

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[BED KNOCKING]

[SEXUAL MOANS]

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

[MUSIC PLAYING]

SONG: (SINGING) After hours. After hours.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. You've tuned in to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, dialogue, and music geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered people and their friends. Here at *After Hours*, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common.

We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets. That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hello, Houston and College Station and Huntsville and the world. And welcome to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper and-- I'm Jimmy Carper and this is the May 5th edition. And Big Roy came in here and was kind of trying to tell me something without using words, and I had no idea what he was talking about. OK, there we go.

And some of the first things I want to talk about is-- yes, the spring marathon is coming up next week. And we'll be anxious to hear from folks who are going to donate to KPFT for *After Hours* and the station. And a couple of other little things here, some unrelated stuff that just came through during the week organized for a workplace justice. I'm looking for a few good men and women bilingual preferred, English-Spanish or English-Vietnamese.

The Sheet Metal Workers' International Association is looking for energetic-- yes, that's what I said. The Sheet Metal Workers' International Association is looking for energetic, passionate, and committed people, who would like to help workers gain a voice on the job for better wages, improved health care, and pension benefits. If you agree that all people deserve a better standard of living, call Linda Morales at 713-869-8480 for more information. And you know if Linda Morales is behind it, it's the real deal.

And speaking of Linda Morales, there's going to be a meeting at the Community Center, 803 Hawthorne, on May the 9th to form a brand new gay Latino-Latina group, since Houston is kind of lacking in one. Let's see.

A couple of more things here, the parade workshop is going to be held on May 12th from 9:00 AM till 12 noon at Bering Memorial United Methodist Church at 1440 Harold. And that is a workshop on how to build a parade float or how to light it. So with the Pride Parade coming up, you may want to attend that.

And one of the events during Pride month will be Euphonia, an evening of acoustic music to benefit the gay and lesbian switchboard of Houston. There's going to be several people featuring Joel Stein and Houston's own, Christy Ray. It's going to be held at Bocado's Restaurant & Bar at 1312 West Alabama on Friday, June the 15th. OK.

And a couple of other things. Don't forget to see Sweet Mama Cotton every Wednesday night at the Briar Patch and other things we'll be talking about. But it is Bi-Net night and I know that GiGi is just-- oh, one more thing. Music--

GIGI: Yes.

JIMMY CARPER: I forgot music.

[LAUGHS]

The music you heard at the beginning of the show was especially chosen because it showcased two of Houston's talents. The first one was by Rodney Crowell, who country and Western folks will recognize. He is a straight musician who's been writing wonderful, wonderful music for years and years and years.

And that's from his brand new album, *The Houston Kid*. It was called "Wandering Boy." And it's specifically talking about the queer community. And he's got another on there that addresses the AIDS issue, so it's a great album by a great Houston entertainer. And the second one was by Houston's own, and very queer, [? Davon ?] who--

GIGI: Aha.

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: --who did--

GIGI: We know [? Davon. ?]

JIMMY CARPER: Yes. Yes. What a sweetheart he is. And that was, "I Could Not Ask for More." Wonderful entertainment. And GiGi, now it is time for--

GIGI: The bisexual segment. And tonight, we're getting witchy.

[LAUGHS]

We have CMA.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes?

GIGI: I mean, I'm sorry. We have the GLBT--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes?

GIGI: --Society of Texas--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes?

GIGI: --pagans who are queer and here.

JIMMY CARPER: Queer and here?

GIGI: Yes.

[LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

GIGI: But before I get into the show, I have two announcements.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

GIGI: One is Bi Camp's coming out.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, that's right. That's May 18.

GIGI: May 17th to the 20th.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

GIGI: And it's going to be at Rainbow Ranch Campground.

JIMMY CARPER: That's two weekends from now.

GIGI: Yes. And it is going to be fabulous.

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm.

GIGI: And the other announcement is WIP Society is having a big production.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. I had something on that too. [INAUDIBLE], huh?

GIGI: Yes. And it's coming up May 26, starting at 6:00 PM. And for more information, email WIPsociety@hotmail.com.

JIMMY CARPER: We should be talking about that later on toward the end of the show.

GIGI: Yes.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. That and more information on the Bi Camp like registration and all of that kind of good stuff. But you've got people waiting in the wings.

GIGI: Oh, yes. We're ready to bring them in. And--

JIMMY CARPER: So this is pagan night, where are we going to-- how does pagan affect bisexuals?

GIGI: It's amazing how many bis are pagan and how many pagans are bi. It's always amazed me. It seems like there's something to paganism and something that bisexuality that's just totally kindred spirit.

JIMMY CARPER: Could it be something like, once you have an open mind to sexuality maybe you have an open mind to spirituality?

GIGI: I think that's a big part of it. And I think part of it too steps into this notion of two spirit where you do a lot of gender bending.

[LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, that's true. That's true, yeah.

GIGI: It's like, are you male or female or something else?

JIMMY CARPER: Does it matter?

GIGI: And I think when you get into spiritualism and two spirit kind of prepares you for that path. Because when you get into spiritualism, you're no longer just walking in the material world but in the spiritual realm.

JIMMY CARPER: You bet.

GIGI: And by being two spirit, it brings in an element of preparing you for that pathway. But I'd like to introduce some of our guests.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

GIGI: And we've got a few more out in the hallway.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Wait, really waiting in the way.

GIGI: Yes. So why don't we go to a bit of music and then we'll bring everybody in.

JIMMY CARPER: How nice of you to put me on the spot light.

GIGI: Oh. I forewarned you earlier.

JIMMY CARPER: Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch.

GIGI: At least I didn't put you on the spot in other ways.

JIMMY CARPER: That's true.

GIGI: I've been a good boy tonight. Good girl thing.

JIMMY CARPER: So soon.

GIGI: We'll wait. The night's young.

[LAUGHTER]

I can get really bad.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. Let's see.

GIGI: But while you're finding music--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, I have music right now.

GIGI: Oh, OK.

JIMMY CARPER: It's from a group from England. I interviewed the lead singer, Mr. Aiden Shaw.

GIGI: Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Here, when he was in Houston for a couple of weeks ago.

GIGI: Oh, wow.

JIMMY CARPER: And we did an interview and we put it on the air. The group is called Whatever. And it's electronica mixed with singing and talking. It's-- I don't know. It's kind of good think music.

GIGI: Oh, good.

JIMMY CARPER: And you're hearing it all on *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. The group is named Whatever. And the lead singer is Aiden Shaw. He was here. And in fact, I owe him a copy that interview I did with him.

GIGI: Oh, wow.

JIMMY CARPER: That reminds me. Yes. So GiGi, we're back and we've got a whole lot of people in here.

GIGI: Yes. I kind of gave an open invitation to the GLBT Pagan Pride of Texas.

JIMMY CARPER: And they took you up on it.

GIGI: And they took me up on it. Flying colors.

JIMMY CARPER: We've got some new faces. We've got old faces.

GIGI: Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: Bobby being one of the newer-- older faces.

[LAUGHTER]

GIGI: Oh, we know Bobby.

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

BOBBY: I'll take that as a compliment.

JIMMY CARPER: Melanie is here.

GIGI: But I'd like to go around and have the baby introduce themselves.

JIMMY CARPER: OK. You do it.

GIGI: And introduce yourselves and with whatever name you like on the air.

ERIS: Oh, I guess I'll start. My name is Eris.

GIGI: Why don't you tell us a little bit about your path.

ERIS: I'm Wiccan. I've been practicing Wiccan for 11 years now. Although, it's only been in the past few years that I've been working with a coven and other people. For about six or seven years, I worked solitaire.

JIMMY CARPER: Can you spell that, your name?

ERIS: E-R-I-S.

JIMMY CARPER: OK, Eris. OK, got you.

MELANIE: I'm Melanie. I'm the president of the Texas Association for Transsexual Support.

JIMMY CARPER: TATS.

GIGI: TATS.

MELANIE: Yes.

GIGI: Yeah.

MELANIE: Yeah. People [INAUDIBLE] of the transgendered show have heard me before, so they know.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

MELANIE: But I don't know. What else do you want to know, GiGi?

GIGI: It's butch night for your path, spiritual path.

MELANIE: My path, I don't think there's any words to really describe it.

GIGI: Would you say you're solo? Or--

MELANIE: Oh, yeah. Solo. Eclectic would probably be the best definition.

GIGI: That sounds good. And what is eclectic?

MELANIE: Basically, there's one truth. I mean, things are true or they're not. And you find truth wherever you find it. And I draw on all sorts of different belief systems. Because as far as I'm concerned, I haven't found any that really have it right.

GIGI: Yeah.

MELANIE: I found some that are getting close. And I found some that--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--have one or two do things that make sense and the rest are crazy. But that's as far as my experiences. But I don't really put a label on it.

GIGI: Yeah.

MELANIE: I just know. I mean--

GIGI: It's kind of a give and take. You take what feels right in your heart and--

MELANIE: Yeah. Probably the best, it's crazy. But the best philosophy I ever seen was from Bruce Lee.

[LAUGHS]

The [INAUDIBLE]. So basically, take what works and discard the rest.

GIGI: Yeah.

MELANIE: So that's basically what I've been doing with my life. I find the things that work for me, and that's what I do. So the things that don't work for me, I don't worry about.

GIGI: Oh, OK. And we have another guest.

KIT: Hi, I'm Kit. I take the Calvin and Hobbes approach to spirituality. I make it up as I go along.

GIGI: Yeah.

KIT: I've been pagan all my life. I was initiated for the first time in '83 before paganism was a fashion statement.

[LAUGHTER]

And up until recently, I've described myself as Wiccan. And now I have to say that I'm more of an eclectic pagan. And that the goddess of chaos has chosen me.

GIGI: Oh, OK.

KIT: Thank you.

[LAUGHS]

DEE: Fascinating. My name is Dee. I'm a Norse pagan, Norse Celtic to be exact. I have been within the community-- I've been a pagan most of my life. In fact from the time I was a child, on the Cherokee Reservation of the Northeastern Oklahoma.

GIGI: Aha.

DEE: And since then, I have studied since I left the reservation, came out to this great big wide world. What I have found is fascinating. Much like Melanie there. I too had to search my path.

GIGI: Yeah.

DEE: And like her, I do believe Bruce Lee had it the best.

[LAUGHS]

Take what works and discard the rest.

GIGI: Oh, good to have you.

DEE: Thank you.

ALYSSA: Well, I'm Alyssa [? Jacquelyn ?] Wright. It's hardly not my first time here. I've been on the air off and on for the past six months. I'm a pagan and Wiccan initiates. As matter of fact, Dee here's my very good friend, and teacher, mentor, guide. I'm on my third wave of spirituality.

I spent the first 20 years of my life as basically a fundamentalist Christian and broke away from that in college, Went to the opposite extreme, became very skeptical, agnostic, almost atheist. I got involved in the Unitarian Church. 1990s, I started struggling with more metaphysical concerns.

I had a very dramatic thing happened to me in 1995, where I realized, wait a minute, we are beings of energy. We have energy surrounding us. We are energy. I can get into the whys and wherefores of what happened there. But to me, it makes an eminent amount of sense to have a spirituality or religion built around that.

And the metaphor, the myth, also the lifelong learning and the basic Wiccan truth of, as he harm none, do as you will. It all makes a great deal of sense to me so I'm studying. As for bisexuality and being transgendered, I am a transsexual. I will be transitioning probably in the next one to three years. It's now 2001, probably on 2004. And I think as a man, I was probably a rather uneasy heterosexual bi-curious. But I think as a transsexual, I'll probably be bi.

GIGI: Oh. Oh, good to have you.

JIMMY CARPER: One more.

GIGI: Oh, yes. And we have one more in.

BOBBY: You get so used to having me around that--

GIGI: Oh, no.

[LAUGHS]

You're just kind of part of all these.

BOBBY: Yeah.

GIGI: And what is your name?

BOBBY: My name's Bobby. My friends call me Merlin. My friends call me Merlin. And I pretty much have always believed-- I grew up in a Roman Catholic family. And as a gay person growing up in a republican Roman Catholic family, I just never saw things quite the way they did.

Which is probably why my belief system from a very early age was-- I believed very much that the world was-- everything was so much bigger than what's being explained to me. And I'm a science fiction fan.

And as a child, the character of Yoda, the idea that there-- I learned stuff from shows like that. The concept that there wasn't so much a single God as a force and energy, something that runs through the entire universe really meant something to me. And it's only in the last couple of years that I have followed the path to as, this is how I am. This is what I believe as a pagan.

And my last name is Pagano. It's an Italian word which comes from the word pagani, which means village dweller from which we get the word pagan. And when I tell people that I'm pagan and that my last name is Pagano, they look at me funny.

And I'm like, I can't-- At this point in my life, I couldn't imagine being anything else or believing any other way except that at the heart of it, I believe that all religions have their validity. I have my path, somebody else has theirs. And that I know what feels right to me. And it's not mine to judge anybody else's path.

JIMMY CARPER: (IMITATING YODA) Well, the force be with you.

[LAUGHTER]

GIGI: And before we go further, I want to step back a minute and just talk a little bit about what paganism is in general. And basically it's Earth-based religions. It's matriarchal in nature. And there's many different paths in paganism, everything from Celtic to Wiccan to Eclectic to you name it.

What paganism is basically a reverence for our goddess, the Mother Earth and for the cycles and for the rhythms and for the nurturing of this planet that we live on. It's about getting in tune with nature and getting in tune with spirit. And I guess that's it in a nutshell. I mean, it's much more than that depending on what path you choose to follow.

But one thing that's been happening, especially here in Texas is that there's been a lot of persecution of paganism. And there's a lot of things happening where-- I know Fort hood, we've had some problems bubbling up. Some things have happened in Dallas. The Bible Belt still misconceived and says, oh, it's satanic. It's evil. I'd like to go around and clarify some of these misperceptions that are out there. And who would like to start? OK.

DEE: I would like.

GIGI: Sure.

[LAUGHS]

DEE: GiGi's very--

GIGI: This is Dee. And say your name as you starts so that--

DEE: I'm sorry. My name's Dee.

GIGI: I got a lot of people here.

[LAUGHS]

DEE: Actually my name is Diana.

GIGI: OK.

DEE: As a child, my father named me this. It means warrior goddess. It is Korean and Roman. However, I go by Dee, warrior I am. You're very right GiGi. Here in the Bible belt, but not only here, this thing-- the persecution of pagans in general, it's spreading throughout the US.

People are afraid because they do not understand. This has always been the case for our people. And what people do not understand, they destroy. I wish there was something that we could do to tell them that why we're here is not to do harm to anyone.

Our belief with this was the beginning of all beliefs. My studies in archaeology, history, anthropology, and paleontology has taught me this. And I'm speaking of writings dating back so far that even now, archaeologists are not sure of the language--

GIGI: Or the source.

DEE: --from which these are written at. But Paganism is a gentle religion. As you said it is, it's a religion of the Earth. A riverine life in all forms and protecting it.

ERIS: I'd have to agree. One of the things that I've been working on lately as part of an assignment is--

GIGI: And you are?

ERIS: This is Eris here. It's the question of what it means to be a pagan. And so I was confronted with, well, there's Wicca, which is what is most people won't think of when they think of paganism. The worship of the goddess and the God. The casting of the circle in ritual. But there's also Asatru, which has the strong Norse tradition behind it, which may have some outward similarities but has some very different things at its fundamental core.

Then there's another interest of mine, Thelema, the religion created by Aleister Crowley in the early 1900s, which was in part based on the Jewish Kabbalah but also his own revelation which had a lot to do with the Egyptian Gods. And I was thinking, all of these are really rather different, but what links them is that they celebrate life.

DEE: That's right.

ERIS: And really that is going to be very frightening to a lot of people, especially-- and I don't mean to bash Christianity or anything, but especially to a lot of Christians who really aren't aware of its deeper meanings. Because Christianity is a religion that says, and this is much oversimplifying. Please forgive me Lord for I know not what I say, but it's a religion that says life is something we want to get away from and go live in heaven with God.

And so when the pagans come along and say, life is beautiful. Let's celebrate it. There's no reason to be afraid of it. That really strikes at the core of a lot of what Christianity is about. And I think that's where a lot of the fear and the hatred comes from because it's almost as if our very existence is a challenge to the basis of their religion. And we need to communicate to them, no, that's not the case. Your religion also celebrates life in its own way. And we are not so incompatible as you may at first think.

BOBBY: I was-- I had an interesting experience this week.

GIGI: This is Bobby.

BOBBY: This is Bobby. Merlin, I go by the name Merlin. I had an interesting experience this week at work. While I was checking some people out, one of the people looked at me and saw my pentacle and said, isn't that the symbol of satanism?

[LAUGHTER]

And in an earlier age, I might have flown off the handle at that particular moment. Flown right off the broom handle at that particular moment. But I looked and I said, no sir. It is a symbol of my belief in paganism and I explained to him that each of the point stood for earth, air, fire, water, spirit.

GIGI: The five sacred things.

BOBBY: And I said, I am pagan. I inherently cannot be a satanist because I do not believe in Satan. Satan is a Christian belief. In order to believe in Satan, you have to believe in God, in the God of the Christian belief. And he just sort of looked at me and said, well, you learn something new every day.

[LAUGHS]

GIGI: I think you bring up a very interesting point that a lot of people don't realize. Paganism predates any concept of devil by millennia.

BOBBY: And while we tend to-- we do believe, to some extent, in something darker actions more than a single force that is acting upon someone else. I believe one of our ways of thinking is that we are responsible for our own actions. And the good and the bad that we inflict upon other people or give to other people.

ALYSSA: Well, GiGi, you asked about where--

GIGI: And you are?

ALYSSA: This is Alyssa. If asked about where misconceptions regarding paganism come from, I can look back to my own previous, shall we say, in religious incarnations here in this lifetime. I've been through three different religious phases and dry applications here, for example, growing up in fundamentalist Christianity. One might look at paganism and say, well, that is Bobby or Merlin has already alluded to this, it's satanic. It's influencing. The influence of demons, evil spirits.

You can also look at the Bible and dredge up Bible quotations attacking or condemning what we do. I might add, I understand there was a mistranslation of the Bible. The King James from once the very popular and common King James translation came from feared witches so much. I understand he had a Bible phrase changed. It originally was, thou shalt not suffer a poisoner to live. He changed it, thou shalt not suffer a witch to live. So that is where a lot of our bigotry against pagans comes from.

GIGI: Or I think it comes from many sources.

ALYSSA: I know. I'm drawing on one. There was another one in my second phase where I was a rationalist humanist skeptic. They might look at paganism and say, well, that's a cult of unreason. It's superstition. It's irrational. And it would condemn it from that angle. So that's another source of prejudice or fear.

One other thing I'd like to add and it's slightly off the subject, but I'm finding that my paganism, I draw strength from that in terms of being transgendered and almost vice versa. Dee made a comment this afternoon that made me downright proud to be a transgendered person. I'd rather be transgendered than a plain ordinary vanilla male at this point because there are certain aptitudes involved in being Wiccan.

MELANIE: Well, this is Melanie. One of the things that I've seen as a lot of times you hear them saying, oh, well that. They get the confusion of, oh, they see the pentacle like Bobby said and say, oh, isn't that a satanic symbol?

Well, to some Christians, the way they interpret it, is any religion that's non-Judeo Christian is by definition, something dredged up by the devil and therefore, it's satanism. And the thing is, fortunately, not all Christians believe that. And like I had heard one time someone said, the greatest problem with Christianity is it's full of Christians.

[LAUGHTER]

And the thing is, it's not so much. It's the ones who called themselves Christians, but instead do not follow the real philosophy of Jesus but instead substitute a whole different set of stuff. They're the ones that will preach hate and discrimination and all the other stuff.

I get on, occasionally, if I don't have anything else going on. I'll get on some of the pagan chat boards on various MSN and things like that. And it's amazing to me how also in the pagan community, you'll have the same things going on.

You'll have people and you try to say, well, there's this wonderful set of beliefs out of Christianity of-- you start talking about unconditional love and things like that. And they're like, hey, I don't want to hear anything about Christianity because after all I'm open-minded.

[LAUGHTER]

GIGI:

Well, I think that this kind of leads towards what I want to bring up next. And I think around paganism, there's been this deep sense of secrets as-- part of that came from the burning times, when pagans were burned at the sight, witches.