

Hit the Wall Supplemental Glossary
Prepared by Dan Smith

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Twinks: young, thin gay men. Likely in usage since 1963, though may have had more and less specific meanings over time. Multiple possible derivations including the British Polari term “twank,” “twinkle-toes,” and “Twinkie” snack cakes. <https://www.them.us/story/inqueery-history-of-the-word-twink>

Stone-butch: referring to a lesbian who embraced a masculine gender presentation. Sue-Ellen Case’s article “Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic” (1989) may be useful here. Leslie Feinberg’s novel *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) would also be a good resource.

Molotov cocktail: a glass bottle containing flammable liquid and a fabric wick, usually to be set on fire and thrown into a building.

Woodstock: Music festival held in upstate New York, August 15-18, 1969. Attended by around 500,000 people.

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Friday night into Saturday: The Stonewall event began on Friday night, June 27 and continued into the morning of Saturday, June 28.

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The Village: Greenwich Village. An area in lower Manhattan associated with bohemian and queer aesthetics. The East Village includes NYU (and is the setting of *Rent*); the West Village includes many gay bars (and is the primary setting of *Hit the Wall*).

Christopher Street, Sheridan Square, and Christopher Park: Christopher Street goes out to the piers, where sex workers tend to congregate. Christopher Street/Sheridan Square has been a subway stop for a long time. Christopher Park now includes statues honoring the Stonewall uprising.

Washington and 7th is not really a thing. Washington Place and Washington Square do not quite connect with 7th Avenue, but Washington Square Park is not far from Christopher Park.

10014: ZIP Codes (ZIP = Zone Improvement Plan) were introduced in 1963, so this would still be fairly new in 1969. It would likely be pronounced “one double-oh one four.”

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Harpy: an insult used for a woman perceived as angry. Derived from ancient Greek mythological figure that was part woman and part bird.

(es)ta muy caliente para esa mierda cabrona. It’s too hot for this shit, bitch. [All Spanish translations are based on Dan’s very basic Spanish in consultation with Google Translate. Oscar will probably be able to provide additional nuance.]

Ay, coño, destruye esa pendeja: Oh, damn, destroy that asshole.

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Howdy Doody: Very wholesome television show starring a puppet. The theme song “It’s Howdy Doody Time” provides the tune for the “Stonewall Girls” song.

Goldie Hawn: Played sexy and ditzy on the TV show *Laugh-In*. Later in 1969 she would have her first major film role in *Cactus Flower* for which she won an Oscar.

Lesbo: a somewhat derogatory term for a lesbian (depending on intent and who is saying it). The term lesbian referring to women-loving-women relates to the ancient Greek poet Sappho who lived on the island of Lesbos. This usage occurred as early as the eighteenth century, but did not become widespread until the late-nineteenth century.

Ho-hos: Snack cakes sold by the Hostess company; first introduced in 1967.

Po-mo: Short for postmodern (as Tano explains). Postmodern was used to describe architecture movements beginning in the 1940s, but not really for other art until the 1970s. I suspect this is a sly reference to Pomo Afro Homos, an important queer theatre company that was based in San Francisco in the early 1990s.

Chitty Chitty Bang Bang is likely a reference to the 1968 film about a flying car. A colorful and creepy film ostensibly intended for children, it might be characterized as camp. (Director Ken Hughes apparently hated children.) The car is named Chitty Chitty Bang Bang due to its initially broken-down status, so the sense as an insult here is something like “busted.”

Westchester County: North of New York City and bordering Connecticut. This reference marks insider/outsider status as city dwellers vs. suburbanites.

Pop, Crackle, SNAP: creative appropriation of the Rice Krispies mascots Snap, Crackle, and Pop.

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W-I-L-D: Women Internationally Learning Divisiveness. This is probably not a real organization, but is consistent with similar acronyms like MeCHA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán) and WITCH (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell).

Angela Davis: Angela Y. Davis (b. 1944) is a Black feminist activist and currently a professor at University of California-Santa Cruz.

Sarah Lawrence: A women’s college in Yonkers, New York (Westchester County). Sarah Lawrence College went co-ed on a limited basis in 1968.

puerta/perra: Don’t let the door hit you where the (female) dog bit you.

Ay, Dios mio, mi Dios madre del verbo: Oh, my God, my God, mother of the [incarnate] word.

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Hysterical Homosexuality: Probably a reference to medicalized vocabulary connecting homosexuality with hysteria (derived from the idea that a woman’s uterus could become unmoored and wander through the body, leading to uncontrolled emotional outbursts).

Laugh-In: Already mentioned under Goldie Hawn, Dan Rowan and Dick Martin's Laugh-In was a sketch comedy variety show that featured a number of other famous comedians. Here are a couple of clips of the iconic "joke wall" segment: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4P9PdQYRVV8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ioA1JzbLPo> The show aired on Monday nights and was immensely popular. It ran from 1968-1973.

Hand Jive: You may know the hand jive from *Grease*, but that version is based on an actual dance trend from the 1950s, which apparently arose in London in a club where there was not enough room for full-body dancing. Here is a 1958 song inspired by the hand jive:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxU995zbfno>

Siempre 'ta pegao como una pulga en culo el perro: He's always stuck like a flea on the ass of a dog.

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Cleopatra/Liz Taylor: Elizabeth Taylor played Cleopatra in a 1963 film opposite Richard Burton. They got married in 1964 and divorced in 1974 (then got married again in 1975 and divorced a year later).

Mandingo: A racist insult referring to a stereotype of Black men as virile and oversexed. Also the title of a 1975 Blaxploitation film.

Guido: A derogatory term referring to a working-class Italian-American.

[Vestido] como la puerca de Juan Bobo: Dressed like Juan Bobo's pig, an idiomatic expression meaning to be behaving inappropriately. Based on a Puerto Rican story about Silly Juan who put one of his mother's dresses on the family's pig and sent the pig to church.
<https://www.newyorklatinculture.com/juan-bobo/>

Judy Garland: Born Frances Gumm in 1922, started a performance career in vaudeville and starred in numerous films including *The Wizard of Oz*, *Meet Me in St. Louis*, and *A Star Is Born*. The recent biopic *Judy* is mostly about her later years. She died June 22, 1969.

The Beatles: British band who would release the album *Abbey Road* later in 1969. In 1968 they had been exploring yoga and Indian mysticism.

The Stooges: Punk band featuring lead singer Iggy Pop. Here is a 1969 performance:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vwmU343eBu0>

The Bee-Gees: British/Australian group whose core members were the Gibb brothers. If you know their disco hits from the 1970s, their earlier songs may sound different. Here's "I Started a Joke" (1968):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jrg1UAixGaM>

Ay, Coño, me muero de la risa. Casi me meo encima.: Oh, man, I'm dying of laughter. I almost pissed myself.

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One hundred and ten street: The border between Central Park and Harlem, at the north end of Central Park and the southern end of Harlem. (Tano variously claims to be from 110th Street, 121st Street, and Waverly Place.)

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The lunatic in the White House in 1969 would be Richard Nixon, who had been inaugurated in January. The 1968 campaign was tumultuous and violent, including the assassination of candidate Robert F. Kennedy.

Judy Garland, que ha hecho esa puta por mi: Judy Garland, what has that bitch done for me?

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81st Street between Madison and Fifth Avenue: Frank E. Campbell Funeral Chapel still exists. Address is 1076 Madison Ave. Currently the fastest routes for traveling by public transit from Stonewall to this location would involve train-to-bus transfers and would take 30-40 minutes. Here is a map of the New York subway system in 1969: <https://www.nycsubway.org/perl/show?/img/maps/calcano-1969-system.gif> The closest subway station to the Stonewall Inn is Christopher Street/Sheridan Square. Closest subway station to the funeral home is 77th Street. At the time, it would likely have been more logical to walk to Spring Street and take the IRT to 77th.

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Pigs: A negative term for police officers. Possibly derived from nineteenth-century England, but its currency in the United States in the late 1960s stemmed from Yippie protestors at the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. The Yippies brought a live pig named “Pigasus” to the venue and nominated Pigasus as a mock presidential candidate.

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Liza Minnelli: One of Judy Garland’s children. Her father Vincente Minnelli was rumored to be gay, and having affairs with men while married to Judy Garland. She was finding some success as a performer in the 1960s, but her career really took off in the 1970s. Kander and Ebb wrote a song that helps us all spell her name (“Liza with a Z”): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWURas7fYwk>

Johnny Carson: Late night talk show host. Replaced Jack Paar on the *Tonight Show* on NBC in 1962 and continued to host the show until 1992.

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Jackie-O: Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy Onassis, married to President John F. Kennedy until his death in 1963 and then married Aristotle Onassis in 1968. A style icon. Also the subject of a fairly recent biopic (*Jackie*, 2016).

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Dime: 10 cents in 1969 would equate to 76 cents in 2022. Subway fare was 20 cents. A pay phone call would be 10 cents.

Coño e como tener un hijo retardo (morón) allí: Fuck, it’s like having a ret*rded brother. (Can substitute “moron” to avoid R-word.)

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Manhole: A defunct NYC gay bar formerly located at 28 9th Ave. (In the meatpacking district between the West Village and Chelsea.)

Trolls and witches and fairies: These are people who are not attractive to Tano. A “troll” would typically be an older gay man.

Paddywaggoned: Everybody gets arrested and put in the “paddy wagon,” a police vehicle whose name is associated with belligerent drunks of Irish descent.

Bendita: Meant as a blessing or benediction.

Malcolm X: Born Malcolm Little (1925-1965). A Civil Rights activist who advocated Black nationalism. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* is worth reading, and Spike Lee’s 1992 film *Malcolm X* is worth watching. (Tano’s invocation of Malcolm X feels ironic, given Mika’s suggestion of non-intervention here.)

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Carajo, llama la policia que se lleven las putas esas pa’allá: Damn, call the police to take away those whores over there.

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I don’t call myself a lesbian, I call myself a d*ke...: Roberta is actively reclaiming terms that would be considered insults by others, rejecting the more polite term. There is a long tradition of this in radical LGBT culture, with activist groups like Queer Nation reclaiming “queer” in the 1980s. For a deep dive, see Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality, volume 1*, in which he uses the concept of “reverse discourse” to argue that the invention of “homosexual” as a negative medical term in the nineteenth century paradoxically allowed for the rise of “homophile” movements because it made sexual orientation a legible identity in a new way. Alison Bechdel’s long-running comic *D*kes to Watch Out For* is the origin of the Bechdel test: <https://www.npr.org/2017/07/14/537052343/>

N-word: Roberta is similarly reclaiming this racial slur, which apparently derives from a corruption of the Spanish word “negro” meaning “black.” African and Caribbean writers and activists such as Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Leopold Sédar Senghor were part of the négritude movement arguing for a similar reclamation of the similarly pejorative French word nègre (similarly pejorative). Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor has argued that the force of the n-word shifted during the nineteenth century due to its use by white performers in blackface minstrel shows. Dr. Pryor has several accessible TED Talks on the topic of the N-word, including this one:

https://www.ted.com/talks/elizabeth_stordeur_pryor_why_it_s_so_hard_to_talk_about_the_n_word?language=en

Women’s Movement and Black Panthers: Roberta points out that Second Wave feminists excluded her as a Black woman and that Black radical activists excluded her as a woman-loving-woman. For more on this: <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/lesbians-20th-century/lesbian-feminism> And here is an interesting oral history article about members of the Gay Liberation Front traveling to attend Black Panther rallies in the 1970s: <https://www.harpersbazaar.com/culture/features/a36651331/the-incredible-true-adventure-of-five-gay-activists-and-the-black-panther-party/>

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Grazing in the grass...: This was the number 3 song on the Billboard chart in June 1969, by the group Friends of Distinction. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuOMWMRh93I>

En el nombre del padre, del hijo, y del espiritu santo: Tano may make the sign of the cross, saying “In the name of the father, the son, and the holy spirit. I pray for the lives of these sinful lesbians.”

West Side Story: 1961 film based on a stage musical, adapting the story of Romeo and Juliet as a conflict between a white gang (the Jets) and a Puerto Rican gang (the Sharks). Scholar Enrique García’s perspective on this film may be useful: <https://www.latinxspaces.com/latinx-film/west-side-story-reflections-of-a-professor-papa-and-diasporican>

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121st Street: Tano is probably from East Harlem, also known as Spanish Harlem.

Waverly Place: a few blocks from the Stonewall. The Waverly Diner is famously invoked in the song “Frank Mills” from the musical *Hair* as the place where the singer met Frank Mills.

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Helen Keller: A Deaf-Blind disability rights activist whose life inspired a play and film, *The Miracle Worker* about her teacher Annie Sullivan. Keller was also a socialist: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/keller-helen/intro.htm>

Bleecker Street: Also not far from the Stonewall. Here is some history of LGBT culture on Bleecker Street: <https://www.villagepreservation.org/2014/11/18/lgbtq-history-bleecker-street/>

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Carajo ‘ta bien, ‘ta bien, ‘TA BIEN: Damn, it’s all good, it’s all good, it’s all good. (Or that’s enough, that’s enough, that’s enough.)

Seeing a show down the way at eight: May refer to the Off-Broadway Lucille Lortel Theatre, then called Theatre de Lys, at 121 Christopher Street. The musical *Dames at Sea* had a long run there beginning in April 1969, with Bernadette Peters in the role of Ruby, a role she had originated at Caffé Cino (Off-Off Broadway). In the opposite direction, the Orpheum Theatre at St. Mark’s Place had another long-running Off-Broadway musical called *Your Own Thing*, based on Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Broadway options uptown included *Hair*, 1776, *Man of La Mancha*, *Oh, Calcutta* (which had just opened June 17), Woody Allen’s *Play It Again, Sam* and *Hello, Dolly* starring Pearl Bailey. Broadway productions of *Hamlet*, *The Miser*, and the Jerry Herman musical *Dear World* had recently closed.

Billy Cowan (and the sports section): Baseball player (outfielder) who played for the Yankees in 1969 until he was traded to the California Angels in July. The Yankees were out of town playing the Detroit Tigers. He had one at-bat against the Tigers on June 25 and did not play in the game on June 26. [NYT Sports page for June 27, 1969 available in SharePoint Dramaturg folder.] Wimbledon tennis was underway in England, and Billie Jean King would be the runner-up in the women’s singles final on July 4. Outed as a lesbian in 1981, King was a feminist icon and won a famous “Battle of the Sexes” tennis match against male chauvinist Bobby Riggs in 1973.

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Lorna Luft: Daughter of Judy Garland and Sid Luft; Liza Minnelli's younger half-sister.

53 Christopher Street: Address of the Stonewall Inn.

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porque la mierda esta caliente, no trabajo mañana, and my puto landlord puso un raton enormous en mi apartamento: Because it's hot as shit, I don't have work tomorrow, and my landlord put an enormous mouse in my apartment.

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The Five and Dime:

S*mbo: An anti-black racial slur used as a character name in literary texts such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Little Black S*mbo*.

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West 10th [Street] and 6th Avenue: A couple of blocks northeast of the Stonewall.

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Otter: Possibly meaning a hairy gay men of slim-to-medium build. A large, hairy gay man might identify as a Bear. This meaning would probably be anachronistic, as a distinction between Bears and Otters appears to date from the 1980s.

Gone with the Wind: A sweeping, epic 1939 film about the Confederate South. It seems possible that Tano is using this as a stand-in for any big epic movie where characters shout each other's names. (Marlon Brando yelling "Stella" at the end of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, for example.)

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por meter mano y echar el polvo: To put [my] hand in and get you off. Or, to get involved with you and have sex (lit. "throw up dust").

come mierda nelly busssdown traga leche: Eat shit, nelly busted-down milk-drinker.

y hasta tu madre cabrona: and even your mother, bitch.

Sp*c: Slur dating from around 1913 and likely originated in the Panama Canal zone, mocking Spanish-speakers' pronunciation of the phrase "No speak English." A 2015 article by Juan Vidal discusses the history of this word. It also includes other racist language.

<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/03/03/388705810/>

W*tback: A slur referring to migrants who traveled through bodies of water, particularly undocumented Mexican immigrants who crossed the Rio Grande to enter the United States. The Spanish-language equivalent, *mojado* (wet), is used within immigrant communities somewhat controversially.

<https://www.latimes.com/local/la-xpm-2013-apr-01-la-me-latino-labels-20130402-story.html>

docks and bath-house: Places to cruise for sex, both somewhat distant from the Stonewall Inn. The "docks" refers to the West Side Piers, within walking distance. (<https://hornet.com/stories/nyc-piers-1970s-book/>) Bath-houses functioning in 1969 included Everard Baths at 28 West 28th Street and

Continental Baths at 73rd and Broadway. Patrons could rent a room or a locker, granting access to shared spaces.

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On the turnpike: Probably the New Jersey Turnpike.

NOW: National Organization for Women

CVO: Could be something like Civic Veterans' Organization?

TLC: Tender Loving Care

ASAP: As soon as possible

P and V: Maybe Piss and Vinegar?

An illegal bar owned by the Mob: On Mafia control of NYC gay bars, see this interview with author Phillip Crawford, Jr.: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/gqmym3/how-the-mafia-once-controlled-the-new-york-gay-scene-616>

And to wrap up, here is a playlist of the Billboard Hits of 1969:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3i3ch1EZ_Ak&list=PLONqtwi88v_7soxzPisf3HrR5s5l3QfJi&index=1

And the Billboard Hot 100 for June 21, 1969 and June 28, 1969:

<https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1969-06-21/>

<https://www.billboard.com/charts/hot-100/1969-06-28/>