

BUDDY Hey, you want to hear a secret? My name is Buddy, and I work as a dispatcher for the Houston Police
JOHNSTON: Department. But every Sunday morning from 2:00 until 4:00 AM, I sneak into KPFT studios with my friends and start pushing buttons.

VARIOUS (CHANTING) What do we want! Gay rights. When do we want them? Now. What do we want? Gay rights. When do
SPEAKERS: we want them? Now. What do we want? Gay rights.

BUDDY Well, actually it's no secret. My name is Buddy Johnston, and I produce a program here at KPFT every week
JOHNSTON: called *After Hours* with a lot of my friends. *After Hours* is music, news, special features, and interviews all brought to you by Houston's gay and lesbian community. And it's heard every Saturday night after the bars close real early Sunday morning from 2:00 until 4:00 AM. If you want to know what's going on in Houston's gay and lesbian community, why not tune in to *After Hours* right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. Just listen and hear what you've been missing.

VARIOUS KPFT Houston.
SPEAKERS:

The disorders began with a routine police raid on a homosexual bar, the Stonewall on Christopher Street.

(CHANTING) Say it loud, gay and proud.

We take great pride in what's happened in the gay community and what's going to happen.

The people of Dade County have said enough, enough, enough.

(CHANTING) Human rights are here to stay. Anita Bryant, go away.

There's no question in my mind that the people of California don't want homosexual teachers in the classroom.

State Senator John Briggs has just conceded the election.

Both Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk have been shot and killed.

Dan White has been found guilty of one count each of voluntary manslaughter.

(CHANTING) Fight now. Fight back.

It has now broken loose. Cops are now bashing heads.

And here comes the National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

Gay power, gay politics, that's what this report is about.

There are gay and lesbian people singing out here. What's your reaction to that?

I think it's terrible. If I had a rock, I'd throw it at 'em.

The real message of these gay games is that every one of us is a winner.

Tonight we are marching as are others across America, and we shouldn't have to be.

Say it so they can hear you in the Capitol! For love and for life, we're not going back! For love and for life, we're not going back! For love and for life, we're not going back! For love and for life, we're not going back!

I think that's Robin Tyler on the stage leading the chant. For love of her life, we're not going back.

Good afternoon and welcome to the National March on Washington, DC for Gay and Lesbian Rights and choral reciting.

[CHEERING]

Let's hear it out there!

I'm Lea Delaria.

I'm Bruce Hopkins.

I'm a dyke.

I'm a faggot.

And we're best friends!

I want you to savor this next moment. I have the proud task of telling you that the official count of the Lesbian and Gay Rights March, the official count is over 500,000 strong! 500,000 strong. Look at you! 500,000 strong.

500,000 strong, one of the largest marches in the United States history! One of the largest marches in United States history, 500,000 strong!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

And then the voice of Harvey Milk was heard throughout the land, and children please pay attention to what the man is getting ready to say to you this morning.

Come on and say it.

We must destroy the myths once and for all, shatter them. We must continue to speak out and most importantly, most importantly, every gay person must come out. Did you hear that?

[CHEERING]

As difficult as it is, you must tell your immediate family. You must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors. You must tell the people you work with. You must tell the people the stores you shop in.

[CHEERING]

Once they realize that we are indeed their children and we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all. And once you do, you will feel so much better.

I asked people all over this country to do one thing. Come out. Come out, America. Come out.

[CHEERING]

BUDDY Well, that can only mean one thing, Mike.

JOHNSTON:

HOST 1: Tell me.

BUDDY It's a Pride Month, 1988. Parade's three or four weeks away, right?

JOHNSTON:

HOST 1: Three.

BUDDY And we're cooking this morning, baby, because (SING-SONGY) we're queer.

JOHNSTON:

[LAUGHING]

Thanks, Alan. There goes an ambulance down the street. They here to get me? I think they might be.

HOST 1: Yeah, with a funny jacket.

BUDDY Anyway, this is *After Hours*, radio celebrating live from the heart of Montrose on your Pacifica station 90.1 FM. My
JOHNSTON: name is Buddy Johnston. Please spell the name correctly if you wish to complain. J-O-H-N-S-T-O-N. I'm the one that works for the police department as a dispatcher, you know that fag they've got down there.

Anyway we're getting ready to tell you about Lesbian Gay Pride Week coming up June the 17th through the 26th, a lot of wonderful things getting ready to happen. Mark Timmers, an ex-Houston police officer's going to join us this morning to talk about growing up gay and working for the Houston Police Department. Sure you want to stay tuned for that. Call your friends and tell them that *After Hours*, radio celebrating life from the heart of the Montrose, is on the air, and we're ready to roll.

The group's been out bar hopping. Is that right, baby?

HOST 2: That's right. We've been out a while bar hopping.

BUDDY Yeah. Well, we'll tell you all about it. So stay tuned. Call your friends and tell them that Lesbian Gay Pride Week
JOHNSTON: is getting ready to take off like a-- like a what? Anybody got anything clever to say?

HOST 2: A rocket.

BUDDY Like a rocket? Oh, no, not the Rockets.

JOHNSTON:

[CHUCKLING]

Anyway, we're here anyway, and we're ready to go. 526-4000's the number to call. We want to hear from you. It's from the movie *Beverly Hills Cop*. Did you get that, cop?

Mark Timmers, Houston police officer, going to be come in and talk to us. I should say ex Houston police officer. So stay tuned. It's going to be great.

[MUSIC PLAYING - "SHAKEDOWN" - BOB SEGER]

Have you ever been busted?

HOST 1: Yes.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Have you really?

HOST 1: Yes, I have.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** I didn't know that. I swear to God.

HOST 1: But we're not going to talk about it.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** You know, I started working for the police department in Van Buren, Arkansas, my hometown, when I got out of high school, and the jail there was just the pits. Now I've worked for Houston police almost five years, but I've never seen the jail down there. So--

HOST 1: It's just the pits.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Is it really?

HOST 1: Yeah, it is.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** You know from experience?

HOST 1: Firsthand.

[LAUGHING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** That question has been asked hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of times. Johnny, are you queer?

HOST 1: What's the answer?

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Well, I'm as queer as a \$3 bill, and if anyone has \$3, please send it in, especially if you pledge during marathon because we raised 90 point some odd hundred thousand dollars? No. 90 point what?

HOST 1: Man, we were-- \$91,000.

BUDDY Was it \$91,000?

JOHNSTON:

HOST 1: Yeah, man.

BUDDY Lots of money. 1,200 of that was donated by *After Hours* people. I think that's great.

JOHNSTON:

HOST 1: That is fantastic.

BUDDY And we want to thank you so much for taking the time to call in the last couple of weeks and pledge during
JOHNSTON: marathon. And I want to thank Mike for being here last weekend because I stayed home and slept like normal people should do. Normal people. [INAUDIBLE]

HOST 1: I heard.

BUDDY Anyway, we've got Houston-- I keep saying Houston. I have to say a former Houston police officer, a former
JOHNSTON: Houston police officer, Mark Timmers going to join us this morning and talk about growing up gay and what it was like to work for the Houston Police Department. And a lot of interesting things getting ready to happen so stay with us.

Also today is going to be the final day of Lesbian Gay Pride Week meeting, planning sessions. We are going to get together and brainstorm, getting ready for the parade and the whole week's activities. The guide is out. It's been distributed to a lot of the bars. It's in a lot of the businesses up and down the Montrose Strip. If you don't have a guide or you haven't seen a guide or you don't want to go pick up a guide and you want me to mail you one, just call us right now at 526-4000, 526-4000 and we'll send you one.

And we got some new music for you this morning from a new album by Romanovsky and Phillips. It's their third album, *Emotional Roller Coaster* is the title but this cut is called "Give Me a Homosexual" and I'll take one right now.

[MUSIC PLAYING - "GIVE ME A HOMOSEXUAL" - ROMANOVSKY AND PHILLIPS]

DEBORAH BELL:Hi, I'm Deborah Bell.

BRUCE REEVES:And I'm Bruce Reeves.

DEBORAH BELL:I'm a dyke.

BRUCE REEVES:And I'm a faggot.

BOTH: And we're the co-chairs of Lesbian Gay Pride Week 1988.

DEBORAH BELL:Pride Week is June 17th to the 26th this year, and we would like to encourage everyone to come out and be rightfully proud.

BRUCE REEVES:That's right. The parade is Sunday June 26th, 3:00 PM, and will run from Westheimer at Woodhead to Montrose. Immediately following the parade will be Gayfest across the street from Kroger's. We need everyone to come out and be a part of the festivities.

DEBORAH BELL: Pride Week is much more than a group of individuals parading down the street planned by an elitist few.

BRUCE REEVES: It is an opportunity to get involved and show the world that we are a happy loving people, that we are united in our fight for civil rights.

DEBORAH BELL: We are thankfully unique and rightfully proud to be a gay and lesbian people.

BRUCE REEVES: For more information on Lesbian Gay Pride Week--

DEBORAH BELL: Call 961-2905.

BRUCE REEVES: Come out of your closets--

DEBORAH BELL: Come out into the streets--

BOTH: And show the world you are rightfully proud in 1988.

BUDDY Hey, and that's all going to happen in a couple of weeks.

JOHNSTON:

HOST 1: Thought it was already happening.

BUDDY Well, it's already happening because it's Pride Month and people are coming out by the thousands and thousands
JOHNSTON: and thousands. Find out what's going on by calling 961-2905.

And just a reminder that today, June the 5th, right? Is that today?

HOST 1: That's today.

BUDDY At 6:00 at Dignity Center down on Fannin it's the very last meeting of the Pride Week committee just before the
JOHNSTON: festivities began. And there's not going to be a Gayfest although they said there's a Gayfest on that card. The Houston Bar Owners' Association decided they didn't want to do that. I've been trying all week to get a statement from them, and I haven't been able to get that for you. We'll-- hopefully we'll have that soon. Maybe we can get something at the meeting this afternoon.

In the meantime, we're going to have a rally immediately following the parade right there across the street from the disco Kroger store. So you want to come down and join the parade and enjoy all the week. You can pick up a copy of the Pride Week Guide 1988 available all over the Montrose or you can call me right here at KPFT at 526-4000. I'll not only send you the guide. I'll send you a KPFT program guide, and it'll tell you about all the wonderful programs that you hear on the station.

Right now we're going to listen to an interview that we did a couple of days ago with Mark Timmers, a former Houston police officer who was born and grew up gay. He's going to tell you all about that. He's also going to talk about working for the Houston Police Department.

In the beginning of this piece you're going to hear some-- what is it called, radio transmissions I guess? These are recorded off of a scanner. Anybody can go to Radio Shack and buy a scanner.

And I had some problems one time with a supervisor down there, and I used to tape every day everything that happened because it's hard to get copies of things from them. So I would set up my reel-to-reel recorder and call my neighbor and say run over and put it on this channel because that's where I'm working today because the city is broken up into different channels.

But anyway you're going to hear-- if you listen real close, you'll hear me at the beginning of this thing and enjoy this. If you have any questions, give us a call at 526-4000 and we'll be back in just a little bit.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Oh, yeah, this is *After Hours* on KPFT 90.1 FM. The number again is 526-4000.

DISPATCH: [INAUDIBLE]

300 ZX going about 100 miles an hour at 610 East. I'm just passing the 225. He won't pull over for me.

[INAUDIBLE]

225 East. Still going over 100 miles an hour.

[INAUDIBLE]

I've just been shot.

[INAUDIBLE]

I've just been shot.

[INAUDIBLE]

I've just been shot.

[INAUDIBLE]

Officer's been shot. 8400 [INAUDIBLE]

BUDDY Is it really like that?

JOHNSTON:

MARK It's like that.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Huh?

JOHNSTON:

MARK It's like that. It was like that.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY For-- is it really like that, Mark. Come on.

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, you should know. You should know. You sat on the end of that mic.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY It's not really like that though. That's like two or three minutes.

JOHNSTON:

MARK Yeah.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY And it goes on for days and sometimes nothing ever happens.

JOHNSTON:

MARK That's true. That's true. It can be weeks, weeks and months, and then it happens in less than four seconds.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Yeah, sometimes unexpected.

JOHNSTON:

MARK 90% of the time unexpected.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY We're talking to Mark Timmers, a personal friend of mine. I guess I should say that. Maybe I shouldn't say that. I

JOHNSTON: don't know.

MARK Oh, no, you can say it.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Don't know if I want to be seen in your company right now.

JOHNSTON:

MARK I wouldn't worry about that.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY But anyway, Mark is a ex Houston police officer, right?

JOHNSTON:

MARK That's true. Class 111.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Class 111.

JOHNSTON:

MARK Yeah.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY So all you police officers that are tuned in, you can run get your book and look him up if you don't already know
JOHNSTON: him. He's the cute man that I've never had an affair with by the way. That's one of the rumors that's been going around 61 Riesner that we've had an affair.

MARK I've been gone for a while. I haven't heard that rumor.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Really?
JOHNSTON:

MARK No.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY You left the department last October 30th on your own?
JOHNSTON:

MARK On my own. With a little coercion from some other people that we can't get into right now.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Because there are things going on in court?
JOHNSTON:

MARK This is true.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY So we can't talk about--
JOHNSTON:

MARK No, we need to stay clear of that subject.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Yeah, that's what your attorney told me. But anyway we are here to tell people that you're what?
JOHNSTON:

MARK That I'm still alive and out there.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Yeah, but what else?
JOHNSTON:

MARK That I'm former Houston police officer and was a hidden gay person in that police force of 5,000.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY So you're the only one though, right?
JOHNSTON:

MARK Yeah, I'm the only one.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY There are no other homosexuals at 61 Riesner other than me?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Other than you.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY And they all know about me.

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, yeah, they all know about you. Well, we don't know how many there are, do we?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY I'm just kidding you. There are a lot of gay police officers just like there are a lot of gay doctors and lawyers and

JOHNSTON: paper boys and-- well, not paper boys. Maybe we should say paper men.

MARK Yeah. Got to be careful how you phrase that.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Where did you grow up?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Grew up in Minnesota, small town of Forest Lake. About 10,000 people. Went to school there, married there, and

TIMMERS: then moved to Houston in about-- it was '80.

BUDDY Did you say married?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Yeah, I was married for six years?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Any children?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Two kids, a boy and a girl.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Oh really? What do they think about all this?

JOHNSTON:

MARK They're pretty well hidden out of the whole situation right now. I talk with them twice, two, three times a week,

TIMMERS: and I visit them three or four times a year.

BUDDY The kids don't live here in Texas?

JOHNSTON:

MARK No, they don't. They live back in Minnesota with their mother.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY So what was it like growing up?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, when you first asked me what was it like growing up gay, we need to straighten that out. A person-- when I

TIMMERS: was growing up, I didn't know what gay was. Had all the feelings, had all the emotions, but didn't know what to do with them. Really didn't know what to do with them until about five years, six years ago. So there was no such thing as growing up. There was growing up with a lot of feelings that I didn't know how to deal with.

BUDDY So you have a strong family background?

JOHNSTON:

MARK I have a pretty strong family background. I feel my family is stronger now than it was when I was growing up.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Your mom didn't put you in dresses or your dad doing boozering--

JOHNSTON:

MARK No.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Slap you around the house.

JOHNSTON:

MARK No, I wasn't from that is they would call it the domineering mother factor. I don't even know.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY What about church? Raised in church?

JOHNSTON:

MARK No, my parents didn't raise me in a church. I attended church on a regular basis. And as I grew up, I was a youth director at a church camp, and I was a counselor. And I myself got myself involved in the church I guess seeking out answers and looking for answers.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Answers to what?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Answers to the question of is being gay against our religious beliefs. Is God going to send me to hell for being gay?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY So when were you looking for these answers again?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Oh, I probably started when I was about 12, 13 years old.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY OK, because you just said something about five years ago. You didn't act on any feelings until--

JOHNSTON:

MARK No, not really. I didn't-- well, we all acted on feelings when we're growing up as children, but I never--

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Accepted it?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Accepted it.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Yeah.

JOHNSTON:

MARK And it was until about-- well, a little bit longer than that-- six or seven years ago. I've been divorced now for a
TIMMERS: little over four or five years.

BUDDY What did your wife think about all this?

JOHNSTON:

MARK She went through a very traumatic period and still has sometimes hard times, but we're closer now. We talk.
TIMMERS: We've been able to work a lot out. The children have a lot to do with it, making sure that they're OK and raising them. She was very bitter, which is very understandable.

BUDDY So growing up, what did you want to be when you grew up?

JOHNSTON:

MARK I always wanted to be a police officer. It's my-- always as a small child--

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Why?

JOHNSTON:

MARK On a-- I think it was the responsibility had being out in the public, being with the people. I always had a grave
TIMMERS: respect for police officers or where I came from, deputy sheriffs. I was always-- that's all I ever wanted to be. When I was given a chance back in '82 join Houston Police Department, I took it and enjoyed it. It was a trying time. That's for sure.

BUDDY What do you mean trying?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, it was a whole different culture, whole different lifestyle. And I changed my lifestyle. Working in the police
TIMMERS: department and all of a sudden deciding that you couldn't deal with your gay feelings, that you had to come out with them and express them and knowing that you couldn't be open in the police department, which I really don't-- when I mean open, I--

BUDDY You mean be yourself?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Be yourself.

TIMMERS:

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Because those are the things we're fighting for on this show, just trying to get people to realize that you can be yourself. And I heard someone had called you and said that another officer that's on-- that's still on the department and said that you were afraid he was going-- you were going to start naming names or something. He ask you what-- what you wanted him to do, stand up on his patrol car and scream or are you gay or something or I'm gay.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** There have been a lot of people, a lot of police officers that have been afraid that I was going to point fingers and name names and--

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Well, listen, guys you can arrest-- you can rest assured that he won't tell anybody.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** Guys and gals.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** He won't even tell me.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** No.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** So-- but I really don't want to know. I know there are police officers out there. I know there are officers that here everything we do here just like there are people in every occupation. But I want the officers that are out there that are listening to become my friend because they want to. I want them to pick up the phone and call me some day and tell me they appreciate what we're doing and what we're trying to do here by standing up for ourselves. And I want to know that they're living their lives happy and not in fear like I used to do.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** Yeah and like I did.

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** And like you used to do.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** My whole tenure with the police department, which created a lot of problems for me--

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Because this isn't easy for you, right?

**MARK
TIMMERS:** No, it's not ease--

**BUDDY
JOHNSTON:** Doing this show.

**MARK
TIMMERS:** No, it's very hard for me. It's not hard for me. It's hard for my lover, too. It puts us both in a situation where I'm afraid of repercussions that could happen.

BUDDY From who?

JOHNSTON:

MARK From not just the public but from the police department in general. I still see a lot of police officers, and a lot of

TIMMERS: them turn and walk away from me now. But a lot of them still come up and talk to me, and I hope to someday be back in police work. I really do.

BUDDY So have you had any threats?

JOHNSTON:

MARK I've had quite a few, quite a few threats.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Recent threats?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, I think the last week I've had a couple, but it's something you just blow off. I really-- I just-- there are threats

TIMMERS: that if people wanted to do something, they know where to find me. I don't hide. People can come and find me, but I'm not-- police officers in general, I'm not at all worried about them.

BUDDY Let's clear up something, too, right away. The police department as a whole is made up of what?

JOHNSTON:

MARK They're made up of probably some of the best individuals I know.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Some of the best men and women you'll ever find--

JOHNSTON:

MARK You got that right.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY And work with.

JOHNSTON:

MARK I really strongly believe that's some very fine individuals. I think though the only problem we have when we

TIMMERS: become police officers is that we tend to lose our own way of thinking, then we fall into a trap. I know I did, and I know a lot of the officers I stood back and watched a lot of things. And they tend to go with the flow, and if you go against the flow, you can be ousted pretty easy or harassed very easy. But--

BUDDY So who's running the flow?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Who's running--

TIMMERS:

BUDDY The old boy.

JOHNSTON:

MARK The good old boys.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Are they still down there?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Oh, yeah. We still-- you have to have the good old boys.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY What about the chief?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Well, I've never met the man. I never met the man.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY I see him all the time.

JOHNSTON:

MARK Do you?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY In fact, he used to-- I used to tell him everything I could when I would see him, but I don't see him as much. I

JOHNSTON: don't know if he's avoiding me--

MARK He probably avoids you. I wouldn't doubt it.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY I wonder if he's ever heard about this show.

JOHNSTON:

MARK I'm sure he has. I'm sure he has. I've had quite a few officers call me and tell me about your show that you're

TIMMERS: doing.

BUDDY What do they think about it?

JOHNSTON:

MARK In general, I think a lot of them like it. I really do.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY When I first started doing this program and I've told you this and I've told the people that are listening to us now

JOHNSTON: this, that I went to my supervisors because number one, I was scared to death. I didn't know what was going to happen. When I came to Houston--

Well, let me go back before that. I worked for the police department in my hometown in Arkansas as a patrolman.

MARK Arkansas?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY JOHNSTON: Yeah, Van Buren, Arkansas. Can you imagine? I know it was the pits. But-- and my attorney--

MARK TIMMERS: What was the population?

BUDDY JOHNSTON: 1,800 I think.

MARK TIMMERS: That was a pretty big town.

BUDDY JOHNSTON: My attorney they're, also a good friend of mine, was gay, and we became good friends. He later was sent to prison for killing his mother. I don't really-- I don't really know if he did that or not, but anyway that's another story.

But working for the police department in my hometown, I loved it. And it was a small Gomer Pyle kind of town like Barney Fife and the Andy Griffith when-- we had three patrol cars, and there were four or five of us depending on what day it was and what shift we worked. And I started out working the night shift, and we were all patrolman. Sam Brown, the whole bit. And when you got to work, whoever got in-- got there first got a car. So I was--

MARK TIMMERS: That's the way it was with this police department, too. If you could get there, you got a car.

BUDDY JOHNSTON: I always made it a point to get to work early so that I'd be sure to get a patrol car so I can get out and drive around. And I had a blast. It was great because people really respected you. And this is in my hometown. People really loved you, and people respected you. But I saw so much corruption from within--

MARK TIMMERS: Yeah.

BUDDY JOHNSTON: That I just-- I couldn't deal

MARK TIMMERS: With it. What I think the major problem with the police department is the officers are beaten down from within administratively.

BUDDY JOHNSTON: That's all the way from the mayor's office down to--

MARK TIMMERS: Yeah, we have no idea where it comes from. We really don't, but I think the general consensus is that most officers are just beaten down from within. Paper work added on paperwork and rules added on regulations and every time you turn around there was something always new.

BUDDY JOHNSTON: And I dispatch for the Montrose area on day shift and [INAUDIBLE]-- what are you laughing about? What's so funny about that? I love Central.

MARK I know. You know you it like the back of your hand.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY I wouldn't work anyplace else. I love my Central, and I do not like the back of my hand. And I'm damn good at
JOHNSTON: what I do.

MARK Do the officers like you out there?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY I don't know if they like me personally. I know they respect me for the job that I'm doing because I'm damn good
JOHNSTON: at what I do. And I've done it for several years about 10 or 12 years.

But what I was going to say earlier-- and I got sidetracked-- when I first started doing this show, I went to my supervisors at the time, two of which I really trusted and really liked a lot and I felt comfortable talking to them. But the reason I went to them, I didn't want them-- I always knew I was going to do this show no matter what. I knew I was going to do the show. But I went to them because I didn't want them to pick up a newspaper and see homosexual dispatcher does gay radio show on local communist radio station because that's what a lot of people think about KPFT.

MARK KPFT, communism.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY But I've told most of the supervisors I work with, and then I told a lot of the people that I work with, my friends.
JOHNSTON: And the more people I talked to and told, the easier it got until now I wish I could go on the *Riesner Report* and tell everybody. And for those of you that don't know, the *Riesner Report* is a monthly thing or--

MARK You think Al Baker would let you do that?

TIMMERS:

BUDDY No. I can guarantee you Al Baker wouldn't let me do that. But the *Riesner Report*, 61 Riesner, the street are
JOHNSTON: building is on, the *Riesner Report* comes out I think once a month or twice a month or something. And it's a video that the chief does and they update the officers and the department in general as to what's going on down there. And I'd like to just go on and put in a plug for my show, but I don't think--

MARK I don't think so.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY They would let me. I don't think Al Baker-- and we have to explain who Al Baker is, too. Al Baker is one of the--
JOHNSTON:

MARK Public.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Officers that works in the public information office who we here at KPFT have had a couple of problems with. And
JOHNSTON: briefly without getting into a lot of that, we called down a month ago-- over a month ago Garland Ganter, our news director, and asked the HPD information office if we could have a photograph of you to promote the show. And at first they said yes, and then they drug their feet up until last week. And to make a long story short, they said that finally that no we couldn't have the picture because they didn't want pictures of you out in uniform. They didn't think that would be in a good light.

And it was funny because my attitude was that they didn't want pictures of an openly admitted homosexual coming out in police uniform. They weren't going to-- about to release that. But, again, I told Garland, and Garland felt the same way that if you had been arrested and convicted of something, your picture would have been on the 6:00 news. They would have given it to channel 13 before you could have said channel 13.

And those are just a lot of the things we fight here at KPFT, but that's another story. And I really don't want to get into that because life goes on.

MARK Yeah, this is true.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY And they just have to-- they'll just have to deal with it because we're dealing with it the best we can. We have a--
JOHNSTON: I have a job to do, and I'm sure they have a job to do. And, again, Al Baker's probably a nice guy. I don't know. He's probably real homophobic, and I'd suggest that he gets over that, especially since the NOP program's getting ready to stop or start, neighborhood-oriented policing. Because if they're going to have NOP, neighborhood-oriented policing, that means they have to police every neighborhood. And Montrose certainly is part of the neighborhood or it is on the mic I work.

MARK Yeah.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY So they're going to have to really--
JOHNSTON:

MARK One thing we have to keep in mind, too, is that the gay community does not live solely in the Montrose area.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Oh, that's true.
JOHNSTON:

MARK I'm in the Spring Branch area, and there's quite a community out there in the southeast, northeast, northwest,
TIMMERS: and in the Woodlands area. The gay community just isn't restricted to the so-called gay area of town.

BUDDY And gay people are everywhere.
JOHNSTON:

MARK Yes. We know that's true.
TIMMERS:

BUDDY Listen, I want to play something for you, and we'll come back and talk about it. All right?
JOHNSTON:

MARK All right.

TIMMERS:

[MUSIC PLAYING]

NARRATOR: What are policemen made of? A policeman is a composite of what all men are, a mingling of saint and sinner, dust and diety. Coldest statistics wave the fan over the stinkers, underscore instant dishonesty and brutality because they are new. What that really means is that they are exceptional, unusual, not commonplace. Buried under the froth is the fact that less than one half of 1% of policemen misfit that uniform and that's a better average than you'd find among clergymen.

What is a policeman made of? He of all men is at once the most needed and the most unwanted. He's a strangely nameless creature who is sir to his face and fuzz behind his back. He must be such a diplomat that he can settle differences between individuals so that each will think he won.

But if the policeman is neat, he's conceited. If he's careless, he's a bum. If he's pleasant, he's a flirt. If he's not, he's a grouch.

He must make in an instant decisions which would require months for a lawyer, but if he hurries, he's careless. If he's deliberate, he's lazy. He must be first to an accident, infallible with the diagnosis. He must be able to start breathing, stop bleeding, tie splints, and above all be sure the victim goes home without a limp or expect to be sued.

The police officer must know every gun, draw on the run, and hit where it doesn't hurt. He must be able to whip two men twice his size and half his age without damaging his uniform and without being brutal. If you hit him, he's a coward. If he hits you, he's a bully.

A policeman must know everything and not tell. He must know where all the sin is and not partake. The policemen most from a single human hair be able to describe the crime, the weapon, and the criminal and tell you where the criminal is hiding, but if he catches the criminal, he's lucky. If he doesn't, he's a dunce. If he gets promoted, he has political pull. If he doesn't, he's dullard.

The policeman must chase bum leads to a dead end, stakeout 10 nights to tag one witness who saw it happen but refuses to remember. He runs files and writes reports until his eyes ache to build a case against some felon who will get dealt out by a shameless seamus or an honorable who isn't honorable.

The policeman must be a minister, social worker, a diplomat, a tough guy, and a gentleman, and, of course, he'll have to be a genius. For he'll have to feed a family on a policeman's salary.

KPFT Houston.

BUDDY Now that's more like how it is, right?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Ain't that the truth.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Yeah?

JOHNSTON:

MARK That's the truth.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY You spend hours working on a case, and then the bad guy gets out of jail before you get home.

JOHNSTON:

MARK This is true.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY It's really like that, and it's real aggravating I know, especially now. The court system is so screwed up, and it's
JOHNSTON: our system.

Oh, but I see good officers down there just working their fingers to the bone and nothing ever gets done it seems like. Drugs are killing us right now.

MARK It doesn't feel like nothing was ever getting done. But once you're on the outside and you look back, you'd give
TIMMERS: anything to be back there trying to make it work again.

BUDDY Do you think it will work?

JOHNSTON:

MARK I think it does work. I think the process is real slow, but I know it works.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY The system, right?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Yes.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Obviously I think it works, or I wouldn't have devoted so much of my life to being a police dispatcher. I love what
JOHNSTON: I do, and I have some of the best goddamn people working for me you've ever seen in your life. Some of our officers would go out of their way to help people, anybody.

MARK Yeah.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Gay, straight, Black, white, Indian, Mexican, Eskimo, Vietnamese, you name it. They're just good people. And
JOHNSTON: they get treated like crap.

MARK They do.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY They do.

JOHNSTON:

MARK I did.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY They take crap from people. I-- you tell-- tell me this story you told me about stopping the guy one time that was gay and-- on traffic. Do you remember that story you told me.

JOHNSTON:

MARK That was-- boy, that was right after I had gotten off probation. I was out in the north-- worked the northwest part of town. And it was 2:30, 3:00 in the morning and pulled the car over for going 65 in a 35. And I remember-- I was driving. I remember getting out of the car and grabbing my ticket book.

TIMMERS:

As I opened the door, guy jumped out of the driver's side of his car and came running back there. He was screaming and hollering at me that the only reason I had stopped him was because he was gay and that I would never harass the average person in the world, that I knew he was gay. And I stood there and listened to that and listened.

Finally, I just started writing out the ticket. And I listened to him go on, and on my partner just turned around and walked back in the car. He wouldn't even stand there.

And I finally asked him to sign the citation. He looked at me. He says just total harassment. I looked I said, well, tell me one thing. How did I know you were gay when I stopped you? I said you were going too fast for me to know anything. He's, well, you knew it.

I said no I didn't. He signed the ticket under duress he said. And then I gave me his copy.

And as I was walking back to the car, he was just screaming and hollering at me. And I got in the car, and I threw my ticket book on the dashboard. And I looked over my partner. I said that damn queen is driving me up a real wall.

And he looked at me and says what. A queen? He said what in the world is a queen. I know this sucker's more naive than I was.

BUDDY Apparently, your partner had never been to Heaven or--

JOHNSTON:

MARK No.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY The Mining Company on a Saturday night.

JOHNSTON:

MARK I remember the first time I walked into a gay bar.

TIMMERS:

BUDDY Oh, really?

JOHNSTON:

MARK Yeah. I've got a funny story I have to tell you. I was working plainclothes in a juvenile division one night, and we

TIMMERS: had a complaint of possible of juveniles in a gay bar. I won't give you the name of it, but it was a country western bar. And the sergeant looked at me. He says, Mark, we'd like you to go check this out. Do you want to take someone with you? I looked around at the officer sitting there. I thought there's only one person I take with, an officer friend that I knew was from a--