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leather, wear, hides, houston, belt, chaps, lubricant, put, store, garment, house, montrose, storage unit, manufacturing, jeans, shirt, place, great, people, find

SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper



00:03

We've had lots of gyms approached him and said, You're gonna go to another Levi venue, you need to have another story in here. And we'd like to do it. And he went, Okay, so we kind of looked around the bar to see where we could put this little business and we stuck it in this beer closet.



Jimmy Carper 00:25

You must have been totally underwhelmed when you saw it. Well, I



00:28

was because it was full of beer cases. And the canisters that the carrier for comes in for the soda, and the kegs and the old rails from the remodeling the old boot rails. I mean, it was just dealing with all this stuff. And it was really quite an experience to go into this space. And in two days, turned it into a store



Jimmy Carper 00:57

for Louis for Louis. And for those of you who may not be familiar, of course you all are. Louis is Lettuce Entertain You weekend? It happens here in Houston every year and it's the weekend after Mardi Gras, right.



01:11

Yeah, this this year, it's going to be March 10 11th and 12.



Jimmy Carper 01:17

And what there was 1000 people, in fact or more last year,



01:23

that's going to be my next month's guest, Chris Robertson, the president of Eastern Council.



01:28

Good Yes.



01:29

Who is an employee of ours? No, we're tying all this together



01:37

it's starting to seem a little incestuous here but hey, sounds like a Seinfeld buddies coming on next month. Good. Good, good. Good.



01:47

That's right. And Chris does our sewing for us. He is a very talented man that can take a garment and turn it in a piece of leather and turn it into a leather garment the shirt that I have on the jeans that I have on he can no kidding he can I make them fit wow the jeans that I've got out he took a pair of my fiber ones laid them out on this heavy paper that we use for making patterns and made the pattern and cut them stitch them sew them together and the the part my part in the other process is to do the studying work the metal work the bright work that you see on the belts like the belt I have on the one I have on Tim the legend Montrose 1999 belt that has on I made that for him. He was a present. Thank you, his partner, and Ken Claude. And but all the all the metalwork I do that.



02:49

And we can vouch for the fact here that that outfit fits very well. Yes. Thank you. Yes.



Jimmy Carper 03:01

Like, enhance or show off your tattoos



03:03

to oh, well, thank you. I have been very selective on the tattoo work that I've had done. And I have a large one on my back, that when I had it done last summer, I took my harness that I wear to the tattoo parlor and said, This is what I want to have all my back. But it has to be set in such a position that my harness frames it. And she adjusted the size and the fit of the tattoo that I had designed because I do my own design work. And it's framed right in the right in my car. When I where am I that art my tattoo artist is also in San Francisco. And she is was one of the people we had invited to come for our Grand Opening an open house and because of her schedule, she was not able to make either, but she's a very, very talented person. And she is a by natural talent, the pen and ink artist and by training a tattoo artist. So she will look at your body shape. And once you've designed and then make it fit. Like your contours or even like the one on my chest. It fits by hair patterns. Because very important hair grows in a lot of people grows and patterns. And if you put a piece of art on your body that doesn't fit the contours of your your muscle shape, your body shape and your hair pattern. It doesn't draw so it just doesn't look good doesn't fit right.



Jimmy Carper 04:29

And I agree with you. I like good tattoos and you should be very selective because if you're gonna, yeah,



04:40

if you make a mistake, you can't take the pencil eraser out and rub it



04:43

doesn't go away. It goes Nah, no, no, no, no.



04:47

Well, it sounds like you're into a lot of the manufacturing. Yes. How did that come about?



04:54

This is a funny story. I was in a four H club when I was in the fifth sixth and seventh grade. Right, I was raised in Denver and I started out doing Western Tourmaline making belts and wallets and that sort of thing on cow heights and I just transitioned over from the Western things that I made into the black leather things from brown to black round



05:21

up okay why right? Oh,



05:27

okay why but there are others that are also Lee also equally fun. Careless can be a very very fun lubricant. And the nice thing about it is is a silicone now what is this? Well, Ky is a lubricant. Oh, that dries out. Yeah, that drives my favorite lubricant, my lubricant of choice. And being a leather Daddy that is a bottom my lubricant of choices. Arrows. ers, ers, yes, a silicone based lubricant that is very importantly, condom compatible. But from a place standpoint, it does not dry out. It has no odor, and it has no taste and it's moisturizing at the same time. So you can play for hours chi,



06:16

a lubricant named after the god of love How original? Imagine? Yes, imagine.



06:23

And it is the primary lubricant we carry in both of our stores. And it has achieved quite a bit of popularity in in Houston through I like to say through our marketing of it and selling them. And it's a very, very good lubricant. Because it's it's safe, and it's compatible with with condoms, which is very important.



06:47

Yeah, it's



06:48

latex friendly.



06:51

Right? What do you want to take a little musical break and we'll get into a little bit more about their manufacturing and leather care.



Jimmy Carper 06:58

Okay. I did fail to mention that. The piece of music that I played before you came on the air was from our good friend, Charlie pitchai. Oh, no. Okay. San Francisco. Yeah, yeah. And he comes to town every now and then. And I got to know him on the net. And he sent me I mean, this was before he had the CD out. This was like he burned one and sent it to me. That was shame. Shame on me. He has a wonderful voice and he's putting out a a more openly gay CD sometime this year. The man I'm gonna play now is Mark Weigel, who is kind of want to say

Falk, but not quite folk singer. He is going to be in town this year. So I don't know that when but as soon as I know I'll Yes. Yes, he'll be in town and he does a duet with a man named Blackberry, who put out some of the earliest gay music that was recorded. The very late 60s early 70s. And they have a wonderful wonderful duet. My favorite on this album called no more nights alone who like it and you're listening to it on after hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station we'll be right back with



08:36

Mark waggles with blackberry doing a duet no more a lot nights alone. That's from his album. The truth is, Mark is going to be in Houston sometime this year with Dudley Saunders who happened to have been came to Houston in 1999 and had a show at the guava lamp. I'm sorry, I missed that. Yes. He he got some great publicity at the last minute because he got his picture on the cover of Twitter. So he and he played Houston in Dallas and and I think Austin, it wasn't heavily. There was not enough people there. Actually, well, we'll change that. Yes, yes. And Dudley is a really hot looking guy. I don't think I have a picture of him here but and he doesn't know if we have time. I'll play one of his later on the show. Anyway, the show is after hours. Queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station. I'm Jimmy Carper. Bobby's with me. But the co host is Jim



09:48

Jim's Virginie and my guest is Kim Ziggler Blackhawk leather, we were talking about earlier, your shops at the venture end and your new shop and just how did you get started? I mean Yeah, I wouldn't imagine. I mean, where do you go for equipment and things like that?



10:05

Well, we we really kind of had an interesting experience with picking up our equipment because we, at the very beginning, didn't have any manufacturing at all. I went on vacation to San Diego, and walked into one of the stores out there and said, I would like to set up a wholesale account with you and have you manufacture for us. And the man sitting behind the counter looked at me and said, Why don't you just buy me out? Kidding me very straight faced. Just why don't you buy me out? So you thought he was joking? Yes. And come to find out, he was ready to sell his business out. He had his cutting table. He had his benches. He had his clicker, he had his dyes. He had cabinets full of all the different pieces that we would be needing the buckles, the snaps, the Wow, the glue, everything, everything, and all the punches, the pegboards everything. And I said well, what do you mean, you're selling your business? He said, I'm getting out of the business period. And I said, Well, how much do you want for and he gave me a price. And I said, Well, let me go talk to my partner. And we talked back and forth. And we kind of decided, well, maybe we weren't quite ready to spend that money. Because I'm sure Yeah, sure. It was a big investment. It's a big investment. And we didn't have any place to put it was one of these things that kind of landed on you're like this meteorite of the sky. Now, what do you do with this meteorite when you're sitting here holding it? And so I came back home. And a month later, he called up and said, I really want you to buy this. And I said, Well, okay, but we really can't afford it. And we don't have any place to put it. And he said, Well, I'm going to make it affordable, make it affordable. So you cannot say no. And he did. So our boy

and myself at that time, got on an airplane and flew to San Diego rented a budget truck and loaded up the truck, loaded up a 26 foot box truck and spent two days loading the truck and drove back to Houston with this truck full of equipment, and hides and everything else. We got everything that he had in that place, including the light fixtures, lock stock and back stock and barrel, including the coffeemaker. I put that link



12:36

out somebody seriously wanted you to have



12:39

that he seriously did. And considering we had just opened the store in the venture in February and this was going on in May. We had been in business three months. And now we had all this equipment, we were ready to start manufacturing. Well, we were living in an apartment. So yeah, where are you? Where are you gonna put all this so we back a truck up to a storage unit over on Richmond and just stuffed everything in two or three storage units. Wow. And let it sit until we can get ourselves kind of pulled together. We opened up a little manufacturing startup out in the shopping center where our clothing store is at Kirkland Memorial because one of the storefronts out there had been vacant and the landlord was nice enough to let us use one of the vacant storefronts had been vacant for two years. While no more than got everything all unpacked, and in there, and he leased the space. And we have three days to pack it all back up and stuff it back into another storage unit.



13:42

Let me tell you, I've helped move some of this. It is heavy. There's some heavy pieces of equipment



13:47

exactly in the man that we bought this stuff from by trade originally was a machinist. So he didn't do anything. Like the cutting tables, the workbenches, the legs on them are four by four posts. And these tables, as Jim said, are heavy. Well, they needed to be and they need to be Yeah. And so we had all this stuff at once for a second time, stuffed back into a storage unit. Bob and I and our boy looked at each other so we got all this stuff. Yeah, what are we going to do with it? So we bought a house up on last year, actually, last year, two years ago now 1998 up on Shepard Park Plaza, which is our 43rd and shepherd. And the house that we found quite nicely had a 16 by 20 room game room built on the side of the garage, the 1960s so we once again with Jim and Ken's help Boxtop packed all this stuff out of the storage unit and brought it to the house. Instead of our manufacturing in the spring of last year, and started into our custom work, piece by piece, we went through the boxes and we're still finding things and finding patterns because we bought all of his patterns as well. Gosh, so we have years and years of this man's patterns for shirts and chaps and pants and all sorts of different things. And

one of the very first things that we got commissioned to make was a title sash for the leather alternatives, Master leather contest. That particular sash had over 500 studs that all have to be set by hand very time



15:41

consuming. You were telling me like you said each stud and then you have to go through the back and yes, lock it i



15:47

i bought my letters out with a with a with a pin, and then have to hand punch. Each of these studs has two prongs on it. So each each stud has to have two holes punched in the leather with a punch. And you push it through with your thumbs, flip the item over, bend the prongs over and then tap them down with a hammer. Oh, by time I ended up setting these 500 and some studs. I had calluses growing up from



16:14

your fingers must have been bleeding. They



16:16

were they were sore. Why don't you get once your hands get accustomed to it and they get calloused into it. It's not difficult at all. It's just like any other type of activity that's got manual labor involved in it. But I'm very very as my partner says, Bob says anal retentive about my studwork



Jimmy Carper 16:36

well and no something like that is important because one one of them off. You can see the whole thing exactly the very exacting job



16:48

and I really I really take a lot of pride in myself without I'm really trying not to sound egotistical is what take a lot of pride in myself that when I have people in the bar that are wearing the belts or the the title sashes or the patches that you see on the back of the vest. When I see three or four of those walking around in a bar on a Friday or Saturday night and it's my handiwork walking around there. I just smile on the inside. Yeah.



17:17

It's like our signatures.

 Jimmy Carper 17:19

You bet Exactly. And I do know that that owner is very proud of it and well in some

 17:25

cases friends well that's like the belt the gym has on that was not part of the data Montrose contest. But Ken came to me and said I want to give a belt to Jim for Christmas. And I'd like you to make it for me and I made it for four kids to give to Jim for Christmas.

 17:47

How nice is very nice it's a good one here.

 17:51

Oh yeah.

 17:52

And it's says Daddy a Montrose 1990 1990 ad I'm gonna say in the wrong year heaven I I'm sorry. That's okay.

 Jimmy Carper 18:04

Once you've been the daddy of Montrose as I had pointed out before you remain a daddy

 18:09

once a daddy always there

 18:14

Well, I'm sure with your new location, you have a lot more space

 18:17

now we have a lot more space we are able to spread our equipment out so we're not quite as on top of each other as we were in that in that room off the side of the garage And one thing

on top of each other as we were in that in that room on the side of the garage. And one thing we've been able to do is set up a hide room with dowel rods or hide room. Well your your heights are Oh,



18:40

okay. You're thinking of a room that's not there.



18:44

It's not a hidden room. It's a Hydra and it's, I've developed I developed racks with dowel rods. Three different racks with five rods each to hang the different heights Sure. Because if you take a hide and you lay it with a fold and you'll get a crease, if it lays there long enough that crease is very difficult to get the come out well when we had all this stuff at the house it grew out of this room off the side of the garage into the garage and then to the bedrooms turned into hide room so our house always had the wonderful smell of leather in the house also had yes another bedroom that turned into an office. So now a four bedroom house we have three of our rooms the belt devoted to our business besides this room off the side of the garage M part of the garage.



19:32

What happens if you get another boy well



19:37

he's gonna have to sleep under the table in the hive. And at this point in time we are without a boy it's just Bob and I at this point we are actively interviewing and looking Oh, so all you boys out there that listen up. Daddy Bob and daddy Kim we're looking alright and never hurts to Look, that's right. That's right. And never hurts to let everybody know you are looking.



20:06

I don't know one thing, you know, I see a pair of chaps, what do you look for in hides? I mean, what are some of the things that you look for



20:12

what I look for and hides, and I hand select, I personally hand select all the hides that we use. And I have not found any vendors in Houston at all that I can use. So I have to leave the city. And I'll take a car trip, but I'll drive the state or leave the state and I'll drive for two or three days to different vendors that are in the Oklahoma, Louisiana Texas area. And I'll I'll call them all in advance, and I'll tell them I'm going to be coming, ordering a bunch of hides. But what I'm

looking for are hides that are very clean. And when I say clean, I don't mean that they're not dirty. I don't want hides have got holes in them. I don't want hides that have dead spots. I don't want brands, I don't want, you know,



20:56

you don't want what



20:57

brands, how's your



20:58

random cows are branded? Oh, you don't think about that? No, you don't see that



21:03

the brand leaves a scar. Sure. And I or if these defects are there, I want them to be minimalized. Because when we make a pair of pants, it is the front leg panel is just like your jeans, it's one panel from the waistband clear to the hem. Well, you have to have a fairly large expanse of leather this way, without defects in it. So you don't have a thin spot, or a hole or a brand. someplace you don't want. Now there are times where somebody wants a brand on the front of their jeans, or on the front of their chaps. They liked the look. But I look for minimal defects that I haven't picked these heights and I will go through sometimes on a trip at any one vendors location, I'll go through several 100, Garmin hides to pick out the ones that I want.



21:52

Wow, that must be more expensive.



21:56

It's more expensive from a time standpoint. But it's less expensive from an actual expense standpoint. Because if I order the hides from a vendor in, let's say, Ohio, and they shipped me a box of hides, and I go through them at my store. And out of this box of hides, I can only use four or five and I have to ship the ones I'm not going to use back. I paid the freight to get them to me. And I pay the freight to send them back. Yes. So I would much rather do it. The way I'm doing it when I can so the manufacturer doesn't grade them. They grade them but they are not going to use them and being the annual return a person that I am. I'm picky because I want the stuff that we make to look good.



22:45



22:45

Well that shows good quality. Yes



22:46

it does. Is it does



22:48

if I'm going to spend the time in doing the metal work that I do and have craft and our other employee spend the time that they're going to they're going to have good materials to work with. And the best materials that I can find for them.



23:02

Do you deal with any used leather? No. Okay,



23:06

we have not. And one of the one of the biggest things I've had the greatest satisfaction of finding our colored hides. Oh, because as you know in the leather community there are colors that means certain things yes. Yellow for watersports, red for fisting. Navy for different types of sex, gray and black. Well, black is very easy. Sure, we'll find the greatest suitable or a yellow that suitable because I like a yellow that's a true Crayola crayon yellow and like a red it's a true Crayola crayon red. Yeah, you can find all sorts of shades you can find all sorts of variations, but I like the colors. I know what you mean look like the the hankie code colors that the little community uses to signify interest in different types of play. And ferreting out these different hide colors has been real interest in yellow has been a real real challenge.



24:06

I would think so we're



24:07

gonna get yellow. But guess what? You found it.



24:09

I found one. All right. I found now a vendor that carries a real true yellow and it is Crayola crayon yellow. And it's going to look sharp. Yes, it will. You can do things with with colors on garments. And I did this. We did this on one of Ken Claude shirts. He wanted the blue on the cuff of the short sleeve shirt and also the blue stripe on the side of the chest. And it is a very,

very pretty blow that we use. And you can use these colors as a permanent coloring on the on the black garment, either as a stripe or as a ribbon. And who Yeah, yeah And they make great great accents but they signify interest in different types of play activities different interests do you have any interest in the in the passive aggressive sure which side you wear it on left or right and then what the color?



25:15

Yeah



25:17

100 Green is one of those colors that is a lot of fun.



25:22

Well it's also bright you know, with hanky codes now it's like so many different shades you know, it's hard to tell you know, is that 100 Green is at Olive Green Yeah,



25:33

but the the 100 Green is one that I like because that's the one that either a boy is looking for a daddy Oh, or a daddy is looking for a boy



25:44

okay.



25:46

So I kept a clean



25:47

no involved money No, no. Okay.



25:54

It involves what you're interested in from a either an uncapped yeah play situation or a relationship situation. Yes. But the colors have been a lot of fun to ferret out all right. I wonder with Houston you know being so warm the climate and all is there like a leather season here in

Houston. For me personally? Well, for for most people that you know, for most people, they seem to think there's a leather season in Houston. For me personally, there's not you'll find me at the Pride Parade in June in Fall leather. But for a lot of people they seem to think that there's a leather season that they can't wear their chaps in the summertime because it's too hot. Or they can't wear a leather shirt in the summertime because it's too hot. But we have designed a tank top off of one of my tank tops. Or you can wear a lace front shirt like what I have on that reads. I have a pair of chaps that are laced down the side. And if you don't think that they don't breathe wear them on a cold winter day. You will feel the cold through that lace side if you're wearing them without jeans, but you can wear a codpiece belt under chaps yes still be street legal look very, very sexy, and very hot. And attract all sorts of attention if you have body hair in some of the right places.



27:19

I remember pride parades when they were during the day. And always, you know looking off at leather folks, you know go marching down and full leather and yeah, like 90 degree heat.



27:33

But in the summertime, you can wear a vest with a pair of jeans and no shirt or a tie or a t shirt and being very comfortable. Sure, or you can wear as pair of suspenders. Everybody wears a belt. Whether they're in leather community or not. I like to wear my boots. I have a pair of boots that I really really like. They're the lineman boots that lace to the knee that the linemen wear when they climb the poles so Yeah, put the wires up so we have electricity to our homes. I have a pair of those 16 inch lineman boots that lace up the front and I just tuck my jeans into them and wear my belt and best with



28:11

you are aligned them for the



28:18

somebody asked me I wear these cuffs that are on my arms every day of the week. And it's beautiful I and I wear these every day of the week. And people asking me when it was like 85 degrees in the middle of our happy little Houston winter weather. Don't these get uncomfortable? Well, you know, you get used to wearing these things know that even with the heat, they're okay, you know you?



28:48

Well, I live I wear my leather all the time. And if you come into the store on South Sheppard, you'll see me in a one of my various styles of boots, and my jeans and a T shirt and my vest, you come into the bar situation. And you'll see me dressed in different types of shirts and my leather pants or my chaps or different things because the leather wear in a bar is a little

different than what you'd wear in a regular retail situation where you have sure some of the straight community thinks that this is a leather store to come in and buy a full length leather coat for their wife and they don't realize it's not it's more of an edge type of situation. More of an edge situation than what their guests may be accustomed to or think they're walking into that opens their eyes. I've had a few people walk in and get about three or four steps into the store and go oops, and back out they go and it's like, that's okay. Yeah,



29:45

but they come back the next day usually right. Otherwise, it's very



29:51

the store is stimulating it stimulates thought and, but it's not a store where you walk into where you're going to find erotic things. that are obscene. That's not the point.



30:03

Okay. How would you answer the question, say someone would come up to you and would one of your stores had never purchased any leather? What would you tell this person to first purchase?



30:15

My first suggestions to people when they are buying a first communion to the leather community and in the leather scene are to buy a pair of boots, a belt, and a vest, very neutral. Because at that point in time, the person doesn't know what type of play they're going to get into. They don't know, typically, they don't know whether they're going to be a top or a bottom. Many times they think you're going to be a top because they think the top has got control. Surprise, surprise, really, the bottom is the one with the safe word that says this scene can continue to go on or or stop or stop. And a little thing on myself when it comes to safe words, I use for safe words in a place situation. And there are some things that I do as a top, some things I do as a bottom. And some things I do as a switch. But I like to use for safe words. And they are red, yellow, green, and stop. If you tell me to stop at a place situation, you're gonna put your clothes on and go home. We're not that doesn't mean slow down. If I am in a play situation with somebody, and I'm topping somebody, and I say, what color are you? And they tell me they're green. That means they're doing fine, they'd like more. If they tell me three yellow, that means they're getting to the point where I may need to kind of start to taper off a little bit. If they say red, that means I'm going to back down, but I'm not going to stop. And this applies to a flogging scene it can apply to a fisting scene, or any number of different types of smbd type play situations. But if I asked that person, where are you and they say stop, that means they're gonna put their clothes on and go home.



32:13

All right. Deal quick about it with leather scene. God, I wish we had more time. So fast about

All right. Real quick about it with leather care. God, I wish we had more time. So fast. about basic leather care, what do you recommend as as far as frequency for what to use?



32:28

The biggest enemy to leather in Houston is moisture. Keep your leather dry. Because you either get in the rain, potentially within although not this winter, or in the summertime, you perspire in it, let your leather dry, take it home, after you've worn it, hang it up, let it air dry, don't force it into being dried. And then keep it clean. After you've worn it. Take a clean, dry cloth, dust it off. Excuse me, there are a number of different types of leather cleaners you can use claim. Use a cleaner before you condition. Because the conditioners have got oils and waxes and different things in them to re moisturize the leather. If you don't clean it first and clean the dust and the dirt particles out of the pores of the leather. And you just put the conditioner on all you're doing is sealing that dirt out.



33:28

Okay, so you clean it each time not as required. Actually, I



33:32

do it as required, okay, because the type of wear that my leather gets mostly that we have in our leather community, we're not doing it wearing it out into a muddy situation or a dirty situation. They get dusty more than anything else. Lexol makes a very fine line of cleaners and conditioners, and so to Apple products, so we carry those in our stores. Great. And there's other things that you can do as far as shrinking a garment or stretching a garment. And anytime you have anybody has a question about something of this nature, they're more than welcome to give me a call. And I'll outline that with them



34:09

at 713. Leather. Yes.



34:12

I love that.



34:13

Yeah, it was great. It was great. We do need to wrap up, unfortunately. Sure.



34:19

It's great. Thank you.

it's great. Thank you.



34:21

Thank you, Jim, for inviting me in.



34:23

Sure. We certainly appreciate him. I just again, wish we had a lot more time to talk about leather care, because that's really important to hear in Houston. Yeah, sure



34:32

is. Sure is, and that's I don't think it's a subject we've even just ever discussed on the show. And so yeah, we may need to get into that more at another time.



34:42

If time permits in the future. I'd be happy to come in and go through I've done a lot of research and I have a lot of personal experience in this realm of leather care and I have people coming into the store all the time asking me how do I get this out? Or how do I get that out? Or how do I make this fit? If I inherited it from somebody and it's contoured in the wrong places. Yes,



35:01

yes, I have one of those great.



35:04

Good luck in your new shop and your open house again the 19th and 20th of February.



35:10

Yes, we'll start our open house on the actually the grand opening is 18th 19th and 20th. And the open houses on the afternoon of June 20. And there'll be ads in the local publications. Thank you watch for our ads. Thank you.



35:24

Thank you. And thank you, Jim. Thank you, Jim. And happy birthday. Thanks. You've been listening to after hours queer radio with attitude on KPFT Houston. Ke O 's College Station coming up at the top of the hour is Big Daddy j with a red eye special. And then in the

background, as I promised is Dudley Saunders from his album, restore, it's called The song is called breath and he and Mark Rocco will be in Houston sometime this year. And I'll let you know it till next week. Take care. Good night.