

FORUM: ANNA LVOVSKY'S VICE PATROL: COPS, COURTS, AND THE  
STRUGGLE OVER URBAN GAY LIFE BEFORE STONEWALL

## Introduction: Rethinking the Policing of Homosexuality in Modern America

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In 2021, Anna Lvovsky published *Vice Patrol: Cops, Courts, and the Struggle over Urban Gay Life Before Stonewall* with the University of Chicago Press. The book studies gay communities' confrontations with criminal law in the mid-twentieth-century United States. Lvovsky, a professor of law and affiliate professor of history at Harvard University, pays particularly close attention to law enforcement practices that aimed to police homosexuality, as well as "the gay world's confrontations with the law." What results is a complex story of regulation and contestation that spans several decades, which is poised to not only influence how historians understand the policing of sexual difference, but also push forward understandings of the United States war on crime and the inter-related rise of the carceral state.

*Law and History Review* invited several distinguished interdisciplinary scholars to offer their thoughts on the importance and historiographical significance of Lvovsky's work. Steven Maynard is adjunct associate professor in the Department of History at Queens University, author of numerous books and articles on the modern history of sexuality, founder and ongoing co-chair of the Canadian Committee on the History of Sexuality, an affiliate of the Canadian Historical Association, and book review editor of the *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. Yvonne M. Pitts is associate professor of history at Purdue University, and author of *Family, Law, and Inheritance in America: A Social and Legal History of Nineteenth Century Kentucky* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), which won the 2014 Cromwell Foundation Book Prize from the American Society for Legal History. Marie-Amélie George is associate professor at Wake Forest University School of Law, and is currently working on a book entitled *Becoming Equal: American Law and the Rise of the Gay Family*, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press.

We are pleased to bring our readers this lively and detailed discussion of Lvovsky's important book.

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