

RAY HILL: In '68, right here in Houston, Texas I had this wild hair, and I talked to all three presidential candidates in their hotels when they come campaigning through Houston. Does anyone out there remember who they were?

JIMMY: No.

RAY HILL: They were Richard Nixon,

JIMMY: Richard Nixon.

RAY HILL: Hubert Humphrey, and George Wallace.

JIMMY: Wow.

JACKIE: Yeah.

RAY HILL: And the only one that invited me in, sat me down, and tried to give me a beer was George Wallace.

JIMMY: Yeah.

[LAUGHTER]

RAY HILL: How did you get in here? Boy, you got more cahonies than anybody I've ever seen in my life. You won't ask about what?

Let me tell you, the people in this room are people that I have known for a good many years. And their commitment to the cause of your rights, your liberties, your equality, your freedom, your expectation to live your life without government interference is just astounding.

JIMMY: Yes, thank you.

RAY HILL: I have seen Councilmember, Annise Parker, anguishing over issues so minor that you would wonder why she's wasting her time. But she's wasting your time because she cares about your life, your lifestyle, your streetlights, your stop signs, your potholes--

JACKIE: Garbage pick up, your bridges.

RAY HILL: Whether or not-- your ditches-- whether or not you can get out of your driveway because of the pothole that's left there. Annise Parker actually is anguishing over this, and she's going to go far. Sitting next to her is Deborah Rogers, and Deborah Rogers, as President of Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, came into a position that had almost fallen on bad times.

She took over a desert town, and she's building new buildings and this new construction--

JIMMY: It's becoming Palm Springs right before our eyes.

RAY HILL: And she did not fall off the watermelon wagon this week either.

JIMMY: MA No.

RAY HILL: She has been developing politically and concerned. She's exceptionally bright. She provides the kind of leadership that the caucus has recently been lacking. Hell, she's even gotten me back to meetings every once in a while, which is an amazing thing.

JACKIE: Yes, Mr. Parliamentarian.

RAY HILL: And on the other side, Jackie-- what can I say about Jackie? But Jackie and I have been through literally hell in our lifetime. We have literally seen it, and there have been times when people have overtly tried to pit me against Jackie and other transgendered people, and the gay community against transgender people. It has been a real struggle just to get yoked up and to pull equally toward the goals.

And we're there, and you're at home. I love every one of you. If you got arrested tonight, who the hell would you call except Ray Hill--

JIMMY: MAN That's right.

RAY HILL: Because I know how that works. And your sorry husband gets a DWI, and I know how to get him out of jail for less money than anybody else in the village. But we have been here for you. We are not just the politically active people in this community. But we are the support system that exists for you. And we're your grandparents and your parents that you never had at home.

JACKIE: One other person I'd like to add to that was somebody else who was invited to our panel tonight, and that's Grant Martin.

RAY HILL: Grant Martin just came over here and just went to work.

JACKIE: Grant Martin.

JIMMY: Yes.

JACKIE: I don't know if you've saw it yet today, but Grant Martin put out an absolutely wonderful thank you letter out on Hand Net today that he asked to be spread around. I have it on the screen right now if we want to go over it.

RAY HILL: Yeah, please do.

JACKIE: You want to read that? All right.

RAY HILL: I'd like to read that, yes, because--

JACKIE: While I'm scrolling that back up again. The one thing I have to say about it is, no, Grant, you're wrong. Not thank us, but thank you. The work that Grant did on this was amazing. So here's what the letter is that he wrote.

Dear supporter, no for City Prop 2. This is an especially hard letter for me to write. As you know, we lost our fight Tuesday against City Proposition 2 by 6,710 votes. While my heart broke that night, however, my spirit did not. Over the course of the next several weeks, we'll be analyzing results of this election and evaluating the performance of the campaign. We will also explore possibilities for future action, including available legal and political options. There are a few things I want to say now, however, before our analysis is complete.

First and most important, I want to say is thank you. Thank you for your contribution and the role you played in standing up to discrimination and unfairness. Thank you for moving outside your comfort zone as we've had a very public, honest, and positive conversation with Houston voters about the value of gay and lesbian relationships and gay and lesbian families. Thank you for making a difficult campaign bearable and worthwhile.

In a defeat as close as ours, it's tempting to start laying blame and pointing fingers. A very few things done in a slightly different way could have affected the outcome. I know I made mistakes and, as I assess my own performance over the next several weeks, I know I'll uncover more of them. It's even more tempting to rage at Dave Wilson, the architect of the anti-gay ballot measure and his merry band of cowards who mask their hate in the guise of values and pervert the concept of family.

But that energy would certainly be wasted. As it turns out, we weren't really running against them. They ran next to nothing of a campaign. We were running against a set of deeply held beliefs that take a lot of education to overcome. Indeed, if the numbers were flipped and we'd won by a two point margin, the fact would remain that roughly one half of Houston voters still do not get the concept of gay and lesbian families and would still be left with the job of changing a set of deeply held beliefs that take a lot of education to overcome.

So while we take the time to figure out what we could have done better, let's take a look at what we accomplished. Many, many people became heroes by giving of themselves in ways they may never have thought were possible. I know gay and lesbian people who came out of their closets in order to have an honest conversation about what was at stake.

I know an African-American minister who took the time to search his soul and to discover his opposition to discrimination against gay and lesbian people. I know a man who took a week of vacation to check petitions for fraud. I know people who quit their jobs and moved to Houston just to work on this campaign. These are life changing experiences that empower people no matter what the outcome of the election.

In 1985, we lost an election to save an nondiscrimination ordinance for gay and lesbian city employees by 64 percentage points. In 2001, we passed a nondiscrimination ordinance for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered city employees with little controversy. We lost an election about domestic partner benefits, a much more controversial issue, by only 2.64 percentage vote.

We built a coalition of leading elected officials. Mayor Lee Brown, state representative Garnet Coleman, and council member Annise Parker stand out. Of corporate CEOs, of unions, of leading African-American ministers and clergy of every color and denomination, of social justice organizations, of students, of parents, and grandparents, of working middle and upper class people, of leaders from virtually every ethnic community in Houston and even the Houston Chronicle and channel 2 to stand up openly and publicly for gay and lesbian families.

We raised and spent over \$300,000 on a public education campaign about gay and lesbian relationships, including a television and radio education campaign that reached well over one million people, and a field campaign that organized more than 1,500 volunteers to talk one-on-one with over 50,000 voters.

These are the reasons that my spirit is intact and my heart will heal. Still, there's no doubt that winning is better than losing, and coping will take some time. It's my hope that we'll take a long view and continue a positive, open, and honest dialogue with Houstonians about the value of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and their families.

Again, thank you. Sincerely, Grant Martin, campaign manager.

JIMMY: Thank you, Grant.

RAY HILL: Grant and the PVA--

JACKIE: Thank you, Grant.

RAY HILL: Grant, and the PVA campaign did more than they had resources to do.

JIMMY: Yes.

MAN 2: Alex worked his butt off.

JIMMY: He certainly did.

JACKIE: Yep.

MAN 2: And while we're passing out kudos here, I'd like to refer over here to Ray Hill who was so gracious to all the rest of us. Ray Hill was out there before probably any of us were fighting like hell for our rights. And unfortunately, I can remember, as Ray probably knows very intimately when Herman Short and a few of the other jerks were chief of police for this city and some of the stuff that went down by the police department, the Sheriff's Department against, not only the gay and lesbian community, but against the Blacks and Hispanics and the rest of that.

I can remember the incident at the TSU dorm where they stormed the place with gunfire. I can still remember Joe Campos Torres, who got was drowned in Buffalo Bayou.

RAY HILL: 14,000 rounds of ammunition was dumped into a college dormitory and nobody got killed. It was just amazing. But we have now the best police chief, the most professional command staff we have had in the history of this city.

JIMMY: We have a police department that is part of the Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade.

JACKIE: And Empower.

JIMMY: And Empower. These are major steps in this city.

MAN 2: Definitely, yeah.

JIMMY: Some people are getting it. We just need to get more people to get it.

MAN 2: The main thing we need to do is you need to come out too, your friends, your family, people who are open-minded. The people who go to Second Baptist, don't bother. It's kind of like trying to teach a pig to sing.

JIMMY: Wait a minute, every time I go-- now, now.

MAN 2: It irritates the pig, and it wastes your time.

RAY HILL: Every time I go to Second Baptist Church, I look up in that choir and it's just full of gay people. And I wave, and they don't wave back. I just think that's the rudest thing.

JIMMY: Well, a good, almost half of the people who are listening to this show right now are not part of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community.

MAN 2: But the thing about it is, though, those who are need to let people know that they are part of the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered community so that the person who is not part of our community can put a face on it.

It's like my when I was talking with my daughter, when my wife found out that I was transgendered. And the first thing she did was told our two children. The second thing she did was she told the pastor of our church and got on the phone with my daughter talking about it.

And she said, I don't know anybody else that has this problem. I said, yes, you're right. You don't because it's not something that someone advertises. But I said, I guarantee you. If you take 10 of your classmates and line them up, there's at least one of them who either is or whose brother or father is transgendered also.

JACKIE: OK, go ahead.

DEB ROGERS: One of the things that impresses people is, after you put a face on it, they realize that you're not going to go run off with their sons or their daughters or suddenly grow horns.

RAY HILL: Except for me.

JACKIE: Except for you, Ray. You know, Deb, you're probably sitting between Houston's two most famous faces.

RAY HILL: It's their fathers they have to watch out at this stage.

DEB ROGERS: Present company excepted, when I was at work in the precinct, my precinct is overwhelmingly Republican. In fact, I'm sort of the token Democrat out there. So the Republican judge and the clerks were teasing me, good naturedly. And they said, frankly, they were just happy to have a Democratic alternate judge out there that smiled and laughed at their jokes.

So I could do no wrong, and it was in the elementary school where my kids go. So they met my kids, and everything was fine and dandy. And we talked about school issues and kid issues and the price of this and the price of that and everything.

And everything was fine for a whole day. 6:30 rolls around, and my partner comes in to vote. And the kids are with her, and they're going to stay with me to close up. And they're telling her goodbye and kissing her goodbye and everything. And the judge looks at me, and the ladies look up, and they go, oh, who's that? I go, well, that's my partner, and that's why I'm a Democrat.

[LAUGHTER]

RAY HILL: Well, we've got the city council, or had a city council, where one member was sleeping with another member's wife and all of this kind of stuff. And here we have Annise and Cathy, probably one of the most stable couples on city council.

DEB ROGERS: And the most putz-like too. I'm looking at-- this is the council member who shuts down the hot sheet motels, and then she instigates about the booming bases and stuff. This is the old woman candidate over here.

RAY HILL: I know she's falling asleep right now.

JACKIE: We've got her way up past her bedtime.

DEB ROGERS: --radical stuff. Come on. But the thing is, after I said that, the ladies looked amongst themselves, and they just burst out laughing. And they patted me on the back and said, you've got an absolutely gorgeous family, and everything was fine. They said, we can't wait to see you in the primaries.

RAY HILL: Once they know us--

DEB ROGERS: And then they made a few more jokes about not letting me stuff the ballot box. But it's putting a face on it.

RAY HILL: Again, this time. Yes, and I think that that's probably one of the reasons that we almost won because so many of us have come out of the closet. So many straight people know us. They know us for what we are, and we're not the mystery. We're not the big bad ogre anymore.

JACKIE: Well, in the churches they weren't talking about something called domestic partner benefits or giving health insurance to two gay city employees. They were talking about gay marriage.

MAN 2: And Sodom and Gomorrah.

JIMMY: Yes.

JACKIE: Yeah, it is not-- so there's still-- we can still be used to inflamed people, but they can't talk about the issue that's in front of us. They have to make something up.

JIMMY: Yes.

MAN 2: Well, that's what they did back in '85, which is why they crucified us was because, basically, it was an up or down vote on homosexual lifestyle. And of course, back in '85, that was much less acceptable than it is now.

JIMMY: Because if they don't lie about us, they'd lose.

MAN 2: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

JACKIE: And there's too many of us out there, and so many people know gay people. They know transgender people.

RAY HILL: Yes.

JACKIE: That it's a lot harder to lie about it.

DEB ROGERS: It's like the PFLAG billboards that says, somebody in your family-- and they're not kidding.

MAN 2: No.

JIMMY: They're not kidding.

RAY HILL: And all of these ideas and concepts and wonderful things have exploded inside your head because of the staff and the radio station that provide them. Thank you, *After Hours*, and thank you KPFT in Houston.

JIMMY: And KEOS College Station.

RAY HILL: That's right.

JIMMY: That's right.

RAY HILL: They don't listen to my show, just yours.

JIMMY: No, they can't. And they're listening too. Let me tell you.

JACKIE: Do we have to give the frequency when we say that?

JIMMY: No.

JACKIE: Not anymore?

JIMMY: No, no. If they're listening, they know the frequency. If they're not listening, they can't hear it.

[LAUGHTER]

JACKIE: Yeah, that might have been a change in the rules from when I was--

RAY HILL: Boy, that get everybody coughing, didn't it?

JACKIE: Boy, when' Ray's got to do it, he really has to do it.

[LAUGHTER]

RAY HILL: Oh, so where do we go from here, folks?

JIMMY: Wow.

ANNISE I don't know where we go in terms of Prop 2, but the community needs to build on this momentum. The other
PARKER: positive thing about the effort on Prop 2 that I didn't mention is that we have now a huge pool of identified progressive voters. We have a trained cadre of more than 1,000 volunteers.

MAN 2: Wow.

ANNISE We have people who are pissed off and want to do something.

PARKER:

RAY HILL: Yep.

JACKIE: And they're even more pissed off now than they were before the election.

JIMMY: Oh, they certainly are.

ANNISE PVA is going to continue. Its voter outreach and voter identification. It's not a screening and endorsement
PARKER: organization. And that's the role of GLPC. So there's a place for people in either one of those organizations. But we need more bodies, but we're going to go out and continue doing the field work that brought us so close.

JIMMY: Good.

JACKIE: Is there any mobilization planned for the runoffs using that-- for those of you who aren't in the room, Annise is nodding her head yes.

ANNISE I was nodding my head, but I was pointing at Deb Rogers. I thought she might say something, and that's why I was nodding at her, not to the radio.

RAY HILL: OK.

JACKIE: Yes, there is.

RAY HILL: And is it a secret?

ANNISE Do you have the PVA number there?

PARKER:

JACKIE: I do not have the PVA number in front of me.

JIMMY: No, I don't either.

JACKIE: But I think we can probably run it up during the break.

ANNISE Let's get it quickly because we want people to be able to volunteer.

PARKER:

JACKIE: Right.

ANNISE We want people to volunteer.

PARKER:

JACKIE: While we're at newsbreak, I'll for sure get that.

ANNISE And also, membership of the Houston Gay Lesbian Political Caucus is not limited to gay, lesbian, bisexual,

PARKER: transgender individuals.

RAY HILL: No, no.

ANNISE There is no litmus test to get membership. We just want your money.

PARKER:

JACKIE: Or your time.

ANNISE So for a modest membership fee, anyone can join an organization, gay-friendly, parents, whatever, and be a part

PARKER: of what we do. And let me tell you something. For the price of admission that we charge on our membership, it's worth it just to be part of the screening process.

JACKIE: Yes.

DEB ROGERS: And there are a lot of non-gay, non-transgendered volunteers in the PVA process too. It's simply that you care about fighting discrimination. You care about civil rights issues.

JACKIE: Yeah.

ANNISE And you care about basic equality. Just to touch on one issue back on Prop 2 for one quick moment, it's not just a discrimination issue. It's a health care issue.

DEB ROGERS: Yeah, absolutely.

ANNISE For the small price of a premium, which I realize the premiums are not that small when it's coming out of your paycheck. But still, for the price of allowing someone to pay a premium to insure their family, I find that to be economically more sound than sending them out to the street and having them go to the county for coverage.

RAY HILL: Absolutely.

MAN 2: Yeah, and of course--

ANNISE Which comes out of everybody's pocket, by the way.

PARKER:

MAN 2: With the health insurance, you can do preventive medicine, which is a hell of a lot less expensive than if they actually come down with something and have to go to the emergency room.

ANNISE Exactly.

PARKER:

RAY HILL: Ryan has joined us. You have something to say?

RYAN: Yes, actually, the day after the election I decided to go online and see what the results were. And of course, I was very upset at the Prop 2 turnout. But after that, I just, on a whim, I went around and asked the people at work-- and by the way, I work at a mortgage company.

So it's fairly reserved there. And even most people there were upset, and it wasn't because it was for same sex couples or same sex partners or anything like that. It was the fact that it was discriminatory. And in fact, some of them were dead against same-sex domestic partners. But they did not want that proposition to go through. And I thought that was absolutely amazing.

JIMMY: They really got it.

RYAN: They did, and I didn't mind it at all. It was the fact that they knew exactly what was going on. They didn't want it in the city charter. They wanted to keep their own reservations to themselves and leave it at that.

RAY HILL: OK.

RYAN: And not make it public.

DEB ROGERS: Actually, the biggest frustration of election day was the fact that only less than 30% of the voters in the city of Houston decided to come out and vote. There's a higher percentage than that, I'm sure, that's going around with these flags all over their vehicles and flaunting their patriotism. Well, one of the most patriotic acts that you can engage in is your right to vote and participate in our democracy.

RAY HILL: What's the normal? What's the percentage of people who vote in any election.

DEB ROGERS: It it'll be lower in a runoff, unfortunately.

JIMMY: Yeah, unfortunately.

MAN 2: Well, not only that, but it also depends on whether it's a National or state or a local election as to the percentage turnout.

JIMMY: Is it ever much higher than 30%?

MAN 2: Sometimes in the presidential it is.

DEB ROGERS: Presidencies tend to get up in the 40s and 50s, yeah.

JIMMY: And that's sad.

DEB ROGERS: Isn't it, though?

RAY HILL: Yeah, less than half.

ANNISE PARKER: And really this is where I do my little shtick on local government. Local government affects everything in your life from when you get up in the morning until you go to bed at night. When you get up and you turn on the taps to run yourself a glass of water, that's city government.

When you flush the toilet, that's city government. And when you put the trash out, that city government. When you get on the street and you have a stop sign or a stoplight, that's city government, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

JIMMY: Yeah. The

MAN 2: President doesn't do squat.

[LAUGHTER]

DEB ROGERS: It's back to think globally, act locally. It's been around a long time, and it's true.

RAY HILL: Daddy Ray Hill thought he was finished, but I convinced him he wasn't.

MAN 2: Well, the only thing I can add to this conversation is it's organize, organize, organize.

RAY HILL: Of course, it is.

MAN 2: And that is an amazing thing because Harvey Milk's mantra was not organize, organize, organize.

JIMMY: It was come out.

MAN 2: It was come out, come out, come out. And we have done that in abundance.

JIMMY: Yes, we have.

MAN 2: We used to be the sin that dare not speak its name. Now, we will no longer shut the uh up.

RAY HILL: Yes.

[LAUGHTER]

ANNISE Boy, Jimmy was reaching for that [INAUDIBLE].

PARKER:

[LAUGHTER]

RAY HILL: That's true, but that's why we had a 48 to 52 percent.

MAN 2: Well, a lot of people come, they say, well, these kids just don't understand how bad it can get, and all that. And I'm very glad that they don't understand how bad it is.

JIMMY: Yeah, because it was hell.

MAN 2: Because I've still got the scars of the discrimination and the hatred and the ignorance of--

JIMMY: And the self-hatred. That was worse, the self-hatred.

RAY HILL: Well, what made me a gay activist was a little incident on the bank of Carpenter's Bayou, which is a stream of now very polluted water that runs between a place called Cloverleaf and a place-- here's an image for you-- Channel View. And Carpenter's Bayou, and it is a bend in Carpenter's Bayou where the current had created a hollow out so that the kids in school could go swimming naked. And we did that a lot.

And I was down there naked, and there was a young man younger than me and smaller than me that identified himself as one who did sexual things to other males. And some guy was getting service, and when he got through, he beat that kid up.

Well, I happened to be a little bigger than the assailant, so I whooped him. And then I escorted the kid back to Channel View-- it was on the other side of the bayou from me-- within sight of his house. And that happened to me when I was six years old. And I have never entirely gotten over that experience because it taught me that some of my own feelings was worthy of the aggression and the hate of others.

And I've been working on straightening and protecting that child's life and my own and that of my friends for all these years. That's 45 years ago.

ANNISE I'd like to take a second to timeout--

PARKER:

RAY HILL: Excuse me, 55 years ago.

ANNISE --from the political stuff here.

PARKER:

DEB ROGERS: I was going to count that, Ray.

RAY HILL: Yeah, right.

ANNISE Take a timeout from the current political situation here and mention something that happened last Wednesday

PARKER: night.

RAY HILL: Yeah?

ANNISE PARKER: Which was, [? Katz ?] sponsored an awards dinner that honored those in our community who have worked hard to make our community a safer place. They honored Q Patrol. They honored Phyllis Fry, and they honored Ray Hill.

RAY HILL: Yeah.

ANNISE And I would strongly like to throw my agreement in with those choices. Those are wonderful choices.

PARKER:

RAY HILL: The whole world right now is in a serious struggle between people we are told represent an Iron Age form of the Muslim faith, some extremist. Well, there's also an Iron Age form of the Christian faith. And there's also an Iron Age form of the Jewish faith.

And these antiquated places or where queers, like us, get killed, get beaten, get sent to jail. On tonight, Amullah from Afghanistan looked into the camera just as clear as day and said, well, homosexuals, we throw them off of the highest walls of the highest buildings. And if they die, that's just fine.

ANNISE And if you think the homosexuals have it bad, try being transgendered.

PARKER:

RAY HILL: Well, one of the great solutions-- the problem is to, if we lock up Osama bin Laden, then there will be a million things happen trying to get him hostages and all kinds of things trying to get him out. If we kill him, then he's going to be a martyr for 100 years. So the best suggestion I've heard is slip him out of there. Give him a sex change operation and send him back to Afghanistan to live as a woman.

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY: Yeah, I've read that too.

MAN 2: Well, really, no, what they need to do though is they need to find him and bury him in one of those caves and just leave him there so nobody never knows where he is.

RAY HILL: But even if we do something-- bin Laden, we've got to do something about the women of Afghanistan.

MAN 2: Yeah, definitely.

ANNISE That's always true, but you know--

PARKER:

JIMMY: But with all of this going on right now, Arab-Americans are starting to discover what it's like to really be different and really be hated just because you're different.

RAY HILL: I have got Afghan friends. I've got Afghan friends, some of which are gay. I have got Pakistani friends, which are gay. I've got many Muslim friends, some of which are gay. And the situation is, they are just as horrified by these images of the Iron Age version of their faith as we are because this is not what you learn if you go to the mosque in Southwest Houston.

MAN 2: No, it is not the Muslim or Islamic faith. Basically, it is the extremist, and to a certain extent, it is the Arab portion of the Islamic faith because, if you look at the followers of Osama bin Laden, almost invariably, most of them are from Saudi Arabia. Some of them are from Egypt. Some of them are from Syria and Lebanon, all of which are Arab countries.

And so it is the Arab extremist contingent of Islam. The Indonesians are predominantly Islamic. The Turks are Islamic. For god's sake, don't ever call a Turk an Arab.

[LAUGHTER]

JACKIE: I have a question.

MAN 2: But the situation is that we have a jewel here among us, and that is the right to vote.

JIMMY: Yes.

MAN 2: We have a right to determine the out-- and you're right. Your vote gets lost in a vast sea of other votes. But the only power you have is exercise that vote and convince others of the worthiness of your cause.

JACKIE: And the next time you're going to get a chance to do that is the runoffs.

JIMMY: Yes.

RAY HILL: December the first.

MAN 2: December 1st.

RAY HILL: A Saturday. It's a Saturday, of course.

MAN 2: And if you possibly can, vote early so that you'll be available on Saturday, even if it's only for a couple of hours, to hand out cards at a precinct.

RAY HILL: A victory celebration to be held hear it *After Hours* and in your head through the radio.

MAN 1: You betcha. Oh, you betcha. You betcha. Does anyone know about early voting? When, where?

JACKIE: It'll be the same locations as early voting for the general election.

MAN 2: Yeah, the community centers, I know.

RAY HILL: And about three weeks out until the last week before.

JIMMY: OK.

JACKIE: So if you keep your eye on the websites for Harris County government, you'll see the--

JIMMY: That's right. If you're going to be going on vacation, or if you think you might come down with the flu, or if you're just want to do it in case you come down with the flu, vote early.

JACKIE: And the early voting will once again have the eSlate machines for electronic voting. They're really pretty nifty.

MAN 2: They were fun.

JIMMY: I'll tell you, my other half, Stan, who doesn't work computers at all, ever. He doesn't own one. He looks at mine and doesn't know what to do with one. He went and used that and loved it, thought it was great fun, and had no problem doing it.

JACKIE: Well, the best part is the very last page gives you a recap of everything you've done. So you can look at it and see if you've made any mistakes before you finally send it off.

DEB ROGERS: It kind of hearkens back to the old machines where you tick all the little thingies, and then you wouldn't be sure until you pulled that great big lever. Well, now we've got our big lever back. If you want to change your mind or if you found a mistake, you can fix it before you pull the big lever back. Doesn't work that way with the little peggy things.

So I had a question for four council member Annise Parker. With things worked out absolutely perfectly, and we had the best possible outcomes from the current election and the runoff elections, how would the city of Houston - in what state would the city of Houston be in terms of our ability to support our gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities?

ANNISE Wow, that's kind of a broad question.

PARKER:

DEB ROGERS: Yeah, it is.

ANNISE Clearly, the critical issue is who wins the mayor's race.

PARKER:

DEB ROGERS: Right?

ANNISE And we have the opportunity of two more years with Lee Brown, who is very supportive of the community. He's

PARKER: done so many things, and because of Prop 2 passing, I don't know if you're going to see any significant milestones in his last term.

In terms of something that impacts our community, the city has got to step up more on HIV/AIDS in the African-American community and hepatitis C. We're still lagging behind in addressing those issues. So we have some health care issues that we really need to do something about.

DEB ROGERS: And if I'm to understand correctly, I believe December 1 is also World AIDS Day?

JIMMY: It certainly is.

RAY HILL: Yeah, sure is.

DEB ROGERS: What a great day to vote.

RAY HILL: Yeah, and that reminds me also, November the 28th is the transgender remembering our dead day.

DEB ROGERS: Yes, it is.

RAY HILL: Beth, do you have more information on that?

BETH: I have only just heard the date so far. I understand that [? Chris ?] Williams of [? Katz ?] is at least one of the people who are working to put that together. So I'm sure if you got in touch with them, www.tghelp.org comes to mind is the website that you can get in touch with [? Katz. ?]

RAY HILL: Well, we'll get the information back down here to the radio station for next time.

JIMMY: We're having good callers call in, and had just had a caller called in saying it was a very good show tonight and that the PVA number was 713-521-7161. And that caller was Cathy Hubbard.

MAN 2: Oh, OK, thank you, Cathy.

[LAUGHTER]

BETH: Saves me from having to go look it up while we're in the newsbreak.

DEB ROGERS: So repeat that number again if people want to volunteer.

JIMMY: That's PVA, yes, Progressive Voters in Action, 713-521-7161. We'll be repeating that.

RAY HILL: And that's the number to call to report for duty for the upcoming primary.

JIMMY: That's right.

RAY HILL: I want to make an observation about the 1985 thing. The 1985 election did not really happen citywide. Although, it was citywide on a ballot. It really happened in Spring Branch. And the reason we were so resoundingly beaten is because we didn't even know there was a Spring Branch until after the election and they had kicked our butt.

But the thing about it is, it was very clearly completely legal for the city to fire or refuse to hire gay men, lesbian, and transgendered people after that election. It's was very clear. That's what it had been about. That's what the whole thing was about. And they could discriminate, not only legally. During the process of that campaign, a great many city employees came out of the closet, not just to their families, but to their coworkers as well.

The amazing thing is that no one lost their job. [? Notting ?] Hill had a news conference and it was on the front page of all the newspapers and on the television show. If you lose your job as a result of this referendum, I want you to call me. And my telephone number, of course-- it's a free advertising. Always put your telephone number. You never can know who's out there looking for it.

And I never got a call. As a matter of fact, I got a call from several people saying I've got application in for city counsel, for a city job employment in various levels, and that I'm going to tell them that I'm gay in the process. And I never found anybody that didn't get the job.

So what was it about? It was really about somebody saying awful, nasty, evil, ugly, dirty, untrue things about gay men, lesbians, and transgendered people. And that's what this referendum is--

JIMMY: And using the right wing Christian stuff to do it with.

RAY HILL: And it's about, in a real political sense, it's about everybody feeding their own sheep.

JIMMY: Yeah.

RAY HILL: And so that's what it was about. Now that this is over, you are no less of a human being. You have no less opportunity. The vote denied us something that we had not yet attained anyway. We can still attain it. It's going to take a little more time. We need your active involvement in the community.

Deborah would love to see you--

JIMMY: You bet.

RAY HILL: --at Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus.

JIMMY: And when is that?

RAY HILL: And they meet other first Wednesdays of every month at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center at the corner of Hawthorne and Stanford.

DEB ROGERS: 7 o'clock.

JIMMY: 803 Hawthorne.

DEB ROGERS: 803 Hawthorne, 7 o'clock.

JIMMY: We were talking about how religion works with-- well, the Muslims and all of this. And Ryan had an interesting observation from the book by John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*. And that would be--

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RYAN: Well, what John Boswell says is that it's not the religion that is the problem. It's the people perverting their religion to suit their own views.

DEB ROGERS: Their own agenda.

RYAN: Correct. And if you ever see this book, pick it up. Also pick up a dictionary because you will need it.

RAY HILL: Well, I remember John Boswell. I'd see him at conferences.

DEB ROGERS: That's John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality*.

JIMMY: I can only read a few pages a night because it does burn me out.

DEB ROGERS: It's pretty heavy stuff.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

JIMMY: Yes, he was. Yes, he was.

DEB ROGERS: Yes.

JIMMY: And it is very enlightening. It's logical, very humorous.

RYAN: And the Pope hates it.

JIMMY: And some spicy stories about early monks.

MAN 2: Actually, yeah. A few nuns, actually.

RAY HILL: I don't recall who it was that said it but it was someone who said, it's not religion that's the problem. It's denomination.

JIMMY: Yeah.

JACKIE: Well, folks, I have to tell you. It's been a really wonderful show, but I think our time is just about up. And I'd like to thank Jackie for coming in. That was great, unexpectedly, right?

JIMMY: Yes.

JACKIE: Ray, thank you so much for coming in. And Deb, thank you. And you know, I know we've kept you up way past your bedtime, [INAUDIBLE], but thank you very much.

DEB ROGERS: I'm not really that old, really.

RAY HILL: At least Cathy's up listening [INAUDIBLE]

ANNISE I enjoyed being here.

PARKER:

JIMMY: Well, we're more nocturnal. I know you're diurnal.

ANNISE I can't say age myself. I'm kind of getting there myself sooner or later, but I'm just watching you kind of nod a

PARKER: little--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

And it doesn't have anything to do with age.

JIMMY: OK, an outgoing song. We've got a wonderful-- thank you so much, everyone. We've got a wonderful piece of music by a African-American group called Duality, and it's called *Stand Up*. You're listening to it on *After Hours*, *Queer Radio With Attitude* on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Yeah, one of my favorites. Oh, yeah, I like that.

JACKIE: You like a lot of [INAUDIBLE]

JIMMY: I do like a lot of them, don't I?

JACKIE: [INAUDIBLE] Jimmy.

JIMMY: That was Jeff Krasner from his CD *Maybe*. And that was the title cut *Maybe Love Will Makes Sense To Me*. And that was from the fine line motion picture, *Trick*. That was featured in that movie.

Let's see. We've got tickets to give away.

JACKIE: Tickets.

JIMMY: Yes, as a matter of fact, I'm going to tell you a little bit about this movie. The tickets are for Wednesday, November the 14th, this coming Wednesday.

JACKIE: Wednesday, Wednesday, Wednesday.

JIMMY: That's right. I'll be mailing them out like tomorrow so you can get them in time. The movie is called *Punks*. And here's what it says, just as recent hit movies, such as *Waiting To Exhale* have opened up the world of African-American romance to all movie audiences, now *Punks* takes that a step further, chronicling the romantic reality between African-American men. The four best friends in *Punks* are each--