manford organized the meeting and served as informal moderators of the discussion after explaining that they hoped to be but "temporary catalysts" in getting the parents' group going.

A small ad had been placed in the Village Voice and some 1500 leaflets had been distributed to gays at GAA's Firehouse dances and socials, but the turnout for the first meeting was disappointingly small.

One mother wearing a smart grey outfit said she had come because her son, a member of GAA, had literally stopped talking to her because he felt she was reluctant to discuss his homosexuality with her friends and relatives.

"Why should we have to brag about his homosexuality to everyone?" her husband added. "I don't tell people how much I make. I don't tell people details of my sex life. Some things are private."

Mrs. Manford said that her son Morty had been after her for some time to help form a parents' group. As a result of write-ups in the New York Times and a couple of television appearances, she said a few parents had called and some had come to the Manford home seeking advice.

"When I paraded with Dr. Spock last Christopher Street Liberation Day," Mrs. Manford recalled, "people on the sidewalk applauded as we passed. Others came over and kissed me and said, 'I wish my parents were here.'"

"It's very difficult for all parents when they first discover their children are gay,"

she continued. "It takes a little thinking. I think I really got involved when Michael Maye beat up Morty. I was enraged and wrote a letter to the New York Times. A couple of articles and TV appearances resulted."

When asked by another parent if she would have become involved if her son had not been brutally assaulted, Mrs. Manford replied: "Yes. I would have marched just to please him. I loved him as a child. I love him now. I want to see society give him a fair chance. I don't want to see him denied a job or other opportunities because he's gay." "We have to get the message across to the public that being gay is not an abnormality," Dr. Manford added, "just a different way of life."

Another mother explained that her son, now 26, had been married and had recently become gay. She said that her son took offense at her reluctance to take a picture of his wife, to whom he's still married, off the wall. Her son felt she still had hopes he and his wife would reconcile.

"If these two guys want to have a wonderful relationship," she continued, "fine. But I don't feel you have to sit there and make love. You don't have to pose with them. My brother used to do that with women and I told him, 'What are you trying to prove?' He's been married three times already."

"The ones that get mushy, get mushy with the next one too. There's no love there when they get mushy with ten different people a night, when they make love on the floor."

"If you gave a family party," Barbara Love asked, "would you tell your son he could invite his lover?"

"Yes," the mother replied. "But that doesn't mean he has to kiss everyone at the party."

"I'm a heterosexual woman," another woman in her 40's began. "I believe I'm the only heterosexual woman active with

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VILLAGE POLICE RAP WITH GAYS AT MATTACHINE OFFICES

BY RANDY WICKER

New York, N.Y. Patrolman Frank Hollywood, community relations officer of Greenwich Village's Sixth Precinct, and officers Tony Richie and Les Carr came to the offices of New York's Mattachine Society at 59 Christopher Street just off Sheridan Square to answer questions and talk with local gays on a Tuesday evening recently.

Dr. Henry Messer, neurosurgeon and member of Mattachine's Board of Directors, welcomed some 50 gays, all men, who had come to the "Meet a Policeman" forum, then introduced Patrolman Frank Hollywood.

"We were glad to be invited," Patrolman Hollywood, dressed in civilian clothing, commenced. "At our weekly meetings at the station house, we've been meeting some of you in small groups but there we always outnumbered you, were on our home grounds and sat around a small table. Tonight, at Don Goodwin's invitation, we've come to meet with you here on your home grounds to put ourselves on the firing line where you greatly outnumber us and to answer your questions."

Patrolman Hollywood then introduced Patrolmen Tony Richie and Les Carr who were seated next to him. Officers Richie and Carr were in full uniform.

"Our weekly rap sessions, which were

commenced in October, have been very fruitful," Hollywood ventured, then paused a moment. "Maybe that's the wrong word to use," he added. The audience laughed and applauded.

"Anyway, we have all gotten along quite well. Your representatives have handled themselves very well. As a matter of fact, this program will now be expanded so your people will be going over and getting involved in the training of the new incoming officers at the Police Academy."

"This came about through our department and the meetings we've been having with you people at the Sixth Precinct. Don and some of the other members requested we make this suggestion in a general report we filed with Commissioner Ward several weeks ago. We did so and they accepted our suggestion."

The floor was then thrown open for questions. Someone asked about the series of gay murders in the Village, what the police were doing to catch the culprit and why there had been a blackout on publicity and no notification of the gay community about them from the Sixth Precinct.

"That question is out of our jurisdiction," Hollywood responded. "That doesn't have to do with a patrolman's function. The murders are being investigated by specialists, detectives from the homicide squad, and are not being han-

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Don Goodwin is President of the N.Y. Mattachine Society which hosts meetings and dialogues between the gay community and the Village police precincts.

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Gay liberationist Morty Manfred with mother Jeanne, sister Suzie, and father, Dr. Jules Manfred.

GAA. I got involved by listening to Charles Pitts on WBAI on Saturday nights. Friday night we gave out hundreds of pamphlets. So many gays took them and said they were going to bring their parents. I expected to see more parents here.

"At GAA this past Thursday night, a 16-year-old boy came in with tears in his eyes. His grandmother was kicking him out for being gay. Her sons were beating him up saying it would 'knock the gayness out of him.' He was black but he chose to talk with me, a white heterosexual woman. I guess I was some sort of mother figure.

"I think people should proselytize for homosexuality. I've gotten into fights with my family over it. My brother in Toronto won't let me visit his children because he feels I would be a bad influence. Now I know how homosexuals must feel. I've suffered it too."

"My son didn't say anything till he was 18. Now he's 25," another father volunteered. "It hurt me the minute he said it. He thought I'd kick him out but I accepted him. I don't see how anyone could kick out their kid for being gay."

Many of the parents seemed perplexed as to why their gay offspring were so intent on declaring their homosexuality publicly and asked the half-dozen gays present to explain why.

"I always feel compelled to tell people I'm gay," Barbara Love volunteered, "because if I don't, it is always assumed I am straight. If I let that continue, it puts me in a position of lying."

Another 31-year-old man explained that he had never told his parents. Because they kept pressing him about getting married, he had simply left home. The parents all criticized him sharply for not telling his family.

"What do you have to lose?" one man asked. "You're underestimating people's

intelligence, treating them as infants assuming they can't understand it, assigning them to a category of stupidity."

"Why should he tell his family?" the straight GAA woman interjected, "If you won't even tell your friends."

Another mother, who had come alone, told of confronting her 18-year-old son with her suspicion that he was homosexual. At first he denied it. The next day he came in "stoned on marijuana" and she confronted him again. This time he conceded she was right. She said he was "relieved that I had confronted him and the air was cleared between us. He had been telling me too many lies to hide what he was doing."

The group discussed methods of attracting more parents to the next meeting. They agreed that Mrs. Manfred would be temporary coordinator and several volunteered to talk with members of the press doing features on the new group.

Several expressed the feeling that they should take the initiative of calling up other parents of gays if requested to do so. When asked about having gays present during their meetings, all said they'd prefer it and volunteered that they'd "learned a lot from these people." The gays sat quietly during the meeting answering questions when asked by the parents.

It was decided to establish a counseling referral list of parents of gays willing to talk with other parents in person or via phone. The next meeting was scheduled for 8:00 p.m., Tuesday evening, April 3rd, in the lounge of the United Methodist Church, 201 W. 13th St. Mrs. Manfred's phone number is LE 9-2459. Interested parents or gays wishing to have parents of gays talk to their parents can reach her at that number or can contact Barbara Love and Morty Manfred at 691-6431.

KISSING COUPLES SAVE A DOLLAR AT SCREW FILM

New York, N.Y. It Happened in Hollywood, SCREW's first movie, which has enjoyed a successful run at Manhattan's Orisana Theatre, is now moving (weekends only) to Greenwich Village's Bleecker Street Cinema, 144 Bleecker Street (212) OR 4-3210. Prices for single admission will be \$4 and for couples \$7. The publishers of SCREW have devised a unique way of admitting homosexually-inclined couples to the Bleecker Street Cinema. "If a gay couple will simply kiss each other in front of the ticket-seller at

the Bleecker," says SCREW publisher Jim Buckley, who produced Hollywood, "the ticket-seller will give them a couple rate."

Reviews of Hollywood have been laudatory. Playboy called it "the sexual revolution's Sound of Music." Variety said it is a "pornographic version of Laugh In," and Kevin Sanders (Eyewitness News ABC-TV) said, "It's sany! It's crude! It's sexy! It's funny!"

It Happened in Hollywood starts Fridays (5:45 p.m.) and runs through Sundays each weekend.

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died by the Sixth Precinct."

"Commanding Officer Kestley at the Sixth Precinct deserves a lot of credit for sending you people here to talk with us," a tall thin man in his early 40's commenced with a slight stutter, "but I'm afraid I have to ask some questions I didn't want to ask. First, I have to admit I have a hatred of cops. I want to know if, in working with Mattachine, have you had any feelings that homosexuals are human beings?"

"I treat each and every person as I find them," Patrolman Hollywood answered. "I know a lot of gay people I like. I like them as people."

"In this particular precinct, most police are good guys," Hollywood continued after being asked why many police didn't seem to reflect the same attitude. "They're cognizant you're here. I'm not saying 100%. You guys aren't 100% either. Some are pains in the ass."

The thin man, becoming increasingly emotional, said that he had come to the Village one night and had asked a TPF officer "What is the trouble?" during some Village disturbance and that the officer had subsequently "spit in my eye."

"A Weehawken cop also worked over my lover," he charged. "Now, I ask you, if a police officer was beaten up, would you expect me to come to his aid?"

"I would expect any citizen to come to the aid of a police officer in distress," Hollywood responded.

"Well, then why didn't a patrolman arrest Michael Maye?" the man concluded to some applause.

"I don't know the circumstances of that incident," Hollywood commenced. "I only know what I read in the newspapers and third and fourth hand accounts. I wasn't there. I gather Michael Maye was finally arrested, brought to trial and acquitted. I can't talk about something I didn't see and have no real familiarity with."

"I also can't answer your complaint about the TPF officer. I wasn't there. I don't know the circumstances. And I can hardly be held accountable for what an officer did in Weehawken. I can only talk about things I'm familiar with in the Village."

"There are 30,000 members of this force," Patrolman Tony Richie added. "Each one treats people differently. Out of the 30,000, maybe 1,000 dislike homosexuals. If a cop spit at you for no reason, you can go to the Civilian Complaint Review Board."

"That's like asking the fox to mind the chickens," another man protested, alluding to the fact that New York's Civilian Complaint Review Board is an internal committee controlled and staffed by the Police Department. "My friend got arrested for loitering and was shaken down for drugs. The cops assume you are on drugs if you are gay."

"Anyone arrested for anything," Hollywood explained, "is checked for narcotics. It is a standard procedure and is not specially applied to gays."

"I frequent the trucks," another questioner volunteered, "and I object to the hourly visits by your patrol cars flashing lights and chasing everyone. Why can't they just come back behind the trucks to make sure nobody is having their pockets picked or being robbed?"

"I'm one of the guys who chases you," Patrolman Richie replied. "I've been working this area for 12 years. We feel it's better if we put the light on and you leave. You could be locked up for trespassing. Instead, we put on the dome

light and they leave.

"We only go if someone calls us," he continued. "Some of the brass says why not lock everybody up. But if we did so, the judge would probably just put you out again."

"When your representatives meet with different policemen every week," Patrolman Hollywood interjected, "the trucks always come up. I don't think you people need to go down there. It's one of the things that hurts you people. Nobody cares what you do so long as you do it in private, but down there is open."

"A lot of calls come in," Hollywood continued, "making complaints about gay people at the trucks. You should try to find a place more private to do personal things."

"I didn't know you didn't arrest people in the trucks," one member of the audience exclaimed. "If I had known, I would have gone more frequently."

He asked about a supposed rule in the subways which, he believed, used to require two policemen to be present in order to make a sodomy arrest in a toilet, and whether that rule had now been modified because he'd heard of single officers making arrests.

"If you're doing anything you shouldn't do and an officer sees it," Patrolman Richie responded, "regardless whether it's a violation of the health code, whatever, that single policeman can take you in."

"I too had a dislike for cops," a young campy male volunteered, "until I started going out with a Transit policeman." Both officers and audience laughed.

The officers then said that they received training in the Police Academy on how to handle all types of people psychologically, how to approach a situation.

When a young man reported that he had been picked up near the trucks by a heavy-set older man who said he was a policeman, had a car radio, and then attempted to seduce him, Patrolman Hollywood declared: "That guy has been locked up. He wasn't a police officer. We've had problems like that for years, people pretending to be police officers as a guise for making out."

"A group of people from New Jersey had been pulling people into cars for sexual reasons," Don Goodwin interjected. Goodwin said later that the culprits had been apprehended after a member of GAA had witnessed someone being pulled into a car by a bogus policeman and had recorded the vehicle's license number believing the person was in fact being arrested.

"If someone shows you a shield," Hollywood advised, "ask to see their identification card with a picture on it." Patrolman Richie walked up and down the aisle displaying his red police identification card.

"Ask the cop for it," Officer Richie counseled. "If he won't show it, call a policeman. He's a phony." All three policemen were obviously irritated by such acts of impersonation.

Patrolman Hollywood ventured that the Police Department was "more honest today than it's ever been" and the best he'd seen it in the 20 years he'd served as an officer. "However," he allowed, "there'll always be a few guys in any large group who will do things they shouldn't."

"This election year we may get a new mayor, a new City Council, a new Police Commissioner," one questioner cried. "If we get a new mayor, will a lot of the ground we've gained be lost?"

"I don't think so," Patrolman Holly-

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