

- Uh, uh, uh, uh.

- A really kind of a humorous story, but it's also a story which made me grow up. I was at a conference, and I was well-hidden. I hadn't been out very long, and I was still learning the ropes. And I made the mistake of telling someone that I had a daughter. And she looked me right in the eye and said, oh, how long was your labor?

- [LAUGHS]

- And I thought, uh-oh. [LAUGHS]. And right then, I learned, I can't do this. I just can't do this. If I'm going to have to face the world, I'm not going to lie about it. And so by having made that decision, it immediately separated me from 99% of the gender community. And it's unfortunate. I try to teach people how not to do that.

- I'm sorry to interrupt. I think that's changing now. I think more and more transgendered people are getting the courage to speak up, are getting the courage to say, yeah, I used to be a guy, yeah, I used to be a girl. Big deal. Get over it.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm serious. And I think what's good about it is that our first voices, your voice-- you have a sense of humor. Thank goodness. Thank goodness. I mean, you know, we could be these really, really horrible, angry people. And I've got a lot of anger about that. But it's the human condition.

I've got my cross to bear, so to speak. And I don't choose to see it as a cross. I choose to see it as a challenge. I choose to see it as, well, how am I going to deal with this thing strapped to my back? Well, maybe I can float in the water on my back and kick around for a bit.

I mean, there's lots of things to do. And all of a sudden, it disappears. And I'm terribly free as soon as I say, this is who I am.

- That's the best thing about it. I feel so liberated. The thing about being a liar is you have to have a good memory, and I can't remember what I had for breakfast usually, so I wasn't cut out for that job at all.

- Well, it's like pre-Stonewall gays and lesbians, who had to hide all the time. That's where we are as a community, and we're just starting to come out with that. And I think gays and lesbians should look on us with kind of almost parently pride and go, ah, good, we set the ground for this, because gays and lesbians did.

They came out against tremendous odds and tremendous cultural oppression. And we're marching in that same path, and I think we owe a great debt to the gay and lesbian community for having shown us that it's OK to come out about who we are.

- Well, that leads me right into the next question. That's perfect. In the chapter that was titled "Other Questions," you say, "it's no surprise that the steering committee for the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi Rights, the largest ever civil rights march in the United States, voted to exclude the word "transgender" from the title of the March."

Well, regular listeners to this show have heard me talk about transgender exclusion from the Stonewall March in New York and from our exclusion of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, which is currently sitting in Congress right now. And I've pointed out that both of these happened at the hands of lesbian and gay activists who are determined to achieve a really nasty thing called assimilation. If you would, talk to the listeners about your concepts about assimilation.

- Well, sure. I think it's an inevitable and a sadly inevitable road that many, many activists take, that we struggle so hard, don't we, to just find a resting place, to just find a place where people will let us alone and get on with our lives, right?

And when we can't do that by lying, when we can't do that by hiding, we can't do that behind closed doors, when the police continually raid our bars, we raise our heads in protest. And we storm around. And we go, yeah, we are who we are. And this is what happened with lesbians and gays.

But there is still that search for a resting place, isn't there? There's still a place-- just leave me alone and let me love my lover. Will you just leave me alone?

Unfortunately, what happens in order to find that resting place? The battle isn't over until we name the real oppression, and the real oppression is a culture that does not like difference, that says quite liberally, oh, we're all the same, oh, you lesbians and gays are just like us, I see, you want to vote, you know, like Republican, oh, that's fine.

And I think too many people are too battle weary, and they go, yeah, yeah, yeah, we're just like you, we're just like you.

[LAUGHTER]

Stop putting your cameras on the drag queens, will you? Stop putting your cameras on the butch dykes on the motorcycles, will you? They're not like us. They're freaks.

And those are us. We're the freaks on the edge of the lesbian and gay culture. We're the ones that they put the cameras on. We're the splendid ones wearing ostrich feathers. Or we're the ones who've cut off our whatevers.

And that makes it hard for the people who've been working so hard to find a resting place. Well, I say, there's no resting place until we get rid of the real oppression in this culture, which, I think, is us versus them, which, I think, is this whole tendency of power and greed and, let's face it, capitalism.

It's this acquisitive nature that has been constantly pumped into our culture by advertising, by the nature of a capitalist structure that we have to overcome. And once that happens, then we can start celebrating our differences, then we can start saying, oh, you're a what? You used to be what? [? Poor. ?]

- [LAUGHS]

- But until then, we're always going to find freaks. And I think what lesbians and gays need to do as a culture is acknowledge a very huge growing groundswell transgender movement and welcome it as allies because this recent Republican backlash that happened in the Senate and the House of Representatives-- they're going to hit out at anybody, and they're not going to make a difference between a transgendered person and a gay or lesbian person.

They're not going to stop and ask, oh, excuse me, we're out to persecute some people. Are you transgendered, or are you lesbian and gay? No, they're going to lump us all together, and we'd better, join hands now.

- One of my favorite sayings that people have heard here on this show is a quote from Benjamin Franklin to the effect that we are either all going to hang together, or we will surely all hang separately. And one of these days, we'll get that across. Kate Bornstein, that's all the time that we have for this particular segment. Thank you very much.

- Thank you very much.

[MUSIC - THE FLIRTATIONS, "SOMETHING INSIDE SO STRONG"]

JIMMY CARPER: Mm, "Something Inside So Strong" by The Flirtations. I thought that was a nice way to do a break there in that interview.

SARAH Well, and Kate is definitely what you would call a strong woman.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. Yes.

SARAH She told a wonderful story about being on the Geraldo Show. She told us this off the tape, and I'm cleaning this

DEPALMA: up a little bit.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

SARAH But apparently, Geraldo said something that was inappropriate. And as he came by, she more or less grabbed

DEPALMA: him and told him in real clear, common vernacular--

[LAUGHTER]

--what was precisely wrong with him, the show, and the planet that he existed on.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

SARAH So she's not afraid to say what she thinks.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I see.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, you're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT, Houston, *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude. And on *After Hours* tonight is--

SARAH I'm Sarah DePalma.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And Jimmy Carper. And we're going to go to the second half of that interview.

SARAH Yeah, the second half of the interview is where we get into more political things, and we start talking about some sexual issues, shall we say.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh.

SARAH So if you're easily shocked, you may want to think about the second half. It's not too graphic. I'm just passing this long in advance.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, you already told me you cut out the good stuff.

SARAH I cut--

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: [LAUGHS]

SARAH I cut out the stuff that the FCC would come after us for, yes.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. OK.

SARAH [LAUGHS] So I think we're set with Kate Bornstein.

DEPALMA:

[AUDIO PLAYBACK]

- We're back in this segment with Kate Bornstein, the author of *Gender Outlaw-- on Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. I am proud to say I am one of those "rest of us."

- [LAUGHS]

- I'd like to talk to you about a section of your book that really caught my eye, and that was your talk with Outcasts, the women's S&M organization. I'm very happily involved in a similar relationship. In fact, my life partner and I published a small S&M-related magazine. Talk a little bit about two of the most basic ideas in S&M, that is the controller and the controlled, as it relates to gender.

- Wow. Well, I think speaking as a transsexual person and having lived as a man and having lived as a woman and now neither living and living neither man or women now, I've come to see that the way gender is used in this culture is to be a venue for power. Men culturally have power in this world we live in. Women culturally have less power or are supposed to be passive.

I think what happens inside SM play, Sadoomasochistic play, is that there's an agreed-upon, OK, who's going to get to play at the top? Who's going to get to play at the bottom? And that doesn't happen in heterosexuality.

That doesn't happen in the business world. That doesn't happen at the corner store. That doesn't happen in the police station. You don't have a choice. You don't have a consensual thing. It's not safe. It's not sane.

In SM play, two people sit down and they say, look, I really enjoy controlling people. And someone else goes, really, I really enjoy being controlled. And the two of them get together, and it's like bliss.

And I think that once you acknowledge that, then there's a safe space for it. Where that affects gender is that so much of gender, so much of male, so much of a female is tied up in this power-over-power under thing, that once you agree to do it, what's locking gender in place, the power that's locking in gender in place disappears. And a lot of SM players seem to agree that gender doesn't matter anymore after a while.

- I want to quote from that section of your book because it really-- it just really struck me.

- Sure.

- It says, "and gender is not consensual. We're born. A doctor assigns us a gender. It's documented by the state, enforced by the legal profession, sanctified by the church. And it's bought and sold in the media.

We have no say in our gender. We're not allowed to question it, play with it, work it out with our friends, lovers, or family. Gender is not consensual." I love that line.

- [LAUGHS] Well, it's a sad thing. I mean, we're supposed to be these enlightened people. We're raising banners left, right, and center that say, choice, choice, choice, choice.

And this one thing, this thing called gender-- when you and I come up and say, choice, people go, huh, well, you can't have a choice in that. I mean, you were born with a penis. You don't have a choice in that?

What's a penis? Come on. I mean, didn't we all see *The Crying Game*? Didn't we all see this great line-- and people forget this line-- in early part of the movie, where they say, "it's just a flap of flesh?"

I think people confuse a penis with the Freudian concept of phallus. Phallus is a symbol of power-- here we get back to power-- a symbol of power over, and it has become linked by Freud and his followers with the penis. I know many gentle women who have penises. It's not a big deal.

But I think what we need to do is get rid of the concept of phallus. I think that's an evil concept. I agree with that. I don't think anyone should have nonconsensual power over anyone else.

- I loved it in your book when you talked about how you knew women with penises, you knew men with vaginas, and combinations of the above. I just thought that was marvelous.

- Oh, no, sure. Don't you? I mean, don't you know those people?

- I do. And in fact, some of them are the best friends I have.

[LAUGHTER]

I want to talk about your play, *Hidden-- A Gender*. If you would, talk about your work in the theater. And tell us what it's meant to you. Maybe even give us a sense of how it's shaped your views.

- Working in the theater-- when I was boy, I was trained as an actor. And I gravitated toward that. I think it's something I did when I was growing up.

And when I was very, very, very young, four and a half or five years old, is when I realized I wasn't a boy like everybody else. I didn't know what else to be. And the only other choice that culture offered was girls, so I figured I had to be that.

- [LAUGHS]

- And I knew I couldn't walk through my life-- I mean, there were such restrictions on being sissy, on being girl-like that I learned to act like a boy. And I learned my acting then. I learned to observe people. I learned to take on. It's like that movie, *Zelig*, where the guy-- the Woody Allen movie, where the guy becomes everything he's near?

- Right.

- It's a serious disorder, and I think it's more common in this culture than is admitted. Well, I did that. Only, the difference in acting-- again, it comes to a consensual thing. I'm going to learn this character. I'm going to be everything about it. I'm going to learn their mannerisms. I'm going to learn their thoughts. I'm going to learn how they would react in certain situations.

And that's how I went about going from male to female. I studied women. I studied women under microscopes until I thought I was one. And it wasn't until I started acting women in the culture, until I became women, until I interacted as a woman-- and I was doing a real good job of it. Six months later, I realized that's just another role.

And I leave my role-playing now to theater. I get up on stage. I become all these different characters, and that's where I indulge my love, oh--

[LAUGHTER]

--of being a chameleon, of being all these different characters. But I'm trying to do that more in life now, Sarah. I walk around with a shaved head a lot now, and that freaks people out. And that's kind of cool.

As a man, I developed this male baldness pattern. So as a girl, I have to wear wigs, basically. I even hate the word because it's so pejorative, isn't it? But I do.

But now I play with them. I play with different looks, and it freaks people out. I'm becoming-- I think, as more and more transgendered people, play with their gender. Play with the idea of not having to be a man or a woman, but being something else entirely. I get more courage to do that in the world.

- You have a section here, you talk about passing. And you say that "passing is a form of pretending, which can be fun." Well, isn't that acting?

- Exactly.

- [CHUCKLES] Isn't that acting? I thought you--

- Of course it is.

- [LAUGHS]

- Yes, but not lying. And here's the other thing. In other words, I think that passing in order to lie, passing in order to hide yourself deep within something-- that can be heartbreaking, can't it, because you can never tell your truth.

And what do we want in this world? What does anybody want other than to be able to be truthful and not get hit for it? I think I use an Adlai Stevenson quote, this obscure Adlai Stevenson quote, which is something about a true Republic or a true democracy is one where it's safe to be unpopular. I mean, wow. Wow. Wow.

- For those listeners who have just tuned in, we are speaking with Kate Bornstein. She's the author of *Gender Outlaw*, and this is KPFT 90.1 FM.

I was really struck by you talking about passing because that's a tough issue for anybody that's transsexual. When I go to the grocery store, I want to be left alone. So I need to be able to pass as much as the next person. It's a matter of selective passing, and I think that's a hard concept for a lot of people to get. There are times when not passing can do an awful lot of good.

- I agree. But I think and I hope and I pray, and it's what I'm working for, that this necessity we have to pass at times, this-- there are neighborhoods where I live that I don't want people to know I'm not a girl.

- Yes.

- I just want-- like, leave me alone, you know? And I write what I write. I say what I say. I'm talking with you, and I think I'm hearing that you do the same thing, so that we don't have to do that somewhere in the future, so that people can look back at us a hundred years now and go, they had to pretend they were women at times. Oh, my god, isn't that terrible?

I think that this coming century-- I think that the new Millennium is going to bring a whole multiplicity of genders. I really, really do. I think it's going to-- it's happening. It's inevitable. I think, for example, the word Ms., M-S, took, what, 15, 20 years to enter the culture. And it's now firmly there.

I think there's going to be non-gendered pronouns, personal pronouns that come into the culture. Someone's going to invent them, and it's going to take maybe 25, 30 years to get into the culture. But again, what it boils down to, is there a social need? Is there a biological need? Is there any need to define us any longer as men and women? No.

- I think one thing that people don't talk about is that the culture pays an incredible price for gender. Think of the people who are involved-- just talking about my own life, for example, whose life has been made more difficult because I had to struggle with this issue.

My parents, my ex-wife, my daughter-- they have paid as high a price as I have for the concept of gender in our society. And I wonder what it will take sometimes to get people to understand that enforcing these rules can come at a price that might not be worth the trouble?

- I'm really glad you said that. I'm really, really glad. I think too many transgendered people ignore the fact, ignore the pain that they put their partners through, their loved ones through when they change their gender. Gender is so basic to how we relate to people that, when you go ahead and change your gender, it's like killing the person off whom these other people loved.

And I think the transgendered people need to be aware of the havoc they wreak when they do change their genders, and they need to be more compassionate to those around them, frankly. No one writes from the point of view of the partner of the transgendered person who's going through the transition.

I recently had to do that myself, which is how I learned that lesson quite painfully, when my former lover went from female to male. We're still dear friends. We're not lovers at this point.

- Well, that was going to be my next question. I was going to ask you about David. Really, the question I think that struck me as I was reading this is I wondered, as you've had to make these adjustments, has it strengthened your some of the beliefs that you've held on gender? Or are you now in a position where you're having to rethink what you've written?

- You know, as David became David, I mean, I sat down to write the book probably about a month after he decided to become a boy. So a lot of my views are already in the book, and I stand by them.

I'm writing a new book right now, should be out in about a year, I think, about-- there's this new question that comes up. How do you live in a world without gender? How do you live without gender in this world? I mean, Kate, it's nice that you have all these theories. But come on now. How do you really do it?

And the simple answer is, I look for where gender is, and I go someplace else. And I'm trying-- this whole thing of going through David's gender change from female to male made me look at how deeply gender was embedded in my sexuality, in my sexual orientation, and what I wanted to do sexually.

I've always been attracted to women. And all of a sudden, my lover is becoming a man. Well, wait a minute. Wait a minute. I'm saying that gender is such a mercurial thing, that it's such a construct. Why is it affecting me so profoundly? And that's what I'm examining now. How do we have sex without gender? That's real interesting.

- Well, I think that's really a tough issue. We've gotten several phone calls since I've been on the air from people who just don't understand there's a difference between your gender and your sexual orientation. And they are obviously in great pain.

Some of them are heterosexuals who are transvestites. Some of them are gay, who are transvestites. Some of them just don't know. But the whole idea of sexual orientation and gender is so muddled for them, they just can't make any sense out of where they are. And I really feel sorry for those people. That's been taught to them that way, and they're going to have to unlearn that.

- Yeah. Well, I think it's not necessarily that it's taught. I think it's pressured in. I think you were talking, at one point, about how gender is bought and sold in the media. I talk about that in the book.

- Right.

- That, so much of what we buy is gender based. So much of what we're told to strive for is, be a real man, do this, be a real woman, do that, be heterosexual, which is what? It defines our love based on what, the gender of our partner? Well, if there's no such thing as gender, how do we do it? We, all of a sudden, get to this really dizzy place, and our brain cells start to fry.

Well, what is heterosexual? What is gay? Heterosexual means you're a man, and you love a woman. Does that mean that man loves every single woman? No.

- [LAUGHS]

- I don't think so. I don't think so. So I think that heterosexuality, that lesbian sexuality, that gay sexuality, even bisexuality hides our true desire. What is it that really, when-- what is it that you masturbate to? That's the deal.

- [LAUGHS]

- I mean, really. But by saying, oh, yes, I'm heterosexual, that's just the McDonald's version of sexuality, isn't it? That's the kind that we can sell over the counter and that anybody can buy. But we're not saying, well, what I really like is to get down and dirty with a couple of dildos, maybe a pair of whips. I really like chains and scalpels.

But how are you going to say that? How are you going to say that simply? I think it's time to strip away this blanket term of, oh, I like women. Oh. Oh, you like what you do with women in bed. And yeah, maybe you like people with vaginas. And maybe you like vaginas. That's cool. But maybe that person was a vagina is a man.

[LAUGHS]

- One of these days, we're going to get that idea across. We're coming up towards the end of our segment, but there was something you said that really brought a memory to mind here.

When I was in high school, there was a young person by the name of Adrian Fullerton. And I can use his name because he has since passed away. But Adrian was a very confused young soul, and he would come to school with different color hair each week. And he was very, very effeminate, which, of course, made him the target of everybody that you could think of.

And poor Adrian had the poor sense to come into the boys' locker room wearing panties one time. And I'm sorry to say, there was nothing I could do to save him from being beaten up. Yet, Adrian, as he grew up, turned out to be an absolutely wonderful soul. He turned out to be a male with a vagina, and he paid a terrible price for being that person. I can't help but think that there are so many other people out there like Adrian, and I'd like to think your book is helping them.

- Thank you.

- You're an absolute delight to talk to.

- [LAUGHS] I'm having a lot of fun talking--

- [LAUGHS]

- --girl. I think it's so cool that you've got this "out" radio show, and I'm just like so flipped out that our voices are finally being heard. We're not being portrayed by other people. We're not being vilified. We're speaking out for ourselves, and I think that lesbians and gays can identify with that and support that.

- Well, actually, this show happened because gays and lesbians wanted it to happen.

- Yeah.

- And I have to be careful sometimes because I will say things, and people think, uh-oh, she's declaring war on the gay/lesbian community. No, quite the contrary. This show happens because they wanted it to happen. And I'm very grateful for the opportunity.

Kate Bornstein, thank you very much. The book is called *Gender Outlaw-- on Men, Women, and the Rest of Us*. I very seldom will ever recommend reading to anyone, but I'm going to do it in this case. It is readable. It is enjoyable, and it will really make you think. Kate Bornstein, thank you very much.

- Thanks so much, Sarah.

[END PLAYBACK]

[MUSIC - SEATTLE GAY MEN'S CHORUS, "CHRISTMAS COMES ANEW"]

JIMMY CARPER: Mm. That's the Seattle Gay Men's Chorus, "Christmas Comes Anew."

SARAH Isn't that pretty?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Isn't that pretty? Yeah.

SARAH I get so tired of "Jingle Bells."

DEPALMA:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: The usual stuff, huh?

SARAH Yeah. It's nice to hear a Christmas carol that's not Top 40.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: There you go. There you go. Well, that's why I think people tune into KPFT, because we play that non-Top 40 stuff.

SARAH You know, that's why I tune into KPFT. You hear things here you won't hear anywhere else.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: I'm here to tell you.

SARAH Let's talk a little bit about that interview with Kate Bornstein.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

SARAH Kate makes some points that are controversial, but I think they make a lot of sense. Her argument is that we don't have any choice in gender. You're born in a particular biology, and that's never going to change to the end of time. I mean, your biology is always going to be what it is.

DEPALMA: But what would-- suppose that, at the time of birth, the doctor does not label you male or female. You are simply labeled a person. And as you grow up, you get to choose from the range of behaviors that suit you best.

What do we end up with, men who are masculine and men who are feminine? Would we end up with women who are masculine and women who were feminine? Would we drop those labels? Would people simply find where they are on a range or continuum of behaviors? And what if we said, all of that was OK?

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm. I always thought that the gays and lesbians kind of had a notch up on everybody else because we could see maybe both sides of the issues. And gay men can see the feminine side, and lesbians can see the masculine side. And it was OK.

SARAH I think that's true. I'm not sure that gays and lesbians realize that that's a plus for them. I think, in many ways,
DEPALMA: gays and lesbians are pioneers of gender. Although, they probably would never think of it in those terms.

JIMMY CARPER: Bisexual folks, too.

SARAH Oh, very much so-- very much so. In fact, bisexuals, in many ways, are challenging an even stronger belief
DEPALMA: because they are adding sexual orientation into the mix and saying, not only is there a right to choose from a range of genders. It's OK to choose from a range of sexuality, too.

JIMMY CARPER: There you go.

SARAH So yeah, there's a whole lot in that.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And there is a big thing here about, what is this continuum here with gender, because we grow up thinking the masculine, the feminine, and never the twain shall meet. And there are special rules for women, special rules for men, and more so than just the rules, the things that you can't do if you're a man, the things you can't do if you're a woman.

SARAH In her book, Kate Bornstein has a chapter called, "The Rule Book." And maybe that's a good place to go.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I think so.

SARAH OK, first of all, she says, according to the rules here, there are two and only two genders-- male and female. Well,
DEPALMA: I don't buy that.

JIMMY CARPER: No. I don't think-- the more I know you, and the more that we've talked about this, I think you're right. There are more, lots more.

SARAH I think there are. Where is it written that you have to be male or female? And in the interview, she talked about
DEPALMA: knowing men with vaginas and women with penises. And of course, she's talking about that in a literal sense in terms of behavior.

You take somebody that's a butch dyke, for example. And according to Kate, that's a gender because you're not born that way. You have to make a series of choices to get there, a series of compromises. And when you reach your place of comfort, that's right.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH Well, so if that's true, then there will have to be more than one or two genders.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: But then I have to argue that maybe we are born. I mean if this is the comfort zone, did we acquire it? Or is this our natural manner?

SARAH Well, there's a book that's coming out by a woman named Martine Rothblatt called, *The Apartheid of Sex*. And
DEPALMA: she makes an argument here that I think makes a lot of sense. She compares sex assignment to the enforced apartheid of South Africa.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

SARAH And she points out that, as recently as 20 years ago, racial classification in the US had to be indicated on birth
DEPALMA: certificates and marriage licenses.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, I remember that.

SARAH OK. Well, so does gender. Interracial marriages between races was illegal. Well, marriages between people of the
DEPALMA: same sex or same gender are illegal. Blacks and whites were not allowed to use the same toilets. Transgender people can tell you that, on the job, the first question that comes up is, what potty will we use?

JIMMY CARPER: Oh brother.

SARAH So right off the bat, in the first three things that she talks about, she's right. Gender and apartheid do have a lot
DEPALMA: in common. She also makes an argument. She says that "a spectrum of behaviors would allow a person to define themselves anywhere along a continuum and recognizes that your place in that continuum might change over time."

Well, look at my background.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH I was a heterosexual married man. I had a gay male lover, and now I'm transsexual.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: There you go.

SARAH Can your behaviors change over time? You bet.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Sure.

SARAH So I think that's kind of interesting. OK, let's go back to the rule bit here. Kate says, "another argument people
DEPALMA: make is genitals are the essential sign of your gender. In other words, our gender is what our genitals are."

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, boy. That's not true.

SARAH No, of course not.
DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: No, no, no. And I think-- how do I want to say this? I liken this to-- I've had the same lover for 16 years, and we're both men in different ways. We take charge in different areas, and we both sit back in other areas.

SARAH It's been a strange learning process for me to go from male to female. And we were talking about this off the air.
DEPALMA: I get asked in classes all the time--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah.

SARAH --what's the biggest difference that I notice from being male to female? Well, the first thing I notice is there's an
DEPALMA: incredible lack of status. Where once my opinion would be sought out. Or my opinion counted, if it's a group discussion, I will give my opinion, and they say, oh, that's nice. Now let's see what this man thinks.

JIMMY CARPER: And that's something even-- being a gay man, I try to be sensitive. But that's something that I can't imagine.

SARAH Well, but gay men get that, too.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I can't, and I don't see it.

SARAH Openly gay men will tell you that they get that same thing.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Openly gay men, yes.

SARAH They'll tell you that they get that same thing, and it's partly because gay men, openly gay men unfairly are

DEPALMA: viewed as being effeminate or feminine. So there's that lack of status again. there you are. There's the lack of status.

JIMMY CARPER: You're right.

SARAH The other thing that I've noticed is I feel far more vulnerable than I ever would have before. I never would have

DEPALMA: thought, in the past, to go to a security guard and say, would you please walk me to my car?

Now I carry security devices. I make sure people walk me to my car. I look under the car. I look around the car. I live in a lot of fear that I never had before.

JIMMY CARPER: That's not a fun way to live.

SARAH Well, it's not. But it says something about the state that women currently live in, and it's something. I know men

DEPALMA: try to be sensitive to it. But I think it's hard for them to understand because they don't feel that fear. Although, gay men certainly-- openly gay men, again, certainly fear it because of gay bashing.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, but I'll tell you, Jim and I, from Esoteric Adventures-- we were real good friends, and we liked to walk. And we walked around in the Montrose as an exercise. We'd talk, or we'd discuss things. And we're liable to take a walk at 10 o'clock at night or midnight. And I often think, if we were to women, would we do this?

SARAH I'm sure the answer to that's, no.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH I'm sure. Even my life partner-- we live in Southwest Houston in a relatively safe area, but we don't go out for

DEPALMA: walks at night. We wouldn't dream of it. So--

JIMMY CARPER: So you become a prisoner of your home.

SARAH Well, you become a prisoner of your gender, actually, if you think of it in those terms. We are prisoners of our gender. Now, if gender wasn't made to be such a big deal, if you were allowed to be simply what you were without labels on it--

JIMMY CARPER: The concept is almost mind boggling.

SARAH --where would we be then? That would be called freedom, wouldn't it?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, it sure would.

SARAH So it seems to me, in that respect, we are-- Kate Bornstein and Martine Rothblatt are pioneers. Now, something else that we were talking about off the air while Kate was doing-- and that is the topic of gender is a hot issue in the transgender community for another reason.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

SARAH If there was a choice of more than one gender, would transsexuals exist?

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

SARAH How much of what transsexuals do, in going from one gender to another, is based on social pressure to do so? If it was all right to be an effeminate man, for example-- if you were allowed, as a man-- you were allowed to wear the clothes that were comfortable to you, whether they were skirts or leather, would you still be a transsexual--

JIMMY CARPER: Would you need to be?

SARAH --would you need to be if, as a woman, you were free to wear three-piece suits or sexy lingerie, whichever you preferred, would you feel the need to change genders?

JIMMY CARPER: I don't know.

SARAH How much of it is social pressure? How much of it is internal pressure? How much of it is internalized pressure from outside?

How much of it is-- Kate Bornstein talked about how gender is bought and sold in the media.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah.

SARAH We buy and sell perfumes. We buy and sell-- well, gender is bought and sold, too. If it wasn't such a big deal, if there wasn't so much pressure to be one or the other, would you choose something else? Would you choose something in between?

JIMMY CARPER: I am something in between, actually.

SARAH Well, that's right. So I think it's a fair question to ask, is, how much of this is outside pressure? How much of it is something that's still yet to be defined? And that's--

JIMMY CARPER: The whole thing is a continuum. It's like the gay/straight thing. It's not the gay/straight because it's a big continuum and all kinds of things in between. Just talk to any bisexual.

SARAH That's right. That's exactly right.

DEPALMA:

JIMMY CARPER: And I think it's the same thing with gender.

SARAH And right now, it's a really hot topic in the transgender community because there are more and more of us who

DEPALMA: are becoming extremely skeptical of the medical [AUDIO OUT].