

JIMMY CARPER: Get to spend 20 minutes with a wonderful, wonderful imaginative artist by the name of Aiden Shaw. And that's coming up right now.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And that is one of the more different openings I've ever had to an interview. This is Jimmy Carper, you're listening to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And in the studio I have Aiden Shaw.

AIDEN SHAW: Hey, Jim.

JIMMY CARPER: Welcome. Welcome to Houston.

AIDEN SHAW: Hello.

JIMMY CARPER: I have had this piece of work from you called Whatever-- that's the name of your band.

AIDEN SHAW: That was the name of the band. And the self-titled. And since sitting with you here for the last hour, I've realized that you're a lot more than what's on the CD.

AIDEN SHAW: Well, that's quite old material. But it's just a record company has picked it up. They're selling it as a CD now. Since we've made all that, I've been working on my computer at home by myself just working on the program called Cubase. And I tend to do all the recording myself and all the programming and all the instruments. I'm having a lot more fun with it and it takes a lot less organizing people.

JIMMY CARPER: And a lot more imagination, I think.

AIDEN SHAW: Well, it's more just me. I find whenever you work with other people, at a certain extent it's lovely because you get different ideas. But at the same time, you're not getting pure you. And it's very nice to get pure you sometimes.

JIMMY CARPER: I have noticed just today that you are a very well-rounded person. You're in a lot--

AIDEN SHAW: Too much weight?

JIMMY CARPER: No, not at all. People might hear the name Aiden Shaw and say, gee, I know that name. But they may not associate it with music and writing and poetry. You've written the novel, you've got a book of poetry, and you've got a band. And you've done all the stuff.

AIDEN SHAW: I keep a low profile.

JIMMY CARPER: How can you play the Castro Street Gay Pride and keep a low profile?

AIDEN SHAW: I don't know? To a certain extent, I think it's because people want me to keep a low profile, you know. I don't think people want kind of spunky, gutsy, and prostitute who's not ashamed of anything he's done, who has HIV and is not scared to talk about it.

JIMMY CARPER: Hey, hey.

AIDEN SHAW: I don't think they really want them to kind of shout a lot or be on kind of national TV or be on national radio and just keep it quiet, you know. He looks OK and he sounds OK, but keep him quiet.

JIMMY CARPER: But you're not keeping quiet.

AIDEN SHAW: I like to keep-- I think I am. Well, I think I'm shouting. But, hopefully, in a sensitive, cool, kind of reserved kind of way I hope.

JIMMY CARPER: Tell me about your books.

AIDEN SHAW: Well I've got a couple of novels out. First one is called *Brutal*, which is about the club scene in London, about drugs and about HIV written in the first person. My second book was a book of poetry. My third book was a fictional tale of love, a thriller. And the sequel to that is out in July.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

AIDEN SHAW: Plug. It's called *Wasted*.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

AIDEN SHAW: With publishers come [? better days ?].

JIMMY CARPER: With *Brutal*, is that autobiographical?

AIDEN SHAW: I've used a lot of my own experiences, but I held back quite a bit when I was writing it, I was quite young. I was writing in '95. And I don't know who I thought was censoring me but I thought I don't say that. But since I've realized that I could have really said anything and got away with it. It's different than TV and music, you can actually get away with a lot in literature.

JIMMY CARPER: Poetry.

AIDEN SHAW: It's a hard word, isn't it?

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, well, it's masters of words. However, you're not going to get rich off of writing poetry.

AIDEN SHAW: I don't think I'm going to get rich.

JIMMY CARPER: So why are you doing it?

AIDEN SHAW: Ask any artist why they do it and they'll say they have to. I wouldn't be so dramatic. I wouldn't say I have to, but it's the thing I enjoy most in life is when I feel most content, most happy, most at peace of the world and myself.

JIMMY CARPER: With writing either words or music?

AIDEN SHAW: I like to kind of go between a few different things because I think they use different parts of your brain. And I like to think I'm going to be an older man who has a kind of a really good brain, who's exercised all his muscles and his brain. I'd like to think that.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Is there any anything else in show business you want to get into?

AIDEN SHAW: Well, I do some acting. I was in about three films last year, one in Paris and two in London. Just mainstream stuff. But, you know, acting, I'm enjoying it more and more as I get older because I realized that I actually can do it a little bit. When I was younger, I was too self-conscious. But now I kind of don't care.

And what else am I going to do? Writing is my main thing, that's my kind of career. Music I do for fun. Merging the two kind of poetry with backing tracks is my favorite thing at the moment. I kind of haven't done visual art since I was going to art school, that's how it all started. But I haven't really done much of that lately. Although, I designed my new book cover-- my poetry book cover. I'm constantly decorating my flare.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh you are gay then.

AIDEN SHAW: Yeah. Well, this isn't-- I'm not gay.

JIMMY CARPER: Have you been compared to many other people? Names instantly come to mind when I hear some of your stuff. I think if he was maybe the Mark Ullman of the new millennium--

AIDEN SHAW: I'm sure Mark could be flattered by that. And I'm flattered too, I love Mark.

JIMMY CARPER: And the activism that you have, not being afraid to talk about your life, is very Jimmy Somerville.

AIDEN SHAW: Well, I've been compared to Debbie Harry, which I'm very flattered.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

AIDEN SHAW: Well just because she was fun. I like that. I like some comparisons, I don't like others, you know. Some people call my writing like John Ricci and which I don't mind, you know. I would never like to be compared to Edmund White.

JIMMY CARPER: I'm with you on that. John,

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JIMMY CARPER: John Rechy opened my eyes to the gay world way back when.

AIDEN SHAW: I'd like to think I'm doing that for some kind of teenagers now. Maybe I can help them avoid some of the kind of mistakes I made.

JIMMY CARPER: Through your writing.

AIDEN SHAW: Maybe.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. And what about the music? How does that fit into your life?

AIDEN SHAW: It's just me being fun and being creative, you know. And I like to think I'm saying different stuff than a lot of other people, but it's all just about self-expression, you know. I don't mean to change the world.

JIMMY CARPER: What if you do?

AIDEN SHAW: Then hope it's a better one.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Let's hear some of your stuff.

AIDEN SHAW: Can I just say though, I--

JIMMY CARPER: Want you to say everything you want to say.

AIDEN SHAW: I signed a bunch of books, two of my novels, *Brutal* and *Boundaries*, down at Lobo Books today. They're not many. They've got about 10 copies, five of each. And so if anybody's interested, I'm going to grab a copy.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. *Brutal* and the name of your poetry book is?

AIDEN SHAW: No, they've got *Brutal*, which is my first novel, and *Boundaries*, which is my second novel.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

AIDEN SHAW: They couldn't get hold of any of my poetry books, but you can get hold of those off amazon.com or amazon.co.uk, one of the two.

JIMMY CARPER: What about the music?

AIDEN SHAW: They can get from a website called People Sound. It's a record company on the web called peoplesound.com. PeopleSound, one word. And just key in Whatever, that's the name of my band and you'll get it that way.

JIMMY CARPER: Whatever.

AIDEN SHAW: Or go to my website, aidenshaw.com. And then I'll answer all questions.

JIMMY CARPER: Aidenshaw.

AIDEN SHAW: Yeah. there's a gallery, there's poetry, there's prose, and you can ask me any questions. There's a contact page, which I designed myself.

JIMMY CARPER: Ta-dah.

AIDEN SHAW: Ta-dah. If you're interested in a copy of the new book, just leave a message at all.

JIMMY CARPER: He does it all.

AIDEN SHAW: And I'll make sure that I'll let you know when it comes out.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Let's hear a piece and then come back and talk about, OK?

AIDEN SHAW: OK. All right.

JIMMY CARPER: OK, tell us the background of that song. Where did that come from?

AIDEN SHAW: Oh I wrote it on Cubase. I got Marcus, who does a lot more backing vocals, to do backing vocal. It's called *Killing Time* because it's just about waiting for someone to call or not or whether you care if they do or not. And stuff like that.

JIMMY CARPER: The first time I listened to your album, the Whatever album, I thought, gosh, this guy is nihilistic almost. And since then, since talking to you, I've realized that some of your words, some of your sentences maybe are saying the opposite of what the words mean. We were talking earlier about the emotions.

AIDEN SHAW: I think I do that.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

AIDEN SHAW: I mean that's the fun of being a writer. You can play with words, you know.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. When we were talking about the things I like about you, you were talking about some of the bad stuff.

AIDEN SHAW: Well, it's my kind of style. If I wanted to tell someone how much I liked them, I might say to them, you know, I like the filth the scum and the hate of you. And I think that's a compliment rather than saying I love your smiley, you know, huggy sweet bits. Because like so what? If you can love someone, scum and that filth, and, you know, their rotten behavior and their sleaziness and I think it's pretty good. And I guess I expect people to love that about me because they have to, there's no choice to get that or not so.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, yeah, it's not what we're used to here. We're used to hearing all the sunshine and hearts and flowers and stuff.

AIDEN SHAW: I think it's just a small about we just used to cliches, cliches are easy to understand. They're more palatable and they sell. And so much these days is about what sells. People have got to get it straight away in that few seconds because it doesn't sell otherwise. And I guess it's a bit more complex to use kind of an irony or something like that.

JIMMY CARPER: So you're in the States promoting your books.

AIDEN SHAW: No, I'm actually in the States having a car ride with my most favorite person in the whole world, David. And he's just driving me across the States. We're going up to Napa to spend a week at his parents' winery and popping in San Francisco. I might pop into some of the bookstores there. And we've popped into Lobo, like I said. We might do the same thing in Austin and Dallas. And then we're driving up to Denver and flying up to San Francisco.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow, you're getting to see the USA. And thank you for being in Austin and Dallas, all the three-- the big three cities in Texas.

AIDEN SHAW: I've never been down there at all. And This sounds so corny but yes, I do have a fantasy about Texans.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

AIDEN SHAW: I'm not ashamed to say it. And I'm hoping to go to a bar tonight and see some lovely cowboy dressed up types.

JIMMY CARPER: Well you better go to the BRB then.

AIDEN SHAW: And I'll be there.

JIMMY CARPER: The Brazo's River Bottom.

AIDEN SHAW: If anybody is interested, I'll be there.

JIMMY CARPER: That's our cowboy bar, Brazo's River Bottom.

AIDEN SHAW: OK, write that down.

JIMMY CARPER: BRB.

AIDEN SHAW: I love it. Because in San Francisco, there's a kind of country Western bar and the men dance together in a formation. I think that is nothing sweeter and nothing sexier than seeing that.

JIMMY CARPER: In fact, I think they have dance lessons tonight

AIDEN SHAW: Hey, I'm not a dancer. I'm a watcher.

JIMMY CARPER: Hey, OK. You can do that.

AIDEN SHAW: I'm a drinker, a sitter, and a watcher. I'm a writer.

JIMMY CARPER: You're a lot of things.

AIDEN SHAW: I'm a lot of things but I'm not a dancer.

JIMMY CARPER: And one of them is being HIV positive and not being afraid to tell the world.

AIDEN SHAW: That it's not an identity.

JIMMY CARPER: No, no.

AIDEN SHAW: It's just something that happens in my body.

JIMMY CARPER: But it does change your life, doesn't it?

AIDEN SHAW: Yes.

JIMMY CARPER: How has it changed your life?

AIDEN SHAW: It's changed a many times. Like everybody else early on in, it made me panic. It made me think I was going to die. It made me romanticize, maybe try to fit a lot in. Then things started to calm down. It made me go on medication. It made me realize though, oh, maybe I might get a bit longer.

In the last year and two months, I've been off medication and my t-cells are getting my blood works fantastic. And we're talking about trying some other drug now, which means I don't have to go on trials ever again. And so, you know, who knows what it means now. But I'm expecting to live to old age. That's why I'm anticipating now.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

AIDEN SHAW: So watch.

JIMMY CARPER: So does this mean your writing is going to get happier or what?

AIDEN SHAW: No. But I'm hoping-- the beautiful thing about writing is that you can do it sitting in a chair when you're 80. And I think by that time I think I'll be a pretty hot writer.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

AIDEN SHAW: I think it's one of those things that really takes time to learn your craft. And, you know, I think--

JIMMY CARPER: And it is a craft.

AIDEN SHAW: I think is going to get richer and richer and deeper and deeper and more beautiful.

JIMMY CARPER: So those 10 copies that are autographed over at Lobo are going to be pretty rare once you're 80 years old.

AIDEN SHAW: Hopefully, I'll have some more books. I don't know.

JIMMY CARPER: So Lobo is the place to go to pick up *Brutal* and--

AIDEN SHAW: *Boundaries*.

JIMMY CARPER: *Boundaries*.

AIDEN SHAW: And when *Wasted* comes out, they'll have copies too.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. OK. Good.

AIDEN SHAW: I'll make sure they'll get some signed copies too.

JIMMY CARPER: Great, great. Oh and thank you for being with us tonight.

AIDEN SHAW: It's been my pleasure.

JIMMY CARPER: It really has been. I wish we could have taped everything that we did before I started the tape to let people in on how you just blossomed in front of me.

AIDEN SHAW: Thank you for playing the listeners my music. I hope they didn't mind it.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, I'll play more. And where can they get your music again?

AIDEN SHAW: Well, they can get the CD of peoplesound.com and just key in the title, Whatever. That's my nickname and band, Whatever. And it's got to be, for some reason it's got to be in capital letters because I've typed in otherwise, it doesn't work. In Whatever in uppercase in peoplesound.com and you'll see a pictures of me.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

AIDEN SHAW: Go to my website and ask me. If there's any doubt, go to aidenshaw.com and ask me about it.

JIMMY CARPER: Easy. That's easy easy. Aidenshaw.

AIDEN SHAW: Aiden's easy, that's what they say.

JIMMY CARPER: Aiden, thanks for being with us.

AIDEN SHAW: OK. Thank you.

JIMMY CARPER: And we're going out with one of your instrumentals.

AIDEN SHAW: [INAUDIBLE].

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

AIDEN SHAW: OK. Good night.

JIMMY CARPER: Good night. Jade Esteban Estrada right here on *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And now, as if I needed to tell you, it is time for the Latino hour.

FRANCISCO In case you couldn't tell by the music right.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Francisco Sanchez and Sandy Lopez are here. Hello, hello, hello, how are you guys doing?

SANDY LOPEZ: Oh, I'm fine. I'm fine.

JIMMY CARPER: Happy Easter.

SANDY LOPEZ: Oh, thank you. Happy Easter to you too. So what have you been eating?

JIMMY CARPER: Candy. I don't know what you would plan to talk about, but that's something interesting about how Easter is celebrated.

SANDY LOPEZ: I don't eat chocolate or much candy.

JIMMY CARPER: You don't eat chocolate?

SANDY LOPEZ: No because I never liked it when I was little--

JIMMY CARPER: Wait a minute. That's un-American.

SANDY LOPEZ: You got it.

FRANCISCO You dang foreigners just come in here with their--

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: OK, OK. Now you're going to say--

FRANCISCO Pinata.

SANCHEZ:

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SANDY LOPEZ: When we were little, candy cost a lot of money. And we do--

FRANCISCO Was too poor to have chocolate.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Oh. We just had other priorities, you know. I'd rather have a little toy or something. We used to spend a lot of money to buy things to play with other kids.

JIMMY CARPER: Rather than candy? Easter basket is not a big thing?

SANDY LOPEZ: No because it's like we don't have a bunny.

FRANCISCO OK, well I have a question.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: And so that's a strictly--

SANDY LOPEZ: That's an American thing. I'm sorry but didn't say you guys have the creepiest holidays in the whole world when you get a bunny with a little basket leaving eggs all over the place.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh come on. I mean, what about the sugar skulls and all of that for--

SANDY LOPEZ: I mean, we do-- I mean I'm going to say this because I was getting to my point, you know. I don't like candy, I don't like chocolate. But my mom makes what it's called the torrejas because we're not supposed to eat meat. But--

JIMMY CARPER: You're supposed to eat meat for what?

SANDY LOPEZ: On Easter, you don't eat meat.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, on Easter?

SANDY LOPEZ: On Easter.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

FRANCISCO We're barbecuing tomorrow but we're not supposed to.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: I mean it's like--

FRANCISCO It's like it's one of those things, OK, it's the last day. So the family bargains like we're not supposed to, but it's the **SANCHEZ:** last day.

SANDY LOPEZ: The first thing I want to say is shame on me because I've been eating all kinds of things.

FRANCISCO Even on Fridays?

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Even on Friday. I was having a big ol' steak and I was like, OK.

JIMMY CARPER: I don't think I even-- I think I had fish on Friday. Even me. And I'm a recovering Catholic.

SANDY LOPEZ: The only thing my mom was cooking was torrejas which is like it's a piece of bread. It's folded on-- it's like fried on egg. And then--

JIMMY CARPER: Like French toast?

SANDY LOPEZ: Huh?

JIMMY CARPER: Like French toast?

SANDY LOPEZ: Mhmm.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SANDY LOPEZ: And then you and then you take it out of the pan and then put it in this other pan where you have a dulce, the big heart one? The one you buy-- it's very hard to explain. But you put it in this sugar--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. Yes.

SANDY LOPEZ: Pan and it's like it's very delicious and I just ate so much.

JIMMY CARPER: It's like sugary bread?

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Sweet bread.

SANDY LOPEZ: But it's a little soft. And the sugar melt in your mouth.

JIMMY CARPER: Ooh.

SANDY LOPEZ: It's very, very good.

FRANCISCO Well his mom's in town so he's getting all this. She's still there? Still at your place?

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: My mom is sleeping in my house.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JIMMY CARPER: So how much weight have you gained?

SANDY LOPEZ: OK, we're going to go there because it's like I--

FRANCISCO But he went to the gym. You did. You got a membership?

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: I weighed 130. Right now I'm waiting 147. And I'm blaming my mother. So when I was in school, I used to go exercise at U of H because they had a gym and it was free for students. I decided, OK, I can go to the pool, I can do my weights and all that. And just three times a week. I'm not a 24/7 or even four times a week, it's just too much at the gym.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SANDY LOPEZ: To keep yourself healthy, you just have to walk and do exercise. It's like, I don't take my car to the store every time I need something. The store is three blocks from my house, you know. I have two little legs. Sorry, people.

JIMMY CARPER: No, no, no, that's true. And I think it's--

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah, we don't--

JIMMY CARPER: It's a crime of Houstonians that we will get on our car to go two blocks and it's ridiculous.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah, yeah. And that's just silly. But anyway I decided to get a membership to Valleys. And my best friend, Brian? He got me-- tried to get me one last year. But I sort of--

[INTERPOSING VOICES].

SANDY LOPEZ: But then I went there once and it's like I remember the steam room and I just got out of there pretty quickly.

JIMMY CARPER: That good, huh? In and out. Now we know what he went to Valleys for.

FRANCISCO At the Y you have to wait and wait.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Why don't you just go to the Club Body Center? The new one? It's right next to the old one. It's like a new building, \$1.9 million they spent. There's more--

FRANCISCO So Jimmy hears.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: No, no, no, no, I was there. I actually went there. It was the pre-opening thing and it was just beautiful.

SANDY LOPEZ: I've always told myself that if I was going to go to a gym, I was going to go to somewhere there was going to be close to my house. Because first of all, I mean I'll go to the gym after work or at night, you know,

JIMMY CARPER: Sure. When it's convenient for you.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah. Which is, you know, it's like I'm not going to drive across town to go to a gym, you know, like some people do. No offense.

JIMMY CARPER: I wouldn't even.

SANDY LOPEZ: And I'm like no offense to you weirdos. When I was living in the Galleria, it seems to fit. The Valleys right there on Westheimer, I lived on Chimney Rock, just a few blocks, you know. And now I'm living on 290, so there's some Valleys in the 290s and I went there on Thursday. And it was quite a rude awakening.

JIMMY CARPER: How come?

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, first of all, there's more women than men.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, boo.

FRANCISCO Oh that's everybody that's a Garden Oaks area, I mean there.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, well. That's the lesbian enclave.

SANDY LOPEZ: No, but, you know--

FRANCISCO With the canoe new machines.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: First of all, I do not-- I'm not going to the gym because of the men. I've always hated that. And that's one of the reasons why I was so against going to Valleys in the Gallery because that's just the cruising place. And it's like first of all, at some point in my life, I didn't feel comfortable showing my body to anybody unless it was dark, you know. OK you better watch.

JIMMY CARPER: Let me clue you in, it only gets worse. The older you get, the worse. So unless you really want to show off what you've got.

FRANCISCO Put in a dim switch.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

SANDY LOPEZ: One of the things that--

JIMMY CARPER: Why don't they have candles at these gyms, you know? That'd be better.

SANDY LOPEZ: But I've never been overweight, Jimmy. I've never had-- I mean, I've always been just 10 pounds up, you know.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SANDY LOPEZ: Now that my mom is on that, I have to start being careful. But I've never liked sugar. I mean I'm not a candy person.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SANDY LOPEZ: I mean I like Cokes, but I'd rather have something natural than just--

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. How would you celebrate Easter?

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, let's see.

JIMMY CARPER: In your country.

SANDY LOPEZ: Well first of all, I mean I got in trouble with my mom for the same reason because my mom is Christian. And my mom, she's going to church, you know. She's doing all this and all that. And, you know, she and I said-- we sat down and we're watching some TV and then while the commercials were on, like, all of us, we started to discuss a few issues.

And, you know, I told her that I still believed in God because I was raised that way. I was raised to believe that there's something up there, you know. But in my heart, I don't have anything forth the whole organized religion. I mean it's like, yeah, Jesus died, the sacred week, I respect that. But that's it. I mean it's like it doesn't say in the Bible please don't eat this. There's not a menu there.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, some people would argue with you.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah, but I think it's up to the individual. The way you want to celebrate it. My way is that I feel bad. He died, he's in heaven, and he's going to come back and--

JIMMY CARPER: Well, there are a lot of people who are not celebrating Easter per se as an equinox or the spring or nature renewing itself, and that type of thing.

FRANCISCO And or jungle loss.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, exactly. And you had to cut it short, didn't you-- [INAUDIBLE]. I was going to say, that just closed down, didn't it?

FRANCISCO Right before the Resurrection, I had to make--

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SANDY LOPEZ: OK, that was--

FRANCISCO I'm going to have to go to church tomorrow.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Yesterday we had both Friday the 13th and Good Friday and Good Friday. We kept the pagans and the Christians happy, all on the same night.

JIMMY CARPER: So, Francisco, how would--?

FRANCISCO I have a question about this.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah, OK. You can ask me a question.

FRANCISCO The coscorones? Do we only do that or do you like--

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: No, we do that too.

FRANCISCO Oh, I know we did but do y'all-- Easter egg hunts, we all do that.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

FRANCISCO But do you all decorate egg shells and put confetti in them and bust over people's heads?

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: What?

FRANCISCO OK, it's just us. See, I didn't know. OK, see, we have this tradition.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

FRANCISCO Egg shells, we save them up for about a month and a half, two months. We decorate them. We cut a little hole--
SANCHEZ: when you use an egg rather than cutting it all, you just punch a hole in the top and use the egg that way and then you save them. And we decorate the egg shells, you put confetti inside the egg. And then you cover it up. And then you bust them on people's heads like on Easter, that's like big sort of--

JIMMY CARPER: And what's that do?

FRANCISCO It's just a--

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: It's just the thing to make the kids, the children, happy. You're not going to eat meat the whole week--

FRANCISCO I wasn't sure if it was just Hispanics did that or I thought I was going to ask, do you all do that?

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: I think it was the pinata hitting you instead of you hitting the pinata.

FRANCISCO Kind of.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: So I bet your mother like said, do that outside.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah.

FRANCISCO Oh, yeah. I mean you get you out to a park and you do it. And you do it outside while enjoying the barbecue. And-

SANCHEZ: -

JIMMY CARPER: It's just kind of a playful thing?

FRANCISCO Yeah. And it just sort of-- that's why I just, and I've never-- I don't know. I didn't know if we just did it ourselves--

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Eggs symbolic of life, new life, and I guess sitting in it--

FRANCISCO Sure. I think it's just a cheap thrill.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Well, hell, what's am Easter basket. Same thing.

FRANCISCO Yeah.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: I mean the only thing I never-- I mean what I remember from when I was little was just going to church. We did go and go to church when I was younger. Well, I guess a lot of people went to church when we were younger. My mother made me do it.

JIMMY CARPER: And then you had the Easter outfit. Or?

SANDY LOPEZ: No, no, no, no, no, no. We did not get in the whole bunny because we don't believe in the bunny.

JIMMY CARPER: Well I didn't-- that's something I never understood either. What's the big deal with the Easter eggs brought by a bunny? Why isn't it the Easter chicken?

SPEAKER: Long explanation for that, but it's a pagan thing.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, about the bunnies that are very reproductive. Oh, OK.

SANDY LOPEZ: Well it's like--

FRANCISCO Fertility.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Fertility, yes. Fertility.

SANDY LOPEZ: There's a reason there's a reason why they call that bunny thing that's happening this weekend the--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes.

SANDY LOPEZ: Why they have that other name for this event?

JIMMY CARPER: The bunnies on the bayou? The original name, yeah. The other, OK. And maybe that's the thing with the egg-- fertility.

SANDY LOPEZ: I don't know. I just think that somebody's put an on me and I just had to punch them.

JIMMY CARPER: I think it's cute that you have all this damn confetti in your hair.

FRANCISCO Yeah,

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: But, I mean, in my family it was mostly very ceremonial. I mean yeah, we did that, but it was mostly when we were in school. Because we were in school until Thursday. Then we were off on Friday, the regular weekend.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SANDY LOPEZ: But, you know, I remember playing with the eggs in school. We didn't have an Easter Bunny. And then Friday, we had soup like fish.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah. And lots of church.

SANDY LOPEZ: Then we went to church. We also saw other processions because my grandma used to take us. I remember one time I had to play the role of some sort of Jew person in the crowd.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah the role that I played once was the devil. And believe me, I did love that one.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh I bet you did very well.

SANDY LOPEZ: I did. And I was wearing tights which, my being gay, just loved it. But mostly church does ceremonial things because they're very important to us, to our beliefs. And because Christianity is based in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. So this is one of the most important weeks.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. For our different religions and everybody celebrates in a different way. I remember the mass on Good Friday is the one where the priest like would lay on the floor, prostrate himself, you know. And it's like, wow.

SANDY LOPEZ: Do you know, this is something personal, but it's like the one thing that I have never been able to do during Easter is have sex.

JIMMY CARPER: What?

SANDY LOPEZ: I have not being able to have sex and Easter. Not because I don't want you, not because I'm not in into the whole--

JIMMY CARPER: Because it just doesn't feel right?

SANDY LOPEZ: Yeah. It's like--

FRANCISCO Easter, midnight, any time anywhere near midnight mass at Christmas Eve or Christmas Day or Easter, I'm just
SANCHEZ: like--

JIMMY CARPER: Sacrilegious or something?

FRANCISCO The only time that I go to church, but it's like I don't.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, and I feel the same way.

FRANCISCO I-- even, well, I'm not going to get too explicit.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: On Christmas Eve, that is very enticing to me. But on Easter, that's one of the few times where I feel that it's like my gift to God, you could say. That like a week of celibacy. Or an understanding that I have that I will feel very weird, you know--

JIMMY CARPER: Like doing it. Like having your mother in the next room or something.

FRANCISCO Well, he's adjusted to that. It's just--

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, you know what I do. I just open the window and say, you want to come visit, you better come through the window. But no, I've never done that either.

JIMMY CARPER: I never thought about that.

SANDY LOPEZ: I don't think that's proper. I mean, I just give my mom-- mom, have \$10. Go to the store and take your time.

FRANCISCO Catch a movie, do some shopping.

SANCHEZ:

SANDY LOPEZ: My mother, ever since I told my mother that I was gay, we have come to a very good understanding of what it means to me. And she knows that there are some times that I want my privacy. There are some times that I just, I told her, mom, if it comes to the point where I want to bring a friend over or he wants to come over it and we don't have no place to go, believe me, I will drive you to my brothers. Take your home-- your stay over little bag. And then I'll come back.

FRANCISCO I'm picturing Sandy in the driver's seat, his trick next to him, and his mother in the back seat with her night bag.

SANCHEZ: Like dropping her off. Like we'll pick her up at 10:00. Don't feed her after midnight and here are some candy.

SANDY LOPEZ: I do have a lot of respect for my mother. A lot. And it's like I've been really good since she came.

JIMMY CARPER: Uh-huh. Well--

SANDY LOPEZ: Which I totally hate.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, you know--

SPEAKER: I had a healthy respect for my mother.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, what I'm thinking is are you dating someone?

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, you know that I've been dating the guy that I had HIV.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SANDY LOPEZ: We were dating for a little while and it was going great. And then he just developed this low self-esteem, you know, where he couldn't be in a relationship. And, um.

JIMMY CARPER: You just couldn't deal with it.

SANDY LOPEZ: He couldn't-- I mean, I was dealing with it very well, you know. I was very happy. I mean, I was just, hey, it's just a thing. I mean, I was educated. I know, you know, what it takes. And then he got a job offer to Dallas and he was so sad or so saddened by the fact that he couldn't deal with our relationship that he left. I mean, it's like I still have some of his papers and it's like I have no way to reach him.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh. So, I'm a little confused since you're not dating anybody.

SANDY LOPEZ: Yes?

JIMMY CARPER: So what do you do when you take your mother over to your brother's house?

FRANCISCO Date is a relative term.

SANCHEZ:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, oh I see.

SANDY LOPEZ: Well, I mean like everybody else, it's like I mean I don't have a commitment to anybody.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SANDY LOPEZ: So it's like I'm just going out with my friends.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

SANDY LOPEZ: If one happens to ask me and we like each other, hey, much better.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. But not during Easter.

SANDY LOPEZ: Not during Easter.

FRANCISCO So it's not like you come home at 2 o'clock in the morning, drunk with some guy, drive your mother to your

SANCHEZ: brother's house. And then, OK.

SANDY LOPEZ: Gosh. I'm so--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SPEAKER: And his mom is aiming the frying pan at her son's head.

SANDY LOPEZ: I've got to say this. I mean it's I am not an immoral person. I will never take my-- I will never do anything-- if my mother's asleep, I'm not going to wake her because I want to have sex.

JIMMY CARPER: No, I know.

SANDY LOPEZ: I would just get my credit card and go pay for a hotel. But it's like, you know.

JIMMY CARPER: I just can't imagine you having sex unless you're dating someone.

SANDY LOPEZ: Well.

JIMMY CARPER: I know that sounds silly but--

SANDY LOPEZ: You know.

JIMMY CARPER: But I mean just knowing you over-- you just seemed like the type that if you're going to be dating someone, you're going to be--

SANDY LOPEZ: I don't have sex just with anyone.

JIMMY CARPER: Right, right. You're not like me.

SANDY LOPEZ: No.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]