

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[BED SQUEAKING RHYTHMICALLY]

NARRATOR: The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature, which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised.

[BED SQUEAKING FADES]

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. You've tuned in to *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, dialogue, and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and their friends.

Here at *After Hours*, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets. That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are.

Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Houston and College Station and the world, and welcome to *After Hours*, Queer radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper. And before I introduce you I want to talk about a couple of things here. Music first, that last one Gwen Avery, wow.

SARAH Kicking booty. Kicking booty.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Kicking booty is right. From her CD, *Sugar Mama*, that was "Precious Lord." And she does several others on here that are really [? socko ?] too-- "The Thrill Is Gone," "Georgia On My Mind." Wow.

SARAH What a voice, I'm telling you.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Great voice, great music. And we started out with a group that you've heard a couple of times before. A group called Whatever. And--

SARAH [CHUCKLES] OK.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That was a song called "Killing Time." What makes this interesting is that it's by a retired porn actor, Aiden Shaw who does all of the music at his house.

SARAH Oh he's got a built-in sound studio.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: He's got it. And he does it all. And he's got a couple of friends who work with him on it. One-- a male and a female. And they just make really nice music. This CD is available at peoplesound.com. He's from London and he was in Houston this past week. I got a chance to interview him and we have a couple of tracks from his yet unreleased new CD.

SARAH A little change in climate from London to Houston, don't you think? [LAUGHS]

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Just a touch. He was here with his boyfriend. They were staying at the Lovett Inn. They just loved it. It was beautiful.

SARAH Well, Lovett Inn, what's not the like?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Jasmine's in bloom. It was just absolutely perfect.

SARAH Well, they came at the right time of the year.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Perfect, perfect, perfect. So I know he enjoyed his stay here. And I was really happy to meet him. And I've seen him in his films, and finally get to interview him. And we will be having that interview right after the transgender segment in lieu of *After Hours News and Views*. It's about a 20-minute segment. And so we're going to not have news, this week only.

But good news also-- [HUMMING FANFARE] Big Roy will be back next week.

SARAH Oh, cool.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. Yes. We have missed him. And--

SARAH The show is not the same without it Roy.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No.

SARAH No.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Neither is the lobby.

CHRIS: Why don't you just kill me?

JIMMY CARPER: [LAUGHS] Oh, you didn't know this, Chris?

CHRIS: Neither one of these bad bits of news.

JIMMY CARPER: Oops. [LAUGHS]

CHRIS: He's in there checking the news [INAUDIBLE].

SARAH Well, we told George W. How did you not know?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oops. Oops. And so Chris comes in here because I didn't tell him he wasn't doing any news tonight. OK.

SARAH We told W. I mean--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Now, my co-host tonight-- actually, she is the co-host. I just kind of sit in the background-- Sarah DePalma. And in the talk studio--

BETH: Am I home? Yeah, Beth Richards is over here.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. I want to start out-- and I know you have a full thing, but I ran across a newspaper called *The Blues*. It's a police newspaper. It's written by and for police officers.

SARAH OK.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And in the editorial-- it's, I guess, a monthly one, because it says April 2001. The editor-- now, if I had it together, I would have the page open, wouldn't I? Sergeant Buddy Williams is the publisher of this. And he does a column called Off the Cuff. And there are three things that he talked about this month. And homosexuality, transgenderism, and words.

So let's get first to the words. He's very upset about "queer" and "gay." Because when he grew up, those were words that you used regularly.

SARAH Yeah, and not in a complimentary context.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And well-- no, no, no, no, no, on the contrary. According to him, he misses the word, queer.

SARAH Oh, I get it. I know where you're going.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: "Feeling queer meant that you, well, felt weird. It was usually a precursor to the--"

SARAH And gay meant you were happy. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And gay means you're happy. And so he's a little upset about that. And I have to give him a little something on here. It's like, Sergeant Buddy Williams, I know you may be listening. But we may have co-opted the word, gay, but we sure didn't co-opt the word, queer. That was used against us. And we would rather not have had that word referred to homosexuality.

SARAH I can't believe that old canard is still floating around. Oh, well, gay meant happy until these darn perverts-- oh,

DEPALMA: shut up. Please.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, now hold on. Hold on. I mean, because you got to think about the mentality. I mean, we're talking about older heterosexual police officer.

SARAH His favorite song is "How Red is My Neck?" Yeah, I understand.

DEPALMA:

BETH: We don't know how old this guy is, but my bet is he is not born yesterday.

JIMMY CARPER: No.

SARAH No.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And then he wants to talk about the justices who ruled that the Class C misdemeanor law regarding homosexual conduct was constitutional. "Their ruling did not mean that it's a good law or a bad law, just a legal one. We, as police officers, must be very careful not to pass judgment, while in uniform, on the fairness of any law. We must keep our opinion of any law to ourselves until we get off duty."

SARAH And sure, that's going to happen. About the same time that aliens cart George W. away.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I understand where you're coming from but. I like the fact--

SARAH I'd pay the aliens to do it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I like the fact that he's putting it down in those men in that manner.

SARAH Yeah, I can live with it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And then--

SARAH Not long, but I can live with it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Then about transgender-ism. Here's what he has to say. Here is a-- he's probably older than me. He's probably in his 60s from this picture.

SARAH From that picture I'd say he is 60s easily.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK, heterosexual--

SARAH Looks like the guy from *Car 54, Where Are You.*

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. "I decided that if a policeman decides to become a policewoman, the first question I ask is whether or not the person is a good police officer."

SARAH Wow.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: "The second question I ask that is that person is-- can that person enforce the laws of the state, including the ones that I've just mentioned."

SARAH Oh, so can a transgender go out and arrest a homosexual? I think it's really unlikely any homosexuals will ever

DEPALMA: be arrested under this law. That's not the point though, is it?

JIMMY CARPER: Now, here's the stinger. You know what's coming.

SARAH Oh I-- yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No. No. You know what's coming. You know what's coming. It always comes-- here it is. "If so, then so be it. Just stay out of the restroom while I'm in it."

SARAH Oh. Oh. Honey, we're worried about your itsy-bitsy teeny-weeny, OK.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

Please.

JIMMY CARPER: And Sergeant Buddy, she won't be in the same restroom you're in. OK.

SARAH No, there'd be a riot if I walked out of your restroom, Sergeant Buddy.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Actually, I liked that, because I thought that, to me, there's some progress.

SARAH Well, I mean, considering the man is like 192 years old from this picture I'd say he's doing pretty good.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH But I mean, it sounds like he's trying.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH Except for this thing about the words, about "gay" and--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I know.

SARAH I mean, that's an old canard. It's right up there with "Adam and Steve" and all that other BS stuff.

DEPALMA:

BETH: I believe the words [INAUDIBLE]

SARAH Enough already.

DEPALMA:

BETH: --apply.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Really. Oh, please.

SARAH And you know, it's ironic because I've been dealing with the police department. I've been working with the young

DEPALMA: lady who was arrested on a prostitution charge and ended up in the Harris County Detention. She actually was sentenced to 90 days, ended up doing 45 of that.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SARAH But it was pretty clear from her story that she was targeted primarily because she knew her rights in jail and

DEPALMA: intended to have them enforced.

BETH: That was 45 days of hard time.

SARAH Right, well, now, there are-- to be fair to the Harris County about this, there are other transgender people in

DEPALMA: Harris County Jail who haven't had the problems that she did. Having said that, the real problem was she knew her rights and she intended to have them enforced. And that was the real problem when it was all said and done. So I've been working with jails, and with law enforcement in-- my view of law enforcement I have to say, it's pretty mixed. There are some people on-- especially in the Houston PD that are really very good.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes.

SARAH But if you get to the Harris County you had better have said your prayers because, honey, it's hell on Earth. I'm

DEPALMA: telling you, if you got an outstanding warrant or something and you think that you could possibly get caught by the police, go pay the damn thing. Because I'm telling you, if you end up in Harris County Jail, that's an experience you're never going to ever forget.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, that's true.

SARAH You don't ever want to do that. And I know we talked about this on the show one time. And it turned out a good

DEPALMA: friend of ours, [? Danielle, ?] in fact, had a compartment full of unpaid tickets.

JIMMY CARPER: I couldn't believe it.

SARAH [INAUDIBLE] and after she heard the show, she decided she ought to go pay those. And it was, I think, about,

DEPALMA: what, 10 days later she actually did get stopped by the cop.

JIMMY CARPER: See.

SARAH And thankfully, she had, or we would have been down there bailing out [? Danielle. ?] So I mean, anyway.

DEPALMA:

BETH: We're talking about [? Danielle, ?] aren't we?

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, we are.

SARAH For sure.

DEPALMA:

BETH: OK.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH For sure, yeah. And well, anyway, Houston, how the hell are you? I have missed-- I have missed being away. I've

DEPALMA: been away for three months.

JIMMY CARPER: I know. I know. I know. It's just too long. We got to do something about that.

SARAH Yeah, well, it's been an incredible three months. I mean, we've had the Transgender Lobby Day.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

SARAH And I've been talking to legislators--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And unity and every-- I mean, just all kinds of stuff.

SARAH Yeah, I mean, there's just been stuff going everywhere.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Committee meetings.

SARAH But if you're turning in tonight and you think, oh, god, these transgenders are going to do another political show,

DEPALMA: no, not tonight. For a change, we're actually going to talk about-- we're going to get off the political stuff. I

thought it was long overdue to do that. And what we all wanted to talk about tonight actually was a result of a couple of emails that came at an opportune moment for me.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SARAH I am in the process of getting ready for my sex reassignment surgery.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH Now, having said that, it's not like it's going to occur tomorrow because there's a waiting list of over a year for

DEPALMA: this surgeon.

JIMMY CARPER: How long have you been on this show?

SARAH Let's see, it's been, what, almost seven years.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. And when you first started you had decided you were not going to have--

SARAH Oh, I've waffled all over.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And then you were going to, then you weren't. And then there was a death in the family. You decided you did not want to die as you are.

SARAH Yeah, well, the moment for me really came, Jimmy, when they thought that I had cancer behind my eye.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, that's right. That's right.

SARAH And as it turns out folks, no I didn't have a cancer. But at the time, we thought--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: We kind of downplayed it here.

SARAH Yeah. And here I am, I'm driving home. Now, you would think, after a doctor says to you, it seems likely that

DEPALMA: there's cancer behind your eye, that you would be thinking, well, jeez, maybe I'm going to die. Or gee, my hair is going to fall out. Or maybe I'm going to be desperately sick.

My thing was, I don't want to die in this body. And that's when it dawned on me just how intense my feelings really were about it. And it finally made it clear to me that, yes, I wanted the surgery and last week would have been good. Having said that--

JIMMY CARPER: That's Sarah.

SARAH Having said that, getting the requisite \$15,000 together is not so easy to do.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No.

SARAH Well, in addition to my own personal stuff that I've got going on, I received two interesting emails. I had put an

DEPALMA: email on this list that's called the TGAIN list.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH And I had asked for information and experiences that people have had with their surgeons if they had already

DEPALMA: gone to have the sexual reassignment. And one person took me to task and said, well, haven't you just sold out all gender revolutionaries, you're giving in to society's pressure and going to get the surgery. And it was like, whoa, hey, timeout.

And a couple of days later, I got another email from somebody that was 16 who wanted to know if she could go and get the sex reassignment surgery and what steps do they have to take.

And I was like, at 16? No, I don't think so. And in fact, the Benjamin Society requires 21.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh really?

BETH: Actually, I was reading the one that came out. The Benjamin Society publishes a document called the Standards of Care. And the most recent one is April, 2001. It's brand-- or I'm sorry, February 2001. It's brand new. And in there, they said 18 now. They have dropped it back to 18.

SARAH Well, that's good. And they really should. I've been invited-- the Benjamin Society National--

DEPALMA:

BETH: Convention?

SARAH --Convention is going to be in Galveston, and I have been invited to be a guest speaker, along with Phyllis Frye.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, what a surprise.

SARAH So they are going to get an earful, Phyllis on one end and me from the other.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No kidding.

SARAH I guarantee you, in their travels throughout the world, they have not run across too many people exactly like us.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Well-- it's kind of you're torn with the Benjamin Society because they provide the venue to have the surgery. But yet to do that you have to agree that you're somehow ill.

SARAH Well, for example, as it gets closer to the time of having the surgery, you have to take a test called the MMPI, the

DEPALMA: Minnesota Multiphasic something or another.

BETH: Personality Index.

SARAH Thank you. Now, to be perfectly honest, this test is a CYA for the psychologist, so that if you go and you have a

DEPALMA: sex reassignment surgery, you can't come back later and say, well, you should have known that I was crazy. What'd you have me go and have the sex reassignment for?

BETH: One of the things in the Standards of Care is that they need to make sure that there's no other-- how do they put it? Psychopathologies.

SARAH Psychopathologies. Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Whoa.

BETH: And so the purpose of the MMPI is sort of a sieve. I mean, when I took it with my shrink, she was like, listen, there's nothing that this should bring up that we haven't been able to talk about. In other words, if she was good enough-- if she was bad enough that she didn't catch on to one of these things then the MMPI might have some use. But she's not. She's no idiot. So when she's sitting there talking with me for time and time again. And then we take the MMPI--

SARAH Except that it's costing \$700 to take this idiotic test.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: What?

BETH: It shouldn't be any surprise. And then you've [? got ?] [? a ?] cost, \$700.

SARAH \$700--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: 700?

BETH: Actually, you can take--

SARAH \$700 to take this idiotic test.

DEPALMA:

BETH: --you can take the test for free if you don't care if it gets graded. It's the grading that they charge \$700 for.

SARAH Yeah. And you know--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: What in the hell do they do for \$700?

SARAH Oh, Jimmy, the questions that they ask are insane.

DEPALMA:

BETH: It's done by a computer. What do you mean what do they do? They put it in the machine. They take it back out again.

JIMMY CARPER: Who is getting all this money?

SARAH Well, that's been a subject of some discussion in our community actually.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Oh, man.

SARAH But the point is between those two extremes, between the comments of the 16-year-old and between the person

DEPALMA: who said, oh, boy, you're selling out to the-- you're selling off to gender revolutionaries.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH I thought there's a show between those two extremes.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: Oh yeah.

SARAH And so that's really what we're going to talk about tonight. Is that we're going to kind of walk people through the

DEPALMA: process, from the realization that you are a transsexual to this decision to make-- to get your surgery.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH And it's something I know we've sort of hinted about and we've talked about and around the edges and stuff. But
DEPALMA: I thought the audience might be interested. And especially-- it happened, I was home sick one day, and I happened to see Jenny Jones, I think it was.

JIMMY CARPER: (SYMPATHETICALLY) Oh.

SARAH And they had some transsexuals on who were talking about their surgery. And they made it sound like it was--
DEPALMA: hey, it's no big deal. You can get your nose job. You go home. Well, that's not exactly true.

JIMMY CARPER: I read a very long--

CHRIS: [? Your ?] nose doesn't [? need ?] [? worked ?] [? on. ?]

SARAH No, if they're working on your nose, you got the wrong sex reassignment surgery. You're right.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: I read a very long article a couple of years ago, by a woman named Carrie, who talked about her sex reassignment surgery in Canada. And it opened my eyes. I mean, there was a lot going on. There was a lot of pain involved.

SARAH Yeah, I'm not going to get too graphic about it. I'm not going to get too graphic about it because I don't want
DEPALMA: people throwing up in their cars.

JIMMY CARPER: No.

[LAUGHTER]

SARAH But at the same time, I thought--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: But we're talking operation.

SARAH Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Well, it's a serious operation. And so I don't know, did you want to go to a piece of music first?
DEPALMA: You want to just go ahead and launch in?

JIMMY CARPER: Let's go to a piece of music, and then I'm going to put Beth in here and then let you two go at it.

BETH: Uh oh.

SARAH Oh, well. OK.

DEPALMA:

BETH: You want to trade places over here, Jim?

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, there we go.

BETH: [LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: This is by a wonderful, wonderful, openly gay entertainer from Hawaii by the name of Matt Yee.

SARAH There are no gays in Hawaii. Come on.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: He is just bubbling over. He's just Mr. Personality. You can tell by his emails. And next time I go to Hawaii, I'm going to meet him.

Anyway, he's got this wonderful CD out called *Every Facet Of My Heart*. He does a stage show. And this is one that really kind of hit me and I think it hits a lot of people. It's called "I'll Reinvent Myself."

SARAH Oh yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And you're listening to it on *After Hours*, Queer Radio With Attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station.

SARAH An absolutely wonderful-- an absolutely wonderful piece of music. And of course, what a lot of transgenders

DEPALMA: decide to do is to reinvent themselves.

BETH: Isn't that the truth.

SARAH I mean, that's almost the nature. First of all, let me say hello to you to all of our listeners on the internet.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH I had put it out on the internet that you did not need to live in Houston to hear this program. That you could hear

DEPALMA: us on the net.

BETH: That's a change of a couple of months ago and it's a good change.

SARAH And I received emails from all over the country. And once again, it was really brought home to me how many

DEPALMA: people there are who live out in-- out of the way places who don't have access to this kind of show. Let's see. The transgendered portion of this has now been on-- I think we've been on seven years.

BETH: That's right.

SARAH Seven years.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Seven years.

SARAH And once again I'm still receiving emails from people who are saying, I didn't know a show like this exist. Well, it

DEPALMA: turns out once again, we are the only transgender-- well now, we're one of two programs with an openly transgendered radio host in the country because the show in Boston went away.

BETH: They did now.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Oh, that was recently then.

SARAH That was recent, yeah.

DEPALMA:

BETH: OK.

SARAH So for those of you who were listening to us on the internet tonight wherever you are welcome to *After Hours*.

DEPALMA: The transgender section has been on now for about seven years. And Beth has been kind of an unofficial co-host.

BETH: Yeah, I come in here a lot

SARAH --for a long time and we actually have quite a bit in common.

DEPALMA:

BETH: About six of those seven years actually, yeah.

SARAH Yeah. So anyway thank you for joining us. And for those of you who have just tuned in, if you're looking for the

DEPALMA: Christian radio station. That's one station to the right.

BETH: It's also one station to the left. We're surrounded.

SARAH Yeah, we are surrounded. That's right. If you are a person with an open mind. This is KPFT radio in Houston and

DEPALMA: we hope that you'll enjoy what we're going to talk about.

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH Let me start by telling you that, Beth and I are both open transsexuals. That doesn't mean that we're available

DEPALMA: for cheap tricks.

BETH: Not in the least.

SARAH It means that we are politically open. And in my case I've also been somewhat open in the press. Most people in

DEPALMA: the media have talked to me at one time or another. And what we're talking about tonight is a result of actually a couple of emails that I received that came in. And so I guess we can go ahead and get started talking about that.

BETH: Sure.

SARAH I want to start with the 16-year-old who contacted me and was talking about getting wanting to get the sex

DEPALMA: reassignment surgery.

BETH: Right-o.

SARAH And the implication was that they wanted to get the sex reassignment surgery, like, next week.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Well, I can't understand that attitude at all. No.

[LAUGHTER]

SARAH Well, let me tell you. First of all, at 16, I'll be very honest. I know this-- you don't want to hear this stuff from your

DEPALMA: parents. So you don't want to hear it from a radio host. But at 16 years old, you're really too young to make up your mind on a decision that as important as this.

BETH: And even if you did, starting today with making that decision, it would be two years before you'd really be in a position to do anything about it any way.

SARAH That's right. The fact-- I mean, I am a person who's taken nearly 10 years to decide that I wanted to have the

DEPALMA: surgery. And if there's anything that I think Beth and I have seen over the years it's been the number of people who have made surgery the be all to end all.

BETH: Yeah. The ultimate goal. The one single focused thing.

SARAH It's called transition when you go from one sex to another. Whether you're going from male to female or the other

DEPALMA: way around. It's called transition for a reason. And as it turns out it's because there's a lot to learn. And I'm one of those people who actually believes that the one year period that's required by the Benjamin Society is not long enough. Because I'm 10 years down the road and I still learn new things all the time. Now, I'm not advocating a 10 year waiting period but I would think probably two years would be more realistic.

BETH: See now I'm going to disagree there because I don't believe in having a mandated waiting period that's a number because really the answer to that question is when are you going to be ready is a decision that you are going to make on your own. It's going to be one that you're going to verify with your shrink. It's not the sort of thing that you can say it will take me exactly one year, six months, three days, in two hours from the time I start to the time I'm ready to go. You can't put a number on that.

SARAH Actually, I agree with that thinking. I guess what I'm trying to say is that for those people who-- think that

DEPALMA: transition is race and the object is to get there first, that's not so.

BETH: Yeah. Yeah.

SARAH But I agree with you. I know people who went into the transition process ready for surgery after a few weeks.

DEPALMA:

BETH: I know somebody who had her surgery after I believe it was seven months of living full time.

SARAH Yeah, and I've known some people who are five years down the road and they're still not ready and may never

DEPALMA: be.

BETH: And at seven months she was very much ready for it. And I know somebody else who had waited for her exactly 365 days, one year, and she went and did it and she was definitely not ready for it. And that caused a ton of trouble.

SARAH Well, the thing is and I say this jokingly, but I don't really mean it jokingly. You don't get a refund on this deal.

DEPALMA:

BETH: No.

SARAH You're talking about a life altering decision. You're talking about something you will have to live with for the rest

DEPALMA: of your life. You had better be darn sure you really want it. And really at 16 years old there is still just too much to learn about life. I mean, just life generally.

BETH: I remember 16 as being a pretty tumultuous time in my life and it didn't have anything to do with transition, although even by that age I knew it was something I wanted to do eventually. But adolescence there's a ton of stuff going on. And a really wise friend of mine once said, listen, work through whatever issues you got before you transition. Don't expect transition to make them all go away.

SARAH Yeah. And trans-- I mean, and transition is a much tougher process than I was ever led to believe.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Oh yeah.

SARAH So honestly at 16 I'm reminded of something that I used to tell my daughter, which was I wish that I was 19 back

DEPALMA: when I actually knew everything.

[LAUGHTER]

And I don't mean to be making light of this person but really at 16, that's a little young, hang on a little while.

BETH: Well, it's a great time [INAUDIBLE] a lot of work in that direction.

SARAH Well I'm envious that this person knows at the age of 16 that they are transgendered.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH I wish, I truly do wish that I had known at 16. I wish that I had met just one role model somewhere who could

DEPALMA: have sat me down and said, listen, this is what this is. This is what this is called.

BETH: I am envious of the courage to say it out loud.

SARAH At 16, my God.

DEPALMA:

BETH: I knew at 16 but there was no way I was going to say it out loud. I mean, it was just-- it was just something one did, not talk about.

SARAH Well, I mean, I grew up in a real small town that truly thought that Senator Joseph McCarthy was a hero.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah. OK, great.

SARAH I mean, which tells you something about this place. And not-- there was no-- sex simply didn't-- it simply-- if it

DEPALMA: existed it was behind really double bolted doors.

BETH: One of those things you didn't talk about.

SARAH And it was never ever discussed. I mean, I've often said this, but it's true. Our sex education class was held in

DEPALMA: the basement in a darkened room by a former Marine drill instructor. And we were told the gay people were dirty old men who hung out in raincoats on the sides of men's rooms waiting to be predators upon little boys.

BETH: Fabulous.

SARAH Yeah, so I mean, I started like from as far behind the eight ball as you could conceivably get, I think. And I am very envious of this person at 16 years old. I mean, and Beth is absolutely right. Boy, you've got incredible courage. And you're way ahead of the game that you know that. I didn't come to the realization. I didn't even-- I had actually never understood the word or even heard the word, transgendered until I was about 30. And I think I was close to 40 before I began to realize that that word was me.

BETH: Yeah. Yeah. Well, as I understand it, [? Danielle ?] came out to her parents around 16.

SARAH But her parents were supportive.

DEPALMA:

BETH: And they ended up being supportive.

SARAH And they were not even surprised at [? Danielle. ?]

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah, well, some people they just know. But she was able to start working with a therapist. And I understand she started hormones-- I don't remember at 16 or 17. But it's definitely young.

SARAH It was real-- it wasn't long after that because it seems to me she said she was 16.

DEPALMA:

BETH: So it can be done. It can be done. But it's not the sort of thing that everybody's going to be able to do.

SARAH And let me tell you something, the physical changes are permanent.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

SARAH Hormones, there are all sorts of different kinds of hormone programs. And without getting too technical there are

DEPALMA: what they call blockers that block certain kinds of hormones from kicking in. And it's not a medical show. But the point is that these hormones are fairly powerful and the changes that they make are permanent. Be darn sure that you really don't want to have a family.

BETH: Yeah. Yeah.

SARAH Because I'm telling you it is in effect a chemical castration in that sense and those changes are permanent.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Again, I was reading in the latest standards of care they were talking about for males to female the youngest age that they would be dealing with an androgen blocker, which is the one that keeps testosterone from doing all those wonderful things it does is 16. And they listed that among the things that was reversible simply just blocking it--

SARAH Well, blocking, yes.

DEPALMA:

BETH: --stop blocking it--

SARAH But once you start on Estinyl or Premarin, or any of these other things. Yeah.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Now you're disabling the production of testosterone in the first place. I mean, when you turn that stuff off, it's off. I mean, and so that they required lots more. Basically, the whole standards of care is about how long you see a shrink before you do certain steps.

SARAH Yes.

DEPALMA:

BETH: And so you could start with the blockers on very little interaction with the psychologist. But it took at least, I think it was three months to start the estrogens.

SARAH What I was really impressed with, Beth, is this person was cross-dressing in school already.

DEPALMA:

BETH: OK, so they're pretty well out.

SARAH So she was already pretty well out.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH And apparently she was in a situation-- I won't even say what state she's in because I don't want to put her in

DEPALMA: any kind of trouble. But she was already dressing in school and with support of the parents.

BETH: OK.

SARAH So she was in a pretty good situation. We're well aware because we hear from so many of you out there that you

DEPALMA: are young in many cases. And that you're listening to us on your Walkmans. And that you do not have supportive parents. And I would say that that's pretty much the norm so don't despair, because this one person that we're talking about was lucky because that's a really unusual circumstance.

BETH: Well, there's an awful lot of street kids out there today because they came out about either being transgendered or gay, and their parents were not supportive. So it's not safe. I mean, it's not guaranteed to be safe.

SARAH There are a lot of street kids. A lot of throwaway kids. People sleeping out in construction sites tonight because

DEPALMA: their parents couldn't deal with their sexual orientation or gender identity. Exactly right.

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH And as far as-- one of the questions that often gets asked is how does a 16-year-old know that they are a

DEPALMA: transsexual. Well, how does anyone know?

BETH: I was going to say how does a 39-year-old know.

SARAH Yeah, how does-- yeah, that's not an age issue.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Yeah.

SARAH That's an issue of realization. And I always like to use this as this is an example. That sex is the biology you're born with. Gender is all the behaviors that's demanded of you because you're born with a certain biology. And any woman out there tonight that's a feminist will know exactly what we're talking about.

BETH: So yeah.

SARAH You can put on a mommy track.

DEPALMA:

BETH: Sex is the biology, the physical nature of things. And gender is the psychology, the brain, the social roles, the personal identities, and all the rest that goes along with that.

SARAH As Brenda Thomas likes to put it, sex is between your legs, gender's between your ears. Which is-- I mean, it's a

DEPALMA: little more simplified version of it, but I understand her point. And it's important for people to understand that that's what we're talking about here, is--