

## “Homo-Hunting” in the Early Cold War: Senator Kenneth Wherry and the Homophobic Side of McCarthyism

(Article begins on second page below.)

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**Article Summary:** During the 1940s, as the medical-psychological establishment changed and fears of sexual “perversions” in America grew markedly. These fears spilled over into the political realm as the anti-Communist, anti-liberal, and anti-new Deal factions in Congress incorporated aspects of America’s existing homophobic culture into their rhetoric and platforms. Joseph McCarthy and his fellow Nebraska Republican Kenneth Wherry figured prominently in this historic movement.

**Errata:** Page 123: In the photo, the man standing at the far right beside President Harry S Truman is not George C Marshall, but Averell W Harriman, in 1949 a special assistant to the president. Page 129: Kenneth Wherry’s cause of death is misstated. Wherry did not smoke, and he died of colon cancer, not lung cancer.

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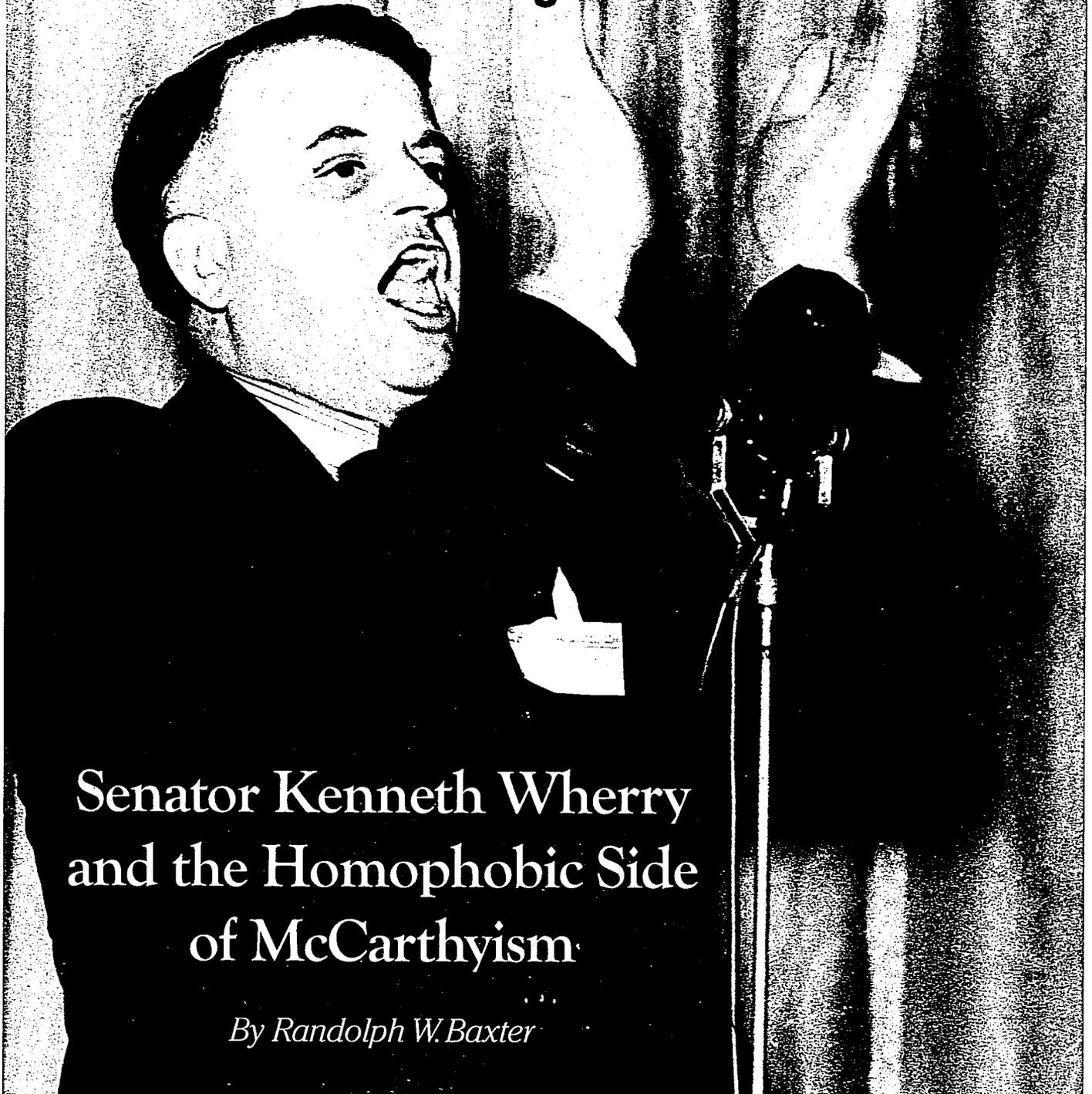
**Surnames:** Severeid; Hunt; Bridges; Clinton; Blick; Gabrielson; Dewey; St George; McCarthy; Truman; Wherry; Roosevelt; Mundt; Nixon; Vandenburg; Taft; Eisenhower; Freur; Henry; Walsh; Welles; Brewster; Hoover; Acheson; Marshall; Hiss; Chambers; Hill; Hobson; Schlesinger; Offie; Peurifoy; Rooney; Clevenger; Miller; Tydings; Hoey; Vaughan; Berryman; Taft; Buchanan

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**Photographs:** Wherry Bros Pawnee County Store; *Omaha World-Herald* photo with Wherry and his father at their Turkey Creek Farm; Wherry with Lincoln Statue at State Capitol; Senators Margaret Chase Smith, Wherry, Arthur Vandenberg with Harry S Truman and George C Marshall in 1949; Alan Dunn cartoon published in the *New Yorker*, 1950; *Washington Sunday Star* cartoon of Secretary of State Dean Acheson, 1950; Alan Dunn cartoon from the *New Yorker*, 1950, personnel interview; the official United States Senate portrait of Senator Kenneth S Wherry

# **“HOMO-HUNTING”** **in the Early Cold War**



**Senator Kenneth Wherry  
and the Homophobic Side  
of McCarthyism**

*By Randolph W. Baxter*

## "Homo-Hunting" in the Early Cold War

**T**hroughout the 1940s, as analysis by the medical-psychological establishment changed, and as the upheavals of the Depression and Second World War began to be felt in society, fears of sexual "perversion" in America grew markedly. These fears spilled over into the political realm as anti-Communist, anti-liberal, and anti-New Deal factions in Congress incorporated aspects of America's existing homophobic culture into their rhetoric and their platforms.

A widely perceived notion that political subversion was paralleled by sexual subversion laid the groundwork for anti-homosexual purges of civilian federal workers, which began in earnest in the winter of 1950 and continued throughout the Cold War. The era's linkage of conventional masculinity with national security became a model that socially conservative politicians continued to employ against perceived threats to American society well into the 1990s.<sup>1</sup>

Who would save the nation from the homosexual threat? Joseph McCarthy may come first to mind for his highly publicized early-Cold-War anti-Communism, but rumors of his own homosexuality may have prevented him from directly attacking gays in the State Department and other federal agencies.<sup>2</sup> Leader of the charge to rid the federal government of homosexual security risks, an event soon labeled the "pervert purge," was another U.S. senator: McCarthy's fellow Midwestern Republican, Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska. Wherry's persistent inquiries into loopholes in federal

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As master of ceremonies at the Nebraska Republican Founders Day celebration in 1938, Kenneth Wherry of Pawnee City, Nebraska, was described by the *Omaha World-Herald* as "young, enthusiastic, and unhampered by too much respect for his elders." He entered politics in the 1930s, and was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1942. NSHS-RG3559-9

employment safeguards eventually became an embarrassment to the Truman administration at a time when rising fears of domestic subversion provided a powerful political brickbat against the Democrats.

rules that enabled Senate debate to more easily overcome minority filibusters.<sup>3</sup>

Wherry's assumption of the role of majority whip in 1947—a first for a freshman senator—reflected his prime position in the conservative bloc, which



The Wherrys had been Pawnee County residents since before the turn of the twentieth century. Family businesses included hardware, furniture, a dry-goods store, a mortuary, and an automobile dealership, as well as several farms. NSHS-RG3559-7

Who was Senator Wherry and how did he come to complement McCarthy's anti-Communist crusade? Kenneth Spicer Wherry was born in 1892 on a farm in Pawnee County, Nebraska. He joined his family's business in the farming town of Pawnee City and eventually took over the Wherry mortuary, car dealership, and dry-goods store.

Angered by the big-government policies of Roosevelt's New Deal, he entered politics in the 1930s. A popular champion of small business, he quickly became one of the new Republican "Young Turks," rising to become state GOP chairman in 1939 and U.S. Senator in 1943. His best known political legacies include the creation of a Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Small Business, and a revision of cloture

increased in both houses of Congress in 1946, and included younger newcomers including Joseph McCarthy (1908-57), Karl Mundt (1900-74), and Richard Nixon (1913-94). After 1949 Wherry continued his leadership in another demanding post, minority floor leader, one he would hold for the rest of his life.

Senator Wherry was known for his feisty spirit, friendly debate tactics, and partisan, masculinist joking. He berated as "pink-tea efforts," for example, the failed attempts of Northern Democrats to override a Southern filibuster. The chain-smoking Nebraskan was liked for his disarming, jovial wit but feared for his excited, hyperactive bravado. Even fellow Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg admitted, "The Senator



Apparently taken just after Wherry's election to the Senate in 1942, this *Omaha World-Herald* photograph shows Wherry (right) and his father, David E. Wherry, looking over steers at their Turkey Creek Farm. The Wherrys had agricultural properties in Nebraska, Kansas, California, and Alberta. NSHS-RG3559-1

from Nebraska can even say 'good morning' so vehemently as to make me quail." Wherry's lack of diplomacy, however, led one Senate historian to remark that the Nebraskan's "outstanding characteristic" was "a flatly uncompromising attitude and a brand of Midwestern, small-town, Lions Club Republicanism so intolerant as sometimes to repel even the redoubtable [Robert A.] Taft."<sup>4</sup>

On matters of government and foreign policy, Wherry distrusted almost anything "foreign." He loathed British "socialist medicine" (which became a reality in 1948, with the National Health Service), and faulted Truman's attempt to promote the same as "spendthrift socialism." He decried White House plans for expanded taxes, "managed government," and wage raises to suit the demands of organized labor. In fervent

speeches, the former Presbyterian Sunday school teacher warned that the "Godless subversion" of Russian Communism and "alien-minded doctrines" had beguiled the Truman administration. In 1946 Wherry unsuccessfully pushed a resolution to have the State Department investigated for possible "sympathy with Communist ideology," and in early 1948 Wherry's legislative efforts predated by a few days the better-known bill of Senator Karl Mundt (R-SD) and Congressman Richard Nixon (R-CA) to effectively outlaw the American Communist Party.

Wherry was part of a group of Republicans that masked its "'pinch-penny response' to the dangers of Soviet world domination by assiduously proclaiming that the paramount threat to American security and liberty came not from without but from within." Through June 1950, he firmly opposed

the high cost of the Marshall Plan and supported NATO only if Congress—not the president—agreed to each assignment of U.S. ground forces to Europe.

Wherry's suspicion of the State Department first rose when then-Assistant Secretary of State Dean Acheson had opposed a militant stance against the Chinese Communists in 1945; despite his lack of enthusiasm for the Nationalist Chinese regime, Wherry supported the inclusion of \$75 million to arm non-Communist China in 1949. Like many American anti-Communists, he fumed at what he labeled "the blackest chapter in America's history," the "loss" of China by Truman/Acheson "appeasement."<sup>5</sup>

Wherry had personally witnessed the effects of another black chapter in history. In late April 1945, as Hitler's Nazi empire was crumbling, General Dwight D. Eisenhower invited members

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of Congress to tour recently liberated concentration camps, including Buchenwald. During the tour, Wherry noted “four types” of prisoners:

- (a) Those wearing red triangles on their sleeves designated political prisoners
- (b) Those wearing green triangles, designated habitual criminals
- (c) Those wearing black triangles, designated as refusing to work
- (d) Those wearing rose triangles, classified as conscientious objectors.

Either by his own fault or that of his tour guides and informants, Wherry was misinformed about the true identity of the “rose triangle” victims, who actually were male homosexuals (*Homosexueller* in German), and the “black triangle” victims (*Asozialer*), women who refused to marry and/or bear children for the Reich, including lesbians. The future leader of the 1950 “pervert purge” deplored the labeling of prisoners by type of crime, an ironic counterpoint to his still-to-come condemnation of homosexuals in federal service.<sup>6</sup>

Before World War II, homosexuality had not been linked to national security, and the only previous congressional inquiry into homosexuality had been somewhat discredited as an entrapment scheme. Beginning as the result of the moral vigilance of two Navy officials at a prestigious training station, the 1919 Newport scandal reflected the gender-role social construction of homosexuality that was then still functional. While some of the sailors involved were considered heterosexual and escaped punishment because of their masculine, insertive role in sex, most of the “perverts” who allowed themselves to be penetrated were punished.<sup>7</sup>

Such a double standard would change by the Second World War, after which both partners in any type of homosexual relationship were considered mentally unstable and likely subjects of blackmail and thus national security risks. Although they continued to condemn the use of terms such as

“perversion” and “deviance,” and the military’s policy of dishonorable discharge of homosexuals, doctors and psychologists nevertheless began to define people by their psychological preference for one gender or the other. Experts such as Dr. George Henry, a



**Angered by the policies of Roosevelt’s New Deal and a champion of small business, Wherry entered politics and was elected to the Nebraska Legislature in 1929. He served as a state senator until 1933. NSHS-RG3559-15**

future witness in one of the 1950 Senate inquiries into homosexuals in government employment, decried society’s “witch hunting” mentality against those with “a homosexual adjustment,” but still believed it could be “prevented” in youth with “proper parenting” (masculine fathers and feminine mothers) and “appropriate” (heterosexual) outlets. Sigmund Freud, likewise, never resolved his own doubts about the innate nature

of homosexuality over his much-publicized theory of “arrested development.”<sup>8</sup>

Ironically, even the 1948 Kinsey report fueled the post-war, political demonization of homosexuality in its fruitless suggestion that the homosexual “variation” be accepted because of its prevalence and irretractibility. Both the American Psychiatric Association and American Medical Association would label homosexuality an illness in 1952, and electroshock therapy, drugs, lobotomies, and castration were prescribed for its “scientific treatment” well into the decade.

Only after the mid-1950s did professionals begin to question the “deviance” theory; state laws did not begin to change until the 1960s, and the American Psychological Association did not reconsider its pathological classification of homosexuality until the early 1970s. Thus, before the 1970s and the change in social and professional thought regarding sexual “orientation” that was solidified by the Gay Rights movement, every man was a potential “latent homosexual.”<sup>9</sup>

Such homophobia affected the U.S. State Department more than other federal agencies. Ivy-League-educated, “East Coast Establishment” diplomats would prove an easy target for hyper-patriotic, masculinist critics as well as for anti-Communists. Often derided as “overcivilized,” weak, and effeminate, foreign service officers earned occasional epithets such as “sissy,” “pussy-foot,” and “stuffed shirt.” Junior officers—often single men without families—were particularly suspect because they often lived abroad, because of the mystery surrounding their missions, and because of their open-mindedness toward foreigners and “alien” forms of government. Single men in general became suspect as failed heterosexuals and candidates for perversion. A prominent Navy Department psychiatrist warned that America’s boys were turning into cowards, draft dodgers, homosexuals, and communists.<sup>10</sup>

Politically motivated anti-homosexual attacks were not unknown in the early 1940s. In 1942 the Naval Affairs Committee chairman, Senator David I. Walsh (D-MA), endured embarrassing public speculation following his arrest in a homosexual brothel in New York City. Walsh had been one of the few isolationists in Congress opposing entry into the war in Europe, and rumor spread that he had met with Nazi agents at the brothel. A subsequent FBI report officially exonerated Walsh, while Nazi agents arrested in the raid were deported.<sup>11</sup>

In a more obviously partisan scandal, Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles was forced to resign in the middle of World War II. Welles had first come under quiet attack in 1941 after Republican leaders threatened to publicize reports of his drunken propositions to Negro taxi drivers and train porters, allegations mixing both homophobia and racism. President Roosevelt managed to ignore the attacks for two years, but once Senator Owen Brewster (R-ME) threatened a formal investigation, the White House was forced to request Welles's resignation.

Some have even claimed that the 1947 changes to the 1886 Presidential Succession Act grew out of Republican demands that appointed officials such as the secretary of state be moved farther down the line of succession. With Welles having reached the position of acting secretary in 1943, and with Secretary Hull frequently ill, his previous ranking in third place could have placed a possible homosexual in the White House in the event of the death or incapacity of the president and vice president.<sup>12</sup>

Concerns over homosexuals as security risks in federal employment arose after the Second World War, paralleling fears of pro-Communist or at least naive government officials. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover managed to amass files on individuals he deemed "subversive," including "sex deviates" whose proclivities were suspect.

Ironically, in the 1960s Hoover himself was rumored to be gay. The new GOP majority in Congress after 1946, in the judgment of one historian, was "determined to rid the government of communists, perverts, and New Dealers."<sup>13</sup>

Republicans, including Minority Floor Leader Kenneth S. Wherry, warned of threats from liberal statesmen like Dean Acheson and from homosexuals as early as 1947. The 1945–46 *Amerasia* case, involving the supposed transmission of classified information on China from a State Department advisor to a magazine of that name, had brought wider Congressional attention to the problem of security leaks, leading to various proposals for loyalty bills in 1947. Truman countered with his own loyalty-security program (Executive Order 9835), which Congress approved only with certain restrictions.

During the debate over E.O. 9835, Senator Wherry joined several of his colleagues in charging Secretary of State George Marshall with lax security in the State Department after Marshall's Personnel Security Board applied a standard of "reasonable doubt" in determining security cases. Various conservatives on the Senate Appropriations Committee—including Wherry—attacked Undersecretary Dean Acheson in an anonymous letter to Marshall not only for "protecting" a Soviet spy ring in the State Department but for allowing "admitted homosexuals and suspected perverts" to be "separated" without trial or publicity. Referring obliquely to the Sumner Welles case, the senators vainly condemned "extensive employment in highly classified positions of admitted homosexuals, who are historically known to be security risks."<sup>14</sup>

Rumors of homosexuality complicated the 1949 trials of former State Department advisor Alger Hiss. Roosevelt's top aide at Yalta came close to publicizing the sexuality of his accuser, *Time Magazine* editor Whittaker Chambers, in an open letter, railing against his "somewhat queer"

accuser and "confessed traitor." He refused to accuse Chambers openly of homosexuality, however, since the FBI had threatened to expose the fact that Hiss's stepson, Timothy Hobson, had been dishonorably discharged from the Navy for homosexuality in 1945. Only after Hiss's indictment did Chambers confess to the FBI in early 1949 to having homosexual affairs with street boys during his Communist days in the 1930s; though these files were not released until the 1970s, Washington insiders understood the homosexual undercurrents of the case in 1949.<sup>15</sup>

The Hiss case led Congressman Nixon (who made his fame from the "Pumpkin Papers" that helped lead to Hiss's indictment) to develop a lifelong mistrust of the State Department, evident even a quarter of a century later, when, as president, he told his staff that foreign policy could never be left to "the striped-pants faggots in Foggy Bottom."<sup>16</sup>

The Hiss case brought further disrepute to the State Department, whose secretary, Dean Acheson, proclaimed himself Hiss's friend. Senator Wherry—who had voted against confirmation of "the appeaser" Acheson—now demanded his resignation, a demand he would repeat several times over the months to come. Wherry and his Republican allies were joined by Southern Democrats and "Cold War Liberals" in the anti-Communist battles.

One of the cofounders of the centrist Americans for Democratic Action, Harvard professor Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., joined the McCarthy camp in attacking Communism as "something secret, sweaty and furtive like homosexuals in a boys school." The State Department also came under fire for having "lost" China, and Democrats were denounced as the "party of treason" by anti-interventionists like Wherry, who had either rejected or only grudgingly endorsed Truman's internationalism in Europe, but supported increased American help for the romanticized yet corrupt Chinese Nationalist regime.<sup>17</sup>

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Such was the climate when Wherry came to demand an inquiry into homosexuals in federal employment in early 1950. The sense of crisis was precipitated less than one month after Hiss's conviction for perjury, when freshman Senator Joseph McCarthy charged that the State Department had been infiltrated by Communists, further inflaming the perception that the Truman administration and the State Department were failing in their efforts to guard the nation, this time against threats from within.

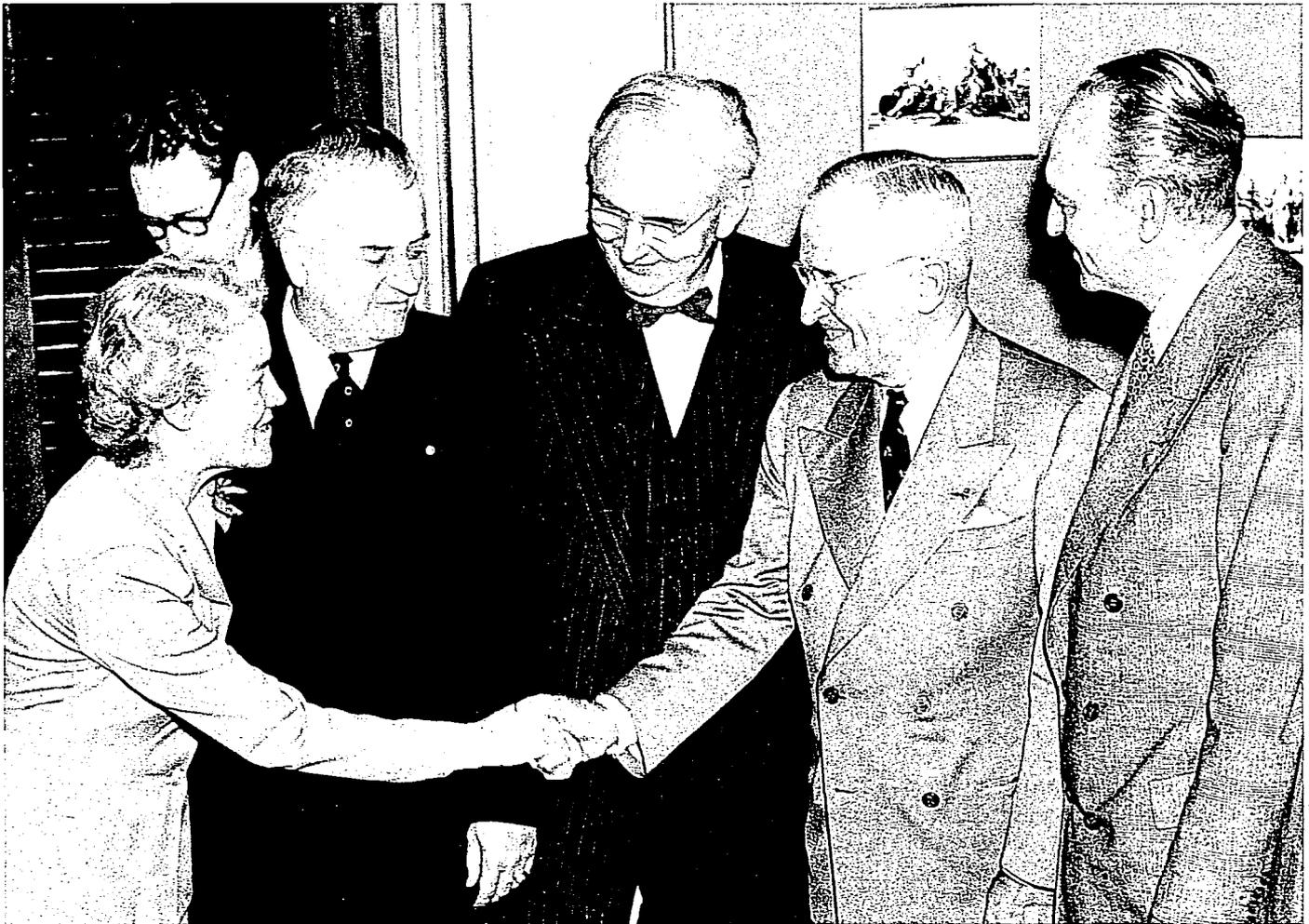
Since the White House would not agree to a release of personnel files,

McCarthy could claim that the administration was protecting "subversives" in government. He also claimed that a "flagrantly homosexual" State Department employee had been discharged as a security risk in 1946, but had been reinstated due to "pressure" from a sympathetic, unnamed "high State Department official," implying that Acheson had reinstated the man knowing he was a homosexual.

McCarthy also warned of another case of "an unnamed homosexual" (now known to be Carmel Offie) who had been allowed to resign from the

State Department after a morals charge, yet was found, in 1950, to be employed by the CIA. The senator was "at a loss to understand" how the situation had happened, and demanded to know who had "sponsored" the man in his current position.<sup>18</sup>

He later bragged to reporters, "If you want to be against McCarthy, boys, you've got to be either a communist or a cocksucker."<sup>19</sup> His conflation of cowardice, homosexuality, and treason covered anyone left of the Right, especially those who also worked for the State Department.



Senators Margaret Chase Smith (left), Wherry, and Arthur Vandenberg greeting President Harry S. Truman and NATO Chairman and former Secretary of State George C. Marshall (at Truman's left) in April 1949. Distrusting everything "foreign," Wherry was leery of NATO's power, but supported the measure as minority floor leader. NSHS-RG3559-18

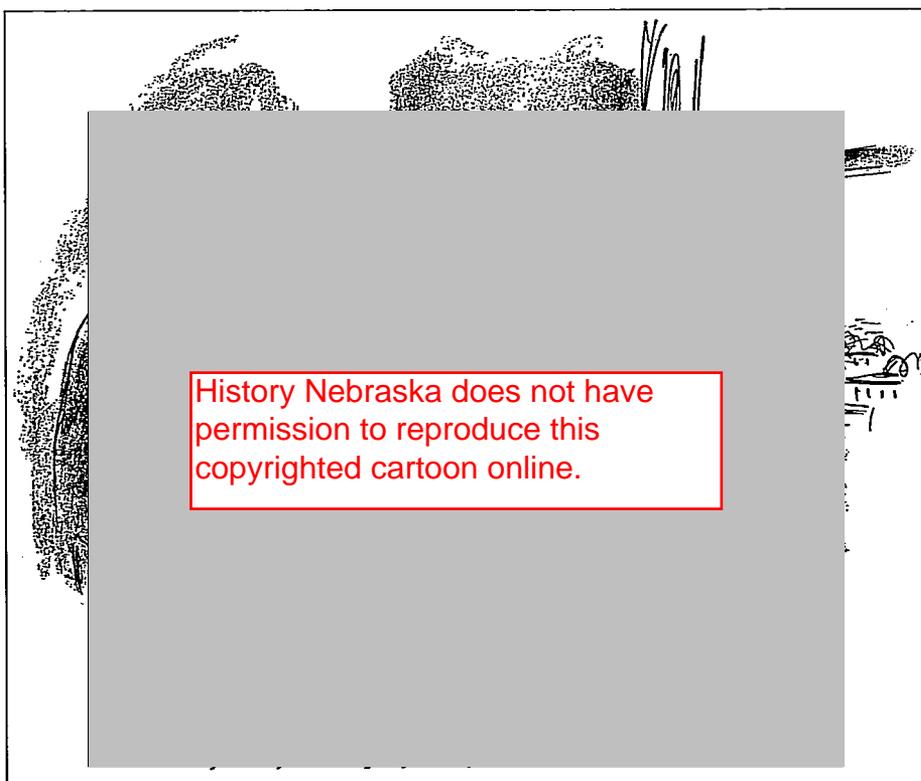
To compound matters, Assistant Secretary of State for Personnel John Peurifoy tried to cover for Acheson and placate the anti-Communist witch-hunters by declaring that many of those fired from the State Department in recent years had been “separated” not over loyalty concerns, but because they were homosexual.<sup>20</sup>

This proved to Wherry that his and his colleagues’ accusation in their 1947 letter to George Marshall had been correct. Under Truman’s 1947 E.O. 9835, known or suspected subversives, habitual drunkards, homosexuals, and others susceptible to blackmail could be dismissed, but by early 1950 word leaked out that those under investigation could resign for “personal reasons,” leaving their personnel files unflagged for future blackballing. Along with Peurifoy’s admission, this loophole led Wherry to demand an investigation into federal employment of “moral perverts” as a key aspect of the Truman administration’s lax security procedures. Wherry sought his own inquiry because a recent House bill authorizing “summary dismissal” of security risks omitted the red-flagging of government personnel files to warn prospective employing agencies that an applicant had been arrested for or suspected of homosexual-related offenses.<sup>21</sup> When the impatient Nebraskan received no immediate reply from a request to the Civil Service Commission for data on the issue, he moved to initiate a separate inquiry on homosexuals in government employment.

Wherry’s action was briefly paralleled in the House Appropriations Committee, where John J. Rooney (D-NY) charged that the Commerce Department was guilty of “laxity in weeding out homosexuals.” Attacking the Commerce Department in the spring of 1950 had less cachet than attacking the “effete cookie-pushers” in the Foreign Service, as Cliff Clevenger (R-OH) later noted.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the Commerce Department did initiate an accelerated purge of suspected homosexuals from its ranks.

Meanwhile, Wherry and Democratic counterpart Lister Hill formed a special subcommittee to interview District of Columbia police and federal agency witnesses—behind closed doors—starting on March 23, 1950. More than a dozen witnesses testified before the Wherry-Hill subcommittee, including officials from the State Department, FBI, military intelligence, and the D.C. police.<sup>23</sup>

catch prostitutes, gamblers, and “perverts” in the nation’s capital. Wherry found Blick was a “one-man watchdog of the city’s morals,” but was disappointed to learn that Blick had no “master list” of homosexuals arrested; the senator had hoped to cross-check the files of homosexual arrestees against federal employment lists. To encourage a taste for such list-making, he suggested increasing the police force



Cartoonist Alan Dunn illustrated the suspect loyalty of State Department personnel as attacks on the agency increased. The grim “Chief” figure probably alludes to FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Originally published in the *New Yorker*, March 25, 1950. © The New Yorker Collection 1950 Alan Dunn. From cartoonbank.com. All rights reserved.

The Navy, for example, reported that more than 7,800 “known or alleged homosexuals” had been “separated” since 1947, while the Army reported more than 5,000. The star witness for evidence of lax federal security measures proved to be Lt. Roy Blick (1900–72), head of the Washington, D.C., police “vice squad” designed to

budget so additional officers could track down perverts.<sup>24</sup>

Wherry could only complain of secret files of employees “alleged in police records to be moral perverts” needed to balance the review of files of potential Communists, since the homosexual threat was “not a local police problem, but one of national

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importance, affecting national security." Neither the Wherry-Hill "preliminary investigation" nor the larger Senate inquiry to follow (the Hoey Committee) was able to force a gay "naming of names" similar to those of anti-Communist witch-hunts.<sup>25</sup>

Given Wherry's distrust of the State Department, it comes as no surprise that he extensively questioned Blick about the agency. The lieutenant claimed that hundreds of homosexuals worked for the federal government and that not all arrests had been reported to employers. He gave "a quick guess" of five thousand in the nation's capital, further guessing that 75 percent of them were employed in government jobs, placing three to four hundred in the State Department (about 10 percent of the department's workforce). To a reporter in July, however, he admitted that he had reached his figures on the premise of dubious venereal disease statistics, and regretted having been caught "between the Democrats and the Republicans."<sup>26</sup>

Blick also informed the senators of an apparent inadequacy in the District's legal procedure. Homosexuals usually were arrested on disorderly conduct charges (perhaps suggesting that sodomy, which was also a crime, was rarely observed), which allowed arrestees to forfeit the twenty-five-dollar bail and avoid having the incident reported to employers. Wherry saw this measure as "scant deterrent to the eradication of this loathsome vice," especially in connection with "the guarding of Government secrets upon which the life of our Republic may depend."<sup>27</sup>

Wherry used Blick's "secret" testimony and estimates of the number of homosexuals in government to great political advantage. The Truman administration had never attempted to compile statistics specifically on homosexuals, and was at a loss to defend itself. Press reports leaked by other Republicans on the subcommittee ensured that Blick's statistics—but not the dubious means by which the statistics had been generated—received wide attention.

A national Associated Press bulletin on March 28, 1950, ensured that the nation's newspaper readers learned of a scandal that otherwise might have remained merely a story told inside the Washington beltway. Sporting Blick's numbers, articles like "Most Of Capitol's Perverts Are Said To Be In US Jobs" detailed how unnamed senators hoped that the "hush hush investigation of sex perversion" might lead to legislation, and demanded to know names of the "sex perverts reported fired in the last two years" so that the State Department could be "liberated" from Communists, "Commie sympathizers," "fellow travelers," Socialists, homosexuals, and "the just plain incompetents."<sup>28</sup> Following McCarthy's rhetoric, homosexuals and Communists were again lumped together in the same xenophobic boat.

Continuing his inquiry, Wherry pressed the Civil Service Commission as to whether fired homosexuals could somehow regain employment in other government offices—the "re-hire" loophole he had long suspected. Commissioner Harry Mitchell eventually confirmed that despite regulations requiring a cross-check of previous agencies in cases of "immoral" conduct when employees sought re-employment at another federal agency, thirteen of the ninety-one cases since 1947 had, indeed, managed to regain employment. This buttressed Wherry's contention that there was "no effective, coordinated system" by which the government "automatically put a flag or warning on the file of one who had been permitted to resign"—indicating to the partisan Nebraskan a "dereliction to duty in the executive branch in permitting these moral perverts to obtain reemployment by the Government."<sup>29</sup>

Wherry's evidence of "holes in the system" strengthened the force of homosexuality as a political weapon. In a short but scathing report, Wherry publicized Mitchell's figures, sported a rumor that Stalin had obtained a list of American homosexuals from Nazi Germany, and demanded a full-scale

Senate inquiry into the matter. Wherry sought to punish those who had allowed the perverts to slip back into the system, a potential politicized witch-hunt along the lines of McCarthy's.<sup>30</sup>

Other Republicans joined the fray, raising the homosexual issue during Congressional debates on security concerns. GOP Chairman Guy George Gabrielson sent a newsletter to more than seven thousand party workers nationwide, warning that "the sexual perverts" who had "infiltrated our Government" were "perhaps as dangerous as the actual Communists." New York Governor and former presidential candidate Thomas Dewey accused Democrats of "tolerating spies, traitors, and sex offenders in the Government service."<sup>31</sup>

New York Congresswoman Katharine St. George and Nebraska's Arthur L. Miller repeated Wherry's rumors that the Soviets had a list of American homosexuals in government, since "the Russians are strong believers in homo-sexuality," and "the Orientals still look upon the practice with favor." Republican Congressman Cliff Clevenger feared "a cell of perverts hiding around Government" and complained that homosexuals would be protected by "the sob sisters and thumb-sucking liberals" who insisted the focus be kept on proving disloyalty.<sup>32</sup>

Wherry and McCarthy also brought up the homosexual issue in Senate debate over the Tydings committee hearings, where they maligned the integrity of Secretary of State Acheson and demanded the Tydings inquiry of McCarthy's charges be expanded to include "sexual perversion within the Government." Senator Tydings pleaded with his Republican colleagues, "Won't you stop this continued heckling about homosexuals and let us get on with the main work of finding communists?"<sup>33</sup> Attempts to deflect attention away from homosexuals and back to the "main work" of Commie hunting proved fruitless.

The "pervert purge" in government

employment began even before the Wherry-Hill inquiry was complete. Blick informed Wherry that "between 90 and 100 moral perverts" from different branches of the government had resigned in April.<sup>34</sup> The growing purge of homosexuals took its toll on those caught up in the security panic, and the Foreign Service suffered from attacks on its reputation.

The most sensational part of Wherry's report came in his supposed proof that homosexuals and Communists were actually linked. One of Blick's vice-squad officers had testified of "quite a few perverts attending these meetings [of Communist-front organizations]." Wherry combined this assertion with his own, unsourced claim that Hitler had "amassed the names of homosexuals around the world" in a list "rumored to have been acquired by Russia." Now "the Communists' fifth column in the United States" could "use homosexuals to gain their treacherous ends" in America. In a further slap at the Soviets the Nebraska senator hinted that testimony included "a fleeting reference to a trail of homosexuals leading to a foreign embassy in Washington, D.C."<sup>35</sup>

As a final step, Wherry offered text for what later became Senate Resolution 280, which "authorized and directed" an unspecified Senate body to "make a full and complete study and investigation" and report "results of the study" and remedial "recommendations for legislation." The Senate passed the resolution on June 8, 1950, and the inquiry was given to an investigations subcommittee chaired by Clyde Hoey (D-NC), which had recently conducted an evenhanded probe of influence peddling by Truman's advisor, Maj. Gen. Harry Vaughan (the "Five Percenters" scandal of 1949).

The new study would look into the "preparedness and diligence" of District and federal authorities in dealing with the threat of perverts—clearly a slap at the Metropolitan Police Force for letting arrested homosexuals off with a forfeited twenty-five-dollar bond. Senators agreed with Wherry that "there was an

urgent and compelling need" for the larger inquiry.<sup>36</sup>

After his successful preliminary investigation, Wherry was reported to have bragged privately about how "hunting homosexuals was his 'specialty.'"<sup>37</sup> He and his favorite political cartoonist, Pulitzer-Prize-winner Jim Berryman of the *Washington Star*, joked about homosexuals in a series of letters. Wherry praised the cartoonist for his critiques of the State Department, which Berryman had "good reason to believe has caused the Missouri Artillery [the Truman administration] considerable embarrassment."

Berryman agreed to "open fire on the Pansy Beds around the State Department," but to keep his heterosexuality above question, he noted that he would "be glad to accept any flanking assignments, Sir, particularly if they are Betty Grable's or Lana Turner's flanks!" He slyly—and metaphorically—compared heterosexual sex (coitus) with a homosexual act (masturbation, if not fellatio) in terms that also asserted the superior patriotism of the former when he "wholeheartedly" concurred with Wherry's "great fighting slogan: 'A Bird in the Bush is More Patriotic than Playing the Piccolo!'"

Continuing the masculinist banter, Wherry refused the cartoonist's request for "flanking assignments" since "morning headlines" had convinced him that this was Berryman's "golden opportunity to go around the ends, cut back, and attack from the rear!!!" Wherry thus added an anal sex stereotype but employed it as an offensive weapon in his wars against the government.

Berryman concurred with the heterosexist thinking by referring to himself as "Bringing-Up-the-Rear-Admiral," a mock-Navy title Wherry had used in a second letter, and likened him to Blick of the special police squad as "VICE-Admiral Kenneth S. Wherry, Chief of Anti-Below-Navel Operations (for members of the same sex)."<sup>38</sup> Ostensibly playful, the remarks go beyond the officially expressed concern about

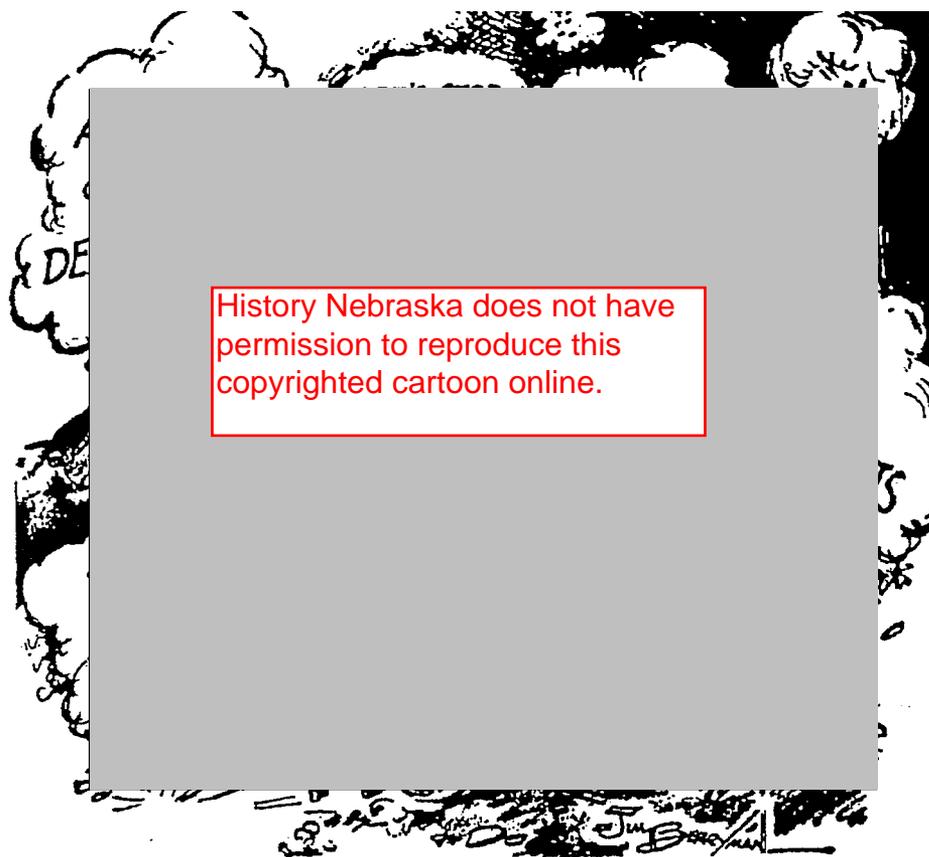
"perverts" as security risks, revealing an underlying fear of submissive sexuality as well as some of the worst (yet common) homophobic stereotypes of the day.

How did the White House and general public respond to the "pervert probe" issue? President Truman was aware that the homosexual problem was not as damaging as critics maintained, having access to an FBI list of persons arrested on charges of "sexual irregularities" who held "highly rated positions" in government; this top category included only two State Department employees, hardly the three to four hundred that Blick estimated.<sup>39</sup> Truman thus would have known that homosexuals in government had seemingly posed little danger to national security. The issue of "homosexuality among Government employees" was also on the agenda for at least two White House staff meetings and one Cabinet meeting in May 1950—after the completion of the Wherry-Hill inquiry and amid discussion of the Tydings committee hearings on McCarthy's charges.<sup>40</sup>

The White House did urge federal agencies to comply with the Senate inquiries up to the point of compromising personnel files, and later that summer Truman signed a strengthened summary dismissal bill allowing for the removal of suspect employees, but otherwise, the White House had the larger storms of the Korean War and Internal Security Act veto-override to distract it from the squall of the homosexual issue.

Given the combined anti-Communist and anti-homosexual attacks, the general public, not surprisingly, reacted with growing concern about homosexuals in federal agencies. Constituents of Wherry, Hill, Tydings, and others generally supported a purge of subversives, Communists, and homosexuals. Wherry earned praise from a Los Angeles man who thanked him for saving the country from "Sodomites" and "sissies" in the "Red State Dept." One nationally known

## “Homo-Hunting” in the Early Cold War



Secretary of State Dean Acheson, lace handkerchief and Homburg hat in hand, feels the Cold War heat up in this Jim Berryman cartoon from the *Washington Sunday Star* of June 11, 1950. This cartoon led to a friendly exchange of letters between Wherry and Berryman, who wrote that he would “open fire on the Pansy Beds around the State Department.” © *The Washington Post*. Reprinted with permission.

personality who publicly challenged the demonization of homosexuals was CBS news commentator Eric Sevareid, who declared that homosexuality had “nothing to do with loyalty or disloyalty,” sought to dispel “misunderstandings” about homosexuals, and urged the Senate not to engage in another witch-hunt.<sup>41</sup>

Newspapers gave fairly accurate coverage of the inquiries, admitting the State Department’s problems, even as they decried the latest witch-hunts and national hysteria. Some questioned Wherry’s report, which cited no specific cases of the alleged blackmail of homosexual employees by Soviet agents.<sup>42</sup> The subtleties of the issue were aptly

captured by *New Yorker* magazine cartoonist Alan Dunn: A job seeker defends his firing from the State Department to a bemused personnel manager declaring “It’s true, sir, that the State Department let me go, but that was solely because of incompetence,” an obvious, if oblique reference to the image problem faced by former State Department personnel as the Senate progressed beyond probes of alleged Communist subversion and approved the “pervert purge.” Only the need to prove one’s loyalty or heterosexuality would lead an applicant to brag about having been incompetent.<sup>43</sup>

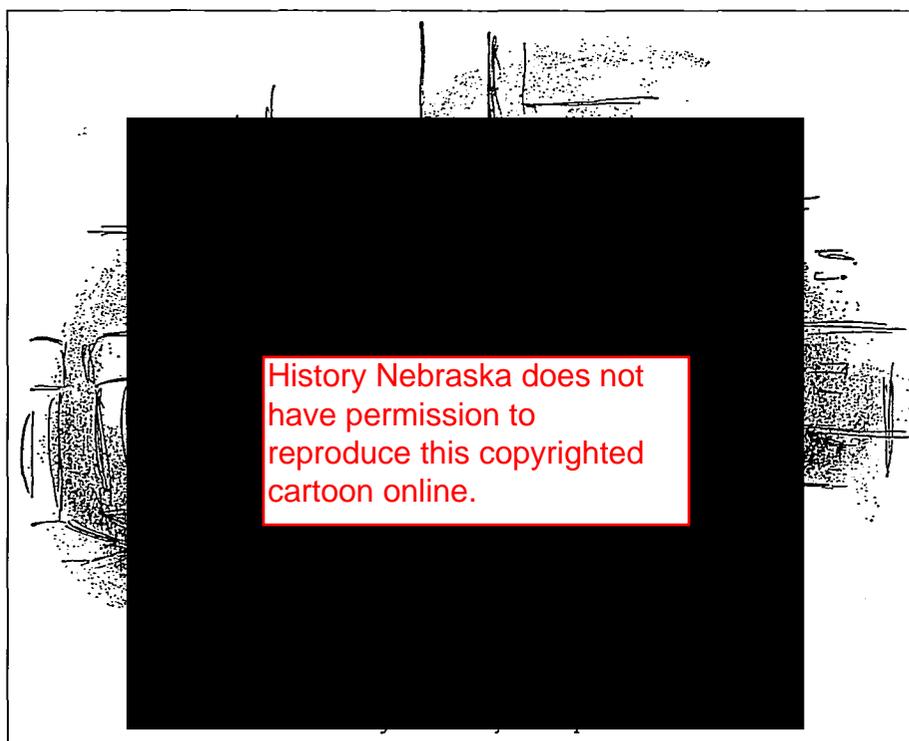
Led by septuagenarian Clyde Hoey (D-NC), the larger Senate inquiry had

yet to hold its first hearings when the Korean War broke out and distracted the attention of the nation and Congress. In mid-December 1950, as Wherry and other Republicans were demanding Acheson’s resignation over the Chinese entry into the Korean conflict, the Hoey Committee issued a scathing report similar in tone to Wherry’s. But the Hoey committee’s criticism of administration personnel security procedures received scant attention compared to Wherry’s loud complaints about homosexuals the previous spring.

The report recommended tighter security measures; D.C. police had already changed bond fees for homosexual arrests from twenty-five to three hundred dollars in August.<sup>44</sup> The larger investigation fulfilled Senator Wherry’s demands from his preliminary inquiry, demands that the Civil Service Commission had offered to remedy in May, when Wherry and other Republicans insisted on the further publicity of a more prolonged set of hearings.

In spite of the “success” of Wherry’s overall efforts, the fact remains that no American has ever been proved to have divulged state secrets as a result of blackmail over homosexuality. The only known case of espionage that is possibly homosexual related involved a pair of American mathematicians employed at the National Security Agency who defected to Russia in June 1960. Wherry would not have been pleased to know that the two had been retained in their jobs despite FBI and Navy Intelligence investigations revealing possible homosexual backgrounds; the same dilemma that had existed in the Truman era had resurfaced—supervisors were inclined to overlook the personal foibles of valued employees.<sup>45</sup>

Demonstrating the deadly success of politicized homophobia, two Republican senators are said to have used a variation on homosexual blackmail during the 1954 election campaign. As a member of the same Armed Services Committee that had approved the summary dismissal bill in the summer



In this *New Yorker* cartoon from June 17, 1950, Alan Dunn obliquely refers to the image problem faced by former State Department personnel. Only the need to prove one's loyalty or heterosexuality would lead a job applicant to boast about having been incompetent. © The New Yorker Collection, 1950, Alan Dunn. From cartoonbank.com. All rights reserved.

of 1950, Lester C. Hunt (D-WY) had come under fire from Wherry's close colleague, Styles Bridges (R-NH), who complained that Hunt's lenience would allow an employee dismissed for security reasons to "wiggle his way into some other department if he can possibly do it." Four years later Senator Bridges was rumored to have taken revenge on Hunt by pressuring him to end his run for a second term with threats to make public his twenty-four-year-old son's arrest the previous October for soliciting a plain-clothes policeman. On June 8, 1954, Senator Hunt announced his withdrawal from the race and on June 19 shot himself in his office.

Newspapers announced that he had been depressed over a negative medical diagnosis, but Washington insiders guessed the real reason. To be fair, Bridges could not have known Hunt would become suicidal. Nonethe-

less, homophobia indirectly claimed its highest-level victim.<sup>46</sup>

Under the pressure of Senate inquiries instigated by Kenneth Wherry, the State Department, and other federal agencies did strengthen their procedures for detecting and removing "homosexuals and other moral perverts" from their ranks. An estimated seven to ten thousand real or suspected homosexuals—Democrat and Republican—lost their jobs during the 1950s. Homosexuality remained a cause for "separation" from civilian federal agencies for more than forty years, until a 1994 executive order by the first post-Cold War president, Bill Clinton, removed consideration of sexual orientation in employment and security status.<sup>47</sup>

Like Communists assumed to be blindly following orders from Stalin, homosexuals in the early Cold War were demonized in popular culture as poten-

tially treasonous and "weak-minded." Same-sex indiscretions were thought to reveal the underlying problem about homosexuality in the Cold War. American men (especially political leaders) had to be seen as masculine, tough, dominant. Stereotypes of effeminacy in males reflected the fear that a lack of masculinity undermined America's position in the world and threatened the moral fabric of a heterosexist nation.

Such fears outlasted the Cold War itself, continuing into the twenty-first century; Wherry would have undoubtedly approved of Nebraska's "Defense of Marriage" amendment to the state constitution prohibiting marriage between lesbian and gay couples, which voters approved in the fall of 2000.

Earlier waves of homophobia had crashed against the bastion of potentially effete diplomacy, the State Department, which drew particular attack from Congressional isolationists and anti-New Dealers who worried about "atom spies" and the new Cold War. Senators Joseph McCarthy and Kenneth Wherry provided the political leadership to place the twin evils of Communism and homosexuality in the national spotlight. By eradicating both menaces if possible, they could ensure America's safety from internal subversion, both sexual and ideological.

Once it became clear that congressional means would not adequately address his concerns, Wherry began his crusade to end what he saw as unresolved lapses in employee security: An employee could be allowed to resign from one government agency for "personal reasons," thus evading a black mark on his record, and could later find employment in another agency without his homosexual past having been revealed—indeed a dangerous security "loophole" that had to be eliminated.

The question remained just how to ensure the closing of the reemployment loophole—privately through back-channels, or publicly, in a forum as damaging as possible to the Truman

## "Homo-Hunting" in the Early Cold War



The official United States Senate portrait of Senator Kenneth S. Wherry, who died of lung cancer in 1951 while still in office. NSHS-RG2411-6025a

administration and the Acheson State Department? Senator Wherry eagerly manipulated police estimates to heighten the McCarthyite witch-hunting atmosphere that had swept the nation's capital since mid-February.

Given the Nebraska senator's extreme partisanship, it is not surprising that he managed to turn the single issue of closing the homosexual security gap from a six-week "preliminary investigation" into a five-month full-Senate-

subcommittee inquiry that confirmed his warning against reemployment and further discredited the Truman administration at a time when it was already drawing blistering fire from McCarthyite anti-Communists.

Senator Kenneth Wherry would not live to see the nation fully purged of government-employed "perverts." The chain-smoking Nebraskan was hospitalized in the summer of 1951 with lung cancer, though he kept working on various bills even from his sickbed. The popular champion of small business, having spent only eight years in the Senate, died at age fifty-nine in late November. With the death of Robert A. Taft in 1953, conservative isolationists would be without nationwide proponents until Pat Buchanan in the 1980s.

Kenneth Wherry would not serve on the larger Senate inquiry, but he could rest assured that the issue could no longer be buried. Apparently satisfied with playing second fiddle to Joe McCarthy, he had found his niche in history after all. Despite his physical absence after 1951, the effects of Wherry's inquiry into federal employment practices continued long after his death—indeed, his "homo-hunting" spirit would haunt both federal agencies and popular imagery for decades to come.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>This article is condensed from a more extensive analysis, "Eradicating This Menace": Homophobia and Anti-Communism in Congress, 1947-1954," Ph.D. diss., (Univ. of Calif. at Irvine, 1999), UMI/Proquest #99-42689. On masculinity and American society, see (among numerous other works) Anthony Easthope, *What A Man's Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> On McCarthy's sexuality, see Hank Greenspun with Alex Pelle, *Where I Stand: The Record of a Reckless Man* (New York: David McKay, 1966), 197-216, 222, 229-44; Drew Pearson, *Diaries, 1949-1959*, ed. Tyler Abell (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974), 188-92; Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and His Secrets* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 432-34; Griffin Fariello, *Red Scare: Memories of the American Inquisition: An Oral History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1995), 123; and Arthur Herman, *Joseph McCarthy: Reexamined*

ing the life and Legacy of America's Most Hated Senator (New York: Free Press, 2000), 189–95, 218–19.

<sup>3</sup> For uncritical reviews of Wherry's career, see Marvin E. Stromer, *The Making of a Political Leader: Kenneth S. Wherry and the United States Senate* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1969); and Harl A. Dalstrom, "Kenneth S. Wherry," (M.A. thesis, Univ. of Nebraska, 1965), excerpted by Dalstrom in "The Defeat of George W. Norris in 1942," *Nebraska History* 59 (1978): 231–58, and "Remote Bigness' as a Theme in Nebraska Politics: The Case of Kenneth S. Wherry," *North Dakota Quarterly* 38 (1970): 23–32. See also Justus F. Paul, "Butler, Griswold, Wherry: The Struggle for Dominance of Nebraska Republicanism, 1941–1946," *North Dakota Quarterly* 43:4 (1975), 51–61. A lighthearted critique of Wherry appears in Robert S. Allen and William V. Shannon, *The Truman Merry-Go-Round* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1950), 248–51, while Allen Drury, *A Senate Journal, 1943–1945* (New York: DiCapo Press, 1972), 26, 41, 180, 292, describes Wherry's dry humor, bombastic style, and organizational skills as of 1943. Wherry's papers are archived in the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln.

<sup>4</sup> William S. White, *Citadel: The Story of the U.S. Senate* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 106; "Pink-tea" quote from Stromer, *Making of a Political Leader*, 101; Vandenberg quote from White, "Portrait of a Fundamentalist," *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 15, 1950, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth S. Wherry, "American Dollars for British Socialism," *Cong. Rec.*, June 2, 1949; *Cong. Rec.*, Oct. 20, 1951, p. 7; Wherry, "Bureaucracy, A National Menace," Wherry Papers, NSHS MS3559, Box 15, Folder "Press Release, 10–17-46"; "The Marshall Plan and Our Domestic Economy," radio speech, Apr. 15, 1948, Box 17, Folder "Marshall Plan speech - 4-15-48"; "Senator's Reservation to the Ratification of the North Atlantic Treaty," Box 11; *Cong. Rec.* 91, Sept. 24, 1945, 8888–8910; Press Release, Feb. 10, 1950, *Cong. Rec.* Feb. 14, 1950, A1084–1086. Wherry deferred to the Mundt-Nixon bill, which passed in the House (319–58) but was not considered in the Senate before adjournment; see Senate Resolution 2412 (80th Cong., 2d sess.), Mar. 30, 1948 draft bill in Wherry Papers, Box 8, Folder "S. 2412—Communism." For Wherry's demand for a State Department investigation, including the text of his S. Res. 197 (tabled and died in late 1946), see *Cong. Rec.* 92, July 31, 1946, 10669–79. "Pinchpenny" quote from Lisle A. Rose, *The Cold War Comes To Main Street: America in 1950* (Lawrence: Univ. of Kansas Press, 1999), 213.

<sup>6</sup> Triangle designations from Wherry, untitled report (n.d., c. May 1945), 11–12, Box 15, Folder "Jan. 29–Feb. 7, 1946, Investigation of Starvation Reports in Europe, Speeches re in Senate." This report formed the first draft of Wherry's June 1945 speech in San Francisco, "Atrocity Committee and Findings," *Ibid.* For a sanitized version, see Joint Committee Requested by General Dwight D.

Eisenhower Through Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, "Atrocities and Other Conditions in Concentration Camps in Germany," 79th Cong., 1st Sess., Report 47 (Washington, D. C.: GPO, May 15, 1945). German terms from 1937 concentration camp manual, U.S. Memorial Holocaust Museum, Washington, D.C.; see also Richard Plant, *The Men With The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Henry Holt, 1986). Wherry did prove to be an early and loyal supporter of the State of Israel.

<sup>7</sup> See Lawrence R. Murphy, *Perverts by Official Order: The Campaign Against Homosexuals by the United States Navy* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 1988).

<sup>8</sup> George W. Henry, *Sex Variants: A Study of Homosexual Patterns* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 1948), vii–ix, xv; On Freud see Henry Abelow, "Freud, Male Homosexuality, and the Americans," *Dissent* 59 (Winter 1996); On "dishonorable" discharges, see Allan Bérubé, *Coming Out Under Fire: A History of Gay Men and Women in World War Two* (New York: Plume/Penguin Books, 1991), 18–33, 128–174, 228–52, 256–59.

<sup>9</sup> On the Kinsey Report, see James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 574–99, 635–65; On the APA's change, see Ronald Bayer, *Homosexuality and American Psychiatry: The Politics of Diagnosis* (New York: Basic Books, 1981), 28–37; on "latency," see Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983), 14–28. For early works of the new school, see Clellan S. Ford and Frank A. Beach, *Patterns of Sexual Behavior* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951); Evelyn Hooker, "A Preliminary Analysis of Group Behavior of Homosexuals," *Journal of Psychology* 42 (1956): 217–25; John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973).

<sup>10</sup> For psychology studies now deemed homophobic, see Edward A. Strecker, *Their Mothers' Sons: The Psychiatrist Examines an American Problem* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1946), 128–32; and Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1942), 188–90. On deviant singleness, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 146–51, 172–77.

<sup>11</sup> Murphy, *Perverts by Official Order*, 62. On Walsh, see *New York Post*, May 1, 1942; *New York Times*, May 8, 12, 21, Sept. 29, Oct. 6, 1942; "The Walsh Case," *Nation*, May 30, 1942, 617; "The Case of Senator Walsh," *Time*, June 1, 1942, 50–52; "Scandal Scotched," *Newsweek*, June 1, 1942, *Christian Century*, June 3, 1942. For later analyses, see Lawrence R. Murphy, "The House on Pacific Street: Homosexuality, Intrigue, and Politics during World War II," *Journal of Homosexuality* 12 (1985), 27–49; C. A. Tripp, *The Homosexual Matrix* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 224–27; Jonathan

Ned Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 580–81; and Nicholas Von Hoffman, *Citizen Cohn: The Life and Times of Roy Cohn* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), 228.

<sup>12</sup> Max Lerner, "The Washington Sex Story: No. 1—Panic on the Potomac," *New York Post*, July 10, 13, 1950. Lerner recalled that "Everyone in Washington knew the story, but it didn't break open for what it was. The tabu was too strong, and besides FDR's skill with crisis situations kept it under control." See also Irwin F. Gellman, *Secret Affairs: Franklin Roosevelt, Cordell Hull, and Sumner Welles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1995), esp. 302–31; Ted Morgan, *FDR: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1985), 234–45; and Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover*, 308–10. For a sanitized account of Welles' resignation, see "One More Scalp," *Time*, Sept. 6, 1943, 21. Officially, Welles left office to care for his reportedly ill wife, who later regained her health and lived another five years, while the nation was deprived of a well-respected, efficient diplomat in a time of world crisis. On the succession bill, which Truman signed into law in July 1947, see Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 392, citing anonymous sources.

<sup>13</sup> David M. Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense*, (New York: Free Press, 1983), 53. On Hoover's compilation of "sex deviate" files, see Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious Foes: The Axis Fifth Column and the American Home Front* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995), 164–77; David J. Garrow, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis* (New York: Norton, 1981), 165–72; Richard G. Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: Free Press, 1987), 171–72, 185, 526. Hoover's sexuality is discussed in Anthony Summers, *Official and Confidential: The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1993). Despite Hoover's lifelong bachelorhood and close friendship with his personal secretary, Clyde Tolson, rumors of their homosexuality have never been conclusively proved; claims that Hoover dressed in drag and engaged male prostitutes date from the 1960s, well after the 1950 anti-homosexual investigations.

<sup>14</sup> Unnamed members of the Senate Appropriations Committee to George Marshall, June 10, 1947. The Letter was first printed in Joseph McCarthy, *McCarthyism: The Fight For America: Documented answers to Questions Asked by Friend and Foe* (New York: Devin-Adair Co., 1952), 22. Wherry later declared he was one of the anonymous senders of the letter; see Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Appropriations for the District of Columbia, 81st Cong., 2d sess., "Report...on the Infiltration of Subversives and Moral Perverts," (Washington: GPO, May 17, 1950), 1 (hereafter "Wherry Report"). For hearings, see House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, "Federal Employees' Loyalty Act, Hearings...on H.R. 3588," 80th Cong., 1st sess., (Washington: GPO, June 310, 1947), esp. 1–8; "Senate Report No. 1155, to accompany S. 1561,"

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80th Cong., 2d sess., (Washington: GPO, Apr. 22, 1948), 3; and Senate Committee on Armed Services, "Summary Termination of Employment of Civilian Employees...", Hearings... on S. 1561 and S. 1570," 80th Cong., 2d sess. (Washington: GPO, Feb. 27, 1948), 1-2. For the text of Truman's order, see the *New York Times*, Mar. 23, 1947, and 12 Federal Register 1935.

<sup>15</sup> Hiss quoted in Allen Weinstein, *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 68-69. On Chambers' confessions of homosexuality and bisexuality, see Weinstein, 118-19, 381, 399; FBI memos cited in Roger Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician* (New York: Henry Holt, 1990), 921 nn. 488, 489; and FBI memos cited in Sam Tanenhaus, *Whittaker Chambers: A Biography* (New York: Modern Library, 1997), 531 nn. 28, 29, and 536 n. 29. Tanenhaus also provides further oral-history claims of Chambers' homo- and heterosexual activities, both pre- and extra-marital, 40-41, 61-66, 342-45. On Hobson, see discussion in Tony Hiss, *The View From Alger's Window, A Son's Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999); see also Weinstein, *Whittaker Chambers*, 165-66, 182-84, 281, 305, 378-84, 401, 582-83, and 633 nn. 57, 59; Tanenhaus, 283; and Morris, *Richard Milhous Nixon*, 488-89.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted by Jack Anderson, "Kissinger: One-Man State Department," *Washington Post* (Oct. 18, 1974). Nixon was undoubtedly aware of his play on words, insinuating imagery of anal sex in his linkage of "faggots" with Foggy Bottom, the part of Washington where the new State Department building was being built in the late 1940s.

<sup>17</sup> "Secret, sweaty and furtive" quote from Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Vital Center: The Politics of Freedom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press, 1962), cited with criticism in Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1970), 573-75. "Appeaser" quote from Wherry to Frank Major, Jr., Apr. 4, 1950, Wherry Papers, Box 20, Folder "Statement re Dean Acheson and re Foreign Policy 4-4-50." Wherry and others amended foreign aid bills with \$175 million for military assistance to non-Communist China; see Wherry Papers, Box 10, folder "Re S. 2341 of August 4, 1949," and folder "S. S.2388 August 10, 1949." The administration managed to hold up funds to the Nationalists until after the outbreak of the Korean conflict.

<sup>18</sup> *New York Times*, Mar. 9, 15, 1950; see also Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, "State Department Loyalty Investigation. Hearings... pursuant to S. Res. 231, A Resolution to Investigate Whether There are Employees in the State Department Disloyal to the United States," 81st Cong., 2d sess., 5 vols., Mar. 8-June 28, 1950 (Washington: GPO, 1950), 318-23. Offie (1909-1972) was the former confidential secretary to William Bullitt (U.S. Ambassador to the USSR) and participant in Bullitt's smear of Sumner Welles. Following his dismissal from the State Department

in 1948, Offie worked for the CIA's Office of Policy Coordination until his continued sexual activities led the CIA's security office to leak a report of Offie's 1943 arrest to McCarthy, whose publicity gave the CIA the excuse it needed to fire him. Offie later worked for anti-Communist labor unions in Europe. See Ted Murphy, *A Covert Life, Jay Lovestone: Communist, Anti-Communist, and Spymaster* (New York: Random House, 1999), 212-13; Gellman, *Secret Affairs*, 245, 398; and FBI File #65-32871 [Offie].

<sup>19</sup> Unsourced quote cited in Lawrence S. Wittner, *Cold War America: From Hiroshima to Watergate* (New York: Praeger, 1974), 95, 99; repeated in Thomas C. Reeves, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy* (New York: Stein and Day, 1982), 299; Caroline H. Keith, "For Hell And A Brown Mule": *The Biography of Senator Millard Tydings* (Lanham, MD.: Madison Books, 1991), 56; and David Halberstam, *The Fifties* (New York: Villard, 1993), 54. McCarthy used similar language in his June 9, 1950, keynote address to the Wisconsin State Republican Convention in Milwaukee; see copy in Tydings Papers, University of Maryland, College Park, Series V, Box 7, Folder "McCarthy Speeches."

<sup>20</sup> Senate Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations, "Departments of State, Justice, Commerce and the Judiciary Appropriations for 1951," Hearings, Jan. 31-Feb. 28, 1950, 81st Cong., 2d sess., (Washington: GPO, 1950), pt. 1, 584-605; *New York Times*, Mar. 1, 1950, and [Washington] *Evening Star*, Feb. 28, 1950.

<sup>21</sup> See House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, "To Protect the National Security of the United States, Hearings ... on H.R. 7439," Mar. 7, 1950 81st Cong., 2nd sess., (Washington: GPO, 1950), 4 (hereafter, "House Hearings on H.R. 7439"). See also Joseph Young, "Defense Aides Pledge Use of Firing Powers Against Perverts: Committee Hears Kimball and Others Testify for Summary Dismissal Bill," *Evening Star*, Mar. 30, 1950. The Korean War helped inflame fears of internal subversion in the U.S. and the bill was revived and passed in July, leading to passage of the restrictive and anti-homosexual Internal Security Act in Sept. 1950.

<sup>22</sup> Clevenger quoted in *Cong. Rec.* 96 (Apr. 19, 1950), 5402. Rooney quoted in *New York Times*, Mar. 20, 1950. See also House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Department of Commerce, "Department of State Appropriations for 1951," Hearings, Pt. 2, Feb. 7-28, 1950, 81st Cong., 2d sess., (Washington: GPO, 1950).

<sup>23</sup> Hill (1897-1984) earned the spot opposite Wherry as chairman of the District of Columbia appropriations subcommittee; see Virginia Van der Veer Hamilton, *Lister Hill: Statesman from the South* (Durham: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987). Hill participated out of "a concern equal to Wherry's about getting at the facts" according to Max Lerner, "Scandal" in the State Dept. IV—Kinsey in Washington," *New York Post*, July 13, 1950.

<sup>24</sup> Wherry Report, 5; see also *Washington Post*, Mar. 25, 1950; *Washington Daily News*, Mar. 28, 1950; *New York Times*, May 20, 1950. Police files were eventually turned over to the FBI, which passed them on to the larger Senate inquiry following Wherry's in July; see note 44 on the Hoey Committee. On Blick, see obituary, *Washington Post*, June 19, 1972.

<sup>25</sup> The *Washington Daily News*, March 28, 1950, used the phrase "homosexual hunt" for Wherry's inquiry. On HUACs 1947-50s anti-Communist witch-hunts in the entertainment industry, beginning in 1947 and continuing into the 1950s, see Victor S. Navasky's classic *Naming Names* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981).

<sup>26</sup> Max Lerner attempted to unravel Blick's convoluted numeric creations in "Scandal" in the State Dept, VI: Blick of the Vice Squad," *New York Post*, July 18, 1950.

<sup>27</sup> Wherry Report, 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> *Sacramento Bee*, Mar. 28, 1950; See also *New York Times*, *Kansas City Star*, *Omaha World-Herald*, Mar. 28, 1950; "Leaks" reported in "Sen. Hill's Unit Waging Drive On Perverts in Key U.S. Jobs," *Washington Post*, Mar. 25, 1950.

<sup>29</sup> Wherry Report, 2-5, 8-10; "Press release, April 27, 1950," Wherry Papers, Box 18, Folder "Press Releases: First Half of 1950." For related Civil Service correspondence, see also *Cong. Rec.*, July 24, 1950, 11006-07.

<sup>30</sup> Blick's figures reported in Wherry Report, 6; also in *New York Times*, May 20, 1950, 8; and "Reds Plot D.C. Disaster?" *Washington Daily News*, May 20, 1950. The figures were later repeated in the December 1950 Hoey Committee Report (see note 44). Senator Hill suggested a more limited inquiry aimed at designing legislation to strengthen penalties for "homosexuality" in Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Appropriations for the District of Columbia, "Report, made by the Chairman, the Senior Senator from Alabama...on the Infiltration of Subversive Activity and Homosexuals in Government Service" 81st Congress, 2d Session, (Washington: GPO, 1950).

<sup>31</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 19, May 5, 1950.

<sup>32</sup> Gabrielson quote from House Hearings on H.R. 7439 (March 1950), 33, 41, 90; Miller quote from *Cong. Rec.* 96, Mar. 31, 1950, 527-28; See also Apr. 4, 1950, 4669-70, Apr. 19, 1950, 5401-02, and May 15, 1950, A3660-61; Clevenger quote from *Cong. Rec.* 96, (Apr. 19, 1950), 5404-05.

<sup>33</sup> *New York Times*, Apr. 26, 1950, 3; See also *Cong. Rec.* 96, Apr. 24, 1950, 5581 (Wherry), and April 27, 1950, 5974 (McCarthy).

<sup>34</sup> Wherry Report, 13-14.

<sup>35</sup> Wherry Report, 3, 10, 13; See also *New York Times*, May 20, 1950. Actual transcripts of the Wherry-Hill hearings, if made, have not been preserved, leaving Wherry's account the sole, public source. The Hoey Committee hearings in

July would later confirm CIA rumors of Hitler's list.

<sup>36</sup> Resolution drafts, Wherry Papers, Box 11, Folder "S. Res. 280—Hill, Wherry and others—homosexuals and other moral perverts." See also *New York Times*, May 22, 1950, 8:6, 19:1; Cong. Rec. 96, June 8, 1950, 8209; and Senate Committee on Expenditures in the Executive Departments, Report 1746, [To accompany S. Res. 280] "Employment of Moral Perverts by Government Agencies," 81st Congress, 2d session (Washington: GPO, May 25, 1950).

<sup>37</sup> Emmanuel S. Larsen, cited in Alfred W. Friendly, "McCarthy Says Peurifoy Made 'Payoff Deal to Help Service,'" *Washington Post*, June 16, 1950. Senator Wherry had quizzed Larsen about possible homosexuals in the State Department after having learned that McCarthy had questioned Larsen about the 1945–46 *Amerasia* case.

<sup>38</sup> James Berryman-Kenneth Wherry correspondence, Aug. 7–Sept. 16, 1950, Wherry Papers, Box 11, Folder "Gen. Nebr.—Jim Berryman letter re Nebr. admiral."

<sup>39</sup> See J. Edgar Hoover to Souers memo and attached list of 66 names, Apr. 10, 1950, Subject File, President's Secretary's Files, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Folder "S," Harry S. Truman Library, Independence, Mo. I am grateful to Robert Dean for informing me of this document. Although the list included the name of a former secretary of Senator McCarthy, Truman was adamant about not stooping to mudslinging. See John Hersey, "The Truman Way," *New York Times*, Aug. 3, 1973.

<sup>40</sup> See "Agenda For Murphy & President," May 17, 1950.; Stephen J. Spingarn Papers, Folder "Assistant to the President Letters, White House Desk Manual—SJS Miscellaneous Longhand Notes," Truman Library.

<sup>41</sup> D. B. Eberhart to Wherry, Aug. 17, 28, 1950; Wherry to Eberhart, Aug. 22, 1950; Wherry Papers, Box 11, Folder "S. Res. 280"; Eric Sevareid, tran-

scribed broadcast, June 16, 1950, *Cong. Rec.* 96, July 7, 1950, A4960–61.

<sup>42</sup> See "The Road Back To America," *Washington Post*, May 22, 1950; "Federal Agency Spots Perverts By Lie-Detector," *Baltimore Sun*, May 21, 1950; "Tyranny or Blasphemy," *Time*, May 29, 1950, 16; "Files on Aberrants Closed to Hill," *Washington Daily News*, June 20, 1950; "'Scandal' in the State Department" series by Max Lerner, *New York Post* July 10–14, 16–21, 23, 1950; and criticism in Joseph and Stuart Alsop, "Has Washington Gone Crazy?" *Saturday Evening Post*, July 29, 1950, 20–21, 60–61.

<sup>43</sup> *New Yorker*, June 17, 1950, 21; Alan Dunn, *New Yorker* Collection.

<sup>44</sup> For the work of the Hoey Committee, see Senate Committee on *Expenditures in the Executive Departments*, unpublished transcripts, "Hearings pursuant to S. Res. 280, 81st Congress, 2d session, July 14–Sept. 15, 1950," R.G. 46, National Archives; idem, "Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government," Interim Report, Doc. 241 (Washington: U.S. GPO., Dec. 15, 1950), reprinted in *Government versus Homosexuals* (New York: Arno Press, 1975). See also Baxter, "Eradicating This Menace'."

<sup>45</sup> See "Memorandum. Subject: Discussion at the 463rd Meeting of the National Security Council, Thursday, October 13, 1960," White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, Kansas ["Top Secret," declassified 1991]; and Donald E. Bower, *Sex Espionage* (New York: Knightsbridge, 1991), 138–39.

The stereotype of the homosexual spy seems to have arisen after the May 1951 defection of two Englishmen, Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt. See Verne W. Newton, *The Cambridge Spies: The Untold Story of Maclean Philby, and Burgess in America* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1991), 33–40, 263–79; Bower, *Sex Espionage*, 141–45; and Fred Sommer, "Anthony Blunt and Guy Burgess: Gay Spies," *Journal of Homosexuality*, 29:4 (1995),

273–94. A few American foreign-service officers were dismissed in the early 1950s for selling visas, but greed, not homosexuality (revealed in the course of their dismissals) was deemed to have been the motivation for their actions; see *New York Times*, Mar. 2, 8, 1951.

<sup>46</sup> Bridges quote from "Senate Hearings on H.R. 7439," 1950, 13. On Hunt's suicide, see Pearson, *Diaries*, 323, 325; and Von Hoffman, *Citizen Cohn*, 227–33. Former Senate reporter Allen Drury focused on homosexual blackmail in what would become a bestselling Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel, *Advise and Consent*, which later became a Broadway play and, in 1962, a popular Hollywood movie. A secretary of state nominee is denied confirmation because of alleged communist sympathies, while a Southern senator with a homosexual past is blackmailed and commits suicide. The film version distorted Drury's original (and the parallel to the Hunt suicide) when the blackmailer was made a leftist senator, obscuring the Republican role in Hunt affair. The issue of homosexual blackmail was also raised in *The Best Man* (1964) in which a Democratic presidential candidate weighs the option of using a previous homosexual affair against his Republican, family-man rival. See Drury obituary, *New York Times*, Sept. 3, 1998; and Wayne R. Dynes, *Encyclopedia of Homosexuality*, vol. 2 (New York: Garland Publishers, 1990), 1385.

<sup>47</sup> For statistics, see Eleanor Bontecou, *The Federal Loyalty-Security Program* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1953), 272–99; Ralph S. Brown, Jr., "Loyalty-Security Measures and Employment Opportunities," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 1955, 113–17 (reprinted in Brown, *Loyalty and Security: Employment Tests in the United States* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1958), 256–60); Karl M. Bowman and Bernice Engle, "A Psychiatric Evaluation of Laws of Homosexuality," *Temple Law Quarterly* 29:3 (Spring 1956), 274–326; John D'Emilio, "The McCarthy Era," *Advocate*, Dec. 3, 1982, 25–27; and Fariello, *Red Scare*, 131.