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SPEAKERS

Bruce Reeves, Jimmy Carper

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Jimmy Carper 00:02

A lesbian Pride Day. This is the time of year that we remember the Stonewall riots in New York City circa 1969. I'm Jim Carper. When Ray Hill and I got together to interview people, we decided to concentrate on those who would remember that era 1969. Everyone was given the same questions. And what follows are their responses. Lee Harrington

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00:29

is my name. And I began to deal with my sexual orientation in 1977, really, and it was a disconcerting experience. So much so that when I came to Houston in 1979, I had to wear a mask at the first gay pride parade calm, I'd also add that also had turned left on Westheimer, our South by the tower theater. The first week I was here, and I had Michigan license plates still on my car. And so the police stopped me. And they said, What have I done wrong? And they said, Well, you've turned to a one way street, and the other officer realized that they've made a mistake. It was only one way on the other side of what timer. And the people in front door mirrors. Were standing there watching all this take place. And so since they had to say face, they looked and found that my son had Michigan plate asked me how long I'd been here. So far. They just said, Well, you know, we just said, What are you going, and I was not quite as bold as I am now. And I wasn't quite sure what to say. And so I pointed between Mary's and boobie rock, and I looked that day straight enough that they thought I was going to be wrong. And I regretted it ever since.

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01:37

My name is Eleanor Hanley, and I came to accept being lesbian, approximately three years ago. And the best way to describe it, it was like coming home. I felt like I finally got the whole picture together what my life was all about. In 1969, I was living in a little town in upstate New York called Holly. What I was doing was being a wife and mother, I had four children



02:07

age ages four



02:10

to nine. And that's what I was doing. What was what was it like? Good and bad. I enjoyed it a lot. And part of it was pretty difficult.



02:26

My name is Pat Gandy and I first came to accept the fact that I was a lesbian. Actually, five years ago, when I came out, I had strong suspicions of it all my life. But I didn't do anything about it. In 1969, I was living in Deer Park, Texas, teaching in Pasadena, and trying to sympathize with all the poor adolescents who are getting drafted for the Vietnam War. And as as always, all my life, I've always been sympathetic with the press people's I suppose that was a projection of my own hidden non acceptance of myself for what I actually knew I was I was a lesbian, and projected by helping other folks and I sympathize with these adolescents. And it was it was a very upsetting time for me because I could see the power and the and the awfulness of the federal government as if it and society stomped on any young person who dared to disagree. But I feel that it's somewhat similar to the fact the way the situation we are in many times by society that they want to squash and step on us the same way.



03:53

Okay, my name is Larry lingo. I accepted being gay in 1974, when I was 37 years old, calculate fast. It was very liberating when I finally came to terms with it. I know I think for some years I was gay, but really come to terms of accepting it was about a year after my divorce, and it was, as I say, very liberating. 1969 I was married. I was living in Fort Worth, Texas. I was teaching history at Texas Christian University. And that was it.



Jimmy Carper 04:29

Lee, Eleanor, Pat and Larry. Now tell you when they first heard about the Stonewall Rebellion, and what they thought of it, you will find out what gay and lesbian pride means to them and how they will celebrate their pride this year.



04:46

Well, I was not aware of it at the time. Of course. I when I first heard about it probably was when I began to deal with leaving East Lansing, Michigan where I had gone after I graduated from University of Alabama. And probably, I really can't remember exactly which troubles me because it's such a profound moment, but I wouldn't have remembered it. Like, I remember the day that Kennedy was shot because I knew where I was. And when I wasn't aware of all this enough at that time to remember what it was exactly the spot. But in 1977, I would say I began

to hear about it. But in 78, when I arrived in Houston, and saw the likes of you and others, at the Astro Hall, in town meeting one, I certainly knew them. Well, I think it's, I think it's a glorious moment for all liberated people. And a special moment for gays and lesbians. It's the thing I look forward to most each year, I always wanted to pray to be bigger and better I want the mainstream businesses to enter floats and I weigh myself to death all year long, but I finally got good and to focus and talk them into it and work with Academy and talk them into it and, and always been so busy with other projects, I never get to go and help Gay Pride Week. Do that. Also better this year, of course, by being at the parade and and thinking back when I wear the mask, and the first one, and how far I've come. And I think also how far we still have to go.



06:19

I heard about the Stonewall Rebellion about two years ago, shortly after I came up. From what I've heard about it when I've you know, heard about it from other people, they had good reason to ride in the streets and write on Lesbian and Gay Pride means means my own personal pride. Since I am a lesbian and proud to be one. I feel like there's a lot of work to be done for us to have to have the the real recognition that we should have as citizens of this world. I will be celebrating Pride week are we started celebrating by going to the the dinner last Saturday that you awards dinner, I will be marching in the parade.



07:13

And this will be the second year of march in the parade. And it'll be the third year I knew there was a parade.



07:20

Well, I probably heard about it when it happened. But I don't remember. Because I usually read the paper very avidly I wasn't out there. But I spent most of the first part of my life as an alcoholic trying to suppress the fact that I was a lesbian. So there are a lot of I have a lot of blank spaces in terms of memories of things. But after I sobered up and and what I was in the process of coming out, I read about it and being an old sort of semi mover and shaker and radical myself I thought that the there probably long overdue and doing it and I should put should have done it sooner. But it was wonderful because being gay pride means to me accepting who I am. And, and being being cool with that. And participating in the life of the community and doing what I can to further the cause of gay and lesbian rights. And I plan to celebrate it by by doing as I do normally. And then participating in in the events of Gay Pride Week such as going went to the banquet last Saturday night. I will attend several events and participate in the parade on Sunday.



08:57

Well, of course I heard about it when it happened because I read The New York Times. My feeling was again, secretly knowing I was gay. I was very sympathetic. I was involved in the anti war demonstrations myself at the time. I thought it was a great thing. Well, let me answer the let me say celebrated by being a be in the parade Sunday, the store our store, Lobo will

have a booth at Star 91. So I guess in that sense, that's part of how we celebrate it. We decorate the store. We celebrate gay pride. We actually a year round at Lobo. But we do get a little more involved during Gay Pride Week. What Gay Pride means to me. Again, I think it's something that everybody should experience here around. I think it's very important that we take pride in being gay and lesbians first of all, because it's good for us individually. Everybody, I think should have a very positive attitude towards themselves. And that comes I think was pride and I think they should be proud if they are gay and if they're lesbian.

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Jimmy Carper 10:03

Now, Lee, Eleanor, Pat, and Larry will tell you how gay and lesbian people have changed over the years in their perception. You will hear what they think of young gay and lesbian people today. And what advice the four of them offer,

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10:18

I think, I think that there has been a lot of change. I'm a perfectionist, and I don't. Please easily. But there's no question that there are more people who are out now I think one of the things that colors my thinking on that is is a dilemma in Houston. Because I do think since 1985, and the January 19 referendum that we have gone down here, I think more people are scared. But I do see a lot of young people having the bars coming out of it early age, and that's exciting. I really love them. Hi, I go to the bars. And I'm a late person and I'll work at my desk on scripts are on a production schedule until midnight or so and, and I'll jump up and my friends kidding me about using that as an excuse, but I'll go to the bar, sometimes maybe for only 30 minutes. And I'll see young couples in the bars, especially under under 21 night, and there'll be embraced when I'll be jealous and envious. Finally, I'll watch. Because I didn't do that at an early age in my life. And so I'll wait for until they break. And I'll usually walk up to them and tell them how jealous I am. And tell them that they need to have two goals that one they need to come out at work within two years and at home within three years. That's where our power is.

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11:34

If I go back to what I thought gay and lesbian people were like, they definitely have changed. Because it was only what I thought it wasn't what I knew, because I didn't know any gay and lesbian people. I don't really know a lot of young people, but the ones I do know. They seem to have a lot of pride. And they seem to know who they are. I think the advice I would give them is to be true to themselves. And to keep working for the rights that we all need and deserve. Oh, well.

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12:17

Yes, I'd say so. Back when I first suspected my tendencies. I was 615 15 years old, just out of high school in a small rural high school in Texas not far from Houston. And I went away to college. By then I was all 16 years old. And I strongly suspected I was one of those homosexuals. So I went to the library and read about homosexuality and found out that it was a sickness that that was visited upon folks and I determined that I didn't want any of that. So it

you know, it took lots of bottles of alcohol for the next 30 years to keep that from, you know, to try and change myself and it didn't work of course. And but I remember a differently I went to a girls school so it's you know, there were there were a lot of lesbians there. It's affectionately known. Among some of us today is the dark factory of Texas. However,

13:32

I purposely

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avoided all those people, because I know who they were, I don't know how I knew, but I knew all I knew the ones that I that were rather obvious. Or I felt like we're fit the stereotype actually. And some of the rest of them I didn't know because I've run into her here in Houston since then, and I had no idea about her. But everything was very closeted and very, nobody, you know, nobody talked about it. If I hadn't been so shy and retiring and less bookish. Of course, some people find that hard to believe about me, but but I was and I you know, everything was hidden and it's wonderful to data you know, you can you can you know read newspapers in things in the newspapers, even the even the straight press this says some positive things in between the rest of the time that it's not and we have access to a gay press and to information that's that's uplifting and helpful. That's in fact that's how I originally came out is you know, other people helped me but I was I got some of my my did a lot of reading. So so that's that's pretty much it. Share. It's changed for the better, but not nearly fast enough spiritual question just for you.

15:06

How important is sobriety to your wholeness and your pride?

15:11

Sobriety is the most important part of being proud person that's proud and happy with themselves and with their with their gayness or their lives. bidness. As you may say, I can't say too strongly or too often, that the advice I'd have to all people young and old, is to, they're not going to ever come to grips with their sexuality with their problems in life, if they if they don't get sober. And I think that's especially important in our community. Because we have been so oppressed and so downtrodden. And so maligned by so many people, families, by society, by everybody that we've often turn to drink I did. And I'm no different than then a lot of folks. It's no respecter of economic conditions. It's no respecter of intelligence. It's no respecter of anything. But it's a very important thing if we, if we don't deal with the the alcoholism, we can't deal with ourselves, and we can't be proud of ourselves. And to me, that is crucial. Crucial owl never drank again.

16:34

And again my experiences of my life has since 1974 as far as changes such medical changes

And again, my experience of gay life has since 1974. As far as changes, yeah, radical changes, I guess, since I came out. AIDS has completely changed our community, I think the main thing I noticed is, and Bill White, my lover and I have discussed this often, in the early years, we seem to do very few women, gay women are lesbians. And we find now that some of our best friends are women. I think that's been a radical change. I think for both men and women, gay men and women is discovering suddenly that there's this whole other community that we actually do have something in common. And I think part of that is because family more and more gay men are realizing that there's a hell a lot more to being gay than sex. And once they get that through their heads, than they realize that we have a lot of common goals and just common ideals that we share with gay women. I think it's that's been the biggest change I've seen it's and it's been radical. Well, I guess my only count my contact mainly with younger members of the community is primarily through the store or through the caucus or other activities. I find them much more liberated than I ever was at that age or even after that age. If I have any concern is I think a lot of younger gay men don't always understand the the impact of aids I think there's a tendency to to slough off safer sex among younger man that that concerns me. But otherwise, I find that much more together much more dedicated, much more comfortable with themselves. And certainly, younger men and women were years ago.

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Jimmy Carper 18:32

The last question for Lee, Eleanor, Pat. And Larry concerns how they think their lives will be in the future,

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18:39

you know, I have no idea I have learned to go with the flow, not quite as rigid as I used to be. I try not to expect things to happen quite as fast. But I do feel like that is going to be more radical than I've ever been

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18:55

right now. My life is pretty wonderful. Because I'm in a relationship with a person that I expect to be in a relationship for the rest of my life. And I'm very happy. Very fulfilled. In the future, I expect my life to just continue on as it is, and you know, perhaps even get better. Oh,

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19:20

I have a wonderful life. Now.

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19:23

I don't know as far as the future. I think I take the attitude and I don't know, maybe more people take the edit here. I think we are at least I think more in terms of day to day at this point. Given the health crisis and everything else, I don't really plan even in terms of the business, I don't really plan that far ahead. And as far as life. We really do take it a day at a

time and that's we like to think it's getting better every day. We watch all the reports say that are coming out of Italy right now in terms of the age column difference. There seems to be a lot of, I think, hopeful signs on the AIDS front.

J

Jimmy Carper 20:05

Now for a different perspective. We talked to John Barco, a 22 year old gay activist, we asked him all the same questions, we asked everyone else.

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20:17

My name is John Burgo. And I first came out when to myself when I was 16, junior in high school, and 1986. And I've been dealing with it ever since. I was like 10, or 11, you know, because you things that happened in Boy Scouts and everything and denying it, you know, and myself, even at the same time that I was lusting for all the men that were around me. And it was, I was really lucky. When I came out. The reason I came out was that an exchange student and German exchange student was living with my family and sharing a bedroom with me, and I was madly in love with them. And I had a terrible crush on him. And that's the point where I could no longer ignore the fact that I was gay, where I was just like, totally, I was really upset when he wasn't there, I was incredibly jealous of his girlfriend. And I should say, you know, the reason you feel this way is because you're gay. And so the very first person I told was a teacher in high school, and she was my best friend. And things were great. I mean, things were great. She was very accepting. And very, she really made a lot of support in Indiana, and also in dealing with my feelings about him, which was the big stress in my life. And I just started telling people, and probably by the end of that year, I told maybe a dozen people in my high school and people that I knew, and except for when I told my mother, I got nothing but fairly positive responses. And so it made me feel very confident about coming out a lot to a lot of different people. I was being born in September of 1969. So my life was pretty simple. Just a little queer baby, doing the things that little queer babies do. Like most other babies, I first heard about it when I was in high school. When I was a junior, after I told that teacher, I was still dealing with water problems. And there was this youth counselor that came to the school once a week. And so my teacher helped me arrange a time to go see her, and I wouldn't talk to her. And then she went back to the county agency that she worked for and found everything she could in their files about gay people. And she copied made huge copies for me, and brought them back to me. And one of them was an article in the American Library Association Journal that talked about Stonewall. And I was just really excited. Because almost as soon as I came out, I was like, I was an activist, you know, I would get really pissed off when I heard people, you know, like in Congress like Jesse Helms saying, stupid awful things. And, and when I just heard about, about it, and the police raising the bar, and, and, and all the patrons fighting back and everything, I just felt so excited and energized, I think it's a time for us to remember everything that we've accomplished in the last 22 years. And to be really angry about the things that haven't gotten done, not not angry at ourselves, but angry at all the stupid people and the stupid society that stands in our way, and to remember all the things that we still have to do in dealing with AIDS and helping gay and lesbian youth. And, you know, getting some real political power for ourselves to represent ourselves in government, and the violence, you know, and all these problems that we still have to face, but to celebrate the fact that we have come so far, and that we really have a community of people who are working to end these problems. And what I'm gonna be doing this year is I'm going to events and like I've done every, every year, as soon as

I came out like that, that first year when I was 16, a lesbian teacher that I knew in school, who I come out to took me to see parenting classes, it was my first Gay Pride Week event. And so ever since then, I've done something and so like, I want to see play this week and going to going to the parade, of course and marching with the people from U of H. And, and just trying to be with as many as my friends as possible. But I don't think the game has been people have changed too much since the time that I came out to the president because that was only six years ago, five years ago. But I think in talking with people and reading about the last, you know, 22 years and even before them, I think people have changed a lot and people are coming out more. And people are realizing more and more that you know, when they get a negative reaction from people about their being gay. It's not their problem is is the problem with the person who's giving them the negative reaction. And I think that's a big change in the last. I mean, it's, it's a big change for myself, you know, from when I was 16, and I was terrified about my mother, you know, having a fit. If I if she found out, I was gay to saying what she has to deal with it, it's her problem, not mine. I also think that, that people are starting to realize that the problems that we face as gay and lesbian people, no matter what group we come from, or what gender we are, or what color our skin is, or what language we speak, or what we like to do in bed, or a lot of the same problems, and that we really have to work together to overcome them. I think that young people in the community today have I think they see a lot of those things that that other people saw as dividing factors, like men and women, or black and white, that divided people in the community, I think for not all young people, but for a lot of young people, they're getting over that, you know, the young men are learning to, to change their behavior towards women, so that they don't, they're not patronizing, and they're not behaving in even unconsciously sexist ways. And, and younger women in the community are learning that there are young men who want to change and giving them the chance to change. And I think there's a feeling more that, you know, rather than being gay, or lesbian, or black and white, wall, queer, and we're all together, and there's a strong feeling of community. The advice I would give is that I think a lot of young gay people also tend to overlook the accomplishments of the generations before us. And if they, they look at the past 20 years, and they see older people as not having, not having accomplished very much. And I think they really have to look at everything that's happened. And look at everything they've done, and learn, learn from learn from what the community has accomplished, and also the mistakes that the community has made. But to learn, you know, you can't just like start over. And we we're not just, we're not, we're not coming from nowhere, we have a whole past behind us that we have to respect. I mean, better and better all the time. I think in Houston, I see a lot of changes that people are coming out more people are getting more involved in the community, that that are the people saying, you know, that they can do their own thing and do what they want and not feel ashamed of themselves.



27:36

Hey, that was I'm sorry, by Jamie Anderson. And we're back here. It's quarter three. And we have just about covered everything we needed to cover tonight. So I want to take a few minutes and remind you a few things. Pride Week, and your your own personal pride. There are several good books out there, you can find them at the local bookstores. There's another one. Okay, there's another one opened up recently called Crossroads a little bit further down on Alabama toward downtown. And you can pick up some of these books. There's several excellent books on on gay and lesbian history. And I think it's real important that we establish a connection to that history. And the more we establish that connection, I believe the more cohesive a group where we come, because we will recognize that the battle is fought by both gay gay men and lesbians, and that it's about time that we started recognizing that we need

each other and that the support we get from each other, is invaluable. We can't, we can't get it somewhere else. They are either uncomfortable with our lifestyles or our sexuality. But our gay brothers and sisters are not they accept us like we are. And it's time for us to start using that acceptance and love from each other, to build a stronger community and one that is self sufficient, as close as possible. So that we don't have to frequent and visit and use and deal with people who are homophobic or who. And that way we can voice our concern in the community by boycotting places, and it won't be the only place in town we can get things because we have brothers and sisters out there who have the stores that we would rather spend our money in anyway. So frequent some of these places, especially the bookstores and make yourself familiar with the history, Trey, I appreciate your calling this evening. And one lets you know that I am honored that you sent us your poem and would really like to see some more of your stuff would be willing to read some more on the air. So if you have some stuff out there at home, if you've written something or you have something you want to share with us, jot it down on a piece of paper and send it to us. We're foreign it love it. And that's Houston, Texas 7706. And we'd be glad to look at it and if it's appropriate air appropriate, we'll certainly try to get it on. I think that that's I think that that's one of the real benefits of having a show like this on the air after after hours and let's use it Come on, let's use it for the best we can. Diane, you're holding something that comes really closely to what I'm saying something you've written yourself. Something that I read a while ago and, and really liked. So you want to read that for us?



30:38

Sure. I wrote this for queer nation Houston tribe. It's called thoroughly queer. Throughout my life when things been evident, one thing's been thoroughly clear. My lust for women can't be denied. That's right. I'm thoroughly queer. When growing up, I said to girls, May I sit next to you? They all said, Sure. Don't you think he's cute? Those girls didn't have a clue that the Alto voice they heard in choir, the friend they held so dear. The girl who helped them with their work. Got an A and being queer. On the job. They think my work superior. I work hard to see it done right. And yet I hear whispers my jobs on the line because of who I go home with at night. To them the bottom line is not my aptitude, work, record or charm. It's who I sleep with when I leave. That brings them great alarm. The boss can't fire me because I'm gay of that. I have no fear. They'll find a reason if they can then fire me because I'm queer. To old friends, new friends, lovers everywhere. teachers, doctors, politicians, even you poor folk, redneck breeders, nuns. All nations colors, rich folks. Yes, you too. Just like I felt when I was young. I want to tell you foreign near somewhere a part of each of us knows what it feels like to feel queer. We're different by smidgen at times by a heck of a lot. Our dignity and our compassion are just some of the good things we've got. invisibly stamped different at birth. For some a diversity, diversity easily hidden. For most it isn't that easy, sometimes wearing our queerness in bold is if it was written. Some harbored deep guilt and found it although it may be who was it God or mother or dad? Who was it that sold you their fear? That to be different was to be bad? No human can try to tell you God's thoughts. No mortal even dare. Every human preacher, teacher, parent, too, has made mistakes and has been unfair. So search your heart listening to the truth and joy you will hear when you open your heart to the whole that is you and embrace your diversity. You are queer



33:06

if you think queer nation is a bunch of radical queers, think again. We're doctors, lawyers,

teachers, parents, politicians, students, and radical queers. Cree Nation is a group of people joining together to end discrimination in all its forms. Many people are interested in queer nation because queer nation addresses ideals and issues particular to them. Affinity Groups A queer nation include shop suburban homosexual Outreach Program, a program to be visibly queer places where lesbians and gays would not normally be visible. Pissed people with immune system disorders. FYI Q fine, young queers, United Colors of queer nation, Q Patrol the eyes and ears of Montrose and many, many more. We meet Tuesday night at 7:30pm 1505 Commonwealth in Nevada at the Montrose palace. For more information call 52929691



34:02

of my favorites. That's Jane Oliver doing I'm always chasing rainbows. Well, it's about that time gang and we're going to be closing up for the evening. I want to thank Diane who's here and congratulate her and let her know that I'm really looking forward to working with you.



34:23

Honey, yeah, I mean that



34:25

love you love your hair. And I want to thank Diana who's in the control room supporting me this evening. Wink Wink, wink. Nod Yeah. And pardon me. Good night, everybody. She's here. My, my support this evening to pet and love on me for the duration. I'm really looking forward to that. But once again, I want to tell you that it's time for us to step out and to get out and start doing some of those things that we just mean to be doing and get aggressive in our treatment of people who are not tolerant of us. I don't ask anyone to give me special favors. Just give me the same favors that you get. I'm not asking for unusual, extraordinary perks. I'm just asking for the everyday normal run of the mill writes that everyone else takes it for granted. Diane, you want to?



35:30

I just want to say hi to Betty and glad you're feeling better. Oh, yeah. Betty over Julius had a great party tonight Betty Yeah, I loved it. Great job them for a couple of weeks and then around and try the PMs party was tonight which that was a pretty mean social had a great time. And good.



35:46

I'm glad to hear that.



35:47

We got to beat up dolls with ex lover written on him and a punch. punching bags and pedigree are great.



35:54

Are you feeling better bedding free? Okay, that's gonna be it for tonight and I'll be talking with you soon look forward to it.



B Bruce Reeves 36:27

You've been listening to after hours a continuing tradition here on KPFT 90.1 FM, Houston, after hours is heard every Saturday night from midnight until 3am. Also tune in to Wallenstein on Monday nights from nine until 10am Break through Friday mornings from nine until noon. All of us on the after hours staff Thank you for listening. We are what we are where