

[KNOCKING]

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

[MUSIC PLAYING]

THEME SONG: *After Hours, After Hours.*

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]

JIMMY CARPER: Hello, Houston and College Station and the world. And welcome to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper. And with me tonight is--

SARAH Sarah DePalma. Hey, Houston.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Hey.

SARAH How the hell are you?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That must be transgender night.

SARAH Yeah, it must be.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. But before we get to that-- and there's a whole slew of folks here in the studio. So it's going to be a fun show.

SARAH Oh, yeah. It always is.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And we're going to not talk about politics.

SARAH For a change. I've been getting the emails. I heard what you said and a lot of people really wanted us to go back and do a back to basics show. And we even had some people submit questions. So tonight, we're going to go back to transgender 101.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH If you're one of those people that's questioning about whether you may or may not be transgender, or if you're just somebody who says, I don't get it, I don't understand what the hell they do, what they're talking about, we're going to walk you through the process. So stick around for that.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. But first, a few things. The music that you heard in the beginning of the show-- and we always play two songs before the opening cart. The first one was by Joel Stein. He is a local boy, and he's also straight. Yes, I know. It's like, I hardly ever play anybody straight like heterosexuals.

SARAH Str-- I can almost say that.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Very heterosexual.

SARAH Yes, however, he is-- this guy is straight but not narrow.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. Well, that's cool then.

SARAH He recently headlined a fundraiser show for the gay and lesbian switchboard right here in Houston.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, that's nice.

SARAH Well, I thought it was too. You know it? There were two lesbians on the ticket and this straight guy. And I just

DEPALMA: thought that was a terrific thing. So actually, what I wanted to do was get him on the air.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, cool.

SARAH And what's going to happen is tomorrow night at this very time, he is going to be right here on KPFT on the ~~Pat~~

DEPALMA: and Rosie show.

JIMMY CARPER: *Night Sounds. Night Sounds. Pat and Rosie's Night Sounds.*

SARAH Oh, good.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I got an email from him. And he's going to do about an hour concert.

SARAH Wow.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Live.

SARAH Wow.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Live, yes.

SARAH That's worth your pledges right there, folks.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, it is. It really is. Now, that song that he played was actually my favorite of two albums that I've listened to.

He's got three albums out. And it's called *Catwoman is My Superhero*.

SARAH I'm for that. That will work.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And like you were saying, I was wondering why-- it really wasn't in the front of my mind, but it was in the back of my mind of why I liked that song so much. And you hit it right on the head. This is like, very, very, very--

SARAH Very Bob Dylan.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: You bet.

SARAH I mean, my first reaction to that song was, well, he's been listening to Lay, Lady, Lay.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Very great lyrics.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, terrific. But actually, Joel is much more of a rocker than he is a ballad singer.

SARAH Balladeer.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Balladeer. OK. So there's going to be a lot of rocking songs tomorrow night right here on this station. And also, he is playing earlier in the evening. And there's a poster on the bulletin board as we come into the door as to where he's playing, which Bobby is running to get.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Bobby is our official-- unofficial co-host. No, the other door. It's a red 8 and 1/2 by 11.

SARAH Well, we'll find it and tell you later.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. It's right there. Yeah, he's got the door.

SARAH Here he--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. That second song was by Anthony Rapp. And many of you out there know the name Anthony Rapp. Several people here didn't. But he was--

SARAH I admit. It was me. I never heard of him.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: He got his start as the star of--

SARAH Joel Stein.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Joel Stein. He is the star of the Broadway musical, *Rent*.

SARAH Which I've never heard of.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, you shouldn't say that on the air.

SARAH OK. I'm sorry.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Ooh, ouch.

SARAH So that's what happens when you spend too much time at work

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: This is what happens when you use your gimpy people to be their run-around folks.

SARAH OK. Anyhow,

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: So--

SARAH I'm not even going there.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: So what's wrong? We've got a couple of gimps in here.

SARAH Yeah, I know.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: What are you talking about?

SARAH That's [INAUDIBLE].

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Put one foot in front of the other and fall down.

SARAH Joel Stein and his band, The Shameless, is appearing tomorrow night Sunday, July--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Sunday, Sunday, Sunday.

SARAH You beat me to it. 8:00 PM, Red Cat Jazz Cafe, 918 Congress.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Whoa, downtown.

SARAH And there's a phone number.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Hey.

SARAH 713-227- like the TV show, 2200.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Hey.

SARAH It's a wonderful thing.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Red Cat Jazz Cafe tomorrow night at 8:00 PM. You can see Joel Stein. And you can tune in tomorrow night at midnight and listen to him for free, actually, a one-hour concert. And--

SARAH Thank you. Thank you, Bobby.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I'm sure they'll be thrilled.

SARAH Thank you, Bobby.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: You're welcome. Anthony Rapp has put out his own CD, as a matter of fact.

SARAH A self-produced, self-titled, self song.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Well, you know, it had to be because he's got so many openly gay songs. So he just decided he wants to be in control of his own music. He put it out. He sells it on his own website at www.anthonyrapp.com That's Anthony R-A-P-P, double p, .com And that song we did was actually number one, *Living Alive*. And it's such a great anthem for this song. It's being yourself.

SARAH You can't ask for better than that.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's what we're talking about. Yeah.

SARAH Cool.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Being yourself.

SARAH That's what it's all about.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Let's see. A couple other things before we get into-- did I say that this is the July 14 edition?

SARAH You know, I'm not sure.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH But it's the July 14 edition.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: It certainly is.

SARAH It's the post-flood edition of *After Hours*.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's for the tape. Yeah.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: A couple of things. This is-- we're talking about this a little bit early but something near and dear to my heart, *Live 2001*, a benefit and a birthday bash. Don Gill productions and Bob Bouton present *Live 2001*, benefiting the Gulf Coast Archive and Museum in conjunction with the big 50 for Don Gill. It's going to be Sunday, Sunday, Sunday, August the 26th at 5:00 PM at Rich's.

SARAH Live, Sunday Buffalo Speedway. And cars we'll be running. Hurry up. The drag race is on Sunday, Sunday,

DEPALMA: Sunday.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. And--

SARAH I just gave away my age.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHING]

SARAH Thanks.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I want to, publicly, on the air, congratulate the very new daddy of Montrose.

SARAH Who is?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: None other than Loyd Powell.

SARAH Ooh.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: You know him?

SARAH Yeah. I've met him a couple of times.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. He is the sweetheart of a daddy.

SARAH Yes, he is.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I found this in the seen and heard in the *Eclipse*. And everything's fine, except they spelled his name wrong.

His name only has one L in it. And so--

SARAH It's all right. I just got my new insurance cards the other day. And they misspelled both first and last names.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, brother. So there we go, Loyd Powell. And some other good news. There's a new club that's going to have an official opening later on this month called Level. And it's located on Windburn which is one block north of Alabama, right at Louisiana, no, Fannin.

SARAH It had to be Fannin. Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH OK.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: At Fannin. And it's an old building. It's about two or three stories. And it's vast. It was like an antique store. And then it was, maybe, a restaurant. So it's just-- you go in, and its columns and iron grill work, wrought iron grill work--

SARAH Sounds ornate.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: It's very beautiful. It's going to be a wonderful club. One of the owners is a man you may know as Mark Dees, who used to be a DJ for KRBE.

SARAH I was to say, where have I heard that name before?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: KRBE, yes. He did a lot of music there. And so he's been in the club business for a while. He said-- the reason I saw this, this is my neighbor

SARAH Oh.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Crystal Knox is one of the bartenders there. She's my neighbor right over there on Westmoreland Street Yes, indeedy. And gosh, she is such a typical bartender.

SARAH What does that mean? Go ahead. You dug the hole.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: Well, she doesn't spend too many nights alone. I'll tell you.

SARAH Oh, OK. All right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah.

SARAH I get it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH OK.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's Crystal.

SARAH I get it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's Crystal. Aha. But one of the things that we found out is long about the 25th of this month, the Ashland Theater is opening up with a new play called *The Blue Babies* or something. It's the story of Joey Stefano.

SARAH Oh. That ought to be interesting.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Starring Ryan Idle .

SARAH OK. I don't who that is.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, Ryan Idol is second only to Jeff Stryker in popularity.

SARAH All righty. I know who Jeff Stryker is.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, yes. Now if you recall, I interviewed him last year because he was here for a film-- for a movie-- for a play.

And Ryan's here. Well, as it turns out we're going to have an interview with Ryan Idol. Mark is going to do it because Mark has bought the rights for all of Ryan's entertainment.

SARAH It sounds like Mark has been a busy little beaver.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, he has. So Ryan is being represented in Houston by Mark.

SARAH Right. Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. So he will be-- Ryan will always be-- also be dancing over there as well as being in the play. And we'll have an exclusive interview, of course, live, I hope.

SARAH He says with fingers and toes crossed.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: We're also going to try to do-- we don't have the equipment for a live remote. But we're going to do some telephone stuff from the bar.

SARAH Well, we've done that before.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, we've done that before.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: So new bar opening up for queers. Yes.

SARAH Yes, that's all of us in-- and even if you're straight, it can-- the term applies to you in some cases.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. If you're straight but not narrow.

SARAH That's right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Like Joel.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: See? OK.

SARAH I was wondering how he's going to close that loop.

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: Well, now, speaking of queers-- and let's see, I was talking to someone today about-- some guy from Italy was at the Museum this afternoon and-- because he's doing a paper on gender in the museum area. And mostly, he was looking at it. And what he's expected to write on is about females in the Museum of Fine Arts, how their role is, and how it affects them.

SARAH Oh, OK. Now I understand. All right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: He was talking to me. And I said, the exhibit we've got on there right now is called On Stage. And so you walk in, and there's a bunch of dresses, stage dresses--

SARAH Right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: --that different people have worn.

SARAH Aha.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I said, when you talk about gender, and you come here to a gay museum, it makes it very, very blurry.

SARAH Yeah, it does.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Because as queers, we blur the lines for genders, whether we're gay men or transgenders.

SARAH That's right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: We blur-- we blur that line.

SARAH The minute you cross from being completely heterosexual to something other than that, you've begun to do

DEPALMA: gender, whether you realize it or not.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

SARAH And a lot of people-- and a lot of people don't realize it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I said, look at all these gowns out here, you know. Mother Brooks has a gown. We have one of her gowns. It's been all hand done with rhinestones, weighs 45 pounds. I mean, some tremendous things, I said, essentially, men wore these--

SARAH Mm-hmm.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: --in shows to collect money from other men who came to watch men blur the gender lines as women.

SARAH I have been told, I've actually heard three or four different versions of this. But one of the versions is that I've been told the drag originally stood for, dressed as a girl.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH You know, I've also heard other versions that say, well, that's not so. But that seems to be the story that I hear most commonly.

JIMMY CARPER: But he was quite taken with the blurring of the gender thing.

SARAH Well, the interesting thing about-- I have a little different take about gender right now. As I was telling somebody earlier, I'm getting ready to go take a test called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the MMPI. Or to put it another way--

JIMMY CARPER: Inventory. That sounds like--

SARAH This is a--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: You keep the extra arms or legs on a shelf in a closet somewhere.

SARAH This is an exam that was 600 questions, designed to determine, essentially, if you were consistent or if you're a liar, or if you're nuts, I guess, because it's the last therapeutic test required before you get the letter to obtain surgery. So right now, I'm looking at gender in a very close up way because I'm getting ready to schedule my sex change surgery at long last.

JIMMY CARPER: Whoa.

SARAH And you know--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: You're really going to do it?

SARAH Oh, yeah. There's no question I'm going to do it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: But you've--

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Come on.

SARAH I've waffled back and forth. But yeah, at this point, yeah, there is no question. I don't regret that I took so long to make the decision. But I certainly-- I'm glad that it's the decision has finally been made. So yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: And so I'm looking at gender from a little different viewpoint. And I think people have a misconception about gender. Gender, basically, is-- well, sex, if you think of it this way, sex is what's between your legs. And gender is what's between your ears, as Brenda Thomas likes to say.

SARAH Yes.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Or I put this another way. Sex is the biology you're born with. Gender is all the behavioral expectations placed upon you because of what you were born with.

SARAH Mm-hmm.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And women understand that all the time. Because for years and years and years, being a woman meant you were automatically relegated to being a second-class citizen. It automatically meant you were going to get paid less for doing the same jobs as men. So when you talk to them about gender being a behavior, they get it. They get it right away that sex is the biology, but gender is about the behaviors.

SARAH And that's something I've pointed out to gays and lesbians over the years too. One of the gender rules and that

DEPALMA: to me is what it is, it's gender rule, one of them said is, thou shall partner up with a person of the opposite sex and produce children. Well, if you're not going to do that, you just violated gender rule number one. So whether you know it or not, you just became transgender.

JIMMY CARPER: There you go.

SARAH And I hear people say to me, I don't get it. What does transgender have in common with gay and lesbian? Hello. I

DEPALMA: think we just explained it.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH And yet, it's an interesting thing. Laurie and I were at the parade. And even then, people that I have known for a

DEPALMA: long time we're saying, someday, you really ought to talk about this because I really don't understand it.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I think as you say, when you start with the word-- with the phrase, or the beginning word "trans," then people just turn off.

SARAH And all "trans" means is crossing.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I know.

SARAH It's just crossing gender.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: But there are so many people who do not understand the difference between transgender and transsexual.

SARAH Well, I got an email from a person the other day in Corpus Christi, who is listening to the show tonight. Before we

DEPALMA: go any further, hello, Debbie. I hope you feel better. I meant to say that earlier. I got--

JIMMY CARPER: Is she OK?

SARAH Yeah, she's just got a head cold.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH Just generally not--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: The Debbie I know.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Hi, Debbie.

SARAH This person in Corpus Christi said, well, they were really confused. And they were trying to decide if they were

DEPALMA: transgender or not. And he said, well, really, all I like to do is just wear women's clothes. Does that make me transgender?

SARAH And I said, well, let's back up. Transgender gets used a bunch of different ways. And you can take your pick how

DEPALMA: you want it. I would almost prefer to see the word transgender go away, and we stick with some more specific titles, actually.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH Transgender, really, all it means is a person who crosses the gender line in any capacity.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH So whether you're a cross-dresser or whether you're a post-operative transsexual, it's still transgender. But

DEPALMA: people shouldn't get too hung up in that. All it means is a person who crosses the gender line.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Well, maybe you need a more all-encompassing word.

SARAH Well, and that has been argued in the community for about the last 20 years.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I bet. I know, just like why isn't there one word for all of us?

SARAH Yeah. You know, I mean, I have seen-- I have watched computer chat lists. And you can't believe the virulence

DEPALMA: with which people argue their side. Oh, transgender ought to be changed to this because it means such and such. Well, it means it to them, and they believe it. I'm a lot more comfortable talking about specific subjects.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH Because there are different areas of transgender that need more explanation than others.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH And for example, this person in Corpus Christi, who said, well, all they want to do is cross-dress. I wrote back and
DEPALMA: said, well first of all, don't say that's all you want to do. If you're happy with that, if it's sufficient for you, it's not all you want to do. It's important to you.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH You know? And that's one of the things that I run across a lot, is that people start discounting themselves.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Shame. Yes.

SARAH Well, this person is discounting herself--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Sure, sure.

SARAH --before she ever gets-- she ever gets a shot out of it. And there is no point in doing that. Now this person's not

DEPALMA: married. So it's not a case of where there's a wife and children involved. It's a single person who likes to wear women's clothes. OK. And so the harm in doing that is what, exactly? And yet, people do get persecuted for it. You can lose your jobs for it if someone finds out. So it seems kind of silly.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH And a cross-dresser-- I've met very few cross dressers who ever said to me, oh, yeah, I want to go run right out

DEPALMA: and get the surgery. And often, that's because they're content where they are. Gender is-- people have an idea that gender is something that's fixed, that you can go pin this to the wall and say, this is gender, and there are no deviations from this. And it's nonsense.

We've had hundreds of guests in the show that have disproved that theory. Gender is fluid. I've known people who have moved all over the gender spectrum, everywhere from butch dyke to a Nelly gay man, and stuff in between before finally deciding, OK, this is me, and this is where I'm comfortable for now. And it may work for them for three or four years. And then they'll say, well, that's not the answer either.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH So it's a mistake for people to say, oh, gee. Gender is this, and it never changes. Well, that's nonsense. But I
DEPALMA: understand why people are confused about it. Because they're raised to believe it.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH You're taught in school from the start, with the gender lines are here. And if you cross those, you'll be ostracized,
DEPALMA: you'll be beaten up, you'll get kicked out of school, any number of things. So you learn that gender has to be this one, strict little area.

JIMMY CARPER: [INAUDIBLE].

SARAH Or else, there will be societal punishment for it.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: It's reinforced, I think, in school. But it's taught much earlier than that.

SARAH Oh, yeah. I mean, I've said before, I was almost-- I think it was right at years old the first time I told my mother

DEPALMA: that I wanted to be a girl. And of course, she didn't believe me. But it was reinforced real fast that was never going to be acceptable behavior. And I should never ever say anything like that again. So I got the message real clear that just wasn't to happen. And lots of people do. And so they think gender is what they've been told it is.

JIMMY CARPER: Yup.

SARAH And that's the mistake. Gender is whatever you think it is. That's a big difference. It's not what someone else sets

DEPALMA: for you.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH And women-- again, women understand that because they've been raised saying, you know, well, women-- well,

DEPALMA: until recently anyway, women were raised that their job was to be subservient to the men's, more or less. And the man made the decisions.

And of course, a lot of that changed with feminism in the '70s and things. But there are still a lot of women out there who still believe that their role in life is to take care of the family and the husband. Everything comes before them.

JIMMY CARPER: And there are a lot of women who are very happy in that role.

SARAH There's nothing wrong with that. That's the whole point of what we're talking about here. If you find a

DEPALMA: conservative position in the gender area, and you're comfortable with it, then go for it. There's nothing wrong with that.

I got an email recently from somebody who said-- I got an email recently from somebody who said, well, you know, I'm not an activist. I don't ever want to be an activist. I'm sick of hearing about activism. What's wrong with being in the closet? And my response is, nothing. You're on. You're getting-- is there something you want to add?

MELANIE: Oh.

JIMMY CARPER: I thought you were on. Go ahead.

MELANIE: Jimmy was gesturing at me. I don't know. I can't really hear myself in here. I don't know if the mic's set up or what. I was like, just the technician-- and he was getting-- I'm sitting here adjusting the mic stand and things like that.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. I think we got you on now.

MELANIE: OK. Let's see. Here we go.

JIMMY CARPER: Yo, yeah. Much better.

MELANIE: Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Why don't you tell our audience who you are, first of all?

MELANIE: I'm Melanie. I'm the president of the Texas Association for Transsexual Support. Those that have tuned in to the show before have heard me on air. I'm just running around. We had our meeting today. And we've got a prospective new member that just moved to town a few weeks ago.

And I'm running around, showing her all the typical cool hangouts and things like that. And we just came over from Chances where we're spending time over there. And I was, like, well, your radio show will be coming on. Let's run over and see what's going on.

SARAH And how do the lesbians at Chances receive you all?

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: It was pretty good. I'm over there, like, practically every week. I almost live over there on Thursdays for Nancy Ford shows. I usually don't have too much problems. I had a little report. Our friend here, she's a little mic shy. But-- yeah. She apparently had a interesting run-in when she was visiting town a few-- a couple of months ago or something like that, I think.

So a couple of months ago, she ran into somebody that wasn't-- behavior wasn't really appropriate. But you know, I assured her that was very atypical of the usual behavior of everybody over there. Usually, it's pretty accepting.

We were by far not the only transgenders that were over there today. There's quite a few. People that I know from the community were over there having drinks and dancing and things like that. They're probably still over there now.

SARAH Well, you would think that if anybody in the community would understand gender, it would be the dykes.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Oh, yeah.

SARAH Oh, yeah, yeah. There aren't a lot of people who have been persecuted more for doing genders than the dykes.

DEPALMA: It's interesting. It's Dykes and the Nellie Queens. They are the ones that really take the brunt of it all.

JIMMY CARPER: Yup.

SARAH And it's because. They're so obvious.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH I mean, they're clearly violating gender rules. So therefore, they're so easily targeted.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. These are people who can't--

SARAH They can't hide.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: They can't hide. They can't go into the closet.

MELANIE: Yeah. And it's interesting. We were talking earlier about passing and getting served when you're out there and things. And actually, Friday, I went to the women's game night over at the community center. And afterwards, a bunch of us went over to In Between or over there, hanging out. one of my friends, April, was saying that she went to, I think it was the movies or something the other day.

And she got her ticket and everything. And somebody goes, well, you know, thank you, sir. And you know, I'm just-- I've always been hoping to aspire as far as her bra size. And I just-- I'm having trouble figuring-- I'll figure that one out. Because I mean--

JIMMY CARPER: Well, you know--

MELANIE: I was like, whoa. I mean--

JIMMY CARPER: Jim Vaughn, who has very long hair--

MELANIE: Oh, yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: --gets ma'am'd all the time.

MELANIE: Oh, well--

SARAH Why?

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Yeah.

SARAH All the time. By haters.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I think one-- I think one of the reasons [INAUDIBLE].

MELANIE: I'd like to have his hair not below the neck, but what's coming out of the top of his head.

BOBBY: And I would so love for people to stop calling me ma'am over the phone.

JIMMY CARPER: I don't know why they call him ma'am over the phone.

MELANIE: You're about as far from ma'am as I could possibly think of, Bobby.

SARAH And the thing about that is what you're talking about, is these are people who are picking up on what are called
DEPALMA: gender cues.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH It's interesting. You can look as butch as you want. But if you're carrying a purse, they'll call you ma'am.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yep.

SARAH It's really strange how that works, But it's true.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Because they have long hair. And because Jim has long hair, it's ma'am.

SARAH They're picking up on gender cues.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH It goes back to what I said about, gender are all the behaviors that are enforced upon you. Because of these--

DEPALMA: because of these cues, people see a person with long hair, and they say, oh, automatically, it's a girl.

I'm trying to think, Bob Seger has a line in one of his songs about going into a bar in which he's got real long hair. And he gets tired of people saying, oh, was that a boy or a girl? You know, well, and he gets tired. He gets-- he always feels alone. And he's always outnumbered. And I thought that every transgender in America understands what Bob Seger was going through in that song.

JIMMY CARPER: And that song says, the same old cliches, is it a woman or a man?

SARAH Is it a woman or a man. And they are cliches.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Love that song.

SARAH And so for the people that are out there, they're new, or even if you're just listening for the first time, and you're

DEPALMA: saying, you know, I don't get it, one of the first things, I guess, you'd have to talk about with being-- with the issue of transgender are the different kinds of people who fit under that umbrella.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH And we've just mentioned two of them. And that basically is anybody who doesn't fit the societal norm. You start

DEPALMA: thinking about that. That's a pretty damn big umbrella.

[LAUGHTER]

How many people do you know who fit the societal norms in every way?

JIMMY CARPER: No.

MELANIE: Well, of course, Jimmy is like the typical, masculine guy over there.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, right. With my big, faggy voice.

MELANIE: Yeah.

SARAH You should have seen him lifting--

DEPALMA:

BOBBY: [INAUDIBLE] that pink shirt.

MELANIE: Yeah.

BOBBY: You should have seen him lifting those margaritas before he came in.

MELANIE: Oh, yeah. That's-- oh, that's how he builds up those big forearms.

JIMMY CARPER: One, two, three, one, yeah. Yes, I do wear pink shirts. I've got a dozen more like this at home too.

SARAH Yeah? Well, that's right. First time I met you, you were wearing a pink shirt.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And a hula skirt.

SARAH And a hula skirt. That's right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: We won't go into that.

SARAH Is that the same one you're wearing now, Jimmy?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No. This is a new hula skirt.

MELANIE: OK. So the thing about transgender then is that, to be transgender is a fairly simple process. All you have to do is be someone who crosses the gender norm, crosses the gender lines.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

MELANIE: And you're in that category. And I know a lot of gay people who have gotten very resentful any time I've said that.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

MELANIE: I am not transgender. I'm gay.

JIMMY CARPER: I know a certain clown. Yes.

MELANIE: You know?

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

MELANIE: You know, I'm not transgender. I'm gay. Well, sexual orientation and gender are two different things. So just don't get your panties in water, right? Yeah, as far as that--

BOBBY: [INAUDIBLE] more jewelry than some men.

MELANIE: You wear more jewelry than some jewelry stores.

[LAUGHTER]

But the best thing, in a nutshell, that I've heard as far as trying to get the thing straight, is something that Beth said one time when she was down here. And I heard this phrase. And I just use it, and people get it, is that sexual orientation is about who you want to go to bed with. And gender identity is about who you want to go to bed as.

SARAH Oh, that's a real good one.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Yeah. Yeah. You've got to credit that to Beth. I heard-- she said that. And I'm like, oh, yeah, I'm using that line from now on. Because I mean--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JIMMY CARPER: --steal someone's best.

MELANIE: Yeah. Just like-- it's like a little one-liner that's just--

JIMMY CARPER: That is a great line.

SARAH Yeah.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Yeah, it's great. And it really gets it through. Because then they go, oh, yeah, OK, I can see that.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

MELANIE: Yeah, because it totally puts everything into perspective.

SARAH And it's exactly right. And then first of all, for this person in Corpus Christi-- and I know you're listening to us on

DEPALMA: the web tonight, so let me address your issue directly-- there are, God knows how many, tens of thousands of men who are doing exactly what you're doing tonight. They are wearing nightgowns to bed. And you know what? It harms no one.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right.

SARAH There is no reason to feel guilty about this. There's no reason to feel ashamed about it. You are harming no one.

DEPALMA: And if you are feeling good about-- and you feel good about this, and if you just do it because the clothing feels good--

JIMMY CARPER: Yep.

SARAH --so what. And it's going to be single men, it's going to be married men, it's going to be gay men, it's going to be

DEPALMA: straight men who are doing this. Well, when you're married men, it's a lot more complicated.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH If you told your wife before you got married, and she still married you, that's one thing. If you've been married for
DEPALMA: 10 years, and she comes home and finds you in her clothes, we're talking about a totally different issue.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, that's true.

SARAH Because now we're talking about trust issues, and what are we going to do because chances there are kids
DEPALMA: involved. And I don't want-- and so that gets a lot more complicated. And we've had-- we get calls and letters about that before.

JIMMY CARPER: Gosh. We've had whole shows about that.

SARAH Yeah. But the point is, to the audience right now, first of all, in falling under the category of transgender--
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH --you've got this subheading, I guess, of people that are called cross-dressers.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

SARAH Please don't use the word transvestite. It's really socially a no, no.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Why is it socially a no, no?

SARAH It has to do with the history of it. But it actually was used originally as a derogatory term.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

SARAH And they're really trying to get away from that.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH And it's like drag queens, they like to call it drag queens. They're female impersonators.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

SARAH It's a more politically correct kind of thing, I guess.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Although I do hear it used a lot in England still.

SARAH Well, you remember, in England, the BBC refuses to use the word "gay."
DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

If you listen to the BBC in the morning, I mean, they will talk about homosexuals or lesbians. But they will not say the word gay.

MELANIE: Lesbians. Those sounds like subatomic particles.

[LAUGHTER]

SARAH They do.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH Yeah. I mean, the BBC still refuses to even say the word gay.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Chris is coming in here. And he's got a smile on his face.

MELANIE: Uh-oh.

JIMMY CARPER: But there's one cute thing about the BBC. They do say dyke quite a bit. The head of the BBC, his last name is Dyke.

BOBBY: Oh.

JIMMY CARPER: So when you go on their website, and you're going through it, it says, Dyke did this, and Dyke did that. I'm going, what in the world is going on?

SARAH She really gets around.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

MELANIE: Yes.

SARAH I thought maybe you were going to tell me that they had-- somebody kept the finger in the dike or something.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Oh, yeah.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

SARAH [INAUDIBLE] hearing that at midnight.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Yeah.

BOBBY: We don't want to use the word "gay." But this is the country that gave us *Are You Being Served* and Mr. Humphries.

MELANIE: Oh, yeah. That is a great show too

SARAH They have no problem with you being homosexual.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Oh, yeah.

SARAH They just don't want you to say you're gay.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Yeah, yeah.

SARAH You're not supposed to be happy about the fact you're homosexual, I suppose.

DEPALMA:

MELANIE: Oh, yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, well.

MELANIE: But just-- he was bringing up-- that reminded me, when I first came out about 10 years ago, I had a lesbian friend named Stacy that-- not the one that it comes down to the station now, it's somebody different.

And it was around Halloween. And she lived over there by Richmond and Kirby. And we're talking about the parties and everything that they have around the bars and all that. And she was asking me--