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SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper



00:01

language or images have a frank or sensitive nature that may be considered objectionable by some listener discretion is advised?



01:04

Oh



Jimmy Carper 01:04

yes, you tuned into after hours, we're radio with attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of after hours is ready to bring you news interviews, dialogue and music geared for gay lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their friends. Hear it after hours. We may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closet. That means standing up for yourself taking responsibility for your own life and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of a job or frame of mind. That's okay, we're here for you too. So sit back, relax and enjoy this week's edition of Asheville hour.



02:30

Hello, he



02:30

said and welcome to after hours. We're radio with attitude heard every Saturday night at midnight, right here on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station we are the sound of Texas I'm Jimmy Carter and with me tonight is



02:50

Sarah ain't graciously submitting to no husband diploma. How are you? Get your girl Oh, hello. All you conservative path is in all of you who think you're going to graciously submit the husband. Right on good luck. Not me, baby. Oh, I've been we've been having fun at work with that. It's interesting. I have yet to meet a woman who actually worked for living who thinks that comment makes any sense. Yes. graciously. You one must graciously submit to their husband header details. Alright, great. So I'm not in this like I don't even submit to mind. Well, I submit the mind but she's not a husband. And that's a little bit of a different set of just different situation. We have a this is I have really been excited about this show. Oh, yeah. I've really been excited about this. Let me let me say first of all, that tonight, this we're going to be doing a show about Stonewall. Now people will say well, hey, you know, we we know all the race to know about Stonewall. What's one more Stonewall program? Well actually if there are quite a few things. Our guest untaped tonight is Sylvia Rivera. Now that name doesn't ring a bell to many of you. When we tell you that Sylvia Rivera was one of the main movers and shakers that actually fostered Stonewall. She was there when it happened he was there has been widely credited with being one of the people who actually threw the first stone it stonewalled. Although she denies that this is an art. This is a live account with a genuine historical figure that I was lucky enough. I've got nearly an hour on tape with her. Naturally I didn't bring in an entire hour. I tried to use the best excerpts of it. But what a fascinating person and she talks a good deal about the transgender involvement in Stonewall. Oh yes. makes many different kinds meant about it. So be very interesting figure was a street person 11 Street 11 Why did 11 Yeah, I told you he talked about that one of the excerpt how well she's one year older than I am. She was born on July 2 1951. That was born July 12 52. She sounds much older. Because Sylvia has had some problems with drug addiction in some crack his his apparently affected some of her speech. Having said that,



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I mean being homeless too, for you know, that kind of has a bit of stress.



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Up until a few years ago she was living on appeared. And yeah, very interesting woman. It makes no difference whether you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, on whatever however you quote, you classify yourself. This is really going to be a very unique and interesting program this evening, about Stonewall and about us as a community. I don't care how you label yourself. This is definitely a community program tonight, you also brought in something that I pulled off the internet. And this was from a 1987 issue of the advocate in an includes an eyewitness account, from someone inside the Stonewall bar as to what was actually happening during the riot. Wow. Very, very interesting stuff, things that I thought I knew I really got debunked. And one of the things most interesting Sylvia Rivera repeated several times, that the Stonewall bar was not a drag bar. I didn't know that. I did not know that either. In fact, I actually asked her at one point said, Well, how did it get that reputation? And she said, No, she said the Stonewall was for white, upper middle class males.



06:55

Well, you know, a lot of bars were because that's where the money was,



06:58

well, drag queens were not even allowed in. You had to be an order to get be a drag queen and get into the bar. You had to be well known. You had to be what she calls any elite. Queen. Oh, are you we're not even allowed in bar. So in fact, the night the Stonewall Riots took place, it was only her second time there. Oh, no kidding. Yeah. Very interesting. She talks about about how it happened. But it was just happenstance that they were there the night this occurred. Wow. One very interesting account. She didn't tell me this. I pulled this off the internet. One of the questions that has been in my mind for years what sparked it? And it seems that up until the point that up until the night of Stonewall, it was fairly well known that the mafia owned most of the gay bars. Oh, yes. And Stonewall bar was certainly no exception. And it actually been burned out previously. In what happens the mafia came in, simply put new paint over the burned out sections and reopened the door. Sounds about right. It was not exactly a high class join. No. And what happened? What happened was usually when they would get raided and Soviet says they would rate it about once a week, or was it that often because they're often Yeah, and for parents, sometimes more apparently. They thought that the police were coming in to collect their payoff, right. And they were very surprised to find out and she said, typically, when they get ready, everybody would simply run around the corner and wait until the police left. And then the mafia would come back with some chain cutters, open the doors, bring back the water down booze and restart the party. But this particular night, they hung around. And they decided to stay. And it started with a tale of coins. They began to throw money, coins, dimes, pennies, and it was intended to be an insult as a please about their bribes.



08:50

Ah,



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that makes sense. Yeah, that makes sense. Because I always wondered, what was the impetus what



08:57

I mean what really started it? Well, the end there's a there's a lot



09:01

because I mean, the patrons wouldn't care about the payoffs No,



09:04

no, in what at the actual incident that started the riot is in some dispute. But in three different accounts that I read. There was a wonderful I loved vision of this. Apparently they were roughing up some of the Queens as they were taking them in from inside of the packet caddy wagon. They saw this weld stocking leg in a high heel, come out and shove this cop in the chest and knock him off the back of the paddy wagon. And that incident was enough to spark it. Once hell broke loose honey, there was no stopping it apparently there was there was some anger and rage. It was the night that was the the night of Judy Guerlain death. Flags were flying the funeral of her funeral. Yes, flags were flying in half staff within the Christopher Street. So there was some anger and some frustration. It all just kind of came came together. Not to mention it was the 60s and you'll hear Sarah Serbia talking about that she had been involved with the anti war movement. Very, very interesting stuff. If you think it's you, you've seen all the race to see if Stonewall, you've heard all the raise to hear. I invite you to stick around. We're gonna have special music. We have very interesting interviews. We'll pull things off of the internet. This is it. This is a gay, I didn't want to use that. This is a community pride yesterday. Yesterday. It really is no matter where you are on community tonight. You don't enjoy this program. And you just don't enjoy your own history and heritage because that's what this is about.



10:36

That's pretty much it. Yeah. Also, we got some little tidbits that we want to do here. I read an article about Juneteenth and the origins of Juneteenth. I knew most of it, but I didn't know a lot of the details. Okay. That's coming up next week. And I want to talk about



10:57

the Juneteenth Blues Festival, I believe is this past this weekend. Excellent. And maybe



11:01

a little touch briefly on what Pat Robertson is doing these days. Yeah, and that came about because of I think, Rob Todd, you know,



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this pat robertson thing this is pretty hilarious. Let me see if I understand this. Orlando, Florida, which no matter what, right would sit in the middle of a hurricane cap anyway, because it's in Central Florida. Gee, pat robertson thinks that Orlando was going to be destroyed by what a plague of locusts and meteorite Oh, get into? Oh, honey, you know, I poor Pat. I think he's going around the bed. I think this guy was almost a president. That's kind of scary. That's bearish. Yeah. It's real scary. Again, right. And this person and our buddy Rob cod is up to no good again. Yeah,



11:14



11:54

yeah. Yeah, buddy.



11:58

Let's say bigger. There's more like the biggest looked it up in the dictionary. So we'll be talking



12:05

about Todd's name. Next picture. That's fine. Sounds good to me. But first, we've got some brand new music thanks to Katrina rose.



12:16

Hello, Katrina. Thank you, Katrina. She's sitting here with a great big smile, but that doesn't translate and radio. Tell us about this person.



12:24

Okay, um, some of you may have heard of a transsexual who won the European? Well, they call it the Eurovision Song Contest. Her name is? Well, it's spelled Dana. But Jimmy tells me it's pronounced Donna. Donna International. And she's apparently been very popular in Israel, which is the country she represented in the contest. She's very popular among real people there but she doesn't she's about as popular with the Israeli religious right as she would be with the religious right in this country.



13:02

Yeah, or even less so.



13:05

Yeah, less. So. Some of the the really, really radical orthodox rabbis are quoting her are being quoted as saying, TS is our transsexualism is worse than sodomy. And



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actually, I think sodomy is pretty damn good.



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And I saw some articles about her. Actually, before she won the contest. She was quoted as

saying she genuinely believes that some of those radicals in Israel will actually try to kill her. But oddly enough, I've seen some stories that the current government in Israel which is actually right wing, they're actually rather proud of the fact that she won this contest because

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it it is a big deal. It's a big deal in Europe, the

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mean that the World Cup soccer tournaments going on right now. But according to some things I've read this Eurovision Contest is almost second only to that. Wow. I mean, that's pretty much what gave Abba their start. Okay, they weren't kidding. Yeah, they won the contest I believe in that's either 73 or 70. And they're one of the few acts to have won that contest that ever actually had a career afterwards.

14:22

It's sort of like the Academy Award.

14:24

Well, in Europe, there's it's there's many jokes called basically the curse of Eurovision and it's a pretty good curse. I was actually rooting for her to. Yeah, it was funny. I was actually rooting for Dana to lose exactly good. Well, she actually comes in second. She might have a career. But she has had a pretty good career so far, at least as far as bootleg sales of her recordings. The CD that I've managed to get from a dealer of Hebrew music. Apparently this has sold for I've million copies of bootleg cassettes in Egypt of all places. And apparently the right wing in Egypt doesn't think too highly of her either. She's considered subversive.

15:10

However the populace love her. Yeah.

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Real people love her. I don't consider religious right to be people at all. The song I don't know if it's actually hit single or anything, but I think it's the best song on the on the desk. It's called Let's kiss. However,

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it's all in Hebrew, right?



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Except for the actual title. That's good as it is mostly in Hebrew. It's kind of a I can the song is kind of equal parts. Aba you can have she she's apparently very fond of ABA. Because I understand that the song she won the Eurovision Song Contest with is was very very Abba asked this song it's kind of equal parts Abba, general Eurotrash, disco and of course the broke



15:57

okay, and you're listening to it on after hours queer radio with attitude right here on KPFT and ke O 's College Station, we are the sound of Texas



16:18

you're right, it's Apple mixed with klezmer music.



16:21

This is cool stuff.



Jimmy Carper 16:23

Let's move being folk music. We played the cosmetics before Sarah was saying I thought this is the first time we've ever played any free music and I said no. There we go first Hebrew, Hebrew, transsexual music. That's funny stuff, isn't it?



16:41

They're actually in Egypt. There is a, a transsexual, who is considered quite a superstar cabaret style superstar in Egypt, in the fundamentalists in Egypt. The the Arab fundamentalists, of course, absolutely loathe her. But they leave her alone because she's such a superstar. They're afraid to touch her. Wow. So it's interesting. There's different cultures. Well, thank you, Katrina. Yes, thank you. That was I've been doing I've



Jimmy Carper 17:09

been bringing about Donna and I haven't been able to find her music anywhere. But I know that computer whiz that you are Yes. So I'm wondering if my friend JD Doyle can do the same because he you know, we I do the reading and he does that computer to keep up with Queer music. So



17:28

there are a lot of



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microphones yeah,



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there's there's already several fan oriented websites about nama. Several of them have links to a couple of couple of as, I guess stores and or internet services where you can buy her music. She has, I think two other CDs out already. And one other one coming so



17:56

okay. That's Donna International.



18:00

Very interesting stuff. Yes, it is. I like tune into the show and you can learn a lot.



18:05

And as a matter of fact, there's something above your head. Yeah, I heard Ray talk about Friday night on the prison program. It's it's a kind of an appreciation plaque that the prison program received from its from some folks from



18:24

I'd says did its I'm trying to read this. It's from run up to stand up to read it. Yeah. What's the what's it say? Okay, KPFT gets from Cape for KPFT prison program. On load, right and Boulevard and it says prison writes on it. And it's a it's a plaque for



18:46

regular prison program. And what it is it's a beautifully lacquered plaque with ModPodge



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beautiful photograph of downtown's use Yes, yeah. Yeah. Very nice. Really, really



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nice. I remember him saying who did it but I forgot the man's name.



19:04

If anybody would like give us or award our name is Stevenson. Pruitt. In this day, again,



19:17

we have lots of fans, that that are people that are incarcerated right now. And we get we get quite a few letters from folks we do. We do another factor I correspond with a couple of folks do I do I do it? You know, we send cards to each other. It's not anything, you know, deep, but but it's just nice to be remembered. And it's fun to get stuff in the mail.



19:40

Yeah. Well, that's what we've talked about for months power radio, being able to go through prison walls and all that sort of that. I wanted to talk about a book for a minute. First of all, I want to thank folks that Half Price Books, because I really knew what needed a copy of Stonewall by Martin Guberman and didn't have 20 bucks. Oh so I went down to Half Price Books and said gee, can you get me a copy of this? They actually ordered about 10 copies and by golly got them in in no time flat. No kidding.



20:09

Nice folks think they have fairly are Half Price Books here on Hyde Park and park and walk Yeah. catty corner from the post office and, and that's a huge and great gay section,



20:23

right because Sylvia Rivera is so prominently featured in this book I wanted to get and I ran across a chant that was used during the Stonewall riots, which I thought was wonderful. We are the Stonewall girls, we wear our hair and curls. We wear no underwear, we show our pubic hair. We wear our dungarees above our new ladies.



20:44

Do you know how you know the music that goes to that? Oh, let me see. Let me I'm gonna have to have the words.



20:52

We are the stonework girls, we wear our hair when we were no underwear. We show our pubic hair all right



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Michelle came running in say oh, it's gonna get scared. Oh, and she was so disappointed. Oh, Kirk usually sings the news.



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Okay, Walter Winchell wouldn't roll over I just thought I ran across this chat and I thought God this is wonderful. I had no idea there was music that went with Oh yeah. Should have known if you're a queen's involved with music somewhere



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on this half hour tape that I have remembering stonewalled, one of the interviewees talks about that.



21:45

Oh, how interesting. And I learned something new all the time. I do there is a this book. Anyway, I started talking about the book. It's called Stonewall by Martin Duberman. Now there's some controversy about the accuracy of this book.



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Well, you know, there's accurate there's controversy about accuracy accuracy in anything historical



22:06

prepare really about Stonewall because Stonewall was in the eye of the beholder everybody has their own truth about history. One thing I learned Jimmy that I didn't know is that there are apparently a lot of conservative gays. They they call them the 50s Good girls the mastering society. Well, now they're even more conservative that who actually who actually that's pretty damn concerned. They actually held some of the rioters for the police's they could be arrested. No, why didn't know that? Yeah. Yeah, I was really shocked to find that out. And apparently, the Fire Island crowd, you know? Yes. The yuppies, the yuppies of the day, oh, actually thought that Stonewall was a waste of time and probably good idea. kkOma. Stonewall anyway, because it

was just a dope drop in a place for drag queen, which of course at that time was lower than what's in the bottom of the ocean, you guys. Very interesting. I was not aware of that kind of animosity within the community. And so I've got quite an education.



23:02

To this day, there's a certain there's a certain group in New York that looks down their noses at the pride parade as an embarrassment.



23:11

And he couldn't lie. Anyway, I would, I would recommend this book, I Stonewall by Martin Duberman. It there are some parts of the book that I thought were sort of controversial, but by and large, he does a very good job of documenting this. And he does the book in a very interesting fashion. He follows six or eight people and follows the events of Stonewall through the six or eight people who were there. Oh, wow. We're one of those is our guest tonight. Sylvia Rivera, but very interesting way of going about it. And he talks about the events that led up to it. He talks about how I did not realize that gay bars were illegal in New York at the time. I was always under the impression that Stonewall was raided because it was a gay bar and the Axi fished and actually that's not true. gay bars were illegal. I didn't know that. I didn't know that either. The Manichean society actually had one that oh, the Stonewall was actually rated in this. There's some some disagreement about this, but he's actually rated because among other things, he had numerous doping violations. And it was in fact a dope drop and a haven for prostitutes. So and the police contingent, it still won't be consisted of eight people. Oh,



24:28

they didn't they didn't even they didn't need more than that.



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No. Now one of the inspectors his name was Inspector Seymour pine. Mr. Pie he gets quoted in the book. He thought it was just another bag. Another fan. Great. Yeah. He was interviewed



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in the remembering stone wall too. And you know, yeah, he comes from it from a straight perspective. And you know, this is the way things were when when you went to write a bar you only needed a couple of guys because, you know, you walked in you said okay, everybody stand up against the wall and everybody stood up against the wall. They did exactly what you said everybody was sheep.



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44.07

I Gotta tell this I want I don't usually like to read stuff. But there's one story in here that I cannot I just can't resist. And I have a personal reason for this as one of the one of the anti war resistors. In the 60s, I was also a conscientious objector. And I don't know how many folks know what that was like in that era. But the way that worked was at the time that you went down to register for the draft, you had to state at that time you were a conscientious objector. Right. Okay. What happened in my case, was I got drafted. Now I'm only five foot two. So I was way too short on military to start with. But there was a saying in those days, they used to tell a story about a guy who goes into the military doctor's office, and Doctor points to the chair and says, sit out, and he does the doctor says you're in. The food guy says, Wait a minute, you didn't check my heart or lungs or anything. Doctor says, Listen, stupid. You saw the chair. You heard what I said you did it you're in. And that's just about what it was like during the Vietnam War era. They were taking every penny. Okay. And so what would happen was

26:00

what the some of the big problems was, if you were in college, you kind of had the deferment as long as you were in college. And so they were a lot of people were going to college and so they were having trouble getting

26:11

folks. Well, my my department had been revoked, because well, no, what had happened is they had revoked deferment. They've basically done away with them. Well, yeah, they did hold the firm and salt together said, okay, okay, I'm a little bit older than you. Okay. So, so Okay. Earlier, I had to go to Whitehall Street in New York City. Oh, yeah, I know where that is. Okay. It's hard to it's hard to explain this. But what would happen was, you would have to go through the physical and the whole process. And then when it came time, they would you were supposed to step forward and be administered the oath of being a member of the armed forces. And if you were a conscientious objector, you simply refused to step forward right now I say simply because you have to understand you're talking about a room of 500 people in your life will be the only person who does not step forward. Yeah. Okay. Now, that's background. Well, peer pressure, oh, a little peer pressure. Sylvia Rivera apparently got drafted.

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The other other thing is that the whole era was one of saying no, for the first time. And

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actually that contributed to Stonewall. Yeah, it really contributed. nd I Abbie Hoffman had been in town just a few weeks earlier, had been rabble rousing, which is like he often did that was

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it was a it was an era of questioning this right. Why should I do this? The



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whole is a whole thing in the 60s If you were one of the protesters was question everything, everything.



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Yeah. Except nothing. Because for decades before that, it was anything was just accepted. So



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this story has to do with Sylvia Rivera, who got drafted. Now if you can imagine that, okay. No, I can't. So Sylvia has decided she ain't going into army honey. She's, I ain't gonna know. And she's put it in the book is saying, I know how to use a gun. I could blow them wet right off this continent. She said, but I'm not going over there and fight for something when I don't know what it's for. Okay. So she makes up her mind. And she appears at the draft board in full drag through high heels, miniskirt, long red nails, the whole the whole mix here. That ought to do it. So but she's a little bit frayed because she's heard rumors that even queens were drafted to do clerical work. Now, I've never heard that before. I don't know if that's true or not, but okay, so she arrives at the draft board and full regalia. And she's directed to a desk and where two sergeants are sitting, one male, one female, and the female a sergeant assumed new arrival being Sophia was in her jurisdiction and says, women who are enlisting, go to that side of the room. And so he says, but I'm one of the boys. My name is Ray Ray Rivera. So now it's the turn of the male surgeon. And he's either nearsighted or stupid. I don't know which but he says to her, no, no, you heard what she said, you go to that side of the room. So Soviet says, the next thing I know I'm on a bus with a bitches with no hair, and no nails, and we're being shipped to Newark base. He's just finally this Bush, who looks much poorer than I got, walks over to her and says to Sylvia says to her, I am not a woman. I am one of the boys. So at the induction center, they took Sylvia directly to the psychiatrist in office, and here's their exchange to psychiatrists, Sister, what's your name? Sophie says, Which one darling? Your male name? Oh, that Ray, Jose Christian Rivera. aliased Miss Sylvia Lee Rivera. Is there a problem with your sexuality? Is there I don't know. I know I like man. I know. like to wear dresses. But I don't know there's any problem with that. You have a problem where the psychiatrist frowns. So so we knew right away she's on the right track here. And she says, Well, I got papers right here from when I was in the hospital, or Dr. Simonton paper says, I'm a homosexual? Is that what you mean by a problem? So without another word, the psychiatrist stamped homosexual and bright, three inch red letters on souviens induction notes. And Silvia figured what the hell she's one says, well, but I have no money to get home. How am I gonna get home? And do you know she got the army to drive her back home? No Sure did. Curious you had balls, I mean, honey. And I thought this girl and I had so much in common under different circumstances. She and I could have been sisters, you know, when I would happen with me is that since I refused to step forward, they would come around and they were trying to browbeat you into going and finally said, No, I said it was a country subject from start, I'm not going well, we ended up in court. No. And they actually sat there and called my minister a liar. And finally, the judge says, how tall are you? I said, I'm five foot two. And she turns to the recruiter and say, well, aren't they supposed to be minimum of five foot six to be in the military? They said, Well, yes. But we

measured her and she's five, six, and the judge says No way. So in the end, they never did rule on the merits of my being a conscientious objector. I was just too damn sure. That's interesting. Those were very bizarre days. It turns out a year many years later, I sued under the Freedom of Information Act. I want to know how it was that I got drafted in the first place. Because at that time, they were having a lottery in mind number came up close to the bottom. Oh, come to find out when Richard Nixon became president, he had ordered the draft board to go out in intentionally higher Draft Draft Draft resistors. And since I had been arrested 45 times in anti war activities, I had a record deal made them boss made it possible for them to draft me. And as it turns out, I wasn't the only one. Stephen Stills, among other people from Crosby, Stills Nash got drafted exactly the same way. Interesting, just about a past that. So it tells you something about the background of Stonewall. We're Sylvia Rivera is coming from on this as we go to the interview with later on, what else he got there. Oh,



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did you want to go through that?



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You already do that? Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Now, this first segment runs about 25 minutes. And typically, I don't like to let segments run that long. But this one is an exception. Very rarely on this program. Have we done an interview that is compelling? Is that a we have done in? I've been very proud to do to do interviews with people who are celebrities. I've done interviews with people who are entertaining. I've done interviews with people who are educational, but never have I done an interview with someone that was so compelling that I lost track of the time. The things that Sylvia Rivera has to say are things we've said on this show for years. But now we get to hear it from the person who just recently won the award from the American boys. As the mother of the transgender rights movement. I like that, and she deserves it. So without any further ado, this is Sylvia Rivera, actually, to get you in the mood.



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I've got a couple of pieces of music Oh, go for it. So this is kind of these two pieces of music will kind of set the mood for what it was like back in 1969.



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When a you history is really quite amazing to me. I have said I mentioned to you earlier that I really wanted to, to start by talking about what life was like for you before Stonewall. And if you would, why don't we start talking about that a little bit. I know I do a lot of research, for example, about the Manichean Society of New York City. I guess in the early days they were really one of the big movers and the shakers one thing but yes,



34:19

the document was it was one of the big underground comic publications without rights David

the management side it was one of the big underground guys alterations without prior to David Raesha. I was never really involved that gives a lot of credit to a What about a third of our community which is the booster.



34:47

Booster who was you? For years worked with benches to sizes and through a lot of drag balls to raise a lot of money. for the man to the side is paired with one year, she was honored because they didn't believe in honoring people who they were. She was honored. The Man of the Year. The LEA boosts the accuracy. First, no. Queen organization here in New York and it's called the queen. Liberation



35:34

right. Now what year was that? That were



35:40

the



35:42

68. So in 68, we had the Queen's liberation movement. Now see, I've never even heard of that.



35:48

Uh, well, we've been around for a while. They used to walk big red balls and whatnot in New York. She was one of the partners, you know, part of the people that reached out to our community has for drag queens transcend the transmit side for whatnot. And she's still learning from these models, Robin, and she's been around for a while. And what people fail to realize is that as much as our brothers and sisters, but what I call trace, trace, Main Street, Main Street viewer. Now, they forget that Lee Brewster put up most of the money for the first, gators. ERATION March