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SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper, Sarah Dipalma

 Sarah Dipalma 00:02

is a feast? Let's eat?

 Jimmy Carper 00:04

Yeah. Yes.

 Sarah Dipalma 00:06

You know, really I do think that's true Stephen widow has just to sit down and speak to Steven woudl is really something to see his eyes sparkle. This is a man that is obviously happy. He is obviously happy. He is very he's very at ease. It's clear that he that he feels like he has achieved things in life. And if something happened, and he passed away tomorrow, he'd say, but I did good things while I was here. There you go. And it really, it truly is remarkable. Some of the people that we've had on our show, I think, that have had this attitude of nothing is going to get me down because I can I can handle it.

 Jimmy Carper 00:50

That is amazing, too. Yeah. And it's not an easy attitude to a lot of people don't have it. I mean, it's, it can be tough sometimes to do that.

 Sarah Dipalma 01:01

It's interesting, too, because virtually all the people that I talk to I don't know about Steven will but nearly all of the people that I've that we've had on our show that have had this attitude, are people who have attempted suicide at least once.

J

Jimmy Carper 01:11

You know, it's amazing to me, I get upset because my air conditioner is on the blank, you know, and and here are people who have overcome incredible odds.

S

Sarah Dipalma 01:22

Here's here's a man in a country where transgendered people have no rights. Here's a man who's taking his country to the World Court. Yeah. How do you suppose the British tabloids play that? You know, here's, here's, here's a man who is I was very interesting. In the interview, he said, he started to say that he was born a girl and said, Well, that's not true. I was born a baby. There you go. So this is a man who has clearly thought things through who really has it together, and really has great courage. It I've really been struck by the people that we've taught that we've talked to on the show people like Martine Rothblatt. And like, like this person, like for later, you'll hear Arman or Tim ski. And never people that have really faced adversity and said I'm just not going to let it eat me. Right. That's really something

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Jimmy Carper 02:14

that makes it a whole lot easier for everybody else who comes afterward.

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Sarah Dipalma 02:19

Yeah. The McKellar and I had a discussion about activism in general. And the question came up, she said, Well, all of this stuff that we're doing with human rights campaign fund and everything. Really, is there much point to it, because really end it isn't going to go anyplace. It isn't going to come out of committee this year. It certainly won't committee come out of committee in an election year. So who are we really doing all of this for? You know, I mean, I think it's, I think it's a legitimate Yes, yes. Because it may very well turn out to be it may be 15 or 20 years down the road before a bill, anything like that ends up ever happening. So why are we conducting this fight now? And the answer is something that I've talked about once before, I think with Tom Johnson. And he's he described activism is like building a wall, and each generation lays down a row of bricks, you better believe it, and they have to lay down good bricks, so the next generation could come down and lay down their lair. And I'd like to, I really feel like that's what we were doing right now. By the time this finally comes around, it may very well be that Phyllis and I both retired and all women taking on nursing homes or something. But if we get the language in there, the next generation behind this will get the benefits for what we did.

J

Jimmy Carper 03:41

That's right. The way back in the in the 60s, when I first met Ray Hill, he was the first person ever, who was openly gay. Not only openly gay, but proud of being openly gay, proud to be gay when everyone else was in the closet hiding it and ashamed. And it didn't change me

overnight, but it put that spark bear. And it was because of that, that I was able to come out of the closet, I was able to, to start working with Buddy Johnston, who started this show and take it over.

S

Sarah Dipalma 04:17

Just this past week, we've had three new people come out of the closet to join us as activists good. And that's it's a real good feeling. It's very exciting. And there's there's room for everybody. You bet your life on it. There's plenty of work to do. But it is an interesting question. And it and it's an interesting thing for me to hear some people likes likes, Steven Whittle, and to hear the attitude that they've got because I think there's really almost in itself. That's an important message. Yes, that you can overcome. Oh, yeah. Well, let's talk a little bit about Europe in what it's like to be transgendered and Europe. Okay. First of all, I need to give a couple of definitions that I didn't know what they were. Okay, first of all, there is a body in Europe called the European Union. What's that? Okay. Well, that's what I wanted to know. And Stephen would have said explains to me that it's what that is, is the European Economic Community, plus a few extra countries, which are primarily the Scandinavian nations. And what it is, is they have they have a selection of treaties and different issues. For example, the student exchange program is done through the student, European Union. Okay. Okay. Now, there's also something else that's called the European Commission on Human Rights. And I wanted to know if that's different from the European Court of Human Rights, because that's where Steven whittles case is going, okay, the European Court of Human Rights. And he explains to me that the European Commission is the body that considers a case in the initial stage before it goes to the European Court of Human Rights. Oh, okay. Okay, I'm, I hope I'm not confusing people. But I didn't know what these words I'm just trying to pass these out. And he explains that the commission is a body that oversees the signatories of the European Convention on Human Rights. And basically, they don't have any enforcement laws, any of these they any decision, they hand down, they can't really enforce. But they can embarrass the country so badly, that they don't really have to have enforcement laws. And that may be the enforcement, which which is true. So I wanted, I started asking some questions about what are the laws like in Europe, and as I understand it, now, the European countries without laws that protect transgenders can be divided into two groups. And though and there are those who try to hold the brakes by refusing to grant transsexuals full civil rights, and those that accept a change in civil status. So how you can distinguish between the two depends on where the decision is made? In other words, is it a governmental decision or a decision that comes down through the court process? No. Okay. Okay. So in that respect, it's not that far different from this country, we, you know, decisions are made either in the legislature or through the courts. Sure. Except that in this case, it's through a European Court of Human Rights, not an individual countries court. Okay. Well, the first thing that I want to know I want I asked about was, which countries are which? And the answer is Norway, Denmark and Austria, are counted in the group where the decisions have been made through administrative decision. And in these countries, civil status can be changed. In other words, your name can be changed in your birth certificate can be changed and that sort of thing. But it's experts selected by the government who get to make the final decision. Oh, so it's not that unlike here where you if you catch the wrong experts, yeah. You can be up to you know where that actual lawfulness of medical intervention for transsexuals in some cases is covered by laws about things like castration Ooh. Well, it has to do with the country, I guess. Yes. But that's kind of a scary thought to me. I want it raised. The question I didn't think to ask is, if that's the case, what happens to female to male transsexuals? How are they covered?

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Jimmy Carper 08:06

Yeah,

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Sarah Dipalma 08:07

you know, I'd looked at this. Anyway, the system works fairly, fairly well, as long as the administrators choose to do the right suit the right thing. But if they don't, well, you can always try again, there is no higher court to appeal to. And there is no legal text to base an argument on. So you're kind of up in the year? Yeah. Basically, the way it works is you decide to appeal to this administrator, this administrator, if they like what they hear, or they liked, what they see or whatever they say, yes. If they don't, when you get to appeal to another administrator, but gee, how long does that take? So this is so this is no easy deal. The system is open to randomness, and a possible change of policy. Almost overnight? Sure. There's also political demands and budget cuts within health services, et cetera, et cetera. Now, one of the things that I found out as many European countries have issue, citizenship cards. And these cards have numbers on them, one for male, one for boy and two for girl, etc. Oh, okay. In many cases, that means you can't or can't work. Not all countries will change everything. So one country might say yes, we'll change the birth certificate. But no, we won't change the card who or some may do with the opposite Wednesday card, but we won't change the birth certificate. Now in this country, birth certificates not a big deal. It's almost never used. I mean, you're you know, you use it maybe once or twice for passport or, or something. But basically, first if it's not a big deal, and the European countries is used often. So countries that do not change. The birth certificate really put transsexuals in an impossible position. Imagine going for a job where your cutter country card says you're female and your birth certificate says you're male. Yeah, no. Yeah, no. So that there They are working on case law in France, Belgium and Luxembourg. And the rulings in different courts regulate different policy. In Switzerland, they have an unusual situation, because there is no specific law. So a judge can act as if he was laying down new law and then rule on it. Yeah. I don't think I like ASCII. Now. Can you imagine getting the the Supreme Court Justice Rehnquist? Can you imagine getting Rehnquist is your judge, for example, or Clarence Thomas? I mean, my heavens?

J

Jimmy Carper 10:40

Well, it depends. You know, if you look like Tula would be one thing. If you didn't, then it'd be another.

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Sarah Dipalma 10:46

Well, it's an interesting thing, as there are various cases that have gone to the courts, they're gone, gone to the courts, and I guess we can talk about those a little bit. In 1979, a transsexual named von Wooster, Vic, I guess that's how it'd be pronounced the Netherlands took the Belgian government to the Strasburg court. And the background was a denial to register the change in civil status from woman to man, which could be regarded as a violation of article eight. And article eight says everyone has a right to respect to respect for his private life and family. So in essence, what what this Fano steward person said was, well, this violates my right

to privacy. The commission made a strong and almost revolutionary statement, and for the first time adopted the idea of the fundamental right for an individual to gender identity. Good. And the case later went to the European Court, and it would turn completely on procedural questions, and the judges had given opinion. And the result was that it was thrown out and never ruled on. So they won, but they lost. There was a lower court said yes, the higher courts didn't know. The next two cases, one was called R. E. S. Reis, which was in 1986. And, of course, Carolyn casi, who was Tula, which is in 1990, both of those against the United Kingdom, interestingly, and the majority of judges gave the United Kingdom a wide margin of appreciation in both cases, meaning that they felt the United Kingdom birth Register was special as compared to most other countries. And in that they were historical documents impossible to change unless an error was made at birth. Now there are states in this country who do the same thing. For example, my home state is Connecticut. Connecticut will not change a birth certificate, they will amend it. What Connecticut says, well, is your birth your what your sex was at birth as a fact, that cannot be changed. They'll amend it.

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Jimmy Carper 12:44

So okay, I can understand that. Yes,

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Sarah Dipalma 12:47

the problem with that is let's say I had to go for passport, the passport office gets these two copies. And it gets the original birth certificate and the amendment one now for case like me where I'm not in closet, it makes no difference. But if you're if you're one of these closeted people, it's a serious problem. Yeah. And I could see where it could be a problem, in some cases for employment. Let's say for example, you're an engineer, and you have to go work overseas, it means you have to get a passport, you need a birth certificate at the end. Here you are, where you are, there you are. So I can I can see where that's a problem. And as in essence, the World Court decided that United Kingdom was an exception to the rule. And basically, the United Kingdom didn't have to change any laws. So that's how it is done. In the case of Stephen Whittle. He is the parent of his children, but not a parent of his children. No, even more interesting is in the interview scene will talks about the fact that as a result of this situation, his wife is considered a single parent with children and gets welfare. Oh, and so they are paying for their court case with the welfare money, the British government. How funny now. So in effect, Britain is shooting itself in the foot. They're paying for this lawsuit against them, basically. So the prime example how to make things work, right. They were working, how to

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Jimmy Carper 14:09

make them work. Yeah, use the system against itself. Yes.

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Sarah Dipalma 14:13

Now, the the most recent case, in one of the most important ones was in 1992. And this, this was about a French transsexual by the name of botella. She took France to court over the refusal to change a civil record. Again, see, this is a major, major issue. But this time, the court

ruled in favor of the transsexual enforced the French Supreme Court to overturn his earlier ruling. France is as far as I know, to this day, the only country who has ever been cited by the European Court for violating human rights. In the interview that we'll be dealing with Arman attempts later, you'll hear him talk about that, but it seems very interesting to me because I was only under the impression that France is this real liberal country, and that you know, these people are just like really open minded. that's apparently not the case at all. No,

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Jimmy Carper 15:02

that's in the Netherlands. Well,

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Sarah Dipalma 15:04

you have the Netherlands Denmark Holland. Yes. I did want to tell one story. Jimmy had a chance to read this. Sometimes you can get your rights in a very unusual Yes, yes. And this has to do with the country of Turkey. And as the story goes like this one of the most popular Turkey singers in Turkey, I'm never gonna get this name right. veulent Ersoy, I guess, has almost cult status, and then surprisingly, underwent sexual reassignment in 1981 and came back as a female singer. This created a conflict with the authorities who refused to accept this and change the name and birth certificate status. As a highly visible protest, the popular singer decided to stop performing unless the laws will change, unusual form of protest. During all these proceedings to the Supreme Court, she kept her silence, almost creating a government crisis all by herself. Finally, the Minister of Justice succeeded in getting a new law drafted and passed in record time of four months. And the singer could then be heard again, on stage and records in Ginny sand says she didn't want to speculate and speculate about the transsexual relationship with the minister, except to say that this minister was apparently the greatest of her fans.

J

Jimmy Carper 16:26

Hey, you know, wasn't one way more than one way to skin a cat?

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Sarah Dipalma 16:33

You know, I guess, whatever word that's whatever works. I think one of the things that's that's interesting, I wanted to know whether they had political activist groups in Europe, similar to its time a miracle. Yeah, the answer is no. Oh, Jenny, Sam tells me that, in fact, the transgenders in Europe are no more politically active than to try yes sorority in this country would be, which is to say they're really not politically active at all. And so my question was, why is that true? And the answer basically, is it just basically never occurred to them. Now, in some countries, apparently, they feel like it's not necessary, for example, with Netherlands has very liberal policies, Denmark, and Holland also,

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Jimmy Carper 17:16

and perhaps people from other countries go to the more liberal countries?

 S Sarah Dipalma 17:21

Well, it's an interesting thing, apparently, for example, let's say I went to Belgium to have my surgery. And I came back and in they would recognize the fact that my surgery was changed overseas, but not all countries will know. So it depends on what the treaties are, it gets real complicated, because, of course, there I don't know, I don't know how many countries there are in Europe. But let's say there are 40 countries, and each one of them may have individual laws that other countries may or may not recognize, right? So it can become very, it can get real complicated. I always like to tell the story about when I was visiting in Italy. And I was telling somebody about the size of Texas, and I said well, Texas is roughly the same size of France. And it looked at me say Oh, tax until big lie. You know, we tell big joke, because they have no concept of the size of this country. They would say things to me, like you know, my uncle, where's your uncle live? He live in Wyoming? Like, like, next door? And that's it? No, you don't understand that's 2000 miles? Oh, no. No country? 2000 miles? Well, honey, Texas would be the 12th largest country in the world. Yes. But you know, in Europe, you can go to 10 countries in six hours. Yeah. Right. So so it's a little different situation. And let's, we want to talk a little bit about what laws are in this country. People may not know what that is. That's true. I just just occurred to me, I'm assuming people know what the laws are here. No, maybe they don't know. Each state is people already I'm sure people already know, each state makes their own laws about marriage. Now, to my knowledge in all 50 states have a transsexual, who goes to have surgery, and has their their gender their sex changed, can marry because legally, they are now the new sex of whatever their surgery has changed them too big. So we have the opposite situation of Britain, where Britain will pay for everything but granting no rights in the United States, they will pay for nothing but give you rights if you do it. Okay. Okay. Now, that very unusual situation. I know several people right now. I'm trying to think how to explain some way it's not confusing. They were originally married in a typical relationship or male, male female relationship. Okay. At one point the male transitions and becomes female, right? Goes to obtain surgery, and is now legally female. Right? And physically female. Is their marriage still valid? The answer is yes, Sara. Now that has always raised a question to me is why don't why don't gay and lesbian groups pursue that? Because to me, that's a loophole in law bigger than I know it. I

 J Jimmy Carper 19:57

don't know I've never understood that that that's, yeah, we can make great strides. Yeah.

 S Sarah Dipalma 20:05

I mean, there's a loophole if it's legal there. Why is it legal all the time? Exactly. which strikes me as an interesting is an interesting case. So that in that situation, yes. Now friend of mine just recently transitioned in this exact situation. Their marriage was originally male, female, she transitioned to become female. So to legally these are two females who are married. Now then she goes to her company and says, I need to change my insurance package. And they said, Well, okay, sure, certainly no problem. Well, how do you need to change it? She says, Well, I need to change it to two females being legally married. Excuse me What? Well, they are well,

yes. And they actually their legal research department of this company went and checked it out and said, Damn, she's right. Yep. So now they have decided, well, yes, they're going to have to go ahead and cover her, which now raises an interesting question. If that's the case, then why wouldn't all domestic partnerships have to be covered? Wow. Okay.

J Jimmy Carper 21:08

So people can really set a precedent. Yeah.

S Sarah Dipalma 21:11

So for people out there who say well, transgenders, and gays and lesbians really don't share the same issues. Louie. Louie, here's an example of where that is. Pull. In other interesting legal loophole, or legal situation comes up. In Texas, or particularly in Houston, there is it's possible to go and get your name change done, and your gender change done. Before you have surgery?

J Jimmy Carper 21:35

Oh, yes, yes. Yeah. Okay,

S Sarah Dipalma 21:39

so so you can go and get your driver's license and your license is Sarah and it says female, even though you haven't had the surgery that actually changed it. Now then, what happens if you happen to have an accident and you go to the hospital? What wards do they put you in? By no kidding? Yes, the answer is they put you in according to your genitals. So if you haven't had the surgery, they're going to put you in as a male

J Jimmy Carper 22:00

still going by the genital thing? Yeah.

S Sarah Dipalma 22:03

Which is an interesting situation. If they put me in a ward with men, I promise you there's going to be a fight. Yeah, they better sedate me because I'm gonna start weapon ups and stuff. But it's an interest because there is no legal recognition in the law. transgendered people are neither male or female, they are neither, oh, they are in the state of Texas transgenders do not exist in the law at all. Underneath there, you can look the entire law code, we're not there. And as far as I know, that's pretty much true in any of the 50 states. So we are in a legal limbo. Now what has happened, this is this is a very strange situation here. In 1976, there was a case called the U Lane case. And this person sued in court under Title Seven, which is an anti discrimination law, and said that she she was a transsexual person ensued. She lost her job and

sued on the grounds of sexual discrimination. The court ruled that law, she lost her job because she was a transsexual, that was not sex discrimination. Instead, it was legal change of sex discrimination,

J Jimmy Carper 23:14

legal change of sex discrimination, right.

S Sarah Dipalma 23:19

That's what the Act that's the rule. And that is still the law. So that's one of the reasons the transgendered people are so so angry about being cut out from ENDA. Yeah. Because we don't have any legal recourse at this point. If we don't get put into end it, where are we? We're back to legal change of sex discrimination laws. So it's a very interesting situation. And it can be very different in each state. There is no federal protection anywhere. So I'm not so sure that we're so much more well off than any of the European countries and in some ways we may be less well off.

J Jimmy Carper 23:53

Yeah, it's it seems that all the victories are person by person victory.

S Sarah Dipalma 23:59

Yeah, that's it. That's true. In one of the things that that I am, I am learning is the courage that different people have. There's a person and that in Louisiana, her name is Nancy Sharpe. And Nancy sharp is an individual when I first met her, Nancy was one of these people who stood off by the wall. And if you said hi to her, she jumped. Tonight, she's leading a protest of the HRC F in New Orleans. No kidding. The amount of courage it took for her to get there, I think is amazing. And so we are now we are now where the gay lesbian community was probably 10 years ago, but we're catching up fast. And we look at the gay lesbian communities our model saying boy, see, look at what they did, and we can do it too. So in that sense, we sort of feel like gay lesbian communities kind of our parents kind of which is kind of it's not not all bad thought.

J Jimmy Carper 24:53

Yeah, well, most of your parents are pretty nice. Some of them you know are pretty crummy.

S Sarah Dipalma 24:58

You know, you know the truth of the matter is it's we've had trouble with political organizations, and yet it is getting better. I've talked in the show about this situation in Maryland, where the Free State justice campaign, which is the equivalent of the Lesbian Gay rights lobby here, yes,

had been fighting transgenders right down the line. Last week, they changed. They did a complete 180 and said, okay, sure, we'll put you in the law. What's the deal? Well, Jessica Xavier, who was a national board member for his time in America, and Martine Rothblatt went and had a little talk, I think, rock Martine Rothblatt, it's a hard person to say no to I would think so. More importantly, we won a major victory at the NIT at the National Organization for Women conference. The National Organization for Women is bought to hold a meeting soon, and it appears that they are going to endorse transgenders in India. It puts people like freestate justice campaign in a pretty bad stop. These were mostly lesbian feminist who are objecting and then now says, well, we don't understand the objection. So the fact of the matter is, it's getting better in a lot of places and say that good things can happen. You just have to be willing to plant your feet and say I'm not backing up. So you want to go to some music or do Yeah, I

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Jimmy Carper 26:13

do have a Holland near pier Holly near piece that I really really like it's she's doing a duet with Mercedes Sosa about discrimination in South America. Well, they've got it there. Yes. So this is this is a beautiful song Mercedes Sosa sings in Portuguese and how we near translates so enjoy this piece of music Holly near and Mercedes Sosa and you heard it on after hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station, Bryan, Jimmy Carper and with me tonight is Sarah

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Sarah Dipalma 27:01

dipalma. I know that song was listened to that sounds a lot like Joan Baez. Yes, it's very clear crystal clear voice. That's a beautiful song. Yeah, that's really nice. Well, we're going to, we're going to go to an interview with Arman. Oh, Tim, ski. So before we do that, let me talk about Armand a little bit. People tell me that they think that what I do is courageous. And I guess and I guess in a sense, it is what it is. But you know, at the end of the day, I can go home, and it's over. Our mind is in a situation and you'll hear him talk about it, where it's not that easy. Train there in the entire country of France, there is not an openly gay or lesbian person.

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Jimmy Carper 27:42

That's true. That's true.

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Sarah Dipalma 27:45

Given that, and given the fact that transgenders are usually pretty well behind gays and lesbians in terms of things,

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Jimmy Carper 27:51

in fact, that the National French gay magazine, gay PA, is out of business.

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Sarah Dipalma 27:57

Well, and another interesting thing is that France is not on the internet, either. Hmm. And it turns out, the reason they are not is because there's some sort of proprietary argument going on between the phone company of France, and the connection to other internet operations. And basically, the phone company, Francis said, Well, if we can't make a profit on what comes out of this country, we won't let anything come out. So it's a very interesting situation. It's one of the very few countries in Europe, I guess that's not wired to the internet. So they do have some unusual things going on there. Armand is a very interesting person. He's fairly young. I don't know how old he is. But I would guess, from his appearance that he's perhaps in his late 20s, something like that. Very, very sophisticated young man really has it together. But more importantly, he's really taking on he's taking on an issue in a place where he genuinely genuinely is afraid for his safety. He is afraid for his own life. So that's why when I hear people say to me, Well, you know, I think what you're doing is courageous, I think, oh, no, no, this what they've done and what the the mothers in Argentina have done is courageous. Yes. You know what, what Armand is doing in France? That's courageous. Yes. And so when you listen to this interview, think about what it must have been like growing up in France, knowing that you really needed to be a female to male transsexual, and then ask yourself growing up in that environment, where do you develop the sophistication to do what he does? Really interesting. So with that, we go to Armand Oh, Tim, ski, regular listeners of after our you are now going to get a treat. On tonight's show, you're going to hear Stephen woudl, who is from Great Britain. And now we are going to introduce you to a very nice looking young man from France. His name is Arman autumn ski and Arman Welcome to after hours. Thank you very much. First of all, let me ask you. I think there might be some people who would be surprised that that there even are transgenders in France. There are there I've heard from people they think being transgendered is a uniquely American thing. So if you would talk a little bit about transgenders in France.

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30:08

Well, first I will tell you that to transgender is an American term that we don't use in France while people don't know about it. And I can tell you that in France there is I think personally, there is approximately more than 4000 transsexual, I speak about transsexual, I can tell you about transgender all the transgender community because there is no numbers, no statistic, and it's very difficult to know about it. For when I said there is around 4000, and possible 5000, transsexual, I use the Niederlande test statistic. And I think that must be a approximately good number.

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Sarah Dipalma 30:59

Okay, now, most people, there are many people with countries that don't know much about the government of France, for example, Canada has a public social system. And so consequently, for example, in Great Britain, I understand in Great Britain, they pay for the they will pay for the surgery, but then after you they have the surgery, there are no legal rights in France, does the government pay for surgery and what kind of rights do transsexuals have?



31:21

So the situation is very strange in France, because the health care system was quite good pay for the surgery. But if they pay for the surgery, it doesn't mean they give the papers. I mean, the dog didn't change the birth certificate easy. Now, France was condemned by the European Court, the 24, march 92. And after that, the French government decide to make easier the way for the transsexual to change the papers. But it was still very strange to believe to see that they pay for the surgery, and they refuse to change the papers. I mean, this is really incredible.



s Sarah Dipalma 32:18

We're gonna see in the United States, we have the opposite problem, no one will pay for anything. But if you go out and you spend the 12 to \$15,000 for surgery on your own, then they will change the paperwork. So we have the opposite situation here. Now when we spoke to Stephen widdle, he explained to us that, that he is not legally the parent of his children, because they will not recognize his marriage, and they won't change his papers. So technically, he has no marriage. Is that true in France as well?



32:48

No, in France, if you change the paper, it's completely changed. I mean, you can marry you can adopt children. But I will say that actually there are a lot of people fighting against that they don't want has to be to have the possibility to marry or to adopt children. And I'm afraid that in the future, they tried to make the same system like in England.



s Sarah Dipalma 33:17

No, in this country, a lot of the opposition to transgenders comes from political, religious group, conservative religious groups. In this country, religion plays, at least in my opinion, too big a role in the role of politics. I'm a real believer that politics and religion don't mix. In France, do you have what is the role? What role do churches play in setting social policy there?



33:43

I will tell you one thing. In April 92, there was the Council of Europe of organize, meeting a conference about transsexualism. And there was a man priest from the Vatican, who can and at the end of the conference, he says what is thinking, it just spoke about the surgery and he said that for him, this is not normal to do surgery for the transsexual. Out of this, I can tell you also that in France, now we have nearly 20% of people who vote for LePen with extreme right, I mean, fascist, and this is that make me really afraid for the future. They become more and more powerful. And we can be we can be afraid for the future because of that. But I would like to tell you also that the biggest problem I think, actually for the French transsexual is the psychiatrist. They are extremely against us. They have all the power they can decide everything. And most of them are against and When you see all the publication, all the books in the store, were written about transsexual. It's terrible, because most of them are written by it's psychology. I don't know, you save psychologists and psychiatrists to write these books and they, they just speak about illusion, transsexual illusion, or they speak about delirium. So this is

really very, very conservative way. Yeah. Yeah, that's amazing. But it's like that. And most of the people in United States telling me that they believed they felt that France is a very open mind, country and very free country. And it is not at all like that. I must tell you, don't forget it. France is the only country come down by the Open Courts, for the transsexual woman, because they, it was the article eight, they have no respect of the privacy.

S

Sarah Dipalma 36:09

Now, in this country, we have an unusual situation, we actually are the United States Supreme Court actually ruled that gays and lesbians do not have the right to privacy. So therefore, any sexual acts they conduct are technically illegal. It's a very strange situation it or you almost can envision sex police peering inside of your windows to see whether you're breaking the law. It's very strange. What another thing, one of the things that you said they very surprised me, it really surprised me is in this country, we have many, most of the psychiatrists are involved in the Benjamin society. And although there are a lot of drawbacks to some of the things that Benjamin society says, for the most part, they are working to make life easier for transsexuals. Is that? Do the psychologists and psychiatrists in France? Are they not part of the Benjamins society? Did they not adhere to that?

Ω

37:02

I will tell you that. Two years ago, there was the array Benjamin Congress in New York, I've been there. There was no other French people. I was the only one. And in September, it is going to be again to read Benjamin in Europe. I read Benjamin Congress, I mean, and well, it will be in Germany, it's very close from France. So I hope there was going to be some French people there. Also, when there was this Congress, this conference from the Council of Europe, there was a friendship psychiatry is there. And I know her very well. And she spoke. And most of the people were very surprised and badly surprise, she had the search. conservative idea. And when I spoke just before with some other people, they told me, I mean, you're kidding, it's not so bad. In France, it's impossible. That's so bad. You're you, you always make bigger the problem. And when they heard that woman, they came to see me, and they say, Excuse me, I really didn't believe but now I know it's true.

S

Sarah Dipalma 38:14

I think most Americans have an image of France of France being a very liberal nation of being a very wide open nation. I think many people's view France as being much like candidate and having very democratic views and being very open to new ideas. So I admit them also kind of very surprised to hear what you say. I think if you ask nine out of 10 Americans what they thought about France, they would say, Oh, that's a really cool country. Those people are really cool there.

Ω

38:43

So I will tell you one things, I think like this, you will know what's going on. In France, there is no politician, no actor, no journalist who say that is gay, or she's lesbian. Nobody said that. So I think like this you can understand what I'm talking about. And also France we've Spain are the

THINK LIKE THIS, you can understand what I'm talking about. And also France, we've Spain are the two countries where the most people who got AIDS, that's another thing very, I think it's like this, you can see something. The politic, the organization in France, were fighting against AIDS, and they got money from the state, but they must shut up. So they got money, but they must shut up. So they can't do good prevention. You know, it's very difficult in that case.

S

Sarah Dipalma 39:40

In the United States, there have been a couple of organizations, one called queer nation and the other one called act up who had been there street level activists. And they made a saying they had a saying, which became very famous here, which was that silence equals death. If you remain silent about AIDS, it only kills more people in it took a long time to become effective with that. But they finally did. I was one of the things I wanted to ask you is given what you just told us about France, in this country, the transgender rights movement is growing very rapidly. A few years ago, there was no such thing. Now we have a nation wide political network and it's growing very quickly. Is there anything like that in France or anything on the drawing board?

o

40:27

So first I will tell you about Aktobe we have French in France we have act up also Seelos a girl more. And and about the right I will tell you first that about silence first. Silence is a big problem also for the transgender community because I would say that first the surgeon or the psychiatrist don't like when people know each other. And yeah, because like this, they can give each other information about other surgeon in other country and Information is power. Exactly. And