

SUBJECT: You know, when we're pushing legislation again on a federal level, I'm going to push for gender identity. I'm going to push for transgenders, whether they like it or not, to the politicians. So to hear Elizabeth Birch tell me that face to face, whether those things are actually followed through upon or whether they were just comments in the heat of hearing, hearing a good talk about it, we'll see in the future. But that was really promising to hear that come out of her mouth. Because that was the first time that I had heard someone from HRC tell me that. So there's-- there's hope there.

You know, but one thing I like about the National Transgender Advocacy Coalition, and why I think it's a great national organization and one that transgenders right now can really believe in and to get part is, the fact that they're not kowtowing to the politicians. They're not waiting for all the sexual orientation stuff to go through first before they get their rights. They want rights for everybody. And I think that their impacts right on the line where we're most of the majority of transgenders want to go with transgenders rights and--

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: And really it's representative of the very folks who started it. A lot of it kind of came about because of, I guess, the opinions that people were not happy with what we had at the moment, with the organization that was representing us. And they just got tired of it. They wanted someone that was actually going to stand up and hold the feet to the fire. And when NTAC started, admittedly we had a lot of firebrands and we had the folks that were screaming bloody murder, and wanting scalps and the whole bit.

But we toned down the rhetoric quite a bit. Now it's basically just kind of settling in and keeping consistent with the message. We work with everyone and there's not really the rhetoric level that there once was. But again, it's still pretty much keeping everyone honest. And that's the prime reason that we're here is to keep this thing honest, and to keep this thing moving, and to make sure that we don't have the stagnation or that people get the wrong impression that, well the community's given up. They've gone away.

And that's one of the reasons why we have to lobby every year. I'm so afraid of if we do get to the point where they realize that, well, they haven't come around this particular session, then they're going to take that as victory on their part, the legislators.

They will take this that we've basically been worn down and we've given up, and we cannot give up. No matter how few of us we have going up there or how many of us, we have to make sure and have that presence every year to let them know that this isn't stopping.

SUBJECT: And it's not just about employment and housing too. I mean, the transgender community has so far to go, in my opinion, with health care issues too. We participated in Razzle Dazzle, which is a street party that we have here in Dallas on to benefit AIDS charities. And one of the educational things that I was trying to present to the community up here was that the AIDS percentage, the HIV percentage for transgenders is higher than most all other minority communities, and there's not enough being done about it.

We've got these AIDS-- these AIDS organizations that have some great outreaches to the community, to the Hispanic community, to the Black community, to the gay and lesbian community, but they're not reaching out enough to the transgender community. The transgender community has such a high rate of homelessness, prostitution, HIV.

There's so little HIV statistics about transgenders that it's really scary, but from what I found out, it can be anywhere from 25% to 35% across the nation, averaging somewhere around 30%. And when people hear this, they're shocked, and they should be, and they should be. And we've got to do something about that.

We live in a society, in a capitalist society that has a health care system that doesn't work for transgender people because transgendered people, especially transsexuals, you know, that are trying to-- that need to transition, their doctors are telling them that they need, that it's medically necessary for them to have procedures, they can't afford to have those procedures. The HMOs aren't covering transsexual surgeries. The government doesn't want to cover transsexual surgeries.

There's countries out there that are covering it, that have health care systems that are covering it, and we don't. And here we've got transsexual people, when I tell I've spent over \$20,000 on hair removal, they can't believe it. That's just on hair removal, let alone anything else. You know.

VANESSA And there's a lot of expense that comes.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: There sure is. Being a transsexual is one of the biggest expenses because it all comes out of pocket, out of the transsexual. Because the health companies, the big health care companies, don't cover it. They consider transsexual-- necessary transsexual surgery all cosmetic surgery, and we all know that the majority of psychiatrists and psychologists within education will tell you that these are necessary treatments that fall in line.

And they don't cover anything, not even the surgery. So I think that's something that we have to change and we have to create awareness about. We have to start taking care of the transgender community and people with HIV, and homelessness. There's a lot of transgenders that are out there prostituting so they can pay for their surgeries.

VANESSA That's one of the reasons why our big push has always been employment, non-discrimination. The fact is when **EDWARDS-** someone has the name change, even if you are able to blend, in other words, not be picked out by folks as being **FOSTER:** obviously transsexual, the fact is we're in the information era. And I had this myself at one of the jobs. They did a rather innocuous little credit check, and that's all it took.

Everything based off the Social Security numbers. And once they started doing a little background check, all of a sudden they noticed two different names on there, one distinctly female and one distinctly male. And it was either A, credit fraud, or B, something else.

And once they realized it was something else, well, I stayed there until the end of my three month probationary period, and at the end of that, they decided to hire someone else off the street rather than to keep me, even though I'd gotten them through the IPO, the initial public offering there.

SUBJECT: And one of the statistics that I had read recently was that 37%-- I believe it was 37% of transgenders have experienced some type of employment or employment-related discrimination. That's incredible.

VANESSA It's still ongoing for me.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

[CHUCKLES]

JIMMY CARPER: I'm surprised it's not higher, to tell you the truth. I'm surprised it's not higher.

VANESSA I am too. And in fact, if anything, I think maybe the numbers may be lower because a number of transgenders
EDWARDS- basically don't even get to make it into the workplace.
FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: So maybe that's it.

VANESSA And that's another issue that's really, it's haunted me for quite some time. When I started transitioning myself, in
EDWARDS- fact, I actually I wasn't even ready to transition. I had just begun the hormones. And five months later, it was
FOSTER: rather obvious there were changes in my body. I had no name and gender change. I was in no position at that time, in fact, emotionally even to transition, but my body was already there.

And the employer decided to get me out. And once I was out, it was 21 and 1/2 months before I found anything. I literally went through the entire year of 1997 and I've still got my little Social Security reporting form where they give you your annual wage based on your social-- well, based on their recommendation for Social Security purposes.

And I've got a great big goose egg there in 1997. And I went from, like, 35,000 to 15,000 in 1996. And if that's not a visual example of what we go through in transition, then I don't know what is.

SUBJECT: And I'd say that's exactly-- that's exactly why we need advocacy to these big corporations. We live in a country, a capitalist society, that is dominated by big business and big companies that are making all the rules instead of people. And when you have that, you have some great companies out there that have sexual orientation listed in their nondiscrimination statements, but they don't include gender identity. And so we need to start with some of those companies and ask them to go that extra mile and include transgenders too.

VANESSA And sometimes they just need that little incentive. And in Dallas now, of course, they do have an incentive to do so as the ordinance is now passed. I don't know exactly how quickly they will all be on board with this. Obviously, it takes some time to get the information to trickle down and for folks to finally get on board with this.

But the fact is that a lot of the corporations right now take a look at it and to them, they see a no gain on their part by hiring anyone from the GLBT community, and especially the T community because of in some cases the restroom issues, and in other cases, just people--

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, that damn restroom issue. You know, it always pops up. It's like, haven't these people watched Ally McBeal?

VANESSA Obviously not. And that's the one thing--
EDWARDS-
FOSTER:

SUBJECT: I haven't used a male restroom since early 1997, and I still have a penis. So I mean, what's-- and you know what? If people are minding their own business when they're doing their business, then what does it really matter?

JIMMY CARPER: It doesn't matter.

SUBJECT: Most restrooms have private stalls. If you're not looking under somebody's stall why they're going to the bathroom, what difference does it make?

JIMMY CARPER: And if they're looking under the stall, then somebody needs to do something with that person.

VANESSA Honestly.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: And some of these companies, their answer to these restroom problems are, oh, well, let's make them use this unisexual-- unisexual restroom that's 10 miles away. Well, that's just like segregation. That's like, oh, well--

VANESSA Exactly, it's separate but equal. We might as well go back to Jim Crow.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: And it didn't work with in the '50s and '60s when colored people when they had colored restrooms, and colored water fountains. And it didn't work then and it doesn't work now, and it's not equal, it's not.

VANESSA Well, eventually they will get around to the recognition of it, but unfortunately, they don't have the examples

EDWARDS- there in the workplace. And that is I guess probably the most public venue where people have to come in contact with folks from other cultures. And that usually is I guess the firing ground.

If you're out shopping, you may see them, but you don't have to interact with them. When you're at home, you don't have to interact with them. When they're your neighbors, you don't necessarily have to interact with them. But when you're in the workplace--

JIMMY CARPER: You do.

VANESSA There's an excellent chance you're going to interact with them and that's where the rubber hits the road. And

EDWARDS- that's why the workplace seems to be the big sticking point for a lot of folks because a lot of folks just really want to avoid having to come into contact with us. And I don't know necessarily that it's hatred born as much as just a lot of folks are very uncomfortable and don't know what to do. They're awkward about it.

SUBJECT: Because [INAUDIBLE] some people, here's an example of, OK, you know, you've got a female restroom, you know. And you know, here's another example of not just a trans-- necessarily a transsexual who has to face restroom issues.

You've got perhaps a gender variant, a lesbian woman that identifies as a Butch, and she likes being a little bit gender variant. And maybe she looks a little more male to society, but you know, she's still comfortable with her female parts and identifies as a woman, but just as a gender variant.

And when she goes into the female restroom, she's going to get looks too. She's-- people might feel uncomfortable about that. Transgenders might feel uncomfortable about using the restroom with people that are full of hate, but we have to let them use the restroom too. That's just the bottom line that everybody has to go to the bathroom with dignity and let people do what they need to do. What's the big deal?

VANESSA And a lot of these are the exact same excuses that they used back before 1963, that before the Civil rights were enacted. It was just--

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: And you know, there was this-- Minnesota-- I believe it's Minnesota is one of the only states that has that gender identity law.

VANESSA Yeah, Rhode Island now too.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh really?

VANESSA Rhode Island is specific.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh. Oh, great.

SUBJECT: Well, anyway, they had one case up there, and I'm sure you know about it. But it's that library case, that librarian was--

VANESSA [INAUDIBLE] Davis.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: Yeah, was a transsexual. And she transitioned, and they let her use the female restroom, and told the lady that was objecting to it that she could use the unisex restroom.

[LAUGHTER]

Basically she could use the special restroom. She was arguing on religious grounds, you know, that [? they could use ?] same restroom with her. Well, my-- I mean, my religious beliefs might not want me to use the restroom with people that hate either. But hey, it's about people being able to use the restroom. And people want to-- the problem is people want to push some of their twisted religious values on other people.

And not to get into a debate about Christianity, or religion, or anything like that, but the fact is we have freedom of religion in this country. And that means the freedom to choose religion. And unfortunately, people want to push those religious views as an excuse to discriminate against transgenders.

VANESSA [INAUDIBLE] need to--

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: [? I need to ?] jump in here and remind folks that they are listening to "After Hours-- Queer Radio With Attitude" on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station. And one thing I want to add to this as a non-T.

VANESSA Honorary T.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Honorary T. OK. I accept. That there's been one sign that I have seen in Gay Pride parades, with the transgender group, and actually wherever Phyllis is, it's one sign that has made the most sense, and really drove it home to me was that simple little sign that says--

VANESSA Yield .

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY CARPER: That says, "transgendered and we vote."

VANESSA Yes.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: That's got to get people's attention, especially legislators.

VANESSA And that's one of the things that I think a lot of folks don't consider is that we aren't part of the process, that we

EDWARDS- don't vote, that we don't really matter in this.

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: And it's another thing that people don't consider is that transgenders are part of the heterosexual community. Some are gay, some are lesbian, some are bisexual. And the whole, that broad term transgender, includes so many more people than what they think. There are so many people that benefit.

We all benefit from passing legislation that enables us to express our gender orientation equally. We all benefit from it, whether it's the ability to wear the haircut that we want, to have the clothing that express the-- you know, wear the clothing that matches our gender expression.

I remember before I transitioned just being what society considered a gender variant male wearing earrings or a touch of eyeliner in the workplace. I worked at-- for this restaurant chain at the time. And you know, I was told, well, you're a guy, you can't wear earrings. And my response to that was, isn't that sexist?

VANESSA [LAUGHS]

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: And the supervisor was a regional supervisor and was very well respected in that organization. He looked at me and said, you know what, you're right, it is. But I have to enforce it. So you know-- and I kept on pushing the limits. You know, I've always been one of those people that pushed the limits, you know, that did things even though people told me not to. You can't do this, you can't do that. Oh--

VANESSA Just to touch on what you had mentioned a little bit earlier regarding gender difference. Is this the argument you used in getting gender identity included in the Dallas ordinance? Can you give me some background as to how you managed to get that in there, especially so late in the effort?

SUBJECT: Well, there were a couple of council members, and John Loza, who I talked to also at that Equality ExxonMobil rally, telling me from the beginning he was wanting to include transgender. They wanted to-- they come up with, we're discussing to include the word transgender as part of the definition of sexual orientation, and what I said, and what I basically told him when I lobbied him was, the way that you've got it worded, for one thing, you're not using very specific wording.

And for another thing, it gives the impression that with this ordinance, you're only including the sexual orientation or the sex and the sexual preference of transgenders. You're not covering them for their gender identity and expression. You know, that was the argument I was making.

I was like, take a look at some of these other cities, take a look at Philadelphia, take a look at New York, take a look at these other cities and check into their wording, and get a little more specific so that we make sure that we cover transgender people fairly.

Now GenderPAC was saying recently that they would have liked to see them go even further with the Dallas ordinance and go into expression and whatnot. And I think that would have been great too. And you know, I was pushing for more detail and stuff, but they came a long way in real or perceived gender identity.

They included as part of the definition of sexual orientation, but you know, I think they should have included separately and went in a little more detail, but with what they've got, I think it's great. And it's basically covers most transgenders, and it's a good thing, and it was a fair compromise. You know, I wouldn't have supported-- I don't think I would have supported the ordinance if they just would have had it transgender without getting into a little more specific.

And they decided to get a little more specific. And in this type of climate here in Texas, I think it was a very courageous move. It was a very courageous move for them. I applaud Laura Miller and the council members for doing it. I think it's great.

VANESSA Absolutely. I was just blown away by that. I cannot believe that, especially so soon after being elected, she came in and just literally took this thing all the way to the wall.

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: Here I was a person she didn't know very well, she didn't know that much about. I was mostly appearing in the gay-- the gay media. She really didn't know that much about me. And here I lobbied her and she took the time to respond to me, and she took the time to answer my questions personally. And I was like, wait a minute, that's really cool. You know, she's married.

VANESSA You don't find that very often.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: She doesn't know me. And you know what, she's taking the time to do this. And so that's really great. You know, it says a lot on her behalf.

VANESSA Everyone in Dallas is just very high on Laura Miller. She has just absolutely won over the community up there.

EDWARDS- And to be truthful with you, I really can't say that I've seen a mayor that matches her anywhere here in Texas at all. To have someone that is not only making these promises, but to be so adamant.

SUBJECT: She used to be a reporter. So I think she has a little bit more idea of these different facets of the community from our experiences than a lot of people. And the fact is our politicians are still mostly white, heterosexual males. We're still dominated by white, heterosexual males in politics. And while there's nothing wrong with being a white, heterosexual male at all, especially if you're right on the issues, we've got to get other people involved from different segments of the community. I'd like to see more transgenders run for office too.

VANESSA Exactly. That's one thing we don't have. We've never had any city, county, state, or federal offices where a transgender has been elected, or at least not an out transgender. If there have been any, we don't know about it.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER: And I guess that's probably a good first step to take.

But again, this is going to be a major hurdle because of the public's image and their reluctance to relinquish that image. And unfortunately, it gets reaffirmed by a lot of the media, which will publicize the more sensational aspects of it.

But they usually don't want to show anything that's positive or that portrays transgenders as just regular, everyday people. And usually if you do get a character like that in any mainstream television, for instance, on "The Education of Max Bickford," they took a character off very soon after. Apparently, I guess, they had too much negative feedback from people that were tired of seeing a positive transgender representative.

SUBJECT: Wow. Do you remember the show "Picket Fences?"

VANESSA I do. In fact, I--

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: It was a show on "PBS" and I tell you it was a very well written show. It won an Emmy award for Best Drama one year. Really good show, but there was one in particular episode where there was a transsexual teacher on there. And you know, and of course, when people found out about it, it caused a lot of controversy about her job and everything.

And it was one of the best episodes I've seen, but there, you know, it was a positive role of a teacher in the community. And I think we need to see more of that. We see Jerry Springer and we see transgenders exploited for ratings, that's what we see. We don't see everyday transsexuals of all different facets.

VANESSA Exactly. At the time of the Dallas ordinance, just to kind of backtrack a little bit, did you realize at the time that your work was going to be making statewide history?

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: I didn't. And I still look back at it and I'm like, I'm thinking to myself, wow, one person can really make a difference. And I had somebody tell me one time, you are one person with a lot of perseverance and persistence. And I am. You know, I've been that way. And I think it's because in my past, I grew up in a small school in the middle of Illinois.

I faced a lot of oppression for being different all my life, you know. I faced discrimination, you know, of some sort or another. I've had-- I've had all the names called at me at one time or another, I've been called every name in the book. And it toughened me up, you know.

It toughened me up. I had to either toughen up or step out. And now that I've got the fight in me, I want to keep going because I know it's the right thing to do. And we've got so much more to do, and I'm excited about it. And it makes you feel good just to be a part of it. It really does.

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: Now on the Dallas Transgender Alliance, is this kind of more or less formed in response to the Dallas efforts regarding the city ordinance or was this already in the works? Can you give a little background on how that came into being?

SUBJECT: Well, I kind of had the idea and some other people had the idea for a while. But I think that was kind of the extra push that we needed. It's like, hey, if we can accomplish this, just imagine what else we can accomplish in the community. What other differences can we make, how else can we serve the transgender community. What else can we do?

And let me tell you, that these people that have volunteered for, we've got a temporary board set up till December and then we'll have official voting for officers of the organization, but there's been some great people that have volunteered to help with this organization from a variety of different groups and from a variety of different communities. The cross-dressing community, the transsexual community, the gender variance community, we've got males, we've got females.

And we've got the whole facet there. We've got lesbians. We've got straight people. We've got-- everybody wants to get involved in this. And the result has been a response that has really-- it hasn't-- it didn't really surprise me. I mean, I thought to myself, there's more people out there that want this than what people are thinking, and we've really shocked people with it. And I think that it will continue to.

There's no reason why our organization can't be on the same level advocacy-oriented as some of the gay and lesbian organizations. The difference is our organization is going to try to end discrimination on both sexual orientation and gender identity, not just one or the other. We realize the importance of both issues. And I think that we're going to strive to be-- we're going to include-- we're going to team up with other organizations where we can help out.

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: I was just going to ask about that. Are you going to work collaboratively with the Dallas Gay and Lesbian Alliance on things like the screenings?

SUBJECT: I think we will. I mean, right now, we haven't even had our first official meeting, but once we get into that organizational phase and once we get the non-for-profit set up, and we get some of these ideas set up, and we can team up with them on certain issues. Obviously, we won't be teaming up with them on every issue, but we've got so many people involved that if one person can't go to this, maybe another person can.

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: And the same thing, you know, I was talking to you about lobbying efforts with NTAC. I can see seeing us with this large group of people, we can help out with your organization too. I mean, there's things that we can do locally.

And you know, once we really get organized and get set up a little bit more, we don't want to take on everything all at once, but we're definitely going to have some goals in that area. Sure.

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: Exactly. And it's been very difficult to activate the transgender community there. You've really, really done an absolutely fantastic job at that. And I guess a lot of this was helped out by the ordinance itself and having something to where there was some kind of a touchstone to where they realized that, yes, something was actually coming of this. We can see results.

And sometimes that's probably about the best boost in the arm that you can give any community or any organization is producing something, having some results for someone to actually tie back to and say, yes, we did this. We accomplished it. And it seems to provide the fuel for furthering the efforts and for continuing the growth of the organization, or the movement, or the effort.

SUBJECT: And now some of these organizations and these companies are basically going to have to wake up and smell the coffee. They're going to have to re-examine their policies, re-examine their harassment policies, re-examine their choices they make about their transgendered, about their dress codes, about restroom issues, about [? these ?]. They're going to have to step back and say, are we treating transgenders equally? Are we--

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: Are you doing any education with any of the workplaces up there?

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: Once again, we're just starting out, but eventually I can definitely see that. I can see educating on this. One idea that one of our board members has that we're going to introduce in the first meeting. Her name is Stephanie Diane [INAUDIBLE] and she's also involved in the Purple Light Transgender Services, but she's a-- she's a person that's very into the movement right now and helping out a great deal. But she has a great idea about an award that would award different community leaders and different companies, a Dallas Transgender Alliance Award, that would--

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: That's basically what we do here with the Unity Banquet and the Unity Awards, the same type of concept. In fact, that was something that I thought would be a great incentive to kind of bring the community out and to get them activated. It gives them a reason to actually get out there and do these efforts instead of just going out and doing them and believing, well, it's a thankless job and no one really knows.

It gives them a little recognition. I hate to cut this short, but we're going to have to kind of wrap this up. We've got another guest coming in, and--

JIMMY CARPER: Yes, I've got a singer/songwriter coming in. He came all the way from Austin to be on the show.

VANESSA EDWARDS-FOSTER: And who is this?

JIMMY CARPER: Daniel Link. He's waiting in the wings.

VANESSA Waiting in the wings. Sounds like a song title.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

[CHUCKLES]

VANESSA Anyway, I do want to thank you very much, [? Telana ?], for coming on the air with us, and especially at this late

EDWARDS- of an hour, this isn't exactly prime time.

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: No.

SUBJECT: It's always an honor to speak with you, Vanessa. And thank you both for inviting me on the show. I really enjoyed it.

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you for being here.

VANESSA Thank you for telling your story.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

SUBJECT: Have a good night.

JIMMY CARPER: Good night. And Vanessa, thank you very much. And we'll see you in a couple of months.

VANESSA Oh, absolutely.

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: OK, and here's some music from Daniel Link.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Something new from Daniel Link. And he just happens to be right here in the studio with--

JD DOYLE: JD Doyle.

JIMMY CARPER: Ta-da. And of course, I asked JD Doyle here so he could do the interview actually because--

JD DOYLE: [INAUDIBLE] going to help.

JIMMY CARPER: You were so-- anal. I mean, you have checked everything out. I mean, you know everything about Daniel's back--

JD DOYLE: Putting you on the spot, aren't you?

JIMMY CARPER: And extremely personal information about him, so I hear.

JD DOYLE: No, I just told Daniel that you better not have an artist on your show without me being here.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, that's right.

[LAUGHTER]

Well, especially Daniel. Yeah, it's been-- we haven't seen each other since the Sidecar Pub.

JD DOYLE: When was that?

DANIEL LINK: That was February last year. Yeah.

JD DOYLE: Year and a half ago.

DANIEL LINK: That was the last time I was in Austin-- or in Austin-- in Houston. That was the last show I played.

JIMMY CARPER: That was with Christy.

DANIEL LINK: That was with Christy Lane, the lovely and talented.

JD DOYLE: Christy Claxton.

DANIEL LINK: Christy Claxton. Yeah, I'm sorry. It's late.

JIMMY CARPER: It could be Christy Lane. I don't know. They've been together a long time.

DANIEL LINK: It is Christy and Lane to me, so.

[LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: So what have you-- what have you been doing with yourself?

DANIEL LINK: I've been in the studio for a year recording this CD. And we-- I got a band together for South by Southwest up in Austin. And we did that showcase with Amy Raye.

JD DOYLE: That ain't too shabby.

DANIEL LINK: That was a pretty good deal, actually. And we-- just I had started to do some post-production work on the CD. We recorded a couple of demos with Tom Johnson. And then we got the offer to do the South by Southwest show, and I said, well, we need a band.

So we got-- we just kind of networked between the two of us and got a band together in a couple of weeks, and it just clicked so well. And I said, well, let's go ahead and go with it, and polish up in the studio. And so we've been doing it for a year.

JD DOYLE: So this is the direction you wanted to go anyhow, more rock-oriented?

DANIEL LINK: Yeah, yeah. I really wanted to get a little bit more straightforward with rock and roll. So yeah.

JD DOYLE: Tell us about your first CDEP just a little bit though.

DANIEL LINK: "Out of the Silence," yeah. It's in a special place in my heart. We recorded that in '99, released it in 2000, and it did very well, we did a show up on radio show with Taylor Cage up in Austin, and--

JIMMY CARPER: What a fun guy he is.

DANIEL LINK: He's terrific. I love Taylor. He's a great guy. I love you guys too.

JD DOYLE: He's supposed to be listening. He told me he was going to listen. **DANIEL LINK:** Oh, really?

JIMMY CARPER: Is that right? Hi, Taylor.

[LAUGHTER]

He's been interviewed on this show, and boy, we had so much fun that night.

DANIEL LINK: He's great, isn't he?

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DANIEL LINK: Yeah. but yeah, so we-- that really got a lot of exposure for me, and--

JD DOYLE: I think I described it. It reminded me of Elton John when he was good.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. Uh.

DANIEL LINK: That's what you said? I love that. It was one of the best compliments I've ever had, it really truly was. And yeah, for a five song EP, we did pretty well with that. "Altar Boy" got a lot of airplay.

JD DOYLE: Yeah, that was my favorite. I played that one a lot.

DANIEL LINK: Yeah, thanks. We do all the songs on that CD in the live show, but "Altar Boy" is really neat with the full band because we've extended it. It's got a really cool solo in the middle of it and it breaks down. It's a nice, nice tune. Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: So tell us about this new. You've got 12 songs, 12 brand new songs on this CD.

JD DOYLE: What's the name of it?

DANIEL LINK: "Ghost Stories." "Ghost Stories." Yeah.

[CHUCKLES]

JD DOYLE: Is it out?

DANIEL LINK: It will be out on the 19th.

JIMMY CARPER: Of this month?

DANIEL LINK: Of this month. Next Friday.

JD DOYLE: CD party next weekend.

DANIEL LINK: Yeah, that's right.

JIMMY CARPER: That's right. In Austin, of course.

DANIEL LINK: That's right.

JD DOYLE: And who's the ghost or what is the ghost?

DANIEL LINK: The ghost, the way that I look at it is, all of us have a part of ourselves that is our true identity. And a lot of times as we go through life, as I went through my life, I kind of forgot who I was in a way. And the ghost is that part of ourselves that always remembers.

And so that's what this album is about. It's about resurfacing. Getting to know yourself and doing-- being yourself, doing what you want to do, and going through the process of life, so.

JD DOYLE: A little [? collect ?] songs inspired by growth?

DANIEL LINK: Yes, very much, very much. So the album starts out kind of dark. There are a lot of songs that are real contemplative and not real happy endings. But it sort of resolves itself by the end of the album and everything's really up by the end.

JIMMY CARPER: First three song titles are "Ghost," "Tangled," and "Storm In My Head."

DANIEL LINK: "Storm In My Heart."

JIMMY CARPER: Heart. Heart. Oh my god.

JD DOYLE: For the visually impaired.

DANIEL LINK: But you know what?

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes. It is.

DANIEL LINK: It was a big ol' storm in my head, Jimmy.

[LAUGHTER]

It really was.

JIMMY CARPER: Ouch.

DANIEL LINK: I'll sing it that way for you.

[LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: I have always admired singer/songwriters because you're putting your soul out there for the public to either embrace or trample.

DANIEL LINK: Yeah.

JIMMY CARPER: How do you do it? How does it feel when-- well, I can imagine it feels wonderful when it's embraced, but when it's trampled, how do you take it?

DANIEL LINK: You just take it. Everybody has what they like and what they don't like. And part of being an artist is realizing that you-- I don't necessarily write for other people, I write for myself. It's very rewarding and if people like it, that's great, and if they don't, hey, that's cool too. So I really try not to let it bother me.

JD DOYLE: But you would like millions of people to like this?

DANIEL LINK: Well, I would hope so. I would hope so. I'd hope somebody would get at least one song, get something out of it.

JIMMY CARPER: Millions.

DANIEL LINK: Well, yeah, that sounds good. I like that number. Yeah.

JD DOYLE: Speaking of millions of people, which song on here would you think is the most radio friendly?

DANIEL LINK: The song that Jimmy played there, "Seance." I think it's a real catchy tune. It's kind of a pop/rock thing. And I'm really proud of the vocal work that's on it. Actually, singled out quite a few songs on here to sort of release as singles to push as the year goes by, because believe me, it's going to have to last a while.

JD DOYLE: Oh, I see.

DANIEL LINK: So, yeah, we'll--

JD DOYLE: That's why you spent so long doing it because if you're not going to do it good, it's not going to be good for a long time.

DANIEL LINK: That's exactly right. You know, I have to live with this for the rest of my life. And having my own label, you know, I invested-- I invested, my investors invested a lot of money into this. So I didn't compromise on anything. So I really feel like that there's a lot of really good tunes on here and we're going to go with "Seance" to launch the "Ghost Stories" release.

We'll probably move to another song in a couple of months, "Be Home Soon," and focus on that. And that song was actually co-written with a friend of mine that lives down here in Houston, James [? Odle ?] Jr. He wrote the lyrics for that.

And we'll go with that. We'll maybe put "Storm In My Heart." And a lot of people like the song, "Christine," which is a six minute song, but we're going to have to edit it down, do the radio edit for it to play, but.

JIMMY CARPER: Only for commercial radio. We can do that here. Last night--

DANIEL LINK: What a guy.

JIMMY CARPER: I subbed on the music show and I played like a nine minute version of a Janis Joplin song. It's like, where are you going to hear that?

JD DOYLE: Oh, you played "Hitchhiker" too.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, I did. Yeah.

JD DOYLE: That was longer.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, that's a half hour.

VANESSA Yeah, well, [? pop in ?] Radiohead, The Doors, "Light My Fire."

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: There you go. Yeah.

VANESSA Than you have different--

EDWARDS-

FOSTER:

JIMMY CARPER: But I mean--

DANIEL LINK: Yeah, that would be cool. That's the main thing I was going here with "Ghost Stories" was kind of make that return to the '70s style of rock and roll.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I think-- I don't know that the breakthrough was with her, but I remember when Bonnie Tyler did "Total Eclipse of the Heart" and that got lots of radio airplay, and that was a very long song.

DANIEL LINK: Sure was.

JIMMY CARPER: And nobody thought twice about it.

JD DOYLE: But "Hey Jude" was seven minutes.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, you know, Jim Steinman doesn't write a song, he writes a book, you know. Yeah. So don't apologize.

DANIEL LINK: Very cool.

JD DOYLE: Are there any songs on here that you just say, I'm the most proud of this song?

DANIEL LINK: Oh gosh.

JIMMY CARPER: Ooh.

DANIEL LINK: I'm the most proud of the song, "Christine."

JD DOYLE: How come?

DANIEL LINK: I wrote it for my sister who's sitting outside here. She came down to the studio with me tonight. That's Christine. I'm proud of it because it was emotionally a really powerful song for me to write. It was an emotional experience writing it. And it was an emotional experience recording it.

And in fact, my engineer and co-producer Tom Johnson after the whole thing was finished and we were listening to the back to the master, and we listened to "Christine," he said, that's an amazing song. It was all done acoustically. It's the only song on this album that was completely arranged with acoustic instruments.

We used Eugene [? Goft ?] to do a viola solo, and he's with the Austin Symphony. It's just a very powerful song. I'm really proud of it. And Tom says it's the best song that's come out of his studio and he records everybody up in Austin. So I'm proud of that.

JIMMY CARPER: Wow.

DANIEL LINK: Yeah.

JD DOYLE: I got to hear this song.

DANIEL LINK: All right.

JD DOYLE: What do you want him to queue up while I'm asking the next question?

DANIEL LINK: Well, we can play "Christine." Since we do six minute songs down here.

JD DOYLE: Let's quickly ask, how did you get Daniel Link Day in Austin?

DANIEL LINK: Ha, well. I'm on the board of directors with the Austin Songwriters Group now. And there was a meeting with the Austin Music Commission a couple months ago. And I was talking with the Director of Tourism. And she had heard my name and she liked my music.

And she said, Austin is now sponsoring or is hosting a day for accomplished musicians in Austin to give them recognition and to just to say you've made a contribution to the city, to the community, and they-- she asked me if I'd be interested in having Daniel Link Day, and I was very honored.

JD DOYLE: You said, gosh, I'm not sure.

[LAUGHTER]

DANIEL LINK: Let me get back with you on that. Let's see. Well, every day is Daniel Link Day at my house, you know, so.

[LAUGHTER]

So it was an honor. I met the mayor of Austin, Gus Garcia, and he gave me this proclamation and got to play for city council. It was great. It was great. And again, I was very grateful that the city of Austin would do that for the musicians up there. That says a lot about the community. And I'm really proud to be from Austin because of that. And I love Houston as well.

JIMMY CARPER: Thank you, Houston. Well, let's have a listen to "Christine" by Daniel Link. We'll be right back.

[MUSIC - DANIEL LINK, "CHRISTINE"]