THE TRIAL OF ROBERT BONIN

At any rate, in June 1978, Chief Justice Robert M. Bonin was tried on nine counts of judicial misconduct before five justices of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC). There are actually seven justices on that bench, but the Chief Justice was in the hospital and the most liberal one disqualified himself because he was a personal friend of Bonin.

This trial was completely without precedent in Massachusetts history. The main witness against Bonin was Francis Xavier Orfanello, his chief assistant. Orfanello is slow-witted and always looking around for cues. He held his cushy job by appointment of Walter McLaughlin, to whom he remained intensely loyal. Orfanello testified that McLaughlin had promised to make him a judge on the Superior Court someday.

Orfanello accused Bonin of lying and then covering up his knowledge that he was contributing to the defense of kiddie rapists. He cried on the stand. Snivelling, he asked forgiveness because he said he was “a family man.” When asked to whom he felt loyalty, he stated to “McLaughlin and God,” in that order.

Two members of the B/BC testified. The Vidal tape was played. The SJC took the case and withdrew for deliberations.

In a matter of days, the justices found Bonin guilty of 3 counts of misconduct. Not the lying or the covering up, but they said he was wrong to take two secretaries with him from the Attorney General’s office. As to his presence at the Vidal speech, they said it gave the “appearance of impropriety” (emphasis added).
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

The SJC had no power to remove Bonin from the bench. They could only censure him or disbar him. They censured. But this is nothing new. In the early '70s, Superior Court Judge Vincent Brogna was censured after he admitted to having been approached by another judge (who was later removed from the bench and disbarred) to fix a sentence for some friends. Brogna still sits on the Superior Court today. But, of course, as all Americans know, sentence-fixing and embezzlement are much more robust and "normal" crimes than sitting in a church filled with gay activists and their supporters listening to the heresies of Gore Vidal.

Calls for Bonin's ouster snowballed. He vowed to stay on. He could be removed by impeachment and conviction or by a shortcut method known as The Bill of Address.

Bill of Address is an archaic appendage to Mass. law whereby a judge can be removed as with impeachment, but Bill of Address does not permit the accused the chance to defend himself at a trial in the Senate. He is whisked away by mere majority vote of legislators.

A Bill of Address was introduced into the House of Representatives and zipped through. Even Elaine Noble voted in favor of Bonin's removal, further alienating the gay community. (When Noble's name had been mentioned at the Arlington Street Church lecture, there were hearty boos from all parts of the house.)

Then the Senate passed it. State Senator Alan Sisitsky — a leading proponent of court reform — told the press that if Bonin were driven from office simply because of the appearance of impropriety, Massachusetts would become the laughingstock of the nation.

No sooner said than done.

Before the Bill of Address reached the Governor's desk for his signature, Bonin resigned. At his resignation he reiterated the statement he had made on the stand in his own defense. "I believe it was proper and appropriate for me to attend a lecture which was sponsored by a gay rights organization. I see no objection to a judge attending a lecture which is sponsored by a sexual minority or anyone else who espouses civil liberties. In fact, I think it is an
obligation for a judge to hear the viewpoint of sexual, racial and
other minorities.” He accused his assailants of exploiting homo-
phobia and anti-semitism to gain his removal.

Bonin’s enemies gloated. The new Chief Justice turned out to
be a former law partner of Robert Meserve, Bonin’s prosecutor. He
was a member-in-good-standing with the Irish pols. Fittingly, his
name is Lynch.

Meserve’s friends arranged for him to receive a special
commendation for extraordinary service at a 1979 lawyers’ conven-
tion in Texas. (He was once prez of a bar group.) There were lots of
chops filled with happy slobber over Bonin’s fall.

And Francis Xavier Orfanello? Having been proven a liar in
court, he continued on in his job, gossiping with judges and
reporting all to Walter McLaughlin. He’s still awaiting the day
when his treachery will be rewarded by the machine and he will
assume the bench in his draping black robes, dispensing Justice to
the Little People, wanting only one significant detail — The
Kangaroos!

Meanwhile, back to getting the fags.
SUMMER RECESS

By mid-summer, none of the defendants in the cases had come to trial. Two major cover stories appeared in *The Real Paper* about boy-love. The first was about the street hustling scene and the difficult life of gay street hustlers. The second was a profile of Edmund Meade and the background on his case. Both were remarkably lucid and important pieces. Here, for the first time outside the gay press, was an effort to present the lives of gay people as victims of established power. This was new.

Noted German filmmaker Rosa von Praunheim, in the U.S. working on his documentary about the American gay movement, *An Army of Lovers: The Revolt of The Perverts*, came to Boston and did extensive filming with some of the Revere defendants, with Boston/Boise members, at the Bonin trial, with street hustlers, etc.

German film director Rosa von Praunheim shoots during B/BC meeting as well as elsewhere for his documentary AN ARMY OF LOVERS
THE D.A.'S RACE

Meanwhile, Garrett Byrne, aged 80, was working hard to get reelected. His opposition comprised two men. One was Boston City Councilor Chris Iannella, a likeable middle-of-the-road Italo-American. Iannella is sensible, intelligent and a constant seeker of higher office. There is a reluctance on the part of Boston voters to promote any councilor to bigger jobs. (One exception was Louise Day Hicks. When Mrs. Hicks was elected — for one term — to the U.S. House of Representatives, it was said she would use the U.S. Congress, even the White House, as a mere stepping stone to The Mayor's office at City Hall. Her dream. Ironically, the provinciality of the Boston Irish knows no bounds.)

The other challenger was Newman Flanagan.

Mr. Flanagan had been an assistant D.A. under Garrett Byrne for 16 years. As it happened, he resigned from the D.A.'s office the day before the "sex ring" indictments were made public. We thought there might be a connexion; there wasn't. His campaign slogan was: "Newman Flanagan — A Man of Convictions."

Flanagan, an attractive Irish-American with a flamboyant personal style, is most notorious for his prosecution of Dr. Kenneth Edelin, a black gynecologist whom Byrne accused of "manslaughter upon a fetus" while Edelin performed a legal abortion upon a black teenaged girl at Boston City Hospital. Edelin's trial took place during the most racially tense period in the Boston school desegregation crisis. Flanagan also prosecuted Ella Ellison, a black woman who had been framed in a robbery get-away in
50 persons picketed a fundraiser for Garrett Byrne's re-election at Quincy Market. Former chief justice Walter McLaughlin, head of Byrne's fundraising, sent a request to every lawyer who practiced in Suffolk County suggesting a $50 'contribution.'

which a cop was killed. Ellison's conviction was later reversed (as was Edelin's) and in Ellison's case, the Supreme Judicial Court reprimanded Flanagan for his deliberate withholding of exculpatory evidence from the defense. For more on Newman Flanagan, you can read William Nolen's 1978 book, The Baby In The Bottle, a candid but pro-Catholic account of the Edelin trial.

Involved in the defense of both Edelin and Ellison, as well as counsel for one of the Revere defendants, was Attorney William Homans, noted Boston civil liberties lawyer. Yet Homans endorsed Newman Flanagan for the D.A.'s job and it is thought that Homans' widely-publicized endorsement of Flanagan made him appear to be the candidate for progressive reform. Since Flanagan had never run for public office before, he seemed a fresh face. In fact, Flanagan did not disassociate himself from Garrett Byrne's practices. His only real criticism of Byrne was that the man was too old. When queried by the Boston/Boise Committee, Flanagan did state that he thought that the Hotline had been an inappropriate police procedure — a safe enough position to take 8 months after the damn thing had been discontinued.

Flanagan subsequently won the primary vote, with the aid of the police union and the Catholic Knights of Columbus. In a one-
party town like Boston, a primary win is tantamount to election. Flanagan met with several B/BC members after his election. He let us know how satisfied he was with his triumph at the polls. "I'm the best thing to happen to Suffolk County in 50 years!" he told us three times. He didn't list for us the other possibilities.

One of the discarded possibilities was another term for Garrett Byrne, even though the D.A. waged a hard campaign. His election propaganda included a 12-page tabloid paper featuring, in Easy-To-Read text, some of Byrne's memorable "clean-ups." One of these was his constant war against the Combat Zone (Boston's tatty Adult Entertainment District). Byrne also highlighted his successful attack against child molesting bus-drivers and other perverts. While appearing on a TV show, Byrne personally threatened Tom Reeves, co-chair of the B/BC. Byrne promised he'd continue harassing homosexuals. I suspect the old goat had his little heart broken when he wasn't returned to office to quietly die someday at his desk while in the midst of one of his numerous naps. R.I.P. Mr. D.A.

Chris Iannella, on the other hand, issued a remarkable statement of support — given the D.A.'s job is a nasty one. Iannella said that as D.A. he would be sensitive to the needs of various and diverse communities in Suffolk County and would never exploit popular prejudice against any minority for political gain. When you live in an Inquisition-like climate, any step toward enlightenment seems just an enormous leap. Iannella lost at the polls.
MRS. GREEN (FINALLY) MAKES THE SCENE

While gay activists were busy organizing voters for the primary, news came that the lovely Anita Bryant was on her way to Boston, a place no one thought she'd dare set foot.

Bryant was invited to Boston to sing at a "Pro-Life, Pro-Family" Rally to raise much-needed funds for the Senatorial campaign of Howard Phillips who was running in the 5-person Democratic Party primary. His opponents included Kathleen Sullivan Alioto (a former school committee member, now married to former San Francisco Mayor Joe Alioto, predecessor to George Moscone), Rep. Elaine Noble, and the ultimate winner, Congressman Paul Tsongas.

Some of you might remember Howie Phillips. His career runs like a raw scratch across the politics of the past 20 years. He began as a Young Republican. He was a loyal Nixon backer. (Curiously, his face even bears a resemblance to the Watergate President.) After Nixon's 1972 landslide reelection, Nixon appointed Phillips to dismantle the social-justice Office of Economic Opportunity, which Phillips proceeded to do until Congress reconvened and put a quick stop to him. Phillips has cultivated a reputation as one of the plump darlings of the New Right.

In this Senate campaign, Phillips was funded by Richard Viguerie of Falls Church, Virginia, the "Money Bags" of the new reaction. Phillips slinked back to Massachusetts, changed parties and threw his hat in the ring. Liberal black Senator Ed Brooke, the incumbent, was already being challenged in the Republican Party
primary by another Vigerie-New-Right creature, race-baiting talk-
show host Avi Nelson.

Anita Bryant Green, taking her first dip into exercising her
political clout, accepted Phillips’s invitation. She was booked, for a
public appearance 1 September 1978, into the vast Hynes War
Memorial Auditorium at the Prudential Tower (which used to be
known on the gay-vine as “Boston’s Erection”). The hall seats
5000. The price to hear Bryant was $10. Bring oranges. Or perhaps
rotten vegetables.

In response to the provocation of Howard Phillips, feminist
women and gay men organized the ad hoc September One
Coalition. With only a week to organize prior to Bryant’s
appearance, there was great pressure to get things done quickly. We
agreed to demonstrate in front of Hynes Auditorium while Anita
chirped and follow that with a rally in nearby Copley Square.

Rep. Elaine Noble came to the organizational meeting of the
Coalition. She volunteered to obtain from the city the various
permits for the rally and demo. Something she never did.

A day after the community mass meeting, the split between
“Good Gays” and “Bad Gays” surfaced. Some members of the
conservative Gay Business Association, in league with Elaine
Noble, were urging gay men and women to stay away from the
demonstration. Elaine insisted there would be violence.

Conservative gay religion columnist Brian McNaught cir-
culated a petition he had written reflecting the Good Gay
sentiment. In this document (see appendix), he red-baited the
September One Coalition, said it was a tool of the radicals and was
luring gay people to certain violence against them.

In fact, these self-proclaimed Good Gays were completely out
of touch with popular feelings in the community — as they often
are. The organizers of the September One Coalition were aware of
the deep anger against Bryant and Phillips. We were getting calls
from all over New England pledging busloads of people for the
demo. It was the Coalition’s responsibility to provide a safe and
effective means for gay men and lesbians to demonstrate their
opposition to the duo of Bryant & Phillips. We met with city
THE YEAR OF THE WITCHHUNT

officials and made all necessary arrangements.

Elaine Noble took her strategy one step further. She held a
news conference on radio and TV. She urged people to stay away
from the rally. She said we should "keep a sense of humor." She
lashed out at the September One Coalition for failing to obtain
permits for the march and rally — without mentioning that she
herself had promised to get them for us!

Meanwhile Candidate Phillips took to the airwaves to
announce that the South Boston Marshalls — whom the Boston
Police have publicly labelled the most violent group in the city —
would provide "security" for Mrs. Green on her brief visit. The
South Boston Marshalls are an all-white terrorist group of Roman
Catholics from Southie who became notorious during the school
desegregation crisis by attacking blacks and organizing gangs of
white teens to stone buses and beat up black people.
BRYANT LAYS AN EGG

It so happened that Anita’s concert sold only 78 tickets — mostly to homosexuals who intended to disrupt the songfest. Phillips, unable to put up the stiff surety for the hall, had to cancel. He blamed feminists and faggots for low ticket sales. Holding up an emergency issue of the *Gay Community News* (it featured a full-page ad: “Anita Bryant — Wanted for Crimes Against Humanity”), Phillips told the press that “militant homosexuals” were out buying “high-power rifles” to gun down him and La Bryant.

Bryant arrived in town and held a news confab. Right in the middle of it, Phillips told everyone to leave; he blamed this on “militant gays” who, he said, had just phoned in a bomb threat. Bryant then appeared at a small cocktail party for 25 people and sang the “Battle Hymn of the Republic.” Then she sped away. It was a great victory for the September One Coalition. Anita had to cancel, one of the few times she has been forced to do so. Instead of raising money, Phillips was left with a stiff tab for Bryant’s visit and was roundly condemned by all. His — like Anita’s — are desperation politics, stock-in-trade of the “new” Right.

But the Phillips goons had their revenge. On Sunday, 3 September 1978, in the afternoon, the metal security bars to the windows of the offices shared by the *Gay Community News* and *Fag Rag* were smashed in. Both offices were ransacked and vandalized. Inside information leaked to members of the September One Coalition (from an alienated Phillips worker)
WANTED
For Crimes Against Humanity

Anita Bryant
ON FRIDAY, SEPT. 1ST
ANITA BRYANT IS BRINGING HER ACT TO BOSTON
JOIN US IN SHOWING HER THAT WHAT
SHE STANDS FOR IS NOT WELCOME HERE

GATHER
AT 6:00 p.m.
ON COPLEY SQUARE

CELEBRATE
AFTER THE DEMO —
DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED

DEMONSTRATE
AT 7:00 p.m.
AT HYNE'S AUDITORIUM
PRUDENTIAL CENTER

— ORGANIZED BY THE SEPTEMBER ONE COALITION —
200 PEOPLE FROM THE GAY & WOMEN'S COMMUNITIES

This ad appeared in a special issue of the GAY COMMUNITY NEWS. Howie Phillips waved this in front of the press and spread lies that "militant" gays were out purchasing "high-power rifles" to off him and Anita. No such luck.
indicated the South Boston Marshalls were the malefactors. Terror is their metier. As a matter of record, with all the talk about violence surrounding Bryant's visit, the only actual violence that occurred was the trashing of the gay press.

The September One Coalition went ahead with its own rally, even after Phillips cancelled his show. 2000 people showed up at dusk. Robin Tyler, the extraordinary entertainer, flew in from Provincetown and gave a rousing performance. While Robin was in the middle of her act, Anita and her party came to the window of their hotel room, which overlooked Copley Square. Tyler, seeing them, pointed at Mrs. Green and shouted: "Anita, you are to Christianity what paint-by-numbers is to art!" The crowd screamed. Bryant, looking like a camp Marie Antoinette, hastily withdrew from view, perhaps worried over the fate of her own leathery neck.

This is how the GAY COMMUNITY NEWS and FAG RAG offices looked after supporters of Phillips and Bryant vandalized and ransacked them. With all the blather about gays stirring up violence, the only target of violence that weekend was the gay press.
Former Chief Justice Robert Bonin and Angela Bonin had, the day before, announced their support for the Rally. They volunteered to speak. Angela Bonin gave a moving history of oppression in Massachusetts and America, citing Bryant as the most recent in a long line of bigots. The ex-Chief Justice criticized both Howard Phillips and Elaine Noble for offering their tacky little lectures to the gay community about First Amendment protections. Bonin also ridiculed the notion of "counseling" homosexuals to turn them straight.

Elaine Noble was nowhere to be seen. Noble ended 1978 badly alienated from the gay community, the result of her own actions. She remained popular, however, with women and gay men, in other parts of the state and nation. Perhaps because they didn't know.

On 19 September 1978, primary day in Massachusetts, liberal
governor Mike Dukakis was defeated by right-wing challenger Ed King. King ran on a platform of lower taxes, no abortions and reinstating the death penalty. King then went on to win the general election. Howard Phillips came in 4th in a 5-way race for the Democratic nomination for Senator. Noble came in last. And Newman Flanagan triumphed in the D.A.’s race.

From the viewpoint of a gay activist, it looked like four more years of the same, unless the powers-that-be have learned that, at least now, they daren’t attack in their usual fashion. If they do, we have demonstrated that we will unleash an angry and quickly-mobilized response. What is now clear — at least in Boston — is that there is no gay person whose rights won’t be supported by mass action, be they accused of “child molesting,” “public sex,” or, even from within our community, “radicalism.” We have shown that by organizing within the gay community alone, and not relying on the comforting and false promises of only-too-hostile legislators, foundations, priests and pols, we can stop a witchhunt, make it rebound upon those who initiated it, and use this as one more way to politicize gay men and women.

All this is important and good.

What is terrible and something I can never forget is the price of it all.
THE TRIAL OF DR. ALLEN

THE MOST EXPENSIVE BLOW JOBS
IN THE COMMONWEALTH
Since it is all too rare that a gay man accused of sex with a minor actually comes to public trial, I thought it was important to include the following section, an account of the trial of Dr. Donald Allen. Sensational charges, as those sprayed by D.A. Garrett Byrne in his “Revere Sex Ring,” rarely stand up to examination as serious concerns of the state and its citizens. Shady dealers, like the D.A., can't stand public inspection of their handiwork. Shoddy goods done with malice become all too visible. The trial of Dr. Allen demonstrates this clearly. It was a rape trial with full-blown billing. Despite some of the odd judgements made by the prosecution and defense alike, it was the state that was ultimately exposed as the assailant.
Dr. Donald Allen
THE TRIAL OF DR. ALLEN

It was fitting that the trial of Dr. Donald Allen (charged on
four counts of blowing a 15-year-old male hustler) should have
begun the same day as Boston's official "Brink's Week," which
was 5 days of hoopla puffing the biggest heist this town has ever
seen.*

The trial of Dr. Allen was another slapstick heist. Using the
estimates of the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the cost
to the taxpayers of Massachusetts was around $250,000 for this
four-week affair.

Dr. Donald Allen, a 51-year-old medical professional (his
specialties were blood diseases in children and, later, psychiatry),
was one of the men indicted in December 1977 as part of District
Attorney Garrett Byrne's sensational "Revere Sex Ring."

Well, this "Sex Ring" turned out to be non-existent. The D.A.

*The Brink's Job, a film by William Friedkin, was lensed in Boston with much
publicity and media hype. Friedkin's next film was the anti-gay Cruising, which
triggered demonstrations all across the country, including the largest one right there
in Boston.
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

had been swept from office on primary day. And of the 24 men indicted, only 20 were ever arrested. Eighteen of them were demanding open trials. One pleaded guilty to blowing boy scouts in Charlestown. The other one, Arthur Preston ‘‘Pres’’ Clarridge, had made a deal with Byrne’s office to snitch on the others. Garrett Byrne, I’m sure, thought they’d all roll over quietly and be sent away, as had been past practise. But this time, things went differently. There’d been a change in the weather.

The witchhunt launched by the D.A. wouldn’t go away, even long after it was clear that he and his boys wished it would. The Revere cases, politicized by the work of the Boston/Boise Committee, were a focal point to create a resistance by a traditionally victimized class, i.e., male homosexuals. Robert Bonin lost his job as Chief Justice of the Superior Court for showing interest in the civil liberties aspect of this issue.

After a year of postponements, sought by D.A. and defense alike, Judge Joseph Ford of the Superior Court decided that there was no reason for further delay. He ordered the trial begun at once. This was Monday, 27 November 1978.* Garrett Byrne’s 26-year-tenure of arrogance, malfeasance and favoritism was to come to an end with a seamy homosex trial. Good riddance. The farce was under way.

I say ‘‘farce’’ and this is not exact. As an observer to most of the proceedings, I decided that Dr. Allen’s trial had three composite parts: it was 25% serious political trial (it would have been all political trial had it not been for the defense attorney’s strange and pandering strategy), 25% Republic Studios 1940s B meller, and 50% commedia dell’arte.

---

*The same day, across the continent, Dan White, an Irish-American ex-cop, in more homophobic violence, murdered San Francisco Mayor George Moscone and gay Supervisor Harvey Milk.
Dramatis Personae

Justice Joseph Ford: A veteran justice of the Superior Court. Fiftyish, balding, Mr. Ford seemed to be nodding off during parts of this trial. And who could blame him? A great one for poking around in the law books while testimony was heard. As Cole Porter wrote: “Brush up your Shakespeare.” He told the Court: “They’re changing the law so fast these days, I can’t keep up with it!” And it’s true! Mr. Ford, while referring to the apartment of Richard Peluso as a “male house of prostitution” — a sobriquet it got from the defense attorney and kept throughout the trial — actually said a “male house of prosecution,” perhaps thinking not of the “sex ring” but of the “indictment ring” of Garrett Byrne’s gang.

Assistant D.A. Thomas Peisch: Had this trial been conducted in the anticipated manner (the D.A. attacking homosexual acts, the defense defending them), Tom Peisch would have played the heavy. He is far from the type. Originally from Vermont, Peisch has the up-country equivalent of the face of an archangel, perhaps just before the fall. Thin, red-haired, the Asst. D.A. is youthful, wiry and intense. Peisch was the youngest member of Mr. Byrne’s federally-funded Suffolk County Investigations and Prosecutions Project (SCIPP), a/k/a the “Get Revere Squad” since so much of their energy was spent indicting people in that city. With the coming of the new D.A., Mr. Peisch has left service to the Commonwealth and has joined the law firm of Burns & Levinson.*

*Mr. Thomas Burns, a senior partner of the firm, is, by coincidence, younger brother of the late gay novelist John Horne Burns. Small world.
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

Lawrence O'Donnell: Dr. Allen's defense attorney. Mr. O'Donnell is strictly from Central Casting, part Ernest Borgnine, part Lionel Stander, but all bark. He has the face any aficionado of Irish Heritage could love. His manner, alternating between rudeness and intimacy, in combo with his booming voice, would make him as much an appropriate fixture in a barroom as in a courtroom. I have no doubt that Mr. O'Donnell is a highly skilled and successful criminal lawyer. But his theatrics, as well as the logic of his strategy, left me thinking that perhaps Mr. O'Donnell was trapped in a movie left over from the era of the Hays Office.

Dr. Donald Allen: Defendant. Nice looking but a cold fish. No passion here. The press photos made him seem more attractive than in person. Black, straight hair. (One courtroom benchwarmer whispered: "Obviously a dye job.") With so many "personalities" in the courtroom, Allen seemed a bit of a wallflower. It was easy to forget he was there at all, as though these crazy proceedings were for themselves and had nothing to do with sober, serious people. When several members of the Boston/Boise Committee introduced themselves to Allen at the end of a day of jury selection, he stiffened noticeably and flashed cues that he wanted nothing to do with us. After we got a smell of his defense, it became real clear why.

The Families: In this legal spectacle, in which deviancy was on trial, there was much show of heterosexual normalcy through breeding capacities. Mr. O'Donnell had his three sons, all lawyers, in constant attendance. Dr. Allen's own gorgeous and healthy children (5 of them) faithfully filled the front pew day after day. Allen's ex-wife and her current spouse were also there. As was Allen's current (and obligatory) "female companion," another icy creature. These folks had no lines. They were merely decor, and as such were an important visual backdrop to the defense drama, providing the obvious (and they hoped, endearing) contrast between the defense's numerous Healthy, Happy Heterosexuals and the Commonwealth's Wretched, Degenerate Homosexuals (all of them state's witnesses).

The Jurors: It was a jury largely of Mr. O'Donnell's choosing.
Fourteen women and two men. Three women were black. One male was Protestant (Lutheran). All the white females (11) were local Roman Catholics. At the order of Judge Ford, the jury was sequestered. Toward the end of the four-week trial, I noticed some of the jurors were putting on the pounds — no exercise and rich hotel food. It took a week to get this panel of 16. Over 90 prospective jurors were passed through to get this number, and an extensive voir dire (comprising over 30 questions) was asked to those who hadn't been excused for other reasons. Among those given voir dire — one question asked religious affiliation — there were no Jews, Unitarians, free-thinkers, agnostics or atheists. It was Mr. O'Donnell's strategy to go after what he perceived to be a conventionally-minded jury, with lots of women who might be impressed by Dr. Allen's background, family and credentials. As the trial began, I thought it was somewhat odd to see 12 middle-aged women sitting in the jury box (the alternates were off to the far side) as the final arbiters on what was legally a matter of statutory rape but really came down to what men do between themselves sexually.

Court Officers: My favorite was the guy who, upon hearing for the umpteenth time the reading of the indictments ("said defendant did knowingly take into his mouth the penis of a 15-year-old") looked at the spectators and made jerk-off motions into his mouth. Less humorous was the incident involving Clover Ceres. Clover, a Gay Rag staffer and a Boston/Boise activist, attended the trial one day wearing one of his usual rubbery schmatahs. While watching the proceedings from the front row, Clover, a great believer in the powers of the Mother Goddess, decided to "send some energy" to the witness — the 17-year-old ex-hustler who was the alleged victim of Dr. Allen's blow jobs. Judge Ford, seeing Clover, hands cupped, mouthing incantations, freaked out. "What's that person doing? I won't have that in my courtroom! Remove him at once!" Three burly Court Officers pounced on Clover and literally lifted him from his seat. Clover screamed: "You can kill me but I'll come back in another life and get you!" They took him into a lock-up room next to the court and roughed
him up. One *Fag Rag* wag suspected that Clover had mis-aimed the energy and had hit the Judge.

**The People's Chorus:** These were the Courthouse Ghouls, mostly old people for whom Courtroom Drama is Real-Life TV. They float through the Courthouse like bad air and settle wherever there's action. I recognized some of the sour-faced ones from the Bonin trial. A few, particularly the old men in their loud shirts, gaudy ties and racetrack hats from the '40s, were Madame Defarge-types, authoritarian and ready to see Dr. Allen burnt at the stake. Many were personal friends of the D.A. One told me — this during "Brink's Week" — that he recalled the actual Brink's robbery trial back in the late '50s. He said that was the last case D.A. Byrne prosecuted in person. The Bunker Hill Beatings trial* was in progress in another courtroom on the same floor, and the Ghouls slinked to and fro.

**Mrs. Robert Green:** Anita Bryant was not there in person but the *odour* of her homophobic self-righteousness hung over the trial like a smog. I was reminded of Southern politics where, until quite recently, the way to win election was to "out-nigger" your opponent. The analogy here was to "out-queer" the opposition. O'Donnell got full measure out of this tactic, Peisch less so because, even though he and the Commonwealth *deplored* the sex acts alleged and all those involved in them, he was asking the jurors to believe his "perverts." It was clear at the start of the trial that no matter which side "won," hypocrisy would be the real victor and little would change as a result.

---

*The Bunker Hill Beatings case: 3 white adult males were on trial for attacking with bats and clubs a group of black Philadelphia school children in broad daylight as they boarded their bus after visiting the historic Bunker Hill Monument in Charlestown. This was just another — though admittedly severe — incident which has given Boston the reputation as the most violently racist city in the U.S. All three of the accused were acquitted.*
O'DONNELL v. PEISCH

Tom Peisch said that the Commonwealth would prove that on four separate occasions, Dr. Donald Allen went to the apartment of Richard Peluso at 242 Mountain Avenue and, while there, did go with Gary into the bedroom and sucked the boy's cock for which he paid Peluso. Any sex with any 15-year-old in Massachusetts, whether it is forced or consensual, is by law "rape and abuse upon a child" and is a felony in this state and can bring up to life in prison.

In his opening statement, O'Donnell countered that Dr. Allen had only gone to the Peluso apartment twice. That was to interview Gary as part of his research on male hustlers. He was writing a paper! Well, my dear, I nearly screamed when I heard this! Ever since my days in the Boston University Student Homophile League (circa 1970), I have known that one of the favorite lines used by those who are closeted and/or are just coming out but who feel they still need a "cover" to make "respectable" their going to gay meetings, bars, discos, porno shows, etc., is this chestnut: "O, I'm just doing research for a sociology paper on deviancy." It's been an in-gay joke for years!* Yet here was Mr. O'Donnell pulling this very same number in this Superior Court Show Trial! Would it wash with the jurors?

*In late 1977, when the gay porno Cinema Follies burned down in Washington, D.C., killing 8 men, family and friends of the deceased gave interviews explaining why the men they knew might be in such a place. A minister was said to have been there saving lost souls. Another man, a writer, was said by a colleague to be "doing research" for a book on "gay lifestyles." Or, as Anita Bryant called them, "gay deathstyles."
THE BOSTON SEX SCANDAL

The first order of business was busing the jurors out to 242 Mountain Avenue to see the vacant former apartment of Richard Peluso. This was at the request of the defense. From this tacky, 5-room ordinary apartment, Peluso was supposed to be operating a fabulous “international boy-sex-for-hire ring,” or so said the D.A. It wasn’t much of a sight to see; your typical unit in a double triple-decker. Back in the courtroom, O’Donnell pinned up on the wall a huge floorplan to Peluso’s apartment, indicating where the alleged blow jobs had occurred. This was real Perry Mason stuff.

Peisch called the state’s first witness — Richard Peluso. Now 39, and serving a day-to-life sentence as a “sexually dangerous person” at the Treatment Unit at M.C.I.-Bridgewater, Mr. Peluso was cool and business-like and, I suspected, on medication.*

Peluso testified that he remembered “Don” being brought to his apartment by Arthur “Pres” Clarridge on several occasions. While there, Don went with Gary into the bedroom and, before departing, left money in a bureau drawer, tucked down under some clothes. (Peluso’s prices? $20 for sodomy. $10 to suck cock. Peluso got half, the boy the other half.)

The important point that no one brought out (for obvious reasons), but essential to debunking the silliness about this being any kind of serious prostitution set-up, was that this so-called Male House of Prostitution was run on The Honor System! Guys left the appropriate amount tucked in the underwear and Peluso never made a fuss. An unconventional way to run a racket if you insist Peluso was a “Master Male Pimp,” as O’Donnell maintained.

Richard Peluso (‘‘Richie’’ to the boys) was a credible witness and, all in all, a rather average and likeable man. Not at all the ogre the press, police and attorneys had made him out to be. He admitted that in his 12 years at the Revere address, he’d probably had sex with up to 200 adolescent males, perhaps fewer. So who’s counting? Even 200 is not that many, an average of about 1.5 sex

* In an interview with me a year later at Bridgewater, Peluso confirmed that on his first day of testimony he had been given drugs. He refused further druggings on the remaining 2 days of his testimony.
contacts a month, a low figure when you consider how many boys were *dropping in on him* on a regular basis for sex and even, like Gary, bringing younger brothers along.

For three days, Richie Peluso sat in the witness box, dressed in the same light blue suit. And for most of those three days, O'Donnell tried, in a vicious and pandering way, to discredit not only Peluso's testimony but to defame him as a person, to slander homosexuals as a class and to smear anyone who would defend the right to sexual privacy of men and boys. If you did not think sex between a man and an adolescent boy was out of the ordinary, then there'd be nothing to get hopped-up about in the matter of Richard Peluso. His misfortune was, apparently, that he lived in Massachusetts instead of, say, Morocco.

O'Donnell's intention was to portray Peluso to the jurors as a satanic Jim Jones-like programmer* who "turned boys against the Creator," taught them to have sex with men, and then exploited them.

The lie was put to O'Donnell's dramatic cross-examination by Peluso himself, who never allowed himself to rise to O'Donnell's baiting.

"Where did you 'nail' little Jimmy ________ the first time?" Jimmy was the teenager named in the three indictments to which Peluso had pleaded guilty, getting consecutive 15-to-25-year sentences as well as day-to-life.

"Frank Damiano [the school bus driver] brought him over."

"You take boys through a period of indoctrination, don't you?"

"Yes, I do, sometimes."

"A kid who is God-created to love women!"

"Jimmy wanted it."

"You're telling me Jimmy ________ seduced you?"

---

*The Reverend Jim Jones was leader of the Peoples Temple cult. After cult thugs murdered Rep. Leo Ryan in Jonestown, Guyana, Jones ordered cult members to drink a cyanide potion. Over 900 persons died. This mass suicide-murder had taken place days before this trial began and was very much in the press and on people's minds.*
"Yes."

"How?"

"He asked Frank Damiano if he could have sex with me."

O’Donnell suggested that Peluso fed Dr. Allen’s name to the police in order to “cover-up for the big names” who had been to his place to score with boys. Peluso denied this but did acknowledge that he did not tell all the names to the police.

Mr. O’Donnell’s conduct was highly improper during his scream-filled cross-examination. He often turned to the jury and said things like: “slimy pervert,” “you’re disgusting,” and on one occasion he asked for a recess “because I’m going to throw up!”

Mr. Peluso said he thought he was “a good friend to the boys,” something neither Peisch nor O’Donnell could accept though in fact a statement supported by one of the teenagers who later took the stand.

It was only after Peluso’s meeting “Pres” Clarridge in 1974 that things changed around 242 Mountain Avenue. Clarridge started paying Peluso for the sex he was having with the boys at Peluso’s apt. Peluso didn’t demur — he was always borderline broke what with beer, food, fishing equipment, air hockey and grass for the boys. And it was “Pres” Clarridge who began bringing other paying men to the apartment at 242 Mountain Ave.

After his three days on the stand, Peluso seemed to be a sad and sympathetic man who had been manipulated by just about everyone: by the boys he entertained (from whom he at least got some fleeting affection); by Clarridge who got him into something way over his head; by the police who whisked him off to jail and put the pressure (life in Bridgewater) on him to name names; and by the D.A. who coached him rigorously for this testimony, lest there by hell to pay. Dr. Allen had his family and his high-power State Street lawyer for support and concern no matter what happened to him. Who was around to help Richard Peluso?

With all the official heat on him, Peluso was in no position to defend boy-love and his past behavior. Though it was clear he thought he had done nothing wrong, he had to say otherwise. One of the first acts of contrition required to begin to get out of the
“Sexually Dangerous Person” category is to admit you are an SDP. If you refuse, you are a lifer at Bridgewater. Hence, when O’Donnell asked Peluso if he was a “master male pimp,” “perversion,” etc. Peluso could not deny it without jeopardizing early release from Bridgewater. Local headlines read: “Admitted Procuer . . .,” “Self-Confessed Master Male Pimp . . .” etc.

O’Donnell closed his cross-examination of Peluso with injunctions to the stern Christian Deity.

“Do you have some understanding of god?”
“Yes, I do.”
“Do you think of Adam and Eve?”
“Yes.”
“Your whole life is made to interfere with God’s way!”
“Objection!” by Peisch. Sustained.

And later: “Do you see anything wrong with your way of life before your arrest?”
“Yes sir, I did.”
“Thinking of god, what steps did you take to stop?”
“None.”
“. . . Will you agree that now you will testify that the acts with kids were harming children?”
“Yes, sir.”
“And won’t you admit: ‘I am a liar!’?”
“I am not a liar!”

“Then you are not forgiven!” said like the first Irish Pope. O’Donnell quickly turned in disgust and plopped into his chair.
"THE VICTIMS"

Dr. Allen's alleged victim, Gary, was the next witness. At the time of the trial, Gary was 17. He was lanky with black hair brushed back in a fashionable cut. His testimony was blatantly coached.

His story: he'd met Peluso when he was 13. Shortly after their meeting, they had sex. Gary then brought Frankie around. Frankie was another hustler, also a witness against Dr. Allen, called later to corroborate Gary's story. Frankie had had sex with Peluso in a 3-way with Gary. Frankie also regularly had sex with Pres Clarridge at Peluso's.

Gary testified that on four occasions he met "Don" — whom he identified as the defendant — and on those four occasions, he went with Don into Peluso's bedroom. Don closed the door and then blew him. Actually, on their first date, they did a "69," which Gary described for the benefit of the jury.

After these four incidents, Gary and Frankie had seen Don once on "The Block" (a cruising area in Boston's Back Bay) and once at Together, a Boston gay disco where Don gave Gary $100 to help him out. Gary had run away from home and needed money for lodging.

During direct examination of Gary, Peisch tipped his hand a bit. Gary admitted that while in police custody for the past year, he had grown a full, black, bushy beard.

"And what happened to that beard, Gary."
"I shaved it off, sir."