

[RAPID CREAKING SOUNDS]

**NARRATOR:** The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature--

[MOANING]

**NARRATOR:** --which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

**WOMAN:** (SINGING) After hours. After hours.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh yes, you've tuned in to *After Hours*, queer 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 transgendered people and their friends. Here at *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 closets. 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 age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you, too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

Hello Houston, and College Station, and the world, and welcome to *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude. This is the January 12 edition, and I'm Jimmy Carper. I'll be your producer for the evening. And first of all, before we get into anything, because at 15 after I have to turn this over to Sarah DePalma. She's got a packed show, as always. And in the second half, we're featuring Francisco Sanchez and the Hispanic Hour.

First of all, I want to say this. The interim local advisory board of KPFT invites all listeners to its next meeting to be held on Friday, January the 18 at 7:00 PM. That's next Friday. The meeting will be held at the Leisure Learning Unlimited Center, 2990 Richmond Avenue in Houston. And this week's topics will be a wrap-up of the recent national board meeting of the five stations of Pacifica Radio, and an open discussion on the future direction of KPFT.

Let me repeat this. This is a meeting next Friday to talk about the future direction of KPFT. Public participation is welcomed and needed as KPFT moves forward so stop by and voice your opinion. And to sweeten the pot, prior to the meeting there'll be an open house right here at the radio station, 419 Levitt Boulevard, from 5:00 to 6:30. Come on down then find out what's up with the new KPFT. For more details, visit [www.houstonradioreport.org](http://www.houstonradioreport.org).

And next on the agenda, we announced last week that Jack Valinski had stepped down as the executive director of Pride Week, and Ken Donnelly has stepped into his place. The Pride Committee of Houston, the organization that produces the city's annual night-time gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender pride parade, elected Kenneth Donnelly as executive director at its January 8 board meeting.

So we want to welcome Kenneth as executive director. He's got his work cut out for him because that is a busy, busy job. So congratulations there.

And speaking of our own Jack Valinski, there's a board meeting going on Pacifica in New York right now, Pacifica National. And I don't think at this meeting particularly, but the executive director is the one who makes all new hires for general managers. And KPFT is looking for a new general manager. There are four people with their hats in the ring right now, and the big money is backing our own Jack Valinski to be general manager of this station.

That would certainly, I think, be a step in the right direction. Jack has a long history of radio experience, 20 years or more, and he has kind of the old Pacifica standard at his heart. Plus, he's been here with the changes that had been made in the last few years, and I think he would be a wonderful, wonderful person to mesh the two together.

Then I want to say hello to some of the guys behind bars who are listening tonight. Randy, and Mike, and William, and Paul, and Daniel Jr., and Wilson. I got your letter, and thank you very much. And let's see, the only other thing I want to say is-- oh, a couple more things. The music you heard at the-- well, let me say this. Because everybody knows this is the second Saturday, so it's Sarah DePalma. And the second half, of course, will be Francisco Sanchez.

And next week we're going to have a live, right here in the station, kind of mini concert by Jeannie Kauffman, who was a featured singer at the Houston Women's Festival this past whenever it was. And that's going to be on [? Jewel's. ?]

And then on the second half of the show, representatives from Outsmart will be here. I talked with Anne last night, and I had talked with Greg a couple of weeks ago. So if anybody's listening and knows Greg, give him a call to remind him. He forgets these things.

The music that you heard, that was something new for *After Hours*. And it's music that I just discovered in the KPFT archives. It's openly gay jazz singer Andy Bey, B-E-Y. Andy Bey's been around a long time. From looking at him, he looks probably 60, 70s.

And I chose that particular one, it's called *Tuesdays in Chinatown*, because it's almost nebulous in the sexuality. And he does the piano playing on that because he does piano and voice. So I thought that was wonderful music. Didn't you, Sarah?

**SARAH** That was great stuff. Hello Houston, and how the hell are you?

**DEPALMA:**

[LAUGHTER]

**JIMMY CARPER:** I got it all in, I think.

**SARAH** Yep, that was really good music. I--

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Thank you.

**SARAH** They were going to just throw that stuff out. And it's, like, whoa man, you don't be throwing out that stuff. That's

**DEPALMA:** good-- that's fuckin' music.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right. You're right about that. I'm glad I was around to find it.

**SARAH** We have a really good show tonight. Tonight, our guest on tape is Laurie Cicotello. Now, the name may not mean anything to you. Perhaps you've heard of her dad, Diane Cicotello, one of the premier activists in this country in my book.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet.

**SARAH** And one of the handful of the best activists in the country. Well, this is Diane Cicotello's daughter. But let me tell

**DEPALMA:** you, she's not living on her mom's coattail-- on Diane's coattail. She is an activist in her own right and author in her own right. And perhaps if you saw the December Cosmopolitan, there was a wonderful three-page article in there about Laurie Cicotello.

Now, I have to say, it's the first time I've look at a Cosmopolitan in a couple of years--

**JIMMY CARPER:** (LAUGHING) I'll bet.

**SARAH** --and it's a rag, folks.

**DEPALMA:**

[LAUGHTER]

I'm sorry. No offense to Cosmo, but it's a rag.

**JIMMY CARPER:** It's a rag.

**SARAH** But they did a very nice job with the interview with Laurie, and for once, it didn't come out looking like something

**DEPALMA:** Geraldo had written. This was actually well done. But in truth, I had contacted Laurie to do this show before I saw the Cosmo article because I've known Diane for many years.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, I know.

**SARAH** Yeah, and subject tonight is going to be the children of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered parents. And

**DEPALMA:** since she is the child of transgendered parents, she is more than qualified to talk about it.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You bet.

**SARAH** It is a very, very powerful interview, and I think that you'll really enjoy it. I also brought a letter that was written

**DEPALMA:** to a good friend of the show that has passed away, [? Addine ?] McKellar, a letter that was written by her daughter about what it's like to be the child of a transgender parent. And so I brought that to read.

And also, I want to talk about a court case that is taking place in Philadelphia. Now, for years, and years, and years, and years on this show, I have said that if the law doesn't specifically say transgender in it that some smart lawyer is going to come along and say, well, it wasn't really a hate crime against gays and lesbians.

It was against transgender, and as we know, transgenders aren't covered. And everybody has said to me, oh Sarah, that's just Sarah being a transgender activist. And she's a pain in the neck, and she's a troublemaker. Guess what? It's actually happened in Philadelphia.

**JIMMY CARPER:** I knew it. I knew it.

**SARAH** So we'll talk about that court case. I just think it's very interesting. This was an employment discrimination suit, **DEPALMA:** and the judge ruled-- let me see what it says here-- it says his case was turned down because he did not show that the discrimination he suffered resulted from his failure to match the societal ideal of manliness.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Aha, there we go.

**SARAH** Sounds like a transgendered issue to me.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

**SARAH** And in the other studio is--

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Beth Richards.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Hey hey.

**BETH** Hey.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Beth, being a transgendered parent, will, I'm sure, have plenty to add to this program tonight.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Yeah, well, I'm very interested in this. I'm actually taping it right now so I can bring it home to my kids who had

**RICHARDS:** better be asleep by this hour.

[LAUGHTER]

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oops.

**SARAH** Spoken like a true parent. And actually, what made me decide to go ahead and do the show is that at Christmas I **DEPALMA:** made an attempt to contact my daughter. And if you're a long time listener of this show, then you know that my daughter has never been able to deal with me as a transgendered individual, and I've not spoken to her in several years.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**SARAH** But I thought that after September 11, and after everything that went on, I would take a crack at it.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Oh, yes.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** And heard nothing, which is not a surprise. I mean, it's one of those things that you say, OK, gee, maybe she

**DEPALMA:** forgot. Maybe she thinks I'm mad, any number of things. So you take a shot at it.

And there was no response. And I said, well, OK, it's better than her crawling up and screaming at me or something. But anyway, that was the idea behind doing the show this evening. So I hope that you will stick around, and I hope that you'll enjoy that. And I think we'll have a pretty good discussion afterwards.

Jimmy, I got to ask you a little bit about this stuff at KPFT, because all I know is what's going on in [INAUDIBLE].

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, OK. Well, there's been a change in the makeup of the national board of directors, and the national board of directors is the group who owns all five Pacifica stations. We have a station in New York, Washington DC, Los Angeles, Berkeley, and Houston. And with that change in the national board, there's going to be a reversal of everything that's happened in the past five years.

And what I mean by that is the kind of mainstreaming in all the daytime music, the sound of Texas type of thing, that was changed. And we'll probably keep a lot of the music but have more local programming, more news programming, more call-in, more current events, more political shows.

**SARAH** So that's what they're going to replace it with?

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** That'll be during the week, yes.

**SARAH** Is there an audience for this?

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, I don't think it's-- Pacifica was never formed to get a big audience. It was formed to air segments of the community who cannot get their voice heard elsewhere, sort of like this show.

**SARAH** Like the show, yeah.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** And as a matter of fact, I'm very kind of honored, as a matter of fact, because segments of the new group coming in want to pattern some shows after *After Hours* by having different segments come in maybe once a month and do a half hour. And these would be amateur people, but people who are activists in their communities. Right now, we don't do anything that covers the Asian community.

**SARAH** That's right, which is hard to believe considering the size of the population here.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right, and lots of other communities. So this group has had a call-out now for program submissions.

**BETH** One of the more recent additions to the KPFT lineup has been *Nuestra Palabra*.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, right.

**BETH** So I mean, we're just now getting the Hispanic population involved. There's room for more.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** There is room for more. The other argument could be said that, well, there's quite a few Spanish-speaking stations, whole stations.

**SARAH** True.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Of course, there's a lot of segments of the community that they don't cover.

**SARAH** They are, again, looking for market share, and audience, and not issues.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** These are commercial stations. Yeah.

**SARAH** OK, I'm just curious. I know I read [INAUDIBLE] and a lot of other people that listen to the show do read

**DEPALMA:** [INAUDIBLE] And some of them have been asking me what's going on, and I'm like, I don't know. Let's ask Jimmy.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, there you go. The former general manager Garland Ganter, has left. And the program director, music director, Mary Ramirez has quit.

**SARAH** So I'm going to lose *Mary in the Morning*?

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes. For the end of the month at least, until we get a hold and see what's going to go on, Rourke is going to be taking her place in the morning and doing his show in the afternoon.

**SARAH** Rourke's going to be a busy boy.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** He is. He is.

**SARAH** That's a long ear shift.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's sure is. Well, he gets several hours off in the middle.

**SARAH** Well, that's true.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Yeah.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** That's true.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** But it's a sucky schedule because it's like 5:00 to 8:00, and then 3:00 to 6:30.

**SARAH** Yeah.

**DEPALMA:**

[LAUGHTER]

Not a schedule I would be looking for anytime soon.

**JIMMY CARPER:** No, no, no. So there's lots of changes going on. KPFT will still be here. It's not going anywhere. It's just going to change.

And in the past 31 years, 32 years almost that it's been on the air, it's changed many times.

**SARAH** Oh, yeah.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** You know, I've been here since 1988, and in that time, there have been six program directors and three general managers. And you know, both of them are your boss. And so each time rules change, ways of doing things change, and you have to adjust.

So it's a new era for KPFT, and I just waved bye to [? Elkie. ?] [? Elkie ?] was here, a former programmer at KPFT, and she's going off to her gig at N'Somnia where she spins music from 2:00 to 6:00. So it's just a whole new ballgame.

**SARAH** So for all those people who have been sending me email and asking me what the heck is going on, now you have

**DEPALMA:** your answer.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**BETH** Now you know as much as Sarah does.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Well, I've been very honest, see, I don't have any clue. What I know is what I read in the [INAUDIBLE] so. But still,

**DEPALMA:** *After Hours* is going to remain, and I'm still very, very proud of the fact that this is the only show in the country that has a transgendered host, regularly scheduled transgendered host, and regularly scheduled bisexual host, and regularly scheduled leather host, and on, and on, and on, which is a lot of firsts with this show and this station.

**BETH** We don't have a regular scheduled transgender host.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, you got three.

**SARAH** We got three!

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right, that's right.

**SARAH** Have you heard the new show--

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well actually, four. Jackie Thorne usually is here just about every week.

**BETH** Pretty regularly.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Have you heard the new web radio program called *Trans Sisters* yet?

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** JD Doyle listened in to, I think, the very first one when it first came on, and he loved it.

**SARAH** I did, too.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** He sent me an email. He said it was really, really well done.

**SARAH** Yeah, I really love it.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** But JD, you know, he keeps up with this kind of stuff.

**BETH** Oh, yeah.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Yeah, well I got his email, and I said, well, I'm going to check this out, and he's right. It really is good.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** When is it on, or does it matter?

**SARAH** Actually, it's replayed several times. It's a very simple web address to get to. It's [www.trans-sisters.org](http://www.trans-sisters.org), That's all

**DEPALMA:** there is to it. It's [trans-sisters.org](http://trans-sisters.org), and it's a website. It is programming for transgendered artists. These are people who-- people like Jessica Xavier and others, people that are transgendered artists, and it's really unique.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Dana International, Jayne County, you know--

**SARAH** Yeah, it's really unique programming.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wendy Carlos, on, and on, and on, and on.

**SARAH** And I thought, well, this is really cool. I never heard of this show until JD did it. And you know--

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** I haven't listened yet, so I've got to.

**SARAH** --sometime, someday, I would like to do a show with JD where he plays music from transgendered from the past

**DEPALMA:** or transgendered artists, and then I could kind of talk about what that period was and what was going on in that period of music and things. I'd love to do a show with JD like that. I think that would be a lot of fun.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That would be fun, wouldn't it?

**BETH** So when I release my CD, are they going to put it on there?

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Sure. Are you kidding? Yes!

**SARAH** I've heard you sing.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Not my singing.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh.

[LAUGHTER]

**BETH** And when have you heard me sing? I don't do much of that.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** OK, that's different. You can do your flute.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** My Irish harp. Yeah, your Irish harp. There you go. I was close. OK.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** No, you weren't.

[LAUGHTER]

**BETH** No I--

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Covering my butt is what I'm doing.

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** I do both. I do both.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** I'm just covering my butt.

**DEPALMA:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** I know you do. I've seen you.

**BETH** Well, you know, I played for D, for those of you who were there for that.

**RICHARDS:**

**SARAH** Well Jimmy, why don't we go ahead and go to this interview with Laurie Cicotello because this runs about 23, 24

**DEPALMA:** minutes. And let me go ahead and tell the audience that I spoke to Laurie, it was about, oh, I guess about 10 days ago. And I don't know what the weather in Denver was like then, but she was complaining because there was no snow on the ground.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, poor thing. I'm so sorry.

**SARAH** Well, you know, hey, [INAUDIBLE]

**DEPALMA:**

**BETH** Whiney, whiney, whine.

**RICHARDS:**

**JIMMY CARPER:** You know, if it's going to be that damn cold, you might as well have snow.

**SARAH** Well, Colorado depends on the snow. They make their living out there in the snow. So anyway, so for the  
**DEPALMA:** audience, we were talking earlier about Laurie Sicatello and about being a child of transgendered parents. Here she is. This is Laurie Cicotello.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And you're listening to it on *After Hours*, queer radio with attitude, on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station.

**SARAH** Well, as I mentioned to you earlier, this show tonight is about the children of transgendered parents. And so I  
**DEPALMA:** always like to start right at the beginning. How old were you when Diane told you about her situation?

**LAURIE** I was 14 when I found out.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** So you were a teenager. That's pretty tough.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Right.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** And how did she tell you? I mean, did she sit you down and give you the old parental long talk, or--

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** I wish. Actually, no, I was kind of being bad, and I stumbled on some stuff in her room. And I was being very nosy  
**CICOTELLO:** and, again, stumbled on some photos and stumbled on some diaries, and so on, and then ended up having to confront her about my discovery.

**SARAH** Oh ouch. It's not the recommended way of telling a child.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** No, but there was no plans at that point to tell me. So my folks were having some marital crises right then, and  
**CICOTELLO:** so it was kind of decided that they wouldn't tell me right then-- that they would wait or not even tell me at all. And then all of a sudden I started finding all this stuff and had to confront.

**SARAH** And so did she come clean? I mean, how much did she tell you?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** She did come clean, and I ended up talking to her mother first-- to my grandmother. And she admitted that Dana  
**CICOTELLO:** had been doing this since she was like four years old. And I think that helped to ease the blow a little bit, not going straight to her. And then my grandmother and I talked to her together and explained that, hey, I know what's going on, and so on.

And then after that it was just like, the doors blew wide open, and Dana was really good about giving me information, and having me read books, and so on, and learn more about the whole phenomenon.

**SARAH** Well, that's got to be pretty horrid. You're 14. Did any of your friends discover this, or did you decide to keep this just quiet to yourself?

**LAURIE** Actually, the first person I told even before my grandmother was my friend McGregor, who he and I are still friends. And you know, it's so odd that I would tell an eighth grade boy, but he was totally cool with things. And he provided so much support then, and he's provided amazing support in the last six years for me that-- that helped to make things that much easier.

I did not tell a lot of my friends throughout high school. I really kept everything to myself and just maybe had like two or three people that I could really confide in who I felt comfortable and safe trusting, but it wasn't until I got to college that the doors really blew open and I said, you know, I'm just going to tell people. I'm not going to worry about what they think of me.

**SARAH** At what point did Diana decide to go full time?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** I was about 15 when that happened. So yeah, I was about 15.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** So at 14 she tells you, and at 15 she's going full time. Oh boy, that's pretty tough.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** It was a matter of about three months, maybe three to six months in there. And then she finally-- you know, I finally saw her in totally female clothes, and saw the whole package.

**SARAH** So did that put you in a position of not having your friends over and that sort of thing?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Very, very, very much.

**CICOTELLO:**

In the last 16 years, one of the things that I've discovered is that I don't know if this will sound bad, but it's sort of like growing up with an alcoholic parent in that a lot of my friends who have alcoholic parents didn't want their friends to come over because they never knew what state they would find their parents in. And I ended up in that same sort of situation because I never knew exactly how Diana was going to be dressed when I got home.

So I never really invited my friends over because I was always like, I don't know what she's going to be wearing or whatever. And so there was a lot of hiding going on that way, and that made it really difficult for me to maintain friendships when I was living at home.

**SARAH** Well, that's got to be pretty hard on a teenager. By the time you got to college, had Diana started becoming activists and really out in public?

**LAURIE** Yeah, she was doing that more and more. It was a very slow process for her coming out, as well. But it wasn't like she just all of a sudden was gang busters, and out speaking to groups, and so on. She was building up her audiences and talking to more and more people over time, and I think that made it easier.

But it was good because as her activism increased, she was having more and more resources that she drew upon in order to teach other people. And then I had access to those resources, as well, so I was able to read a lot of books and talk to a lot of people. And it's just been amazing that way.

**SARAH** And how long did it take your friends to start connecting the dots that you were her daughter?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Well, I mean, it just kind of-- as I got older, I just started telling more people. As my comfortability level went up and my education level went up, then I felt more comfortable talking to people. So I'm sure that I still have friends out there who-- from high school who have no clue that this was going on.

**SARAH** At what point did you decide to become an activist yourself?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Pretty much when I was in college. Back up for a second, right before I got out of high school, one of the things **CICOTELLO:** that kind of helped me for greater acceptance was that I started going to the Rocky Horror Picture Show.

**SARAH** Really?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Yeah. And a lot of the audience is so open minded there that they really help to say, well, we accept who your **CICOTELLO:** family is, and we're cool with you. And that helped. And when I went to college, I went to a very small Presbyterian college in Hastings, Nebraska-- Hastings College.

And out there, it was just not even something that was considered. I mean, nobody talked about these things. So I didn't have that level of acceptance, but my next door neighbor was telling me all sorts of horrific tales from her life. And she told me, she said, don't tell anybody about your parent. Just keep it under your hat. They'll make fun of you if they know.

And I started watching how the kids were treating her knowing what her secret was, and I realized, if she thinks that she's being treated well with them not knowing, I could be treated a whole lot better if they did know. And so I slowly just started just telling people, hey, my parent is transgendered, and we started going from there.

And I think the big moment of activism for me came when my mom and dad were on the Jenny Jones show back in 1992.

**SARAH** Mm-hmm, I remember.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** And we ended up-- I was watching it down in the basement of my dorm, and I had about 50 kids down there with **CICOTELLO:** me. And all of a sudden there was just questions flying. And at the end of the show, the kids who were down there with me were like, tell us more about this. Tell us more about your parents. And all of a sudden, I'm doing education to them, and I realize it's such a gift that I've been given to help people understand something that they just have no concept of.

And I was able to, as we watched the different talk shows together in a group, of course, there's always talk shows on about transgendered people, and whatever, and cross-dressers, and so on, and so on. And I found myself doing education to my students, to the students that were in the dorm with me, and it just grew from there. And as my confidence grew in telling them, and showing them, and saying, OK, this is not the way this always is, or yes, that person is correct, or whatever, as my confidence grew, then I was able to come out more and more.

**SARAH** So you were almost the accidental activist.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Exactly. But it was just because it was a small Presbyterian college, like I said, the background, the mentality is very fundamentalist Christian. And so there's a lot of prejudice around transgender issues and around gay and lesbian issues, and I was able to really work to disseminate and dispel a lot of rumors and so on. So that was pretty amazing for me.

**SARAH** Well, that's got to be pretty tough being in a small town like that. I know when I was doing my activism at Texas A&M, it might just as well have been a small town. And I remember what the reaction to that was like. Now at some point, I know you ended up speaking to the governor of Colorado, didn't you?

**LAURIE** Yes.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** When was that-- how did that happen?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Well, there's actually been two different governors of Colorado that I spoke to. The first one was Roy Romer, who was-- I don't know if he still is, but he was the head of the Democratic National Party at the time. And he ended up becoming the first governor in the United States to veto an anti-same-sex marriage bill twice. And the second time around he said that it was in light of testimony from a certain individual which turned out to be my parents.

And so that was very-- I mean, it's pretty obvious who he was talking about. And Diana and I ended up going to a media dinner at his mansion, and we got a chance to talk to him. And he was really happy that Diana could go with me and so on. The second governor now-- you know, Romer's term ended, and so we were part of the process to elect Bill Owens, who's the current governor of Colorado. My family is Republican.

**SARAH** They're Republican?

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Yeah.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** That's interesting.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Yeah, you know, that always comes as more of a shock to people than finding out that my parent's transgendered.

**SARAH** [LAUGHS]

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** But yeah, so we're Republican, and we ended up-- the neighborhood that we were part of, we have caucuses and so on, and Diana's actually the precinct leader for our neighborhood. And we got elected to be representatives at the Colorado State assembly. And so I was the elected representative and Diana was the alternate, and we were going through all these different steps in congressional, and county, and so on.

And at each level, Bill Owens would show up to stump for his campaign, and so we would meet him. And Dana was constantly like, hey, I'm Dana-- you know, I'm Diana Cicotello, and nice to meet you. And by the way, I'm transgendered, and please don't hurt us if you become governor, and so on.

And so Owens hasn't been the kindest governor to the gay and lesbian bisexual and transgendered community. He really hasn't. But it's good to know that we've at least been able to do education that way. I mean, that's really important to us because to me, you can get so much more done by just talking to people about issues rather than screaming in their face.

And so Owens may not change his views on things, but at least we know that we've gotten in there and we've done some education. And we've tried to keep the communication open there. And for him to see that people who are transgendered are very normal, very down-to-Earth people, and can be just some of the most beautiful people out there. And so I think it's been really positive for this community.

**SARAH** When I talk to people about doing political lobbying here in Texas, I always tell them, even if we never get a bill passed, it's much harder for them to pass a bill that's negative to us if they know who we are.

**LAURIE** Exactly, right. Because putting a face on it, I mean, that right there, that they're not seeing some-- because they think, oh, these people are weird, or whatever. We know what these weirdos doing, and it's like--

**SARAH** They think we're all RuPaul, which is kind of interesting considering I'm 5'3". [LAUGHS]

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Exactly. The people in the community are very beautiful. They're not weird or whatever. It's the people who are hiding who actually do more damage. And once people come out of hiding, and it just seems to really open up things for people. But by putting a face on what this community looks like, it makes it a lot harder for people to hurt us.

**SARAH** Now, what kind of a toll has this taken on you personally? I mean, I know you've put a lot of time and a lot of energy into it, but that also takes away from your own personal time, doesn't it? I mean, how have you fared through all of this?

**LAURIE** I've had some coming out issues myself. I identify as bisexual, and that's something that really for me has gotten backburnered. Because I always feel like, well, if I say anything about that, I don't want it to overshadow Diana, and I don't want it to-- you know, like that could possibly happen. I mean, please.

So a lot of the issues that I've had around that sort of thing have gotten backburnered. But in recent years, I've really tried to come out and say, hey, I've got issues here, too. And this is important, and I don't want people to think, she's just bisexual because her dad is transgendered, or she's just being bi to get by, or anything like that. It really is something that is part of my being, and it's been really difficult.

But now I'm getting to a point that I'm standing up for myself and saying, hey, there are some issues here that I need to work through, as well. And I mean, that's been kind of big. There was a time with Dana that there was a therapist here in Denver who told me that Dana's coming out process was going to be far more important in terms of she said that Dana was going to be going through a puberty, and that this puberty that she was going to be going through was far more important to her mental health than my puberty. Because I was 14 when she was telling me this. And so she said that Dana's puberty was far more important than mine. And that kind of threw me.

**SARAH** Yeah, I don't accept that concept either. I think puberty for both of you is fairly important.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Yeah, but that was the way it was presented. And the therapist told me that Diana would be wearing my clothes, **CICOTELLO:** would be borrowing my makeup.

**SARAH** Oh my gosh. You should have run away from that therapist.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Yeah, exactly. So what ended up happening was-- and I kind of wish it would have gone the other way, but I ended up gaining a lot of weight. And so I had to get new clothes that were bigger. And I said, there, my clothes are too big for you to wear now.

**SARAH** Oh, I see.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** And I quit wearing makeup because I was, the heck with you. I'm not going to wear makeup, and then you can't borrow my makeup. And I'm not going to wear jewelry, so you can't borrow my jewelry.

And it had a really, really negative effect on me because one, the weight problem has been enormous. And when I sit here and I look at where I'm at weight-wise, a lot of it in my head goes back to, man, I wish that Dana and I hadn't gone there.

And so that's been kind of difficult for me to deal with over 16 years, and it's only within about the last two years that I started figuring out, OK, I can lose this weight, and Dana's not going to wear my clothes now, and Dana's not share makeup with me. So I've started wearing makeup more often. It sounds kind of dumb to admit that, but--

**SARAH** No, it doesn't sound--

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** [INAUDIBLE] struggled with.

**CICOTELLO:**

**SARAH** No, it doesn't sound dumb at all. It sounds like you finally realized that you can be your own person.

**DEPALMA:**

**LAURIE** Exactly. But it's taken me 16 years to do that. And it's been a struggle for me in terms of where I was living or the things going on with Dana, and so on. But I'm glad that I'm finally coming in to find out who I am, and to speak up for myself, and so on. And it takes a while. I mean, I know that there are a lot of times where I talk to children of transgendered parents who it takes us so long to find our identities because we get so overshadowed by our parents.

There's a scene in *Deconstructing Harry*, it's movie by Woody Allen, where the parent goes out of focus and they go fuzzy. This is with Robin Williams, and he goes out of focus. And he comes home to the family, and