

Wow.

In 1998 when--

Wow.

Ventura won, he just happened to come out on top.

Yeah, so to speak.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm leaving that one alone--

[LAUGHTER]

Because Mr Ventura is much bigger than I am.

Yes he is. Me too-- everybody is much bigger than me. So what's been going on with Katrina Rose lately?

Just been busy-- keeping busy with writing mostly, although I don't do much for the triangle anymore.

I know.

Just been busy doing law review articles. Those take up quite a bit of time.

Oh, they're so dry.

I try to make them a little bit more lively. Years ago, I had one rejected by someone who told me that it was too readable.

Oh.

[LAUGHING]

Oh, I like that.

And I'm also trying to get my butt in gear to do a book. My sweetie's always after me, well, you need to write a book. So [INAUDIBLE], I'm going to, eventually.

And, you can do it.

The weather up in Minnesota is perfect for encouraging you to do things indoors like that.

Yes, yes.

I always tell people, the first log-- well, actually, it was the second one I got, was 130 pages long, and people ask me, how on Earth did you write something like that? Well, it was in Minnesota. I locked myself in my apartment. What else was I going to do?

Well, another person--

I guess I could have gone out and played hockey, but you know--

Someone else who I think writes well is Jesse Wicks and she's up North, too, so maybe--

Me and my sweetie had dinner with her and her sweetie a couple of weeks ago.

So--

Really wonderful barbecue place in Minneapolis.

Oh.

Well, so maybe if she's stuck inside too she'll write more, because I know there's a book or two in her.

Oh yeah.

Yeah, yeah.

Yeah, and we miss both of you.

But your aim is getting better, right?

[LAUGHING]

If you could see Jenna right now.

Bad pun.

Yes.

But one that won't get us thrown off the air.

There you go. You want to chat about anything else?

I'm actually going to be silent now.

Really?

I'm really going to show decorum and restraint and turn it back to the host of the show--

OK.

And let him speak.

Well, we're going to go to a piece of music then-- that's how I do it here. And, we'll be that way.

This was requested a couple of weeks ago by someone-- Oh, where is it?

You know who you are.

Yes, I know who I am. Music request-- Rick in Galena Park asked for this because it reminded him of the lover that he lost last Christmas. And this is by, actually, it's by Wham. Now, most of us in this room are old enough to remember Wham. And--

[LAUGHING]

And--

1984.

And those who don't will recognize, probably, George Michael. And-- yeah, that's right.

Who at that time insisted that he was not gay.

Right. Well, he was something. And this is called "Last Christmas". This is for Rick in Galena Park. You're listening to it on After Hours, Queer Radio with Attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station.

Hi this is Joan Devlin. You're listening to KPTFT's lesbian and gay voices. We want to create the political climate for same sex marriages.

Let's just talk about some of this stuff.

A neutron lesbian strikes again. We're going to be doing some radical radio right now.

Legal changes decriminalizing gay sex.

We celebrate the diversity.

Welcome to another edition of Lesbian and Gay Voices. This is Jack Falinski.

It wasn't until I had lived with a woman for a year that it even occurred to me to ask, do you think we're lesbians?

Civil rights for gays, the ending of don't ask don't tell.

Listen to lesbian and gay voices.

My prediction, Al Gore, 276 electoral votes, George W. Bush, 262.

That's lesbian and gay voices Mondays at 8:00 PM.

I hear gay people.

Welcome back. You're listening to After Hours Queer Radio with Attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. Before we get into our second segment tonight with Chris Harrison, we've got a couple of things here.

Hey--

Hey, Bobby--

How you doing?

OK.

Happy holidays everybody. Looks like it's going to be a happy holiday after that election, at least for some of us. But I just wanted to make a quick shout out to some friends, some of my friends who work at two of my favorite establishments, Lobo's and Crossroads, just in case they happen to be listening.

Oh.

Happy birthday, Carl. Hope you're having a blast, not that I really expect that you're listening at this hour, but happy birthday anyhow in case you are.

Carl.

Carl, yes.

Do I know Carl?

No, you've never met Carl.

OK.

Carl has not been here.

OK.

He's one of the few who I have not dragged into this station with me. Some of them stick around, like this one here.

MAN: Yeah, I noticed Ryan. Yeah. Oo Yeah. So much of him is sticking around here.

MAN: And I just want to-- in case any of my friends, and Clay, and all of those guys, much love. Hope you're having fun if you're out and about and all that goodness. Much love. I'll see you soon.

MAN: OK.

MAN: I love you, Jimmy, you know that.

MAN: Thank you, Ryan.

MAN: I believe rainbow has as a happy birthday too.

MAN: Happy birthday to Bette Midler, if she happens to be listening. The old girl is 56 now.

MAN: 56. Oh, my God. She's older than me, and she doesn't look a day past--

MAN: Fabulous.

MAN: And she doesn't look a day past 65.

MAN: Hell, she looks a hell of a lot better than I do. I'll tell you.

MAN: You know we're global now. She just might be tuning in.

MAN: Ooh, that's right. WWW.KPFT.org. Anywhere in the world. Chris?

MAN: Oh, you finally turned on my mic.

MAN: No, it's been on.

MAN: Oh. I tapped it before. I didn't hear it.

MAN: Ah ha.

MAN: I was-- I'm sorry. I couldn't see there the red glow off of Ryan's face there.

MAN: I see.

MAN: We know-- Ryan, Jimmy knows you love him. He's just hoping you'll love him a little more.

MAN: Oh, well. Careful. Careful. Lovers in town.

MAN: Oh, like he's listening.

MAN: Hey, it's true.

MAN: Please. He went to bed when the polls were still open.

MAN: This is the After Hours News and views magazine. And this is the holiday season, so we're going to talk about holiday headaches. You may have seen the article in last week's triangle. And joining us is Chris here. It's going to be confused. We got to Chris's in the booth here. Chris from the Montrose Counseling Center.

MAN: Hi, Chris, I'm glad to be here tonight.

MAN: Oh, it's going to be one of those nights.

MAN: Yes, it is. Yes, it is.

MAN: It's strange because usually you think if we're going have a bunch of people in here from talking on our topic here, it'd be like Steven. It's the brand name around.

MAN: We're going to be Chris one and Chris two, I guess.

MAN: No, no. It's Chris squared.

MAN: That's right.

MAN: We're making fun of--

MAN: Chris squared.

MAN: Jimmy does another show and it's Jim squared.

MAN: OK.

MAN: So, it is the holiday time. This is the-- a six week period where we've got three major holidays that are based on gathering together. Thanksgiving, Christmas, and then your New Year's coming up, and it does take a toll in this community. And that's what want to talk about tonight. And if Roy would answer the phones, we can also take phone calls.

MAN: That's 713-526-5738. 526-KPFT.

MAN: And so basically, let's go-- we've always talked, there's been this general problems in the community around these family times. How much is it really out there or is it something that's just kind of hyped up a bit.

MAN: Well, I think it's really out there. It's not out there for everybody, or it can be out there to certain degrees. For some, it's debilitating and it causes major problems. And other people, it's just a minor glitch in their life. The different people we deal with in a Counseling Center obviously are there because it's causing larger problems or major problems. And so we sort of have that view more and have to remind ourselves that there's a lot of people out there that could be going home to spend time with family or spending time with their partners and aren't having any problems at all and having actually a great time.

MAN: Yeah. Because I mean, one of the things we talk with on this show is level of acceptance from families. And Jimmy and I kid about this back and forth the fact of my family has been somewhat accepting and have massive, massive attacks of neurosis over it. And I've often joked about the-- made the joke that I-- people, sometimes, when they come out to their families are abandoned, and I consider them, quite often, the lucky ones. And a lot of people really don't feel that way.

MAN: No.

MAN: It's a strange show up there with Jimmy because he is of that situation.

MAN: Yes. I was kicked out of the house at age 17 because my parents found out I was gay, and that was many years ago and they've never looked back. So I've had to learn to create my own family.

MAN: I think it's always tough, in my mind, to compare pains. My pain to your pain.

MAN: Yeah. That's right. Yeah, you don't get into that pissing contest.

MAN: Because you can wonder, there are people who are alone and maybe have been kicked out of their family, and maybe what's happened is they've created their own family of choice and actually have very enjoyable Christmases.

MAN: Actually, much better ones.

MAN: Compared to somebody who might not be out to their family and still goes home and then therefore has to go through this great transformation to go home, and suddenly, I'm a straight person or I'm a blank slate for those couple of days that I'm home. And there's all these parts of my life I can't talk about. Or these people that are in kind of a quasi relationship with their family where we sort of know it, but we never talk about it. So of course, you can't bring your partner home, and we don't really want to know about anything else.

MAN: Oh, Yeah.

MAN: Yeah, and that's one of the things I've-- in my years since I've come out and all that, I've gotten a point where I really don't care. But now it's one of these situations where I'm seeing it for the first time because of some family get togethers here. I'm going to be spending some time with one of my grandmothers and an Uncle, who I haven't seen in since years before I came out. And it's one of these things like, OK, I have to-- I'm going to be getting those questions. Because when you don't talk to somebody on the phone, you don't get those questions. But the traditional grandmother question the family member is, well, who are you seeing? And who are you going out with?

And since both of my brothers have girlfriends, it's going to be like this, I'm the lone wheel in this little party. And it's one of those things, we see that going through the community a lot that the people are fighting these struggles.

MAN: One of the things I experienced early on when I came out to my-- it was my siblings, my brother and sister. They were very accepting, but they kind of added at the end, but let's don't tell mom and dad because they're getting old. Weak hearts, it could kill them. And that would be a very excruciating situation to be in where I'm home and some of the family knows, but it's like, Uncle George is coming, or the don't let the grandkids find out, or certainly don't let grandma hear any of this kind of stuff.

Unfortunately for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender people, coming out is a lifelong process. And it's every day, do I now-- I've met this new person, do they know? Is it worth telling them? That can start just on the way home. You could be sitting on the plane next to somebody who starts saying gee, you know, where are you going? What are you're doing? Here's the pictures of my family. You're married, you know, and all that.

And you decide, well, for this two hour flight, do I want to come out? Do I just shut up or read a book? And then when you get home, even if you're out to your family, who knows if they've kept it a secret from the neighbors. And so when the neighbors pop over--

MAN: Oh, Yeah.

MAN: Because that's one of things I'm running into with my brothers, their other family, his girlfriend's parents know. And so it's like, I'm trying to hush my dad down because he's starting to get into topics that may border on that. And it's like, I had to find out later on that they know so it's not a big deal. But it's one of those things we always talked about, the ongoing experience of the coming out process. And I can see during the holidays, things already get enough crazy, and this year in particular with September 11th events, It seems, I think the whole country, basically they keep saying it's a Prozac nation right now. If you're not taking Prozac or Cipro, something's wrong.

MAN: Well, besides being afraid of your Christmas cards in the mail, I think if you try to take Christmas in terms of September 11, and Christmas has enough problems the holidays of there own.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: But certainly, there's thousands of families out there this year who have lost loved ones and are dealing with their first holidays with a loss, and that usually triggers and brings up the first Christmas without dad home, or without our son, or brother, or sister, or mother. But for me, one of the big things about-- to me, if you want to ask me what's the one major thing that causes problems in these holidays is, our expectations are too high or they're unrealistic. The more I can treat it like any other day, the less stress, the better off I'll be.

And one of the things I've been hearing everybody talk about since September 11th is this Christmas needs to be real special. This is the time to go and cherish the people that you love. And so you're supposed to go home to your family. And usually the pressure is on that this has got to be the Walton Christmas anyway.

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: Even if your family bares no resemblance to that at all. And it's much more like The Simpsons or something like that. But now with September 11th, it's like, we really have to say the things to each other that we've never said before and we've got to be closer and bond. And not only do you have the orientation and sexuality test and hoops you got to jump through, but maybe even there's some patriotism hoops that you might have to jump through, or you might be subject or exposed to some really racist conversations, and with racial profiling and judgments, and all of that. But if our expectations are that, if I can just survive the holidays.

MAN: Oh, Yeah. Because that's-- I mean, that's the big thing what you're seeing here is the resurgent with a lot of different people wanting to pull you in different directions. And I can understand that wanting that Walton family, Saturday evening Post type of Christmas event. And I'm from the kind of family that we used to watch the dysfunctional family shows like Roseanne and Married with Children and going, are they peeking at our windows to write stories?

MAN: Exactly.

MAN: It's one of those things, I mean, we as a community, I don't think in the Houston we really are that bonded together as a community. We had a Thanksgiving meal over at the community Center, and the turnout I heard was not really that great. There was a turnout, but it really, really wasn't that feeling of community. And Thanksgiving is traditionally that one where you go to visit people event. That's why they say it's always the busiest travel time, it's because you're going elsewhere.

And the Christmas time is that-- is that nuclear family, more nuclear part of that. And I can definitely see where coming with the events there, people just going to work and losing them forever.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: How people want to make those holiday just a little more special.

MAN: Nowadays to, you could have family members who are off in the Service now.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: And you're worried about that or--

MAN: Something that hasn't happened in an entire generation or more.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: One of the things, when it comes to talking about the holidays, I always kind of differentiate or add is that the holidays are tough for everybody. And everybody, including straight people have certain pressures on them for the holidays, and that is like, let's have the Walton Christmas. And whether I'm straight or gay, if my family is not the Waltons and I'm coming there saying, but this time maybe it'll happen, or if I'm taking it all on myself, maybe if I'm better it'll all be different. Or there's a lot of financial pressure. You're supposed to go out and get the best and the biggest gifts and kids are pushing for more and more.

MAN: Absolutely.

MAN: And that just may not-- you just may not have the budget with the crash and the layoffs and everything else in the markets. Or if you're from Enron, and you're working with Enron.

MAN: Boy, you don't have any money.

MAN: Yeah, there's that kind of stress. There's oftentimes just ordinary religious conflicts. If you come from a family that's not really getting along well with each other, or maybe you come from a family where one of your parents was alcoholic when you were growing up, or any of those kinds of issues. Or you've never gotten along with your siblings and it's always competition of whose kids are doing the best or who's going to bring the best food, that all gets magnified.

So you take that, and then if you add to that the additional problems for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people that come in. For me, one thing we haven't talked about it would be like just the whole religious issue. Unfortunately, the holidays around Christmas, we try to say happy holidays and make it as non-sectarian as possible, but it is a very religious time.

MAN: Oh, Yeah.

MAN: Yeah, between Christmas, we have Hanukkah.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: They're making a big deal-- somewhat of a big deal out of it this year, Eid, which is a Muslim holiday. The Post always had a big deal with this. They had-- were going to issue a stamp commemorating it.

MAN: Oh.

MAN: And they said, we're still going to do it. They made a mistake when they sent out the promotional posters for all the holiday stamps, it was left off. So they had to go back and reprint those, and they said that was just a little mix up and misunderstanding. But it's one of those things, you have a lot of conflicts with just the different groups and all that. I'm not familiar to many people of the Jewish faith. I remember when I was growing up, I had a neighbor who used to celebrate both Hanukkah and Christmas.

MAN: Hey, why not?

MAN: Or if you're Jehovah witness, you can't celebrate anything.

MAN: You don't do anything. Yeah. None of it. Or what about Kwanzaa?

MAN: Kwanzaa. Yeah. But if you're going home to your parents' house, and oftentimes, for many years, we're going somehow connecting with parents. Often, our religion or non-religion is very different than our parents.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: So then the big fight is, when are you going to come to church with us or not? And what's the matter with you?

MAN: Midnight mass.

MAN: You're going to go to hell.

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: Yeah, and that's for everybody. Now you add that for the gay and lesbians, which the issue of religious abuse and religious intolerance, and having grown up with a lot of guilt and shame and being sometimes thrown out of the church or rejected. Then whether even if-- we don't even have a choice sometimes. For some people there is not even a choice to go to church.

MAN: I'm chuckling on the fact of this because I brought in a comedy Christmas-- comedy tape that has a Christmas theme to it, and it's actually based off a religion.

MAN: Oh. That'll be fun.

MAN: I'm sitting there going, I picked a perfect part on that. And some of what we're even talking about is included in the segment. So it's like a great segue into that.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: If you have some-- if anyone out there has any questions, they want to call in and get a little bit of advice here on anything having to do with the holidays, and with just general blues and depression, you can give us a call at 713-526-5738. 713 JAM KPFT, and we'll be glad to hear from you.

MAN: Let me ask you, something that you said earlier in the show and something that I guess it's a button-- it's a hot button for me. Is, what about all of the guilt that's thrown on us when some family member says, Oh, don't tell your mother you're gay, it'll give her a heart attack and it'll all be your fault.

MAN: Don't we love mixed messages? I love you. I accept you. But don't tell granddad. Don't tell mom.

MAN: Yeah, it'll kill her.

MAN: It'll kill her. How many heterosexuals do have to hide their heterosexuality because it might kill their family or their parents?

MAN: None. Yeah. So, Yeah. So I mean, we're just getting the double whammy here.

MAN: My brother came out as being a father on Thanksgiving and there wasn't-- no one was worrying about coronaries then.

MAN: There you go. Yeah.

MAN: These don't bring a whole lot of moral issues or what will the neighbors think as much anymore about that.

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: But those mixed messages can come in 1,000 different ways. It can be we all love--

MAN: Love the sinner, hate the sin.

MAN: Yeah, and I hate that. Or it can be that we all accept you, but my parents aren't out to the neighbors. That's a PFLAG thing. Parents have to come out. They're not out to neighbors then our safety ends at the doorway. And so when the neighbors come, or they go to church, or whatever you're doing for the holidays. Or it can be that we accept you, but not your partner.

MAN: Oh, Yeah. Oh, boy.

MAN: Don't bring him home or don't bring her home.

MAN: Wow.

MAN: And it's OK, you can have them here, but under our house, unless you're married you can't sleep in the same bed.

MAN: Oh, Yeah. Like part with keeping it all in the family, that's how my father wanted to treat me when I came out to him. And-- well, I didn't tell anybody, but I just happened to appear in The Chronicle. In The Chronicle with a picture of me and my name and the word Montrose right above it. So he was kind of upset that we weren't keeping it in the family anymore. I say, well, it wasn't my choice. The Chronicle decided to use that picture much to my surprise.

But it's one of those things that when you're talking here, how out you are to your family and how they can be accepting. Have you heard a lot of cases where people, it seems they've changed their acceptance to the bad side of, they seem to be accepting, but then something outside affects them, a person. And they decide, I really can't tolerate this anymore.

MAN: Once in a while. Once in a while you hear the case where they get closer to church. Like, now, everybody's saying that since September 11th, people are going to church more. So if, suddenly, your parents start going to church, and then they start getting those messages, they might start visiting that back on you. That we just heard our pastors that you're going to hell and now we're concerned about you.

I find it sometimes it's kind of a little reversal. It's I can accept-- and usually the first acceptance is, I can accept the idea If I get to that point. OK, you're gay. I can accept that as in my head. But they never-- if they have never been faced with the reality of what that means.

That means that you're going to bring home a same sex partner someday. That means that you might be adopting children. That means that the neighbors are going to find out eventually. Or that-- and those practicalities, if you bring someone home that you're going to want to share the same bedroom. And that's different than this notion in my head that I can accept the concept of being gay, as opposed, can I accept the nitty gritty that you're going to kiss this guy when you toast at Christmas and not expect us to go screaming from the room.

MAN: Yeah. I can-- Yeah, I can see that sort of thing when the--

MAN: I mean, the mistletoe is there. And how will the family feel when the same sex people under the mistletoe?

MAN: Yeah. I could-- because all of it, sometimes, that gets me. Just even out in public seeing a same sex couple kissing. It's like, I'm so-- I have to retreat back so far in my closet, it's like that's something that seems real strange to me still.

MAN: I mean, you'll hear family say, OK, we accept it, but you have to rub it in our face by holding hands like that? Whereas the whole family is all love dovey over Christmas, and your brothers and sisters are all hugging and kissing their straight spouses. And when you get a present, if you lean over and kiss your partner who gave it to you, it's like, well, you're rubbing it in our face now, and that's an inequality that starts to grind on us. It can.

MAN: We have to step in and let you know that you are listening to After Hours, Queer Radio with Attitude here on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. I'm Chris Harrison and Jimmy Carper's in the booth there.

MAN: He's so good. That's why I keep him around, folks.

MAN: Yeah, I'm here to keep the FCC off our backs. Everyone else can get on. Well-- well, it depends on who the FCC person they send there, whether or not they can get on our backs. Right, Jim?

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: We are talking about holiday headaches with Chris here from the Montrose Counseling Center. And why-- well, he doesn't have his headphones on so I can't tell him what to--

MAN: I can hear you.

MAN: OK. Why don't we take a music break for a second here?

MAN: Sure.

MAN: And since we've been talking about religion, at some point in here we'll play this comedy religion. The comedy--

MAN: Just let me know when.

MAN: Well, let's do that. And you have-- and of course you have a Christmas Carol in there as well. Correct?

MAN: Yes. Yes.

MAN: OK. Well--

MAN: You want the song first?

MAN: Surprise me.

MAN: OK.

MAN: Just play them over top of one another.

MAN: I don't think so.

MAN: But like I said, while we're taking the break, if you want to call in any questions. It's 713-526-5738. 713- JAM KPFT.

MAN: Throw it our way back down to the mountains of the Pacific Northwest, and it was December. So the first issue that started when I came home was, would I be going to midnight mass with the rest of my family? Well, Catholicism. I was raised Catholic. Not the kind of Catholic with lesbian nuns or sexually molesting priests or anything like that. We didn't have that. We didn't have it. That takes imagination.

We just didn't have that. I mean, I was an altar boy. I did the whole thing. I was the guy with the stick the little serviettes underneath the senior citizens chins when they came for the body of Christ and would go-- and it's like, the body of Christ, the breath from hell, whatever. Folk mass. Holy. Holy.

And so I don't have big issues about the Church or anything. It's just, I felt sort of like a hypocrite for going because I'm into Jesus. I think Jesus is fabulous. And I'm not into the patriarchy saying they have the direct line to God, all the men in the church. OK. Because as far as I'm concerned, it goes father, son, Holy Ghost, Virgin Mary, way up over the top. They can have the direct line to God, I talked to his mother.

So this is how it goes. We get to midnight mass, right? And I decided to go. I thought it'd be fun to walk into an institution that I sometimes feel basically wants me dead. Whoop! So I with my family and I hit the front doors of my hometown parish and I have a total smart ass attack. I'm just like, hello, Noah the birth. I am Noah. And my mom didn't think that was very funny.

She drags me to the Pew. We sit down, and I realize sitting next to me in the Pew is the head of the anti-abortion hate anyone different league in my hometown. And I'm just like, I was going to snap, man, just snap. And I don't mean, [SNAPPING]. I mean, like a postal worker. OK. Get her.

So she's sitting next to me, right? And the first hymn comes along, I'm a perfect angel, perfect Johnny Mathis. I'm like, (SINGING) All Might One. [GROWLING] she turns and looks at me, she's like, Oh, you have your father's beautiful voice. I'm like, thank you. [GROWLING] The next hymn rolled around, I completely snapped. I just lost it, man. I just completely lost it. OK.

It was the Little Drummer Boy. (SINGING) Come, I told him, but not in my bum. Play it safe. Use latex lube petroleum. Are you my master now? Please make him well hung? She went. My mom, what's wrong with Mrs. Davidson? God, I don't know, mom, bad meds, you know. Thank you, everyone. Mark Davis. Thank you very much for a lovely audience.

MAN: Oh, I'm on, OK. That was Mark Davis from Gan, Las Vegas. A little look at Catholic.

MAN: Yeah, I remember. I remember that now.

MAN: Well, it's hard to remember the little Drummer boy there.

MAN: Oh, no, it's hard to forget that.

MAN: That's my man, it's like-- especially when you hear little Drummer boy, it has a whole different meaning in our community. And who was the Christmas Carol first?

MAN: That was off of the Richard Folk's, a songwriter's Christmas. It's all gay and lesbian singer songwriters. That was called, Ring Bells by Laura Wetzler. And that CD is probably available at Lobo or crossroads.

MAN: I think the one gay from Las Vegas is also. It's-- we've got several-- it's got four comedians from-- performing from Las Vegas. Mark Davis, Scott Kennedy, Elvira Kurt, and I forget who the other lesbian comic is.

MAN: Yeah, me too.

MAN: But it's a fun little CD. I think about that part, and it's kind of like, we're talking about the holidays. And fortunately, the way my family, at one point, was very religious and all that, and we're doing the midnight mass. And I'm a former altar server, so I was serving in the midnight masses and that. But we were talking a little bit there about how the faith affects it, especially around this time.

And do we-- you hear a lot with people who are saying with being a faith and commercial aspects of this holiday, of how we're able to balance the two in our community? Or is it one of these things that it's not any different than the rest of the world?

MAN: Well, I think it's, as tough as it is for everybody to balance the faith, or religion, or the meaning part of it with just the crash-- I can't say that straight. The crass commercialism, and all of the financial and just the junk that goes with it. But if you've been rejected by the religion, so there's an added barrier that the religion that I'm hearing in all the hymns being sung and expressed. If I was told along the way, that that's not for me, that I'm not included.

I mean, just think, if you're a Christian and so you're celebrating Christmas. And you're celebrating redemption and that God sent his only son in the world so that we could live. And then somewhere right after that you were told, but accept you, or that doesn't include you, or that because you have chosen to be gay or lesbian or something that you're excluded from that now, or that every time you are affectionate and loving to your partner that somehow you're stepping out of that grace. That's tough to live with. And it's hard to be reminded of that. It's hard not to be cynical or just want to push all that away.

I think people usually can cope or do end up coping one or two ways with that. One is just kind of shutting the door and completely blocking it out and walking away and saying, I'm going to seal that part of my life away and just never try to deal with it. And in the times when it gets forced back on us, like the holidays, it becomes painful.

MAN: Because I'll admit, I will probably, at some point there Christmas Eve, turn on the tape delay of the midnight mass from the Vatican. Just to see them wheel in the Pope one more time. But it's one of those things where a lot of people can see where the faith. I mean, Oh, come all Ye faithful doesn't have an asterisk after it saying, except-- with the exception of these people.

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: It's one of these things, it's--

MAN: Well, and luckily there are an awful lot of people who have been able to integrate. Deal with the wounding and healing and understand that they are included, and that they are as loved as anyone else. And loved not in spite of who they are, but in and with and because of who they are. And they'll be right there next to everyone else in church, maybe next to you in the regular churches or they're going to Resurrection Metropolitan Community Church, or Bearing one more United Methodists, or Maranatha fellowship, or any of those, or Dignity. And they're going to be there saying that I'm here and I'm celebrating Christmas, and this is making my Christmas celebration even better.

MAN: Yeah. I went to the Resurrection service several years ago. And coming from Catholic services and going to Resurrection MCC, and this was at their old church. It was one of those things where it's-- the first time when I walked in there, I was looking around and going, OK, this is different. And then as the service went on, it's like, they were rapping the pastors as presents. It was something-- it was a different type of-- it was like a culture shock of if, say, someone was to watch some of the-- if a Christian was to go watch Hanukkah celebrations. And that it was just a very interesting thing to see a different point on how the community is.

MAN: I went there once last year it was-- no, more than once. But in December and they did a wonderful skit, and it was I think four different scenarios of people driving home for the holidays. And dealing with each one of them with a different kind of issue or problem or rejection of some kind. And it was gay and lesbian parents, and it was two new people. One thing we haven't talked about too is that inequality in being out.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: That it just occurred to me as we were talking that-- and that's that usually if you're with a partner. And one of the issues for couples, even all couples, straight, whatever, is, you were saying about nesting. Is, what are we going to do for Christmas? We're going to have our own little Christmas ceremony, but your parents want us to come to their house, or my parents want us to come to their house. And of course, they live at opposite ends of the country. Who's going to feel hurt and slighted? So that's a pressure.

MAN: Yeah.

MAN: That's an added pressure if you're a gay or lesbian couple and say, I'm out to my folks, but you're not out to your folks. So I can bring you home to my family, but you can't bring me home to your family. Or your family maybe knows about me, but says, don't you dare bring them home. Or if we're-- just those different levels.

MAN: Different kind of boundaries now. It's-- I have that effect there. I'm not in a relationship or anything, but my brothers who are in straight relationships, it's kind of like, OK, we don't do Christmas until we find out when they're going to be here. And we can get the-- we can get the majority amount of people here in the house at one time, and that's when we start Christmas. And it's like, when you're small kids, it's that thing, well, OK, we woke up, it's now officially the 25th. It's Christmas beginning.

MAN: Yes.

MAN: But when you're changing your stuff around and you're doing Christmas at noon, and I'm going over and spending time with my family because-- and the other ones are off to the other parents' house doing their thing. I can see where we're talking about a large thing of-- I mean, it's confusing enough, I think, in the straight community of where are we going to go and how are we going to celebrate with everyone that we want to? But you have to check and see, well, who knows me here, who doesn't know me. And probably sounds like some relationships it's a scorecard method of where can we go and be together.

MAN: Certainly, one thing I would encourage couples that Christmas is not the time to fight over why aren't you out to your family more, or why does your family treat me this way or that way. It's much more of a time to try to support each other in whatever the status quo is for that time. And not take it as if you loved me, you would be braver with your family or you would yell at your mother when she gives me that look or something. And-- because that's just going to add to the headaches of the holidays.

MAN: Well, there's also the jokes people saying of coming out at these holidays. These big family events of-- if you're having-- I tend to look a little more to the comedy side and all that. And the one comedian was saying, he came at Thanksgiving dinner, he said, mom, would you pass the gravy to a homosexual, and she handed it to her husband. So I mean, this coming out at a big event like that, some people may feel the added pressure of being in relationships. And hey, let's try and make this coming out rather than a long process because everyone says, well, you come out slowly to everybody.

Well, I've got everyone from my great grandmother to my third cousin seven times removed. Let's come out now. And that's not a good thing because the pressures that we have in our community are already out there with other in the straight community, and it's not a healthy time, really, for anyone to be throwing surprise news on anyone.

MAN: There's all the stresses going on already. So to say, Oh, no, this is the time I'm going to choose to come out to my family. And I would certainly recommend probably not doing that. Taking a visit a little bit earlier on, or writing a letter, or doing something ahead of time. Of course, there's always the accidental outings where the roommate that you are a friend from college that you bring home with you and your aunt actually stumbles in on you to smooching or something. It can be a whole thing too.

MAN: Well, it gives you something new to put in the family newsletter when you send it out on the card.

MAN: I went through the thing not recently with having been out to my family, but it was funny, my nephews were sort of coming of age, and it was the first Christmas I was actually bringing a partner home. And having to ask my brother and his wife, do they know, and if they don't, are you going to tell them? Because, it's like, OK, now, I've come out to the family. But here's now, here's the grandchildren or--

MAN: Here's the next generation coming in.

MAN: And how do we tell them or when do they find out? My family is never one to talk about anything really deep or personal anyway. So I guess, unless they asked it wouldn't have come up, is what they were saying.

MAN: I mean, I can say that I've got a niece that I have that I just love and adore. And she's-- at three years old, she's at that inquisitive stage. And so I'm waiting for those questions eventually here because when my brother was coming back at Thanksgiving-- my other brother was coming home for Christmas-- for a Thanksgiving dinner. And what my niece was asking was is his girlfriend going to be coming here too?

MAN: Yes.

MAN: And so, it's one of those things that I'm waiting for the point that she's going to notice, hey, daddy's got somebody. Nana and daddy-- Nana and pop have people. What about Uncle Chris?

MAN: Why aren't you married? Yes.

MAN: Why is he sitting in the kitchen playing with play-doh rather than out on a date with me?

MAN: Well, I went through this thing where I didn't really necessarily want to come out to my nephews or until I've sort of gotten permission from my brother, from their parents. And they actually were being censored because they didn't want to out me without my permission. And I was saying, it'd be easier if you just did it and got it out of the way.

MAN: Another thing we haven't talked about too, we talked a little bit about, but in terms of September 11th, in terms of losses, and maybe there aren't any there aren't too many people in our listening audience who might have lost people in relationship to September 11th. Although, I'm amazed that even in Houston here, there's family and friends that--