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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:02

What did you say James? Who wrote the speech?

00:05

The first thing I said was who wrote this speech for George Bush? And did he know what he was going to say before he started reading it.

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This is one to three are listening to 90.1 FM KPFT in Houston, this is buddy along with Jane Scheidler gonna say Otis McClay, but you're not. Otis, I'm not. And joining us in the studio right now, Jim Carper, who co host the after hours program with me on Saturdays, and we were talking about this incredible speech that a Republican president was giving

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not just a Republican President George Bush, actually be one of the least. I can't say that, can I say he's one of the least sensitive people I've ever met?

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You just did, but we'll edit it out later.

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Okay. I don't know that would be a toss up between he and his predecessor.

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Well, that's true. But I don't count his predecessor,



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looking looking at what his predecessor did. And what George did is, there's not much to look at. So we we wouldn't have to spend too much time looking for something new. As far as dealing with age,



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George Bush is hoping desperately that we're going to grade him on the curve. And we may, I think, if you keep saying things like this, it could be significantly it will help. The question I want to ask, everybody, including the listeners is George Bush has made a stirring statement. And I felt a very inspiring speech about AIDS, about sensitivity to people with AIDS, about treating this as a disease, instead of as a social problem. You say that, um, and I want to get down to real life real quickly. And both of you guys are intimately involved with what goes on, certainly in the gay community in Houston. And I want to just focus on that for a minute, even though I also want to look at the non gay issue of AIDS. But what has this trickle down? Have you seen any change in reaction? In terms of Houston? What about? I'm just, I'm just shooting in the dark here. What about the city of Houston Health Department? Have you seen a big policy change as a result of the statement on behalf of George Bush?



02:24

Actually, I haven't seen much of a change because of the speech. The speech was wonderful. I can't remember the last time I had more mixed emotions. Since I am HIV positive. It was a mixture of of Wonder of it's about time and anger of why did it take so long, right? And more locally, more localization



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that you say, Oh, yes, George Bush can say this, then maybe there is maybe something



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can happen. Yes. More locally, the AIDS equity League has made strides against a policy that was coming up in the Houston area. In terms of insurance. No one thought it was a very good policy. And it the policy was defeated. Now, whether George Bush's speech had anything to do with it, we'll never know.



03:22

Or maybe wouldn't. Wouldn't it be nice to think that this was just an idea whose time had come? And that it that it was time to stop discriminating against people with AIDS and people

with people who are HIV positive? Yes, wouldn't it be? Well,



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we hoped but we don't we don't realize that. And we talked about this on after hours that unfortunately, the gay and lesbian community in this country is hidden and closeted, and quiet and off away. If that 30 or 40 million people would write the president and say, Hey, thank you so much for those remarks. attitudes have changed. If those people right there Congressman's attitudes have changed, but unfortunately, the gay and lesbian community is not going to do that. So we have to deal with reality. Speaking of



04:03

closets. I am an openly gay man. So that means I have come to the class. And more recently, I've come out of the closet on being HIV positive. Let me tell you, that was a much more difficult closet to come out of.



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That's interesting. I think that I wanted to ask you a little bit about that. May I ask you what you do for a living and where you work are we love it. So



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I am retired. I worked for tenneco for 19 years. They had a large layoff.



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I took the golden parachute, golden



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parachute and looked at my life and decided I need to take stress out of it. So I'm going to retire.



04:51

That's great. That's incredible opportunity makes it worthwhile.



04:56

I am very lucky that I can do that. There are no Millions of people who cannot sure and they are

I am very lucky that I can do that. There are no millions of people who cannot save and they are in my same same shape, I



05:05

would, I would risk to say also that you don't have kids to put through college, right. And dogs no matter how expensive they are, it just really, you know, they don't want to make light of this, I want, I want to bring up a point that's made an impression on me. And I want to invite the listeners to call 526 4000 and give us their impressions on how things are going in Houston for people who are HIV positive people with AIDS. One of the things that has consistently made a big impression on me, ever since people started talking about AIDS, and when there was a lot of negative talk about that AIDS was God's punishment to homosexuals for their for their wicked ways. And then we're just gonna kill off all the gay people and then life will work. And what people sometimes forget, and I think that people who get their news from television don't ever find out is that this is a global epidemic. It's not something that's just happening in North America, be it started in Africa, long before it ever hit the United States. And that there are literally hundreds of 1000s of people all over the world who, who have had AIDS who have died of AIDS, who currently have AIDS, and that 93% of those aids victims, globally, are heterosexual. And that sounds



06:40

scary. That's a statistic you never hear. And



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you know, we saw a special not too long ago on the Discovery Channel dealing with the small town, a small city in Africa, in southern Africa, where over half of the population of the town has died.



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And and the half of the population that died was the younger half



06:59

right? Younger, there was a grandmother, a grandmother who had lost all of her sons and her daughter in laws and was raising her grandchildren. Because all of the mothers and middle generation, they were dead and gone.



07:12

Five to six 4000 is our number here at 123. You're listening to KPFT Houston, and OD is not here,



07:19

coming up at three o'clock fresh air with Terry Gross. So stay tuned for that



07:23

the radicals have taken over the studio. And we're not going to give up. I think that there's something we have to remember. And I think that that is one overly simplistic reaction is that it's a gay problem. Now the fact that I'm sitting in a room was two gay guys. And we're talking about AIDS just sort of reinforces that stereotype. But I want to see



07:48

what we were talking about before is true. The the percentage of gay people gay man, coming down with a two is getting smaller and smaller and smaller. Right now, the figures are the CDC in Atlanta, put it between 55 and 60%



08:06

of people in the United States who have a five to 60% are gay. And that number is shifting. Yes, every day, that proportion is becoming less. And in fact, it was a year ago, I think when I read in the New York Times that AIDS is the number one killer of young women between the ages of 18 and 40. In New York City very scary. It's a result in in the case of those young women have drug use. Or frequently sexual contact with partners who are IV drug users are partners who are bisexual. But we're now looking at the number one killer of young women in New York City.



08:52

And one of the reasons one of the reasons they don't want to talk about it is because they have to talk about sex. They have to talk about homosexuality. And no one wants to deal with that. We deal with that all the time on our program, because being openly gay and working for the Houston Police Department. Those don't mix either. So people say you can't work for the police department and be homosexual. You can't do this, you know, radio stuff and duty. So no one really wants to talk about it. And hearing the President talk about it. Yeah, he can talk about an incredible incredible, absolutely incredible



09:23

after nine years of silence from the White



09:27

House. That's exactly what it was. In longtime companion. I'm sure the film starts this weekend

at the Greenway three theaters. I'm sure they'll deal with the names project quilt. I don't know if you're aware of that. The last time the quilt was in Washington, DC last October, I believe it was yes. The President and his wife flew over it in their helicopter on their way to Camp David. And it



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was so big at that point, I think have have they stopped adding to it. No, it's getting to the



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United States. It's it's the Tomb of the Unknown soldiers.



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Right? Ah, that's great.



10:01

I like five to six 4005 to six KPFT.



10:05

The other thing that's interesting, and this is this is, again, this is a gay issue. It's not an AIDS issue. And I want to keep putting this back. The title of this film longtime companion, is the phrase that's used by the New York Times in obituaries of people with AIDS. And the New York Times was, I know, as far as I know, the first newspaper in the country and I know that there are some who still don't would list cause of death with with the family's permission, they will list the cause of death as AIDS or AIDS related complex I remember Perry Ellis was such a big deal imperialist in the fashion industry came out of the closet as a group, but longtime configurable



10:44

in the closet really.



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In print, they were,



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you're gonna start doing



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longtime companion is the phrase they use as they list the person who has been removed at the loss of this person from AIDS, which I think is roommate. But I want to get back to the question of people with AIDS in Houston, people with HIV positive in Houston. What is it? Like? What's the medical care? Like? What is your medical insurance? I want to get personal. Jimmy, I want to talk about what's your personal medical situation in terms of getting insurance coverage? Does? Do you pay? Are you self paying health insurance? And is does your insurance cover it? Are you do you feel comfortable about the kind of treatments that are available to you? Do you feel comfortable about what's available to you? And both in terms of your physical well being and your real, emotional, psychosocial well being? Okay, thanks. Question.



11:43

Insurance is a big problem. And that probably is the number one reason more people are not out of the closet about being HIV positive,



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you just sort of did these people to sort of keep showing up with mysterious ailments,



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yeah, gee whiz, or they're just if they are asymptomatic, they're just very quiet about it, because they're scared to death, that they're going to be canceled. Sure, insurance? Sure. And of course, I do run that risk to be being open. But I think it's very important to be open about it. I believe that the insurance industry is changing. I've seen the change, there are policies you can get now even if you have AIDS,



12:28

that you can start off yes! That's a that's a big change I insurance. So that eight



12:33

years now, my insurance is very expensive. It's \$160 a month for full coverage.



12:40

But you have insurance? I haven't sure I'm saying



12:42

yes. In being HIV positive, the number one monitor that we look at is is T cell counts. And that's a very good monitor of how the disease is progressing. I am above 800.



13:04

Okay, give me a scale I okay. I don't have a context to put a normal



13:08

T cell count for somebody like me, for someone like you runs anywhere between 515 100. Okay, your T cell count is somewhat like your temperature, it varies greatly. And there's a



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broad definition of normal, your T cell count is 800. That means that you're functionally asymptomatic. I'm guessing that's



13:31

right. Okay, that's right. The time to really think about it and do something about it is when your T cell count gets below 500. That is the general thinking right now. Okay. That is when a lot of people start taking AC T. I see. Now, AC T has done a lot to keep people healthier. It does have terrible side effects. And many people.



14:01

I know nothing about this. Do you? Do you want to talk about this a little bit? I think there's a problem too. If people start talking about AZT and and I have a close personal friend who is HIV positive, is he taking AZT as a prevention, as it was the hopes of maintaining the appropriate T cell count? I don't know a lot of technical stuff about his condition. I just know that he's taking this very expensive drug. Do you think that the availability of AZT is lowering some people with AIDS or with HIV positive into a false sense of security? Yes,



14:38

absolutely.



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I'll just take this pill and then it'll be okay.



14:42

It won't be okay. It will be fine. For the general generally 80% 90% of the people are going to respond positively to AC T for a period of up to 18 months. After 18 months.



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These For people who are asymptomatic, asymptomatic, okay,



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it will boost your your immune system. Generally after taking AZT for 18 months, the effects are reversed drops off, it just drops off, it doesn't have the effect anymore, and you have to go off of AC t



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k 5000 is a number here at 123. We're talking about AIDS, and we're talking about what we can do about it both as individuals and as a community.



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The bad side effects for many people is that AC T turns to change your blood system, it creates an anemia. Ah, yes, many people taking AC t have to go in for transfusions. You see. So you have to weigh these side effects. What is your T cell count?



16:01

How much at risk? Are you aware? How serious is it



16:04

is? A lot of people are thinking that? Well, if I if I started at 500, my T cell count is 500. Now I want to interject that, when you get below 200, you're you're really in trouble, you're going to start getting sick, you're going to start getting all the side effects.



16:29

If I start taking it at 500, how much is that going to boost? versus what is it going to do to my system overall?



16:37

And if if it's possible, you know, we're going to talk long term here. Yes, you really have to weigh that with putting it off as long as possible. And cost



16:47

is another factor. Yes, I know the cheapest T cell count, you can obtain that I've been able to find that you can obtain cost about \$100. When you're taking AC t you should have this done monthly as a 10 in the cost of the drug is going to run between five and \$8,000 a year. Well, people without insurance can't do this. Yes,



17:13

exactly. I want to ask, I want to take this out of the personal and back into the political



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folks, I want to get away from it. But he said people without insurance, there are hundreds of 1000s of people who are homeless in this country. And many of those people have the AIDS virus, right and on the streets that are never even going to get close to thinking about having insurance. So we have a problem in this country.



17:37

And there are a whole lot of working people who don't have insurance either. I mean, that's a very common myth that just because you have a job, you have health insurance, contract workers or you know, a lot of categories of people simply don't get health insurance as part of their benefit package.



17:57

This is a disease that you just cannot deal with without insurance.



18:02

That's right and difficult enough to deal with with insurance. Yeah. And I think that's something that we want to talk about. I want to ask, How do you feel? How have you been served as an HIV person? How do you How have you been served both? Let's talk about the city infrastructure, the city of Houston, the city of Houston Health Department, the community hotlines Where has your best support come from? Where is there room for improvement?



18:33

The Montrose Counseling Center has groups for HIV positive people. bearing center there are many, many groups out there boosting HIV positive people. My personal my personal support has come from the gay and lesbian switchboard. Okay.



19:01

He's laughing because that's all we push on this. Yes. We're giving him a



19:05

hard I'm a member of the switchboard. Okay. You volunteer. I volunteer? Yes.



19:10

What is that number? Jimmy



19:12

293211.



19:14

Okay. You don't want to forget the AIDS hotline in Houston. We're fortunate in this city to have the AIDS Foundation, which has a tremendous amount of programs that go out into schools if they were asked and into civic groups if they were asked Yeah.



19:28

Well, that's another point I wanted to bring up because it as this disease has developed, the support has come from the gay community. And as a member of the gay and lesbian switchboard, I talked to a lot of straight people now dealing with the AIDS



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dealing with it in in their lives or in the lives that the



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gay community knows about it may have been well instructed. It's the straight community that's calling now and they are just amazed that the only support they can find is from the gay

community, that's probably



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real difficult for some of them, you know, very difficult. Just another hurdle for somebody who's already trying to cope with a huge, mysterious disease. And



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all of a sudden, the only people who will open up to them are



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avoided all their lives.



20:22

I got a call not too long ago from a minister in Houston, who is black and a member of his congregation, a young black woman, who is straight and has two children, has now the AIDS virus. Her husband left her she has no insurance. And the minister was just beside himself, because he could not find support and did not know who to call. And it's it's really sad when you get these calls from people and they say, Can you help us? There's no one out there to help us. Again, I think in the state and the federal government, and it's not there.



20:56

The other side of that number when we said 55 to 60% of the AIDS victims in this country are gay, that leaves 45% who are not and it's real close to half folks, it's we're almost at 5050. And for your chances are if you're a person with AIDS of being being a straight person, I want to I still haven't gotten an answer to the question I'm asking or the answer the question I think I'm asking, and therefore I'm obviously not asking the right question. Oh, what is the city of Houston? What is the political infrastructure of Houston of the city of Houston health department? What about the community health clinics? Do they have anything for? And though they serve the sort of middle to lower indigent people, people who can't afford private physicians, but it but have the time to sit all day and wait for a measles shot can get it for free at the city health clinics? Are they doing anything to for for people with AIDS? Is there no,



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the county has just opened up the Thomas Street Clinic? Okay.



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And And where's the AIDS hospital that



22:01

was here is no longer here?



22:03

Yes. And that was a private hospital, the one on the north freeway, right? And don't tell me that wasn't enough business to support it. It wasn't enough money to support it. And in other words, there's



22:13

plenty of business not enough money.



22:15

Unfortunately, being in the police department and dealing with the city every day. This is the same problem that the federal government has with AIDS, same problem the state has, nobody wants to talk about it. If we don't talk about it, it'll go away. And we know that's not true. That's it's only because of programs like this, and again, has been programming on KPFT that brings these issues out movies like longtime companion that's going to open this weekend at the Greenway theater, the names project film, tales, Tales from the quilt is that right? Yes, common threads Tales from the quilt that just won an Academy Award. I mean, people are beginning to respond now. But it's as the activist in the audience listening to President Bush said, Where have you been all this time? We've been waiting or is our country been?



23:03

Well, do you think there's an element of what what we in the environmental community called nimet which is not in my elected term? Everybody? Everybody the public officials are gonna sit here and think if I just lay low I'll get out of office before this blows up in my face. Sure. And



23:22

fortunately, we we stay on after hours if it were young Republicans dying, maybe things would have been different instead of gay and lesbian people



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but Young Republicans are dying



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that's starting to die now.



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And you know, those are the people who you know when God forbid, this should happen, but some member of a cabinet officials family comes up positive. There you go. Maybe we'll see a difference. We're out of time. We're out of time. Good heavens. It must be three o'clock. This is KPFT Houston, you're listening to 123 My name is Jane Scheidler



23:56

od original talk on the earth lady coming back.



23:59

I've maybe maybe there were rumors to that effect. And the ineffable Buddy Johnson without whom I wouldn't be here and Mike Leone Carver was AND ERNIE He's here in spirit but his actually in some awful place like St. Louis or Dallas or in the air somewhere. But here in spirit,



24:21

and stay tuned for fresh air with Terry Gross coming up next live right here on 90.1 FM KPFT. I forgot where we were. Que PFT Houston. And if you get a chance, check out longtime companion starting this Friday at the Greenway three theaters. Right. Right. Thanks, Jane. This has been fun.



24:38

Thanks for listening everybody have a good day?



24:57

APFT Houston



25:44

From why why in Philadelphia? I'm Terry Gross and this is fresh air



25:57

on this edition of fresh air, we meet to talk