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[SHAKING AND MOANING]

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

[MUSIC PLAYING]

MUSIC: After hours, after hours.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh yes, you've tuned in to *After Hours*, the continuing tradition on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, and music geared for gay and lesbian people. Here at after hours, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are 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]

Hello, Houston. It's Jimmy Carper, and--

EVELYN Evelyn Carroll.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: And we're here to bring you After Hours. How are you doing?

EVELYN Doing great. How are you?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, I'm great. I'm great. Are you kidding? It's 12 minutes after the hour-- the midnight hour, by the way. And gosh, we've got a packed show. And it's really diverse tonight, too, because we've got an interview with two folks from England--

EVELYN They're with ACT UP, aren't they?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: ACT UP in Leeds, of all places. And some interesting aspects about that, and what's going on over there.

EVELYN Now, did we get that in London, or were they here?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: They were here. In fact, they were staying with an old co-producer of *After Hours*, Bruce Reeves. And we'll see what's going on in Bruce's life also. And, I don't know, a couple of pieces-- some interesting things I found on tape. We've had some-- well, we've had some interesting--

EVELYN Yeah, it's been a real busy weekend, folks.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Well, last week, we had the president of the Log Cabin Republicans on. And there was a letter from Terry Richardson of HDLPC in *The Voice* about it, and about Ken Wilkes. So we may read parts of that later on, for those of you who don't get *The Voice*. You've been real busy tonight. What's been going on with you?

EVELYN Oh, we've been doing some fundraising for the gay and lesbian switchboard.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: [VOCALIZING]

EVELYN Our favorite organization here at *After Hours*.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: As a matter of fact, I think you had to leave that early, didn't you?

EVELYN I did-- I was being auctioned off. Can you believe they had me on the auction block, girl?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, so nobody bid, so you came over here?

[LAUGHING]

EVELYN No, that's not the case at all.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: That's not the case at all. I see, I see.

EVELYN They just had to do the bidding a little early.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Really, really fun show. I mean, there's entertainment, and--

EVELYN Right? And they were auctioning off Mister, Mizz, and Miss-- Miss, of course, being every queen in town.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. OK.

EVELYN Every queen who is a queen. [CHUCKLING]

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Doing that drag.

EVELYN Doing that drag.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: And lots of folks have-- businesses have donated stuff to go along with these dates?

EVELYN Oh, yes. We've had everything from the Alley Theater, Triangle Restaurant. We've just had just everybody in the
CARROLL: world-- everybody in the Montrose area--

JIMMY CARPER: Now, that would be a switch--

EVELYN --and the world.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: --go to the Alley, and then to the Triangle. OK.

EVELYN No, we've had a museum, a restaurant, all the stuff.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. Yeah.

EVELYN We've gotten tickets from the River Oaks, of course. I love the people at the River Oaks. They're always good to
CARROLL: us.

JIMMY CARPER: Mindy's still over there?

EVELYN Mm-hmm.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Hi, Mindy.

EVELYN And-- oh gosh, I can't even begin to thank everybody enough. We had quite a lot.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I hope we raise a lot of money for the switchboard.

EVELYN Oh, we need it.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, always.

EVELYN The switchboard will always take your check. PO box 66469.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: What a wonderful post office box.

EVELYN Isn't that divine?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: 66469.

BOTH: Hm.

JIMMY CARPER: And there's a bunch of folks doing some stuff during the festival, too. What's going on there?

EVELYN Oh, during the street fest-- not the Westheimer Arts Festival. That's been moved downtown. But of course,
CARROLL: there's a lot of us diehards that preferred it on Westheimer.

JIMMY CARPER: So I've heard it called now the West Fest.

EVELYN The West Fest. Well, the West Fest is happening, and I know that Q-Patrol had a table set up. TGRA had a table.
CARROLL: *After Hours* has a table, and we will be there tomorrow.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I will be there tomorrow.

EVELYN I will be there tomorrow, too. Come by and say hello.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, we're right in front of--

EVELYN Chances. Which is next door to Charlie's, for those of you who don't know, which is that Westheimer and Wilcrest.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: About 1100.

EVELYN Yeah.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Real close to the Westheimer and Montrose.

EVELYN About two blocks.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, two blocks. We're right there. Come by, say hi. We've got flyers for *After Hours*, and--

EVELYN *Esoteric Adventures*.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: *Esoteric Adventures* with Jim squared, yes. Plus schedules.

EVELYN Yes, we've got schedules, we have stickers. I hope we have some left. Boy, those were a big hit. I hope the--
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: The KPFT bumper stickers? Yeah, they're hot.

EVELYN They're hot. And we're going to get some more, I hope, in the morning.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

EVELYN So come on out and say hello to us.
CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, yeah. I've been checking out *The Advocate*, and of course, there's a great article in there about Johnny Depp doing the Ed Wood thing. Ed Wood being the man who produced wrote, directed *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, the worst movie ever made.

EVELYN Ever.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, and he-- and his career was low budget, really bad kind of horror. He also did *Glen or Glenda*, which was kind of a cheap thing about transsexuals and cross-dressing. And I mean, he did all kinds of really sleazy things. Not that-- no, I'm not saying gross cross-dressing is sleazy, but I'm saying he did it in the sleazy manner-- all of his films.

One of the last ones he did, which was a real snoozer, happened to-- it was something about-- it's supposed to be a horror movie, and what it really was a succession of women dancing topless.

EVELYN Sounds like my kind of flick. Oh, I'm sorry. A little Bubba in me slipped out.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: So there's a great article in there about that. But on the music side, there is another article called "Luscious Lesbians."

EVELYN Oh, Jimmy, tell me more.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: And we're talking about members from two different bands who are having a relationship. We've got Luscious Jackson's own Kate Shellenbach. Now, we know Luscious Jackson-- I mean, big dyke band. We play them all the time. But she is having an affair. It may be long distance, because both bands are on their own-- with Josephine Wiggs from The Breeders.

EVELYN Oh, really?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: So The Breeders now have an openly gay member.

EVELYN Oh, so we can play Breeders on *After Hours*?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Sounds weird, doesn't it?

EVELYN Sounds really strange.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, but there are queers who breed, so hey.

EVELYN I'm a reformed breeder.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: A reformed breeder? That's right, you have four kids.

EVELYN I have four kids.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Wow. Yeah, that's right. You know, looking at you, it's just you don't look old enough to have four kids.

EVELYN Thank you, Jimmy. I'm not old enough to have four children.

CARROLL:

[LAUGHING]

JIMMY CARPER: I see. OK.

EVELYN Well, a set of twins helped. It sped up the process.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: And how old are these twins?

EVELYN [INAUDIBLE]

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Anyway, we weren't talking about your kids. We were talking about "Luscious Lesbians," which is Josephine Wiggs from The Breeders, and Kate Schellenbach from Luscious Jackson. And just to celebrate that, because I don't have any Breeders music, now that this article is out, I'm going to have to get some breeders music to play in the [? QNZ. ?]

EVELYN I'll check with some of those kids of mine. I know we have Breeders at home somewhere.

CARROLL:

[LAUGHING]

JIMMY CARPER: OK. But we do have Luscious Jackson, and it's my favorite tune from their latest, which is called Natural Ingredients. And you've heard it before if you've listened to *After Hours*, and you're going to hear it again right now is called "Here."

[MUSIC - LUSCIOUS JACKSON, "HERE"]

Oh, yes. Marc Almond. And there's a particular reason that I played that-- because Marc Almond just happens to be from Leeds, England. I found that out this past week.

EVELYN Oh, how wonderful.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: I didn't realize it when our visitors were here, and we were doing the interview. So I thought as a nice intro into that, that I'd play my favorite Marc Almond song.

EVELYN And that was a beautiful piece.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you, thank you, thank you-- *What Makes a Man a Man*. I was going to-- actually, I like that one, and I like another one he cut that's called *Money for Love*, but normally--

EVELYN And who do you always dedicate that to?

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: I usually dedicate it to the boys and girls standing outside the Atrium Bar for Mick and Gill.

EVELYN Jim, you are nasty.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: The boys and girls who stand outside that bar are selling themselves. Yes, money for love.

EVELYN Let's not tell anybody. Maybe nobody will know.

CARROLL:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, right.

[LAUGHING]

OK. Get ready, because you're about to meet Mick and Gill. Welcome to *After Hours*. I'm Jimmy, and with me I've got some guests, one you may remember-- Bruce Reeves, the former co-producer of the show, and he's got some friends with him. Bruce?

BRUCE REEVES: Hello, James. And hi, everybody. It's nice to be back on the show. It's been a while.

JIMMY CARPER: It has been a long while-- too long. Glad to have you back.

BRUCE REEVES: Well, thanks. Well, back in the spring, I got a letter from these folks that are with us tonight asking if they might be able to come to Houston and visit to see the great city, and to see all the queerdome here in Houston, USA. Of course, mostly what they've seen so far is water.

[LAUGHING]

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, they came at the wrong-- where are they from? Where are y'all from?

GILL We're from Leeds in England. That's in the North of England. We're not from London.

CRAWSHAW:

BRUCE REEVES: That was Gill, and Mick is with us, too. And I'll let you all tell him your last names, because--

MICK WARD: OK. Yeah, I'm Mick. I'm Mick Ward. I'm also from Leeds, and I'm involved and active in Leeds, which is how we got in contact with various people in the state. So we've already been to New York, and San Francisco, and now visiting wonderful Texas. And a few people either been involved directly in ACT UP or supporters and had beautiful hospitality.

GILL Yeah, my name is Gill Crawshaw. Ditto.

CRAWSHAW:

[LAUGHING]

JIMMY CARPER: You two are roommates, lovers, you live together? You're what?

MICK WARD: Right, we live together. We met through AIDS activism about 3 and 1/2 years ago. I was doing some work for AIDS advice in Leeds, giving out leaflets and condoms, and met Gill at a queer club. And we've been living together ever since, really, having a wild time. This is our really big vacation together.

I've never been to the states before, and I just base my whole knowledge on films. And so, I wanted to go to New York, and to the West Coast, and then to the wonders of Texas, and its notorious weather.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh. I'm sorry about the weather, and I'm sorry about, probably, the lack of horses.

[LAUGHING]

MICK WARD: Well, I bought my cowboy hat today, so I'm halfway there. I might wait till the end of the week before I get me spurs. Yeah.

GILL Well, yeah, as Mick says though, it's like a bit of a holiday of a lifetime, but we've made really good contacts via
CRAWSHAW: ACT UP, and by people who've either been involved in the past-- or are involved now-- in ACT UP, and in activism. So that's been really excellent.

MICK WARD: Yeah, and that's ranged from here in Houston staying with Bruce and Judy. And that's been really good, seeing Bruce's campaign getting off the ground, and real good success to that. And in New York, we had the privilege, I suppose, of turning up to the ACT UP meeting. And Larry Kramer was there, and the grand old man who started most of ACT UP [INAUDIBLE]. And it is very good to see him still as angry as ever. That was really great.

And San Francisco, there was just so much going on there. ACT UP does such good work in terms of getting information. And people are becoming a real experts on HIV and AIDS there. A lot of people though in Golden Gate ACT UP were very impressive.

JIMMY CARPER: What about ACT UP in Leeds?

MICK WARD: Well, it's a relatively small group. Having come from New York and--

JIMMY CARPER: Let's start with how big of a town is Leeds? I don't think most of our listeners know anything about your town.

GILL I mean, Leeds is a population of about a million. As we've said, it's a city in the North-- maybe about the fourth or
CRAWSHAW: fifth biggest city in England.

MICK WARD: Yeah, and ACT UP, I suppose we have about 10 members, but they're quite active members-- they're hard core. So it's about six or seven people who do lots of work. And it means that fractions, we can bring out, say, 40 or 50 people for something like an occupation, or a picket off somewhere that's been involved in some sort of prejudice action. The major work we've done recently is around insurance, both in terms of people living with HIV, but those deemed to be at risk-- particularly young, gay men-- and sort of targeting insurance companies to make them change their policies.

And one particular company that's based in Leeds is called the Leeds Hospital Fund who recently refused to pay out funeral expenses for one of its members because he died of an AIDS-related illness. And that campaign, although it hasn't been successful in terms of changing the company's policy yet, has been very successful in terms of raising the issue. And the president of the hospital, [INAUDIBLE] Leeds, has resigned over the issue, and we've had really good press and coverage. And that's been really good, culminating in an occupation of the office just before we came, where we had about 20 of us arrested, but all released without charge. And that got really good coverage.

And hopefully, when we go back, we'll be carrying on that campaign. It's their annual general meeting coming up. And we'll be visiting [INAUDIBLE] them, again I think.

GILL And topping Leeds, there's only one of two ACT UP groups left in the United Kingdom, in fact, now. I mean, the
CRAWSHAW: same thing seems to be happening in the States, from what we're hearing, that ACT UP's either shrinking, or even groups are folding. And now there's only ACT UP in Leeds, and in Manchester, and other Northern cities.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. And I think we're kind of unique here, because I wanted to ask Bruce, as I believe-- as I recall, you founded ACT UP in Houston.

BRUCE REEVES: The original one, yeah, way back when it was actually the Action Coalition to Unleash Power.

JIMMY CARPER: Why don't you give us a rundown of what happened with ACT UP?

BRUCE REEVES: Well, we basically formed originally in Houston to protest, I believe it was--

GILL Section 28?

CRAWSHAW:

BRUCE REEVES: Section 28, thank you, which was an English law that was passed. And England basically said, you can't do anything to promote homosexuality in the schools. And they said that, and then they expanded it to be anything. I mean, it was really horrendous.

And so, we decided-- I got real ticked off when I read about it, and talked to three or four of my friends. And we went down there, and we had about a dozen people that showed up at the British consulate. Roger [? Kinser ?] came, and he was dressed as in an English town crier, basically, and he had this little parchment with our demands on it. And he and one other member of the group were actually invited into the consulate, and they were allowed to read that to the people there, and they presented them with their parchment. And it was really kind of neat.

We didn't really get any mainstream coverage, and I don't know that it helped get rid of Section 28. But, I mean, we had a good time, and then shortly after that, we actually formed. And I think David Fowler maybe was elected the first president, and we, at that point, changed the name to the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power. And then shortly thereafter, it basically became an organization run by Leslie. And David and I went on and we formed GUTS--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes, GUTS.

BRUCE REEVES: And I don't even remember now what GUTS stood for.

[LAUGHING]

I'm sure it was something radical. But GUTS was actually how I got the word from Gill and Mick that they weren't interested in coming to the United States, because I'm still-- I guess my post office box still gets all the GUTS mail. And so, there's like a national mailing list for all of the AIDS groups, and GUTS Houston is still on it.

MICK WARD: Yeah, we didn't know what you stood for, either. We sort of hoped it might be something like Gay Urban Terrorist Squad, or something.

JIMMY CARPER: Gay Urban Terrorist Squad. Wow.

BRUCE REEVES: That may have been what it stood for. It was Gay Urban something, and I don't really remember. It's just that it was another lifetime ago.

JIMMY CARPER: I mean, it happened while ago, and ACT UP has gone through changes.

BRUCE REEVES: And since then, both of those groups, of course, have kind of folded, and there've been one or two others. And then most recently, ACT UP Gulf Coast was formed, and I'm not sure that they're really active anymore. And of course, through all of that, several other things came about. I mean, there's the group that patrols Montrose.

JIMMY CARPER: Q Patrol.

BRUCE REEVES: Q Patrol, which you could say was sort of a branch from all of that.

JIMMY CARPER: It was.

BRUCE REEVES: And of course, Q Patrol is still active. And their job is they go around, especially during the weekends, and they patrol the Montrose area with their walkie talkies to try to cut down on the number of people getting bashed to death with baseball bats.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, and they've been very effective. As a matter of fact, I would venture to say that the Q Patrol is now larger than ACT UP ever was.

BRUCE REEVES: Oh, I'm sure. Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: So that is a positive force.

BRUCE REEVES: Right. I mean, there's been a lot of neat things. And of course, I mean, we had several people here that participated in the March on Washington in 1987, and were arrested at the Supreme Court. And for a while, I was involved at a national level with the sort of real loose coalition of all the active groups, and that's been-- it was an interesting chapter, I guess, in my life.

JIMMY CARPER: The last few months, we've been bemoaning the fact that ACT UP is gone, wherever ACT UP went. And somebody tried to start up a group called Gay and Lesbian Americans, which never really came about, and it seemed, from our perspective, that Houston just wasn't the place for activism. But now, it sounds like it's an epidemic. Can you comment on that make, Mick or Gill?

MICK WARD: Well, I think it's complicated. One of the things with ACT UP is, because it's a very broad coalition, each ACT UP I've ever come across is culturally very different. And that is very positive, in most ways. It allows it to grow, and to work on local issues, and develop expertise in those.

But it also means that, in some cases, it's gone off on different tangents, where some of the original members haven't been happy. And I think that's why you see ACT UP changing quite a lot. And in some cities, it's remained very solid and grown, such as in Leeds and Manchester in the UK, or where I work in London. And a lot of people got involved in OutRage!

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I was going to ask you about--

MICK WARD: Yeah, which was much more general-- stuff which came out of the stuff out of Section 28, and it's been a very successful group. And ACT UP work quite closely with that group in some cases. So that's often depending on the city, and the amount of organized queer politics in that city. But ACT UP Leeds is very involved in other European chapters, and we keep quite close links we can coordinate actions. So that, for instance, we had an action against a prison in Leeds, and that was the same day as prisons in Paris, and Brussels, and in Germany were all being picketed. That's really good for the press.

And so ACT UP Paris is absolutely massive now, because it's known as the AIDS capital of Europe. And they have 300 people attend every meeting, and are incredibly organized, whereas in a city like [INAUDIBLE], or even Berlin, in Germany, it sort of slowed down a bit, because people have got involved in other issues.

GILL
CRAWSHAW: I mean, maybe that's the nature of this sort of activism, really, that things flare up for a time, and may be quite short lived. And then people move on, and do something else. I mean, like you were saying before, often other things do happen. I mean, in Leeds, for a time, there was the Lesbian and Gay Coalition, which, for a short time, did some really good campaigns now that no longer exist. It just so happens the ACT UP in Leeds has been going for a few years, and has also remained active.

BRUCE REEVES: That's good. I mean, I think part of it, too, is that, by its very nature, ACT UP is political. And, of course, politics always tends to be very divisive, even in our community.

[LAUGHING]

And as you get more and more people into the group, the face of the group changes, because even though I know most of the groups in Houston always tried to work on consensus, consensus really only goes so far. And ultimately, you basically eventually wind up doing what the majority of the group wants to do. So as you get more and more people into the group, your direction changes, and the group changes.

And then, so a lot of-- maybe the original founders or whatever don't feel like they belong anymore, so they leave. And unfortunately, sometimes that's also the glue. And so it just-- it kind of varies. But then like in Houston, although we may not have a group today, I think if something where, coming up, there would probably be an action of some kind concerning it.

I mean, we have a fairly well loose knit group of people that say, well, I'll call so-and-so, and then they'll call three or four people, and then it kind of mushrooms. And--

MICK WARD: Yeah, and I think also it's about having accessible targets sometimes. Although the AIDS crisis is still getting worse and worse, one good thing we found in the UK is there's less obvious simple targets of people being prejudicial, or whatever. And for some people, it's much harder to have an ongoing campaign around getting some drugs released, or an ongoing campaign against subtle government funding changes than it is against having it against some company that sacks somebody, you know. And what we found is there's been less very simple, specific cases, and it's been a lot more hard work, and doing research, and actually trying to find out where the attacks are.

And that does make it more difficult. But when, as you were saying, there is an issue, then suddenly people still know what's going on, and groups like ACT UP keep people informed and are there with the organization ready when you suddenly need to do an action at a couple of weeks notice. I think that's one of its massive benefits. And it's also about providing that constant information.

And in some cases, activists have gone into the mainstream, and are working in service delivery. But because they've been through ACT UP, they're constantly aware that they know the real experts are people living with HIV, that they recognize it's important to keep in touch with the communities that put them there. And I think that's quite an important role for ACT UP, making sure people don't just become AIDS professionals, and disappear, and just live off the rest of us.

JIMMY CARPER: What about the big public AIDS activists in England? You were talking about seeing Larry Kramer's group, and that he's still going strong. And from our viewpoint, I know that Derek Jarman is very big. And now, that he's gone, I seem to remember that Jimmy Somerville was big for a while, and we haven't heard any--

MICK WARD: He's living in New York.

JIMMY CARPER: No!

MICK WARD: It could be why, yeah. Well, he went to Paris for a few years, and then I think he--

JIMMY CARPER: Went to New York, and was never heard from again.

MICK WARD: Never heard from again, yeah. That's right. I mean, I suppose in terms of a big media figure, that there isn't one. I mean, there's people within the gay community who are still doing work, Peter Tatchell and stuff, but he's mostly involved in OutRage! now. There's no big media star doing HIV/AIDS work. And Derek Jarman used to get very little publicity until everybody knew he was about to die.

And then suddenly, his films were on the television again, and there's quite a lot of coverage of him. But only when everybody knew this is his last couple of weeks.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, that's a shame. He probably had more publicity over here, then.

MICK WARD: Yeah.

GILL Well, yeah. Maybe.

CRAWSHAW:

JIMMY CARPER: OK, what about-- what else do you do? I mean, you don't spend 24 hours a day doing ACT UP stuff?

MICK WARD: No.

GILL We go out drinking and dancing. Don't we do a lot of that?

CRAWSHAW:

MICK WARD: Yeah, we're hoping to do some of that in Houston. Like, get down there country and Western dancing, which I've never done in [INAUDIBLE]. Well, I work. I work for social services in Leeds, and with disabled people. It's a really nice job.

I love it, and the people who work there are really nice. So that's, I suppose, [INAUDIBLE] time. The rest of it is sort of, yeah, socializing, and I'm a big football fan. I suppose you mean soccer over here.

JIMMY CARPER: I guess.

MICK WARD: Yeah, football, you know, it's the thing you kick with a ball-- foot ball.

JIMMY CARPER: I take it that Gill is not a soccer fan.

GILL Absolutely. We come to America, we still end up talking about football, for pity's sake.

CRAWSHAW:

JIMMY CARPER: How about queer culture, queer groups-- the singing groups, or queer actors?

MICK WARD: Leeds doesn't have anywhere near some of the organization of somewhere like Houston. I mean, I was really impressed when we arrived and there was the bowling night. We don't have quite have stuff like that.

GILL And the papers as well, the newspapers that you've got. There's nothing like that.

CRAWSHAW:

MICK WARD: No. I mean, I suppose the big things are the tea dances. It's a big thing. At least if you come to Leeds, you can learn to tango fairly quickly. That's a regular thing.

And a few clubs-- I mean, what's quite good is there's a number of clubs organized by the community themselves, and away from the mainstream clubs just ripping people off, and having gay nights when someone's when they're-- on a Tuesday, when they're quiet, which is what it's historically been.

JIMMY CARPER: Sure. You see a little bit of that here too with maybe the lesbian community, where Wednesday night is women's night or something at the regular gay bar.

MICK WARD: Yeah. So there's [INAUDIBLE].

GILL I mean, yes, because in Leeds, there's, what, three gay pubs-- three gay pubs very close to each other, and one
CRAWSHAW: gay club. And that's it, apart from, as Mick's saying, these that are organized by the community themselves.

MICK WARD: Yeah. What there is slightly more, and this is where all the things get blurred, is that some of what were traditional straight clubs now are much more gay friendly, as they'd call themselves, and not quite queer, but definitely gay friendly clubs. And that's much more of a culturally acceptable thing now. And you go to straight clubs where men wear dresses, and really go for it nowadays. And Leeds has got quite a good tradition of that-- Manchester as well, I think.

Manchester's much more of a gay-orientated city. But that sort of club culture has been quite good in changing some people's ideas and stuff. I mean, in terms of the big picture, it's very hard to tell, because legally, there's still no protection for lesbians, gay men.

JIMMY CARPER: I wanted to ask, now that we can look back, what did clause 28 actually do?

MICK WARD: Well, it created OutRage! I think. It created-- it was a rebirth for the gay movement, I think, in Britain, and it just died a death. And from there, lots of activism came out. So looking back, it was probably quite a positive thing for gay people, because the law itself has never been used. What it was there for was to send a message to local authorities, and generally to the populace that being gay, being lesbian was not acceptable. But they've never actually used the law against anybody, because the law is indefensible.

Because, you know, how do you promote homosexuality? I don't know how you promote heterosexual. Hard to tell, really.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, you see, like in Texas, we have a sodomy law. And where it's not ever used-- I mean, no one is actually ever charged with sodomy-- it's used in a way to keep gays and lesbians from becoming police officers, because technically it's against the law.

GILL Right. Yes, well, section 28 is mandate-- it's something to do with local authorities and local government. It's
CRAWSHAW: about them promoting homosexuality. And it's created this, I suppose, fear amongst local authorities, local councilors, that they're very wary of doing anything remotely pro-gay, spending any money on the gay community. And it's made local authorities censor themselves for fear of breaking that law.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK.

MICK WARD: And the other big change recently was about the age of consent, which was the big campaign in the UK. The age of consent for heterosexuals is 16, and for gay men, it was 21. There's no age of consent for lesbians, because as Queen Victoria said at the time--

[LAUGHING]

--they don't exist, so it doesn't really matter. And there was a big campaign. For the first time, it looked as though it was possible that would be changed. But in the end, it was a real fudge, and they came down at 18, which some people have seen as a victory, some people see as a really big sellout.

And within the sort of organized political gay community, there's quite a lot of debate between the more moderate Stonewall group, as it is in the UK-- which was into letter writing to MPs, and OutRage! Which goes into sitting on them. And there was some dispute on the night of the thing about how people responded to that, because it was a bit of a riot, and stuff. But at least it's on the agenda, and maybe it will come back again.

But we've had 15 years of Tory rule, which has seen cutbacks across the bar.

JIMMY CARPER: What does that mean, Tory rule?

MICK WARD: So, a conservative party.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK. Sorry.

GILL Margaret Thatcher.

CRAWSHAW:

JIMMY CARPER: We've had 15 years of Ronald Reagan, and that--

MICK WARD: Yeah, well, we had Margaret Thatcher, who I'm sure they used to compete with each other how much they could attack the people-- and the attacks have been across the board on women, on gay people, Black people. And [INAUDIBLE] now has just really inherited that on a softer tread, but the party itself has moved so far to the right. And the Labor Party, which is the major opposition, which is supposed to be similar to Democrats, has followed them to the right for fear of being alienated. And so, we have no great hopes for the next few years of our life unless self-organized groups can keep their act together.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, that's a cheery note.

MICK WARD: Oh, thank you. Well, we are on holiday to avoid these [INAUDIBLE].

[LAUGHING]

But there are positives. Things like-- like I said, there may be only two groups of ACT UP in the UK now, but they are very active. OutRage! is active.

JIMMY CARPER: That's good.

MICK WARD: And there's small things, like the major soap operas in the UK now have lesbian and gay characters in quite positive roles. And it's not mentioned every day that [INAUDIBLE] go over there, and it's known.

BRUCE REEVES: *EastEnders*.

MICK WARD: Yeah, *EastEnders*.

GILL And *Brookside*.

CRAWSHAW:

MICK WARD: And *Brookside*, yeah. So small things like that send out good messages.

JIMMY CARPER: --where we really make the inroads, because that's where the human populace gets used to us, sees us, and we're integrated in that manner. And all of a sudden, we're maybe more than just hairdressers.

MICK WARD: Yeah.

[LAUGHING]

Yeah. Yeah, there's good hairdressing culture in Leeds. And we leave--

GILL It's true.

CRAWSHAW:

MICK WARD: --to know we live around the corner from the best lesbian and gay hairdresser, which is very out-- it's not just that the hairdressers are gay. They're very pro-gay, and all the lesbians and gays from miles around traveling. Both the people are involved in ACT UP and do a lot of collecting money for us and selling our products. It's very good.

GILL Cutting Camp, it's called.

CRAWSHAW:

MICK WARD: If you're even in Leeds, Cutting Camp.

GILL Cutting Camp's the place to go. Yeah, often called like the lesbian and gay center of Leeds, because, of course,
CRAWSHAW: there is no lesbian and gay center in Leeds apart from that hairdressing shop.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, OK. Well, we don't have one either. We just have the Montrose.

MICK WARD: Yeah. Well, we do have an area. We have a ghetto of a few pubs, and people hanging around street corners. But it's not warm enough to hang out at the street corners.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, I hear since it's north of London, it's really cold. You have to do your cruising inside.

MICK WARD: You have to get-- yeah, like MESMAC, which is one of the funded health bodies-- stands for Men Who Have Sex with Men Action in the Community, and they do a really good street work around safer sex. And their workers are allowed an allowance to buy themselves thermal underwear, so they can stand on the street corners, and talk with rent boys. Is that the same phrase?

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. We know what that means.

MICK WARD: Yeah, right. So yeah, it's that cold. Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I want to thank--