

JIMMY CARPER: Each year, the parade is run as a non-profit organization and it's not supposed to be political in the sense of, whatever, but it is political. It's political to walk off on the street. It's political to have HATCH in there, the young kids. It's political to watch them build their float, and the young kids being able to hold each other and feel good about it, where we had all this guilt as we were growing up.

HOST: Yes.

JIMMY CARPER: To have an East Parker as our city council person.

HOST: And the pagans and the transgendered folks.

JIMMY CARPER: I know. It's incredible. Tom, how do you feel?

TOM Yeah, this is Tom. I heard somebody talking about me there. But anyway. Yeah , when we marched down Main

RICHARDS: Street, and I mentioned this to Write, it never dawned on us at any time what it would grow into. We never thought about it.

Of course, I came out of the closet screaming, I have to admit, because I was in the closet. And Raymond said there was not going to be any cameras there, but they sure had me on the air that night. Now, I don't know where the hell that camera came from, but it was there. But anyway, but I love you for it anyway, Raymond.

JIMMY CARPER: We have someone on the phone who's joining us. OK.

TOM Is it Jewel?

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: It's Jewell.

HOST: Hey, baby.

TOM Hi, Jewell.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: Hi, guys.

ALL: Hey.

JEWEL GRAY: Happy Gay Pride Day.

JIMMY CARPER: Happy Gay Pride.

TOM We love you, Jewel.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: So sad I couldn't be down there tonight. Love you guys too. You guys I just wanted to let you all know that sitting out here, I can-- because I didn't get to go down today, That sitting out here listening to it is as near as I can get to that parade today, and I really appreciate y'all talking about it.

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you.

TOM What about the media did you see any in the media about it?

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: No, I sure didn't. Actually, I'm listening to KPFT on the internet tonight.

TOM All right.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

TOM So you're out of scope.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: I get a better signal off the internet than I do the radio.

[LAUGHTER]

TOM Hey, it's the humidity. Don't worry about it.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: Yeah.

TOM Actually, we had less humidity this year than in recent memory.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: We had a cold front.

RAY HILL: And it came in right on the right time. All of those religious demonstrators were not persuasive to their deity or we would have had bad weather.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, see.

JEWEL GRAY: Yeah, well, from my understanding, from the resident expert, which is Rainbo D. Clown--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JEWEL GRAY: --that it has not rained on a parade in all the years that we've had it.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, that's not true. It did rain on one of our parades at the very end.

JEWEL GRAY: Right at the very last minute.

JACK VALINSKI: Yeah.

JEWEL GRAY: I was there.

JACK VALINSKI: There was a couple of times we thought we'd have to cancel it, but for some reason it would stop. And the past couple of years it's been fabulous. We always put in our parade times as we pass out there it will rain. And sometimes it hasn't.

And today, talking about the media, I didn't see any of it, but I knew channel 39. Even though channel 39 had live trucks, or they did a TV news on the weekend, I knew they'd do it on weekdays. They were out there. 26 was out there.

These are live shots. They did live shots. 26 and 11. 13 was out there, but I don't think they did a live shot. I didn't see if any of the Spanish TV stations were out there. But that was incredible. Just to see

JIMMY CARPER: That's really good.

JACK VALINSKI: Right, and they interviewed some of us earlier to put it on the early newscast, so.

RAY HILL: And print media should be hot tomorrow.

JACK VALINSKI: Oh, yeah.

HOST: That's what I was going to--

RAY HILL: I was present for the print media interview with the gay and lesbian police department contingent, and I thought they handled that very well.

JACK VALINSKI: And I talked to *The Chronicle* about four or five times because the police got there late. Usually we try to have everybody there early so we can do all this, but yeah. I mean, that angle of the story he definitely wanted to get. And it's the other thing about the media that's amazing, it's not like-- you don't have to explain why we're out here. Nor the mayor to be out here anymore.

TOM RICHARDS: I think that's really exciting, the way that politicians [INAUDIBLE]. And you said it's political. Yeah. But back in '76, we were also making a political statement when you think about it. Stonewall was a political statement. OK.

RAY HILL: Well, I cut to-- I was wondering-- this wonderful convertible that was provided by Jackie Thorn and some other of my friends and--

TOM You looked good, Raymond.

RICHARDS:

RAY HILL: --I turned to a seasoned activist sitting next to me, who works for the City Health Department, and I said, look at that hatch bun. I said, when we were that age, and she said, forget it. There was just no way. Yeah. She said my mama caught me in a pair of panties when I was about that age and it was hell to pay.

JEWEL GRAY: Well, I think we ought to erect a statue in Montrose somewhere for Jack Valenti and the job he has done.

RAY HILL: No, no. Now let me do this.

JEWEL GRAY: Year after year, and I don't want to hear any humble talk right now. This is year after year after year, great time.

RAY HILL: Jewel. Jewel, let me tell you something, because I get this humble mouthing from Jack every time I bring it up. I brought it up for the last several years. Let me tell you something. Jack says, oh, other people do it, and I'll bet that's literally true. But Pride Week is the most open and acceptive organization in the city. If you want to get involved with Pride Week next year, you can go to a meeting next month--

JACK VALINSKI: In a city building. In a city building.

RAY HILL: --in a city building. The doors are open. All you've got to do is go and attend two meetings and you're a voting member, and you can make a vote to participate in every decision that is going to be made.

JACK VALINSKI: And every year we start a new slate.

JEWEL GRAY: And be part of history.

JACK VALINSKI: Right.

HOST: No dues.

TOM Oh. I think that the continuance of Pride Week is very important.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: Oh, I look forward to the creativity that future brings.

TOM But I think that, at times, we probably sail down the road, though. Well, let me speak bluntly because I do some

RICHARDS: times. OK. But I have, ever since Brian Bradley and the rest of these have been my teachers, but anyway, we sometimes lose the point on why we have the Pride parade. I think it's vitally important.

Now this is the second year I have not been in the parade. Have not been in a parade, period. I have been in Tampa parades. I have been in Houston parades and other places. This is the second year that I have not been. Because I feel at times we are losing the focus and that maybe this is not the time to say it.

JIMMY CARPER: Well--

TOM Not him anyway.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: --perhaps some of the rally tonight put the political back in it--

TOM I hope so.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: --for a lot of people.

TOM I hope so.

RICHARDS:

RAY HILL: Well, I don't know. See, I don't know if-- to me, politics is the self-fulfillment, the empowering-- I think empowering people is the most political thing you can do.

JEWEL GRAY: I agree.

RAY HILL: And empowering people is something that certainly happened tonight. I looked out there, and over half-- understand that there's some of those old lesbians, Tom, that walked down Main Street with us in 1976 along the parade route today, and let me tell you, whenever they saw me-- because there's this thing about Ray Hill and old lesbians and I don't even understand it.

JEWEL GRAY: I'll tell you sometime.

RAY HILL: Yeah. Yeah, Jewel. You'll have explain it to me.

JEWEL GRAY: It's the beard.

RAY HILL: It's the beard? Is that what does it? But at any rate, some of those women literally love me and have loved me for years because I piped a little liberty and freedom and self-actualization into their life by having the guts to stand up and confront the police or whatever it was.

JEWEL GRAY: Well, I'm one of those lesbians who's loved you for 20 years.

RAY HILL: And let me tell you, those women are, for the most part, living in couples, for the most part, living in the burbs. And they come down here for Pride Week every year, and it is their only night out. And they see those kids, who really don't have a hint of what it feels like--

JEWEL GRAY: Not a clue.

RAY HILL: --to have a police boot on your neck.

JACK VALINSKI: Yeah.

RAY HILL: They do not have a hint of what it's like to be dragged out of a bar because you're a woman in a pair of Levi's. They do not have a hint of what it's like to face the reality of going to jail because you're a man in a skirt. They don't have a hint and all that. And you know what? I hope they never have a hint.

JEWEL GRAY: You bet. I was going to say, thank god they don't.

JACK VALINSKI: Hear, hear.

RAY HILL: Because in reality, these are the good old days.

JEWEL GRAY: That's right.

RAY HILL: For gay people. You can get as nostalgic as you want to, but before I get too far away from the topic that I was fixing spiel on on Jack. Jack operates as the CEO and the main role model for this organization. The most open, deliberately Democratic.

You can walk in there tomorrow. I don't care whether you got on heels or don't even have on shoes, there are no dues necessary. If you're willing to help with the work, you can help with the decisions, and that is the principle that I think this community should be most proud of.

TOM RICHARDS: And he should receive a great deal of thanks by the fact that there probably is not enough of us to express the kind of thanks that he deserves.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I do want to mention that Jack is the recipient this year of the Schwab award, which is, I think, one of the most--

JACK VALINSKI: It's the activist award.

JIMMY CARPER: It's like the most prestigious thing going here.

JACK VALINSKI: And the one thing, though, I do have to say is I'm so proud of the diversity in the parade.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: We have incredible amounts--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, we do.

JACK VALINSKI: --of wonderful people in the parade. The unity committee, I am just so proud that they want to be in the parade every year.

JEWEL GRAY: We have straight people in the parade.

RAY HILL: Absolutely.

HOST: Sure, sure.

RAY HILL: And we have straight people that vote our way. We have straight people that participate in our decisions on how to vote. There never has been the heterophobic aspect of this community.

TOM RICHARDS: It is still a dream of mine, it is still a fantasy, and you know I've had it for several years, that some of the old farts that were in that first march would be able to get back in again. But many of us are dead and gone--

RAY HILL: And the rest of us are so lame I couldn't walk.

TOM RICHARDS: I know. And it just-- but it's still a fantasy of mine that I would love--

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: We get them together and we will put them in for you.

TOM RICHARDS: But the biggest problem is, too, that many of us gave up wealth because we love our community and we're willing and we don't have the money to pay for a large float or even, probably, a huge entry fee.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, come talk to us.

RAY HILL: I think just like the police officers created probably the most resounding response because it was new, [INAUDIBLE] past time-- as a matter of fact, the police chief called me and said since they wouldn't let me in the parade this year, I'm going to be on your show Friday night. and so I've got Bradford coming on *The Prison Show* Friday night.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, the amazing thing was Bradford didn't want to upstage his officers.

RAY HILL: And so he's going to wait until next year.

JACK VALINSKI: He's just that kind of guy.

RAY HILL: He's going to wait until next year and do that.

JEWEL GRAY: Listen, guys, I'm going to have to go. I hate to cut in, but I wanted-- I do want to say one more thing. To me, and I don't want-- Jack has had plenty of notice tonight, but I just think Jack is like on a ship. They have this one guy who's in charge of the morale. He's called the morale officer, and I feel kind of that Jack is kind of that job in our community. He has kept the morale high.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes.

RAY HILL: For 10 years, he has not made the decisions. He has let them make the decisions, but he's shown them how to go through the debates and make the decisions the hard way and he's done a wonderful job.

JEWEL GRAY: Yes, he has. And I am going to see you all in three weeks?

JACK VALINSKI: Yes.

RAY HILL: We love you, sister.

TOM We love you.

RICHARDS:

JEWEL GRAY: I love you guys. Take care.

JIMMY CARPER: Take care.

JEWEL GRAY: Bye bye.

JIMMY CARPER: Bye, Jewel.

RAY HILL: Now there is a one hell of a beautiful person. Wonderful activism. I've told this story so many times. Whenever we go to-- we had the tornado dance through Marshall Square. I mean, Tom and I both still live over there.

TOM Listen to this, folks. This is great.

RICHARDS:

RAY HILL: We had a tornado come there and it tore Homo Heights up. Westmoreland Square was Homo Heights. It was full of gay people.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

RAY HILL: And a lot of people with AIDS. And what Jewel's job was, she was driving the truck, the van, to carry them over at the Berrien care center.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, she worked for Berrien at that time.

RAY HILL: And so here came a tornado across where a good many of them lived. And so there she was. She pulled up there in the van, and she started going through that building. And not only getting the people out, but getting their medications--

JIMMY CARPER: Their medications.

RAY HILL: --was important, too. Because, I mean, Jewel had this full picture. She didn't just think of them. Let's get people to a safe place, but the people going to a safe place, they got to have their medication, got take them every four hours and all that. And so this young firefighter came up. That's how it is. Young firefighter come up and said you can't go in that building. It's hazardous. And she said, you ain't important enough to stop me.

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

RAY HILL: And them sure wasn't big enough to stop her. She went in there and she got every one of her clients and she carried them to Berrien Memorial Center until the dust settled. And there was 2-by-4's still falling--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah.

TOM Do you realize--

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: I need to break in here, folks, and let everyone know that they're listening to *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude, on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And I have a special announcement. It seems that one of the transgendered folks got separated from the rest of the group, and we don't know where she is. She's young, dark hair, answers to the name of Dana, and she's wearing the purple t-shirt with the unity emblem on it. So if anybody has seen her, give us a call at 713-526-5738. Let us know where she is and what's going on.

RAY HILL: We will just find someone to pick her up.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. We sure will.

RAY HILL: Right.

JIMMY CARPER: But we still hear-- I'm Jimmy, and we've got Ray Hill. We've got Jack Valinski and we've got the old curmudgeon, Tom Richards.

TOM Yeah, that old fart.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: Jackie. Jackie Thorn still here. Rainbo's in the background.

RAINBO: Laughing.

JACK VALINSKI: And Rainbo's still in costume.

RAINBO: I'm doing--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

RAY HILL: I mean, Rainbo did the whole thing on foot--

JACK VALINSKI: Twice.

RAY HILL: --twice.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes.

RAY HILL: And I did that one year. And I'm a little older than Rainbo, but--

JIMMY CARPER: Not much

RAY HILL: --it's tough.

[LAUGHTER]

Tough run.

JIMMY CARPER: But Rainbo's older than God.

RAY HILL: Well, actually we say we laugh a lot and we have a good time, but one of the things Gene Herring-- not Gene Herrington--

JACK VALINSKI: It's crazy Gene Herrington

RAY HILL: --but Lee Herrington, the other crazy Herrington. Lee Herring-- I'm on the podium, and I'm giving a political speech, and he hands me this card. I still got it in my pocket, and he said, the couple over here, Joe and Javier, met a year ago today. And one of them is in a faraway place like Texas A&M and the other was 50 miles beyond that. And they have gotten together and come back to here to celebrate their anniversary.

And I looked at him and they were so cute. They were such a wonderful, cute, little couple that I had to hog the microphone from Sue Lovell again. I've been doing that for 25 years and I have to stop taking the microphone when we do it.

JIMMY CARPER: No, you'll never stop.

RAY HILL: And I told their story from the podium. Then hours later, the parade comes by, and as I go by, there were still two still sober, enthusiastic, cute, young men, and they said Mr. Hill, Mr. Hill? If we called you, will you have a cup of coffee and visit with us?

And I hope everybody on this wonderful Pride Week evening had an opportunity to have a little romance in your life. It might have worked out exactly the way you wanted, but that's the way that romance is. It doesn't always do that. But I hope you had some kind of feeling and some kind of saw somebody that you were interested enough at least to see again. And it is that kind of bonding-- it's not all about cranial stuff. It's not all about politics. It's about being who we are.

TOM Oh, yeah.

RICHARDS:

RAY HILL: And it's about recognizing that the way we feel about others is OK. It's about getting rid of the fear and getting rid of the guilt and getting rid of the shame and being a real person. Let me do something about gay people, and then I'm going to have to go, because I'm getting old and it's time for me to go to bed.

Nowhere in the history of this world can you find an account of a disadvantaged, unfortunate group of people, facing the kind of crisis that we faced with AIDS in this community. And if you can find an example of it, it is an example of how people ran from the crisis and succumbed to it. But in the '80s and the '90s, Houston's gay, lesbian, transgendered, and bisexual community almost to a person ran toward the crisis.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

RAY HILL: Offered solutions. I knew people, middle class people who had worked hard to live in townhouses that are well furnished, take in off the streets people that had never lived in a house in their life so no one in Houston would die of AIDS on the street.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

RAY HILL: Yes, some people fell through the cracks, but damn few. We paid extra taxes. We went to-- curse it-- all meeting after meeting. I was just at a meeting with the City Health Department in the Houston Planning Council for AIDS, and I said, just 27 years ago, or 22 years ago, because we just celebrated the 20th anniversary of AIDS, a few feet from where we were meeting, we formed the Kaposi's Sarcoma Foundation before we even knew about AIDS.

And there was Deborah Dannenberg and there was all of the people for whom the institution's-- Beecher and Wilson and all of the people that-- McAdory-- and all of the people that our institutions are now named after who succumbed to all of that. And before there was even AIDS, we were dealing with the infection of Kaposi's sarcoma because young men were dying with something. You will not find in history another disadvantaged group of people that have behaved so admirably and with such courage in the face of such horror.

TOM I agree with you, Raymond.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: And today was just a day of celebration.

JACK VALINSKI: Absolutely, absolutely.

JIMMY CARPER: It was time to take a day off and say and just dance in the streets.

JACKIE THORN: Jimmy, let me add two things to what Ray had to say. I came out back in 1982 at The Exile, which is where the parade started off from. And I was involved in probably one of the very first AIDS benefits, and I remember Tuesday Holiday was the emcee that night down there at The Exile. And she got up there and she said, look, we're having a benefit for AIDS. to help raise money.

JIMMY CARPER: Grandma called it GRID or something.

JACKIE THORN: Yeah, it was GRID at that time. But we were hoping to raise money for people who have this disease to help them pay their bills and so forth like that because the United Way and the rest of these charitable organizations won't have a thing to do with us.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

JACKIE THORN: And the second thing is I used to go to-- right down the street here, Bacchus, and around the corner on Stanford was Twins and so forth, which were the lesbian bars. And in the '80s, when the American Red Cross and the blood banks and so forth like that wouldn't touch a gay or bisexual person, male, with a 10 foot pole, it was the lesbians in our community here in Houston that were out there giving blood for our-- I'm sorry. But giving blood for it was used to help the people who had AIDS.

JIMMY CARPER: I remember--

RAY HILL: And that is who we are. That is who we are. And that we run up a flag and say, hey, it is time to celebrate being, and we do that this time of the year, every year. One time, when Greer Price was the chair of Pride Week, I did the press conference because Greer didn't want to do that, and I said, you've always heard that gay people recruit. Well, this is the time of year we do that.

We recruit people to be better citizens. We recruit people to be more responsible. We recruit people to live without fear and shame. Of course, that's not how the edit came out. And Greer was horrified by that. But I want you to know those of you out there listening, you don't have to be gay I love you anyway.

[LAUGHTER]

And you don't give up hope--

JIMMY CARPER: And we've got a lot of--

RAY HILL: You don't give up hope things can get better.

TOM RICHARDS: Well, let me say this. And this is why I wanted you to go on the air. 25 years ago, Ray Hill brought me out of the closet kicking. Now, I went to the parade voluntarily, but I don't know where the hell that camera came from, but it wasn't supposed to be there because I was on the TV that night. But anyway, I was angry with Raymond at that time. Since then I have got to love him, and it's all I can say to you, Raymond, is for 25 years thanks. I love you for it.

JIMMY: Wow.

HOST: Can I say something?

JIMMY: Hard to top that.

HOST: Can I say something? When Jackie was talking about the lesbians having the bar shows and stuff like that, before The Ripcord was called The Ripcord, there was a bar called The Happy Trails, and we were doing shows for-- it was before it was called AIDS. He's doing shows there. It was called GRID, and we were doing shows at these lesbian bars. I remember doing-- Miss D was there. I mean, Danny. I mean, we had all kinds of people doing shows there. And I do remember going to The Exile and doing them down there. Who was the lady that was the bar owner?

TOM Virginia.

RICHARDS:

HOST: Virginia.

JIMMY CARPER: And we also do this for all the people we lost.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes. That's exactly right.

JIMMY CARPER: All the people that we have lost. The talents, the wonderful people. It's just incredible. I mean, that scene from *Long Time Companion*, that movie, when it's sort of the mirage and you remember back everybody you lost. Look at Mike Miesch. Mike Miesch, who was part of this radio station-- his ashes are out in back.

And I didn't even like Mike Miesch when I first met him. and we became good friends working on Wilde 'N Stein at the such time. Just the amazing people we lost and we still continue to lose. And we've got to be safe. I mean, we've got to be safe. Jack, let me give you-- I'd like your impressions of tonight's parade because I know this is kind of your opportunity to debrief, actually.

JACK VALINSKI: It was long. The parade was long, but, I mean, the weather was fabulous. The groups. And sometimes behind the scenes you don't see what's going on.

JIMMY CARPER: Because I've seen you now in the last several weeks, and there have been--

JACK VALINSKI: We had a lot of curves thrown to us this year.

JIMMY CARPER: One problem after another.

JACK VALINSKI: And the major sponsor backed down that was \$20,000 committed to us. That was a big fight.

JIMMY CARPER: That's a big one.

JACK VALINSKI: We had some people resign, but that happens every year.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: Because they've got their lives and stuff like that. We had the flood, which affected so many people a lot more than me or Pride. Lost 6,000 of our Pride magazines. They brought in 5,000 more, but they were the generic, not the Houston total content. We had-- what else did we have? Of course, after the flood, then we had the bugs the past-- I mean, those were the vicious, most vicious bugs I've ever seen--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, I know it.

JACK VALINSKI: --in all my time here.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: The city-- this was the amazing thing. I had called and I don't like to ask for special favors from anybody because we want to do it the right way, the way we need to properly do it, and I had called Annise. Or, actually, I called Cicely at Annise's office and I says, is there any way we can get this thing sprayed? And she says, well, the city doesn't even spray. It's the county.

Well, we don't have very good connections with the county. And then half an hour later, she sends me an email back. She says, wait a minute. They voted last night emergency funds, and Annise said she will vote for this emergency thing, but they also had to do our area. Janine Brunjes, who is our liaison, the mayor has been fabulous working with us, being in the parade, cutting the ribbon.

So we had these curveballs, but the organization, the wonderful people I work with, Ken Donnelly, who do the Pride guy, Troy Christensen who just does some fabulous, fabulous writing in the press releases and--

JIMMY CARPER: He's wonderful.

JACK VALINSKI: Because I can't write for anything.

JIMMY CARPER: And I remember him when he was in college and he's he's just come so far.

JACK VALINSKI: I mean, he doesn't make up these quotes. These are things that we say and stuff like that, puts it together. The co-chairs this year, Lynn Sixkiller and Paul [? Reyes ?]- they were fabulous. The board, Brian Keever, Nick Brines, who is our fundraiser. Nick has been-- I mean, here Nick raises an incredible amount of money with corporate sponsorships, but today he was picking up the water delivering it.

I mean, and let me say this, too. Nobody in that committee was riding in open convertibles. The committee, if they were in the parade, they were on the float. Otherwise, they work the parade. There is no dignitaries in this committee. We all work very hard and--

JIMMY CARPER: And I know you were out there before the parade--

JACK VALINSKI: I don't ride in the parade.

JIMMY CARPER: --doing last-minute things.

JACK VALINSKI: And that's the thing that really-- and then, the fact that we try to work with other Pride committees and get them going and stuff.

JIMMY CARPER: Actually, you've put Houston on the map as far as Pride committees go, haven't you? Well, I know you're not going to say, of course, I have, but--

JACK VALINSKI: It's the ninth parade.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, it's the ninth parade. And I mean, we have a lot of people who come to this parade. It's one of the major parades in the country.

JACK VALINSKI: The other thing that we're working with PVA is that they were doing a survey to find out how many people-- and this is not a real scientific-- I wanted to say, how did you get the lights in this room? Usually when we do Lesbian and Gay Voices, there's like one light in this room?

JIMMY CARPER: I know it. It was like last night when I came here for Esoteric Adventures it was like daylight.

JACK VALINSKI: But I do want to say this is that a lot of the processes that happen in the Pride committee, like the voting from Grand marshals, is not the Pride committee. It's your community.

JIMMY CARPER: It's true. Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: The judges, the Pride committee does not vote on that. It is community people. Donna [INAUDIBLE].

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, really?

JACK VALINSKI: Carolyn Alvarado, from the mayor's office. Todd Cunningham from *The Triangle*. Carolyn Roberts And this was great. We asked Carolyn Roberts from the *Voice* to judge the parade. She says, you know, I've probably judged every other thing in this community but the parade.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

JACK VALINSKI: And Fred Walkers from--

JIMMY CARPER: From the *Houston Buyers Club*.

JACK VALINSKI: So it is not the Pride committee who votes on these things. It is unbiased people from the community, and I'm really proud of that. First of all, we're too busy to judge the floats, and the other thing is the Pride float is ineligible for any prizes.

JIMMY CARPER: But it was fabulous this year.

JACK VALINSKI: Lee Wilson, who did that, and his lover, Paul.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: And that's sort of, like, I don't even deal with that. I mean, he's working on it and Ken Donnelly helped, and some other people, Troy, helped on that. I mean, that just showed up and there

JIMMY CARPER: And there it was, yes. I know Lee's work and it was a professional float.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes. Yes. Yes. So it is this community effort, which I am so proud of. And I mean, we all work hard, but my dear friend, Carol Clark, who was one of the founders of the Pride committee, said these people would still show up at their conventions if we never did anything.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: But we still have to do the organization, getting the permits, getting the insurance, raising the money. And it does take-- it takes about \$100,000 to put on this event.

JIMMY CARPER: Woo.

JACK VALINSKI: And we never want to become the XX corporation Pride parade, and as far as I'm concerned, if I'm involved, it never will, but it does take these corporations to help pay for the publicity and the stuff we have to do to do it, and there's no pay. We're all volunteers.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. Nobody is paid.

JACK VALINSKI: And the amazing thing is that we have close to 100 volunteers that were working today, and this is the most exciting, biggest-- our Holy day of the year-- and these people are sacrificing that to put on this parade. I mean, I'm just--

JIMMY CARPER: I'm just in awe of the people who just come forward.

JACK VALINSKI: Absolutely.

TOM Well, like you say, Jack, that first one, we never dreamed of what it would become.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: Corporate groups. Corporate groups.

TOM They wouldn't even have-- if we would have said something to them, they would have told us to kiss their ass real

RICHARDS: quick. We never dreamed-- and not only that, but city politicians. It never crossed our mind. We always thought that we would simply be a mob.

Now remember, '75, Ray and a couple other people did say no more will the gay community ever be silent at this time of the year. That promise has been kept.

JACK VALINSKI: And '79 was the first annual parade, and we have kept that since '79.

TOM But when we marched in that '76 march, it really-- we just thought that that's all we would ever do is just march
RICHARDS: and holler.

JACK VALINSKI: And the amazing thing is we have a person who's 20 years old on our committee. And the diversity of age from me, who's older than God, like Rainbo, to--

HOST: AARP.

JACK VALINSKI: --to 20 years old. And the respect we have for each other, the age doesn't come in. I got to admit, we need to have more diversity within our own committee. I'd love to have that. I'd love to have people say, you're doing it wrong. Come in and tell us we're doing wrong. And I really want to work on next year--

JIMMY CARPER: But the thing is, you're not doing it wrong.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, there are--

TOM Well, there's only one thing I have a bitch about this year.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: OK, what?

TOM Well, I went to buy a ticket for the stands. I wanted to sit down. Being an old fart, I knew I was going to stand for
RICHARDS: three or four-- I'd already got there about 40 minutes before the rally because I wanted close to the stand, and now I was going to have to stand for three-- actually longer than that-- about three and a half to four hours for that parade.

JIMMY CARPER: I did that, too.

TOM And so I went to ask about a ticket, and they tell me, well, you can't buy a ticket. This is for VIPs. I said, what are
RICHARDS: you talking about? There has never been a VIP in this gay community since I came out of the closet. Well, you're going to have to talk to somebody. So I went and talked to them, and they said, that's for VIP. The only gripe, Jack, that I have, really, is classifying.

JACK VALINSKI: Well, and yes. I understand that. VIPs--

TOM We're talking about diversity when we talk about inclusion, and then we start classifying.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: Let me answer that. We would love to put bleachers all along the routes. The problem is it's all city property and the little section we get is a little bit of sidewalk. The VIPs are the sponsors, people who pay to do that. The parade is put on for free.

We wish we could have seats all along the entire route. I'd love to have that. In fact, I stood up on the reviewing stand because we didn't have enough seats up there as the parade started. And yes, no two ways about it. I'd love to have \$5 tickets.

And we do try to fix things every year, make it a little bit better, but it does take the volunteers. And I understand what you're saying. I agree with you. I'd love to do it.

And the other thing-- let me be a little selfish here. Not against you, but we do this. We close the street. And then there are some wonderful businesses who work with us, but then there are some businesses that are a little bit greedy.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: And then they sell their property, these stands, and they're making out on our community effort. And so I take your criticism and I will-- I don't know if I can do something about it, but I'm listening.

TOM Well, I still love you. You understand?

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: And I love you telling me we're doing something wrong because we will do what we can.

TOM Yeah.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: See, and that's the whole thing we've been talking about all evening, that the Pride committee is just open.

TOM Yeah. And probably now to be fair, in this whole thing, and being queer like I am, I strongly believe in being fair is

RICHARDS: that probably there's not a whole lot I do anymore. OK. I'm sort of washed out. I can't run the streets anymore.

JACK VALINSKI: OK. Don't get me [INAUDIBLE]

TOM During my activism, I've even gone to Galveston and fought battles in Galveston. But I can't do that anymore.

RICHARDS: But probably my selfishness, and perhaps, even a little bit of self pity on that has probably kept me from not participating in things I could, and the Pride community's probably one of them. I can't give 100% because-- well, Jimmy knows that my health won't allow it anymore. And my health problems actually started because I came out of the closet and was reported to a man.

Let me tell you a short story on what many of us old farts suffered back then. This is just one that happened to me was that I came out of the closet, and then a police officer reported to my boss that I was gay, and so I was beaten by a board. I now have epilepsy and I have to watch it very carefully.

And that's one reason I just can't go out and run the streets anymore and do much. OK. That was just one of the things that happened to us people that came out in that early time when it was outright dangerous.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, it was dangerous. Jackie has something that he wants to add.

JACKIE THORN: Yeah, I wanted to amplify on Jack Valinski's comment about the volunteers and the participants in the parade, but I think the thing that has struck me particularly for the last two or three years is the number of families that come out to watch the parade. I mean, it's not just the gay community.

I mean, there are literally hundreds of kids out there. And I know the gender community. The handouts that we were giving, we made up over 500 little bags with six pieces of candy in them to give out specifically to the kids. And I mean, we didn't make it to the end of the parade.

JACK VALINSKI: Wow. Now, that's nice. Yeah, I noticed that there were a lot of children.

TOM This is why. And Jack, Pride week, Pride month, and we don't need a President Bush to declare it to be a Pride month. We were doing that long, long before Clinton did. OK. We were declaring a whole month and not a week. It used to be said Pride Week. We were saying Pride week-- hell, we're taking a whole month.

JACK VALINSKI: It is more than a month, actually.

TOM So we don't need a homophobic president to declare Pride month.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: OK, Tom.

TOM But anyway, it is because of efforts of people like you that many of the heterosexuals-- God, that's a hard word to say. But anyway, many of the heterosexuals are accepting now.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes. I mean, we have some non gay people, non queer people on our committee, but yeah, I consider them they are queer. I mean. They're there and it's great. But this is our parade. No two ways about it. It's our parade, but we want everybody else to have a good time, enjoy it.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. Now you were talking-- there was something a little while back about \$5 and if you bought your tickets early to the festival tomorrow, you could get them for \$5. But at the gate, it's going to be a little bit more.

JACK VALINSKI: It's going to be \$8.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. And Eric in Northeast Houston wanted to know if there will be a ride pool to the Pride fest. And I didn't think so. I hadn't read anything about that.

JACK VALINSKI: No, but I can't say that we did that, but metro is free until tomorrow.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. Metro is free.

TOM Metro is free tomorrow.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: I don't know, actually, if there's a route over Waugh, but there's a route over-- well, I don't know if they run on weekends.

JIMMY CARPER: I have no idea.

TOM I know 34 doesn't.

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: But there must be a Washington.

JIMMY CARPER: There must be a Washington.

TOM Yes. That would be-- you would catch--

RICHARDS:

JACKIE THORN: I would think there'd be one that runs down Shepard.

JACK VALINSKI: Yeah. There's a Shepard cross town. Yeah.

TOM Yeah, you could-- if you go downtown, you can catch that [? Antwon ?] 58th and that would go up Washington
RICHARDS: Boulevard.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. OK. Good.

JACK VALINSKI: And the festival from one to seven.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: And I am so proud of-- this is another adventure. And this has been a risky thing to do because we wanted to make it as cheap as possible, but we have to pay for the talent. There's a lot of people donating their talents and a lot of Pride people who donate their time to do this. We were very concerned, but every booth has been sold for the marketplace.

And so, the talent's going to have two stages working. I got to thank Shirley Knight from the Houston Women's festival, who basically debriefed us. I mean, she just told us everything, what they learned about it.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

JACK VALINSKI: Jeffery Neaves, who is our festival chair, who came from Atlanta and just knew a lot of this stuff because most of us didn't know anything, and Todd and my mind is going. I apologize. Matthew, who came from Columbus, and they did festivals. So they did all the talent.

And I know we all talk about wonderful talent, but sometimes and sometimes talent is a little bit difficult to deal with. But then, of course, they've gotten screwed in a sense, like many people, too, so I understand that.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. I mean, there's and I want to bring that up because gay and lesbian artists are often asked to work Pride festivals for free, and when you have these great divas who do dance music and they're paid a whole lot of money.

JACK VALINSKI: Yes, yes.

JIMMY CARPER: But I do have a list of the people who are going to be there tomorrow.

JACK VALINSKI: I don't even know the list.

JIMMY CARPER: This is incredible. And I'm not kidding. There has never been a collection of gay and lesbian talent in one place in this city ever. We're starting off with Bob Smith the comedian and--

JACK VALINSKI: He's our headliner, actually.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, he's the headliner. And we've got Suede, the lesbian singer. Dave Hall and Marcus Hutchison, who you heard earlier live on this show. We've got Sarah Pinsker, Christy Claxton, who was from Austin and plays in Houston often. Nancy Ford and the Vulvamatics, or the Dyke Show, whichever you prefer.

True Soul, which is a wonderful, wonderful R&B/rap duo. I've got their CD in the CD player right now. When we go to a piece of music, we're going to be going to them. Christie Ray, which who is a wonderful folk performer, acoustic. Miss Money, who is a rap artist. The Houston Storytellers Guild, which that's interesting. I'm looking forward to that. The Pride Band, of course.

Then We've Got Clap, which is a comedy troupe from Austin. [? Coffee ?] the Entertainer. Rainbow Wranglers and the Front Alley Girls. This is a group that lip syncs to Backstreet Boy music. They're called the Front Alley Girls.

TOM You're kidding.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, so, I mean, we've got from lip sync entertainers through lesbians and gays. It's just an incredible lineup for \$8. Can you believe it?

JACK VALINSKI: The weather's supposed to be fine.

JIMMY CARPER: And the weather is going to be wonderful.

JACK VALINSKI: I just need to give better directions I was told.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

JACK VALINSKI: It is it's on Feagan. I believe it's the 3900 block

JIMMY CARPER: 3926.

JACK VALINSKI: OK. And it is just off Waugh Drive. If you're coming from Montrose, you go over Waugh Drive over the bayou, which is now back in its banks.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JACK VALINSKI: Yeah. You'll make a left. So, I mean, if you're coming from the other side of town, you would make a right. I believe there's a sign there for Garden Heights. The old Bavarian Gardens if you remember that.

TOM And you can get to it off of Shepherd. Also, there's a traffic light at Feagan there.

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. What's the parking like? There is--

TOM Right there by that Texaco station [INAUDIBLE]

RICHARDS:

JIMMY CARPER: There's parking across the street. Free parking across the street.

JACK VALINSKI: Plenty of parking, plenty of parking.

JIMMY CARPER: Great. So no one has an excuse not to go.

JACK VALINSKI: I want to thank you, Jimmy, for this opportunity to debrief.

JIMMY CARPER: Jack. This is a tradition now.

JACK VALINSKI: I know. I know you're saying and I've got to get up tomorrow early.

JIMMY CARPER: You were saying, what? You were impressed that I got JD here at this hour.

JACK VALINSKI: I'm impressed that you had JD on live. JD does wonderful work, he just doesn't like to do it live.

JIMMY CARPER: He doesn't like to do it live, but he does do some stuff with me on the fifth Saturday when I do music, and actually it's his music. He brings a bunch of stuff in. And he'll be here next weekend, by the way.

JACK VALINSKI: And Monday his hour show is on, on *Lesbian and Gay Voices* at 9:00 PM.

JIMMY CARPER: And what are you doing for--

JACK VALINSKI: We're going to debrief a little bit, too. Review it, and talk about, of course, we'll be talking about the festival after it's over.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah.

JACK VALINSKI: And we're a little bit scared, too, with people come out to the festival. So I hope people do come out.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. For \$8. And all of those entertainers.

JACK VALINSKI: It's like this is our picnic. I mean it's our--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

JACK VALINSKI: And people will have booths and selling stuff and giving out information. It's just going to be terrific. I'm so glad the festival is back. I have really missed it.

TOM RICHARDS: Let me ask, Jack. Just one question. And that question is, do how does one become a member of the Pride committee?

JACK VALINSKI: The Pride committee meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. The first Monday is a board meeting. I'm sorry. The first Tuesday is a board meeting. The third Tuesday is a general meeting. We meet at the Metropolitan Multi-service Center, a city building that has access guarded parking lot.

TOM RICHARDS: Where's this building?

RICHARDS:

JACK VALINSKI: 1475 West Gray. And when we start the new year and the new year is in like August, September. We wipe out the slate. So everybody can vote at that meeting, but after that, you have to be at two meetings without missing two meetings in a row, and you can vote.

And the board, the only time they would overwrite a vote by the committee if it's affecting our 501 3 status, or our legality or discrimination. We try to abide by it.

And the strange thing is, the more open we are, the less people that show up. I mean, Rainbo is a good example. I mean, Rainbo said to me a few years ago, I don't need to go to private meetings anymore because I'm not worried about it. I'm not worried about you. And Brian and Rainbo--

RAINBO: Am I on Jimmy?

JIMMY CARPER: You're on. Rainbo, you remember when it was called the Hyde Week Committee by somebody.

RAINBO: Oh, yes.

JIMMY CARPER: Because it wasn't open. It wasn't open and things were-- decisions were made behind closed doors. And that time is-- that's changed. You had an interesting-- But before I go there--

TOM That's an old activist like me getting excited when things are done in secret.

RICHARDS:

RAINBO: Yes, exactly. I used to, and I've gone to the Pride committee meetings and people can make decisions-- or not decisions, but make what do you call it?

JACK VALINSKI: Suggestions, motions, discussion.

RAINBO: And if you stay with it long enough and you go

JACK VALINSKI: You wear us down.

RAINBO: And you go to the meetings long enough, and you convince the people