

MAN 1: Out in a small town in Minnesota. And the boy is handicapped. And the boy's parents found out he's gay. And they want to put him in an insane asylum. That boy needs help. And the gay mood is about the letter I got from southwest Africa when he read about a gay person getting elected here.

And that person has hope. And that 17-year-old kid in Minnesota has hope. And we have gay leaders not understanding that and are more worried about their own personal power. They're not gay leaders. They're offensive.

MAN 2: That's right, man. You had it easy. You lost your husband in a nice, clean hospital. You know where I lost mine? I lost mine on the street. That's right. They killed him on the street. 27 years old laying dead on the street, killed by a bunch of kids with baseball bats. That's right, man. Killed by children. Children taught by people like you because everybody knows that queers don't matter. Queers don't love. And those that do deserve what they get!

[MUSIC PLAYING]

MAN 3: I'm here partly tonight to say some good things about Texas. I'm proud to be a Texan. I know that I could not have heard Harvey Milk's challenge to me, had not something in my life in this state prepared me to hear the word of freedom that Harvey spoke to us.

I am here tonight because it is time that all of us who love this state that gave us life and has nurtured us and taught us our values to stand up and claim the history of the state for freedom and justice and human respect, away from the forces of narrow mindedness and bigotry that too often dominate the politics of the state of Texas.

PROTESTER 1: I want you to savor this next moment. I have the proud task of telling you that the official count of the Lesbian and Gay Rights March, the official count is over 500,000 strong! 500,000 strong! Look at you! 500,000 strong! 500,000 strong! One of the largest marches in United States' history! One of the largest marches in United States' history! 500,000 strong.

MAN 4: We parents want to persuade society that our gay children are not acting out of defiance or self-indulgence. They're being true to their own nature. Our children are fine men and women. And we say to society, the parents and friends of lesbians and gay men will support their children.

REPORTER: Harvey, do you have a few words for KPFA?

HARVEY MILK: Come on out. Join us. Bring your friend.

REPORTER: What do you think about the turnout so far?

HARVEY MILK: Well, it's never enough, never enough, never enough.

We must destroy the myths once and for all, shatter them. We must continue to speak out. And most importantly, most importantly, every gay person must come out.

[CROWD CHEERING]

As difficult as it is, you must tell your immediate family. You must tell your relatives. You must tell your friends, if indeed they are your friends. You must tell your neighbors. You must tell the people you work with. You must tell the people in the stores you shop in.

[CROWD CHEERING]

And once they realize that we are indeed their children and we are indeed everywhere, every myth, every lie, every innuendo will be destroyed once and for all. Once you do, you will feel so much better.

And I ask people all over this country to do one thing-- come out! Come out, America! Come out!

[CROWD CHEERING]

JIMMY: Good morning, baby.

BUDDY: Huh! This whole day has been a rush.

JIMMY: I noticed that. Yeah.

BUDDY: Anyway. Hello.

JIMMY: Hi.

BUDDY: We're here.

JIMMY: We are here, and we are queer.

BUDDY: And I've got great news for you. Romanovsky and Phillips are going to be here tonight at the University of Houston. And we're going to be giving away some tickets to that show here in just a little bit. Also, I didn't bring any of the music that I had pulled out, so--

JIMMY: Oh, that's nice.

BUDDY: --we're in trouble.

JIMMY: OK.

BUDDY: We're going to have to talk for hours.

JIMMY: They're used to this.

BUDDY: Huh?

JIMMY: Our friends are used to this.

BUDDY: They are?

JIMMY: So what have you been up to today? I was down in Galveston. And I kind of missed out on what was going on in Houston.

BUDDY: Ron and Paul were here--

JIMMY: What?

BUDDY: --about two hours ago.

JIMMY: No kidding!

BUDDY: Yeah. We're going to talk to them here in a little bit on the show. Also, very special--

JIMMY: They came here to the station?

BUDDY: Yeah.

JIMMY: And I missed it?

BUDDY: Yeah. They gave me some tickets. So we're going to give away some tickets here in a little.

JIMMY: All right.

BUDDY: Also, we've got a very, very special group for you that's going to have a lot of information for you. And it means a whole lot to me, this program, because 17-- oh, I don't know. When I was 17 years old-- how many years ago was that? Don't tell me.

JIMMY: OK.

BUDDY: My mom and dad kind of said, bye, and I left the house because they didn't like having a faggot for a son. And they still haven't accepted the fact that I'm gay and proud of myself and happy with my life. But there's a group that could help them if they would only reach out. And a lot of times parents just don't know how to accept us because they are under just as much pressure as we are under, sometimes, if not more. So a group is here in Houston, called Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, right?

JIMMY: PFLAG.

BUDDY: And they're going to be with us this morning and talk about their group. And we're going to have a lot of fun. We're going to be giving away tickets to Romanovsky and Phillips concert tonight. In fact, Ron and Paul are going to come in a little bit on tape and do that. And I hope Roger goes and gets the CDs that we want to play, or we're not going to be able to play anything.

JIMMY: Are you listening, Roger?

BUDDY: He's not. Anyway, this is *After Hours* radio, celebrating life from the heart of the Montrose. Oh, by the way, I still haven't got back to HPD yet.

JIMMY: What?

BUDDY: We can rag the police department.

JIMMY: That has been two months now. What is the deal here?

BUDDY: Guess what? I left the CDs at home. We broke the cord to the CD player. I found something to play.

JIMMY: I could pull off a fingernail and you could kind of spin it around.

BUDDY: Let's play this. We'll be back in just a little bit. PFLAG's here, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. It's going to be a great show. 526-4000, that's the number to call if you have anything to say. And Ron and Paul is going to be here in just a little bit to give you some tickets. So hang on, kids.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Bobby Goldsboro and me and God or "Watching Scotty Grow," do you remember that?

JIMMY: I sure do.

BUDDY: Oh, that helps a little, not a lot.

JIMMY: OK, well.

BUDDY: Trying on Jimmy's glasses because I left my glasses at home. I left the CDs at home. I think I left Roger at home. Hey, PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, they're going to be here in just a couple of minutes, so you need to stay tuned for that. We've also got Romanovsky and Phillips. They're going to come in and give us some tickets to their concert. And they'll be back later on to talk about the show--

JIMMY: Great.

BUDDY: --talk about their career. We had a real nice chat with them here just a little bit ago at KPFT. And you're listening to *After Hours* on Pacifica Radio. We got a letter this week. Yeah. It's from a listener. I'll hold out on his name, but I wanted to share it with you guys.

It says, "Dear *After Hours*, as a new and rather young listener, I need some serious help. I've got a story like everyone else, but I feel that mine is tragic if not closer to it. I came out to my friends at the age of 13, and I realized then who to and who not to trust. Maybe a year and a half ago or two years later, I heard a song that changed the way I thought.

I heard "Hideaway" by Erasure. I thought that the way his family treated him was not the same way that mine would treat me. Boy, was I wrong? My family was always close-knit and very open-minded. At least that's what I thought. I told them on February of '86 that I was gay. And from that point on all hell broke loose.

I've been put through counselors, psychotherapists, and the church. They all told my parents the same thing. He's young and confused. And he doesn't know what he wants from life. And if that's not it, he's just trying to be the center of attention, or possibly he's hiding something and he's afraid to face reality.

Throughout this time, I've kept many friends. And all of my friends tell me to get out of here. But they also know that I don't have anywhere to go. I've been to the Covenant House, and I was treated like hell. In need of some counseling, all I got was harassed, not by all, but by most of the staff and residents. Is that fair?

I've also tried suicide three times and have run away from home. But both only lead to more trouble. I really don't need more trouble. I had one lover, and he died. We'd been going together for a year and a half. He was killed in a car accident. I was unable to attend the funeral. My parents thought we were just friends, until I told them otherwise.

They believe that they were right, and I was just begging for attention. I've never practiced my sexuality around them. I act like myself. I really have not asked much from them. But I've put up with the physical abuse and the verbal abuse, including being condemned to hell by the church and my parents.

From what I've been told that is wrong by what they believe. I know that I haven't done anything wrong, not in my eyes. I want to be accepted by someone, or more by a bunch of someones. I'm a human being. And living in the suburbs is not helping any. It's the biggest closet that I've ever seen. I need help or maybe a straitjacket.

I want to bond with other homosexuals my age, but I don't know how or if there's a group out there that meets to discuss our common problems. I'm 18 years old. And I don't go to bars. I'm not into cheap sex or thrills. And I have values and morals. And I won't break them for anyone. But I'm sick of being hurt. And I want to be loved again.

Is there a light at the end of this dark tunnel? If so, I really need help finding it. Life is too short for problems like these. I want to turn the page and start a new chapter. This chapter's too long. I want to begin fresh. Where can I meet people my own age with my sexual interest, with similar problems. I need help. Can you help me?

I need to find the light at the end of this dark tunnel. I also need to start a new chapter in my life. I know life goes on. But this life has come to an abrupt stop. Anything you can do will be greatly appreciated. I've tried to find the answers myself, but I can't. Life is just too short. Please help me. I'm begging. This is an exception to my rule about begging, but I can't handle this alone anymore."

And it's got his signature on it. Well, we called this gentleman up, and I talked to him on Friday because-- normally, we don't get involved with the people that write us.

JIMMY: Oh, that's right.

BUDDY: But this seemed like some serious stuff was going down. And he's hanging in there. And he's going to make it because not only does he have *After Hours* and *Pacifica*, he's got the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, and there are thousands and thousands of groups out there.

You may be without transportation, you may or may not be able to get to meetings like the Hatch Group, you may not be able to get to the Romanovsky and Phillips concert, but hang in there because life does get better. And if you're 18 years old and you think life is too short, well, let me tell you. It's not

JIMMY: It keeps going on and on and on.

BUDDY: Anyway.

JIMMY: But it does get better.

BUDDY: This is just for you. OK? It's 24 minutes after 12:00. You're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Right now on *After Hours*, we're talking to someone very, very special. You've been listening to their music for at least two years on this program and for many, many years here on KPFT and throughout the world, right?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Well, at least throughout the country.

BUDDY: And this is?

RON We don't get a lot of airplay in Afghanistan--

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Oh, come on.

RON Soviet Union.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Tell them who's here? You want to tell them? Who are you?

RON We are Romanovsky and Phillips.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: I'm just kidding. Ron and Paul, better known as Romanovsky and Phillips are here. And you guys are going to be in concert tonight at the University of Houston, right?

RON Yep.

ROMANOVSKY:

PAUL PHILLIPS: Right.

BUDDY: Kathy is shaking her head. Yes, yes.

RON Yeah.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Sponsored by Metaphysics and the Gay and Lesbian Students Association at the University of--

PAUL PHILLIPS: That's Metaphysiques.

BUDDY: Metaphysiques? Is that "physique" like in-- [SLURP], that kind of physique?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Metaphysiques.

BUDDY: So where are you guys out on your tour? Near the end, or the beginning?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Last.

BUDDY: Huh, last?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Last. I don't know. We just flew back here today from San Diego.

RON We're about 3/4 of the way through it. We left in September.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Really?

RON And we've been driving all over the country.

ROMANOVSKY:

PAUL PHILLIPS: We have seven more concerts.

RON Yeah. We did about 35 or 40--

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Isn't that kind of--

RON --so far.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: --physically draining?

RON Just a little.

ROMANOVSKY:

PAUL PHILLIPS: Sure. Sure. Why do you think we're so dull right now?

BUDDY: Never mind.

PAUL PHILLIPS: Kind of sarcastic tonight. It's kind of road-weary. No we're really happy to be here. We're just happy with where we are.

BUDDY: We're going to have a good show tonight?

RON Oh, yeah.

ROMANOVSKY:

PAUL PHILLIPS: Actually, we were thinking that this would be one of those places where we could do one of our bad shows because they're really a lot easier to do, really.

BUDDY: How many tickets are left to sell, about 10,000?

PAUL PHILLIPS: I think they have sold out.

RON I thought it was sold out. What do you mean?

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: It's not sold out?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Kathy, you lied. You lied.

BUDDY: Kathy, is it sold out? We do have tickets, by the way. But Ron and Paul will be at the Houston room at the University Center on the campus of U of H tonight at what time?

PAUL PHILLIPS: It starts at 7:30.

BUDDY: And [? Marion ?] [? Pandino-- ?]

PAUL PHILLIPS: Yeah.

BUDDY: --of the Comedy Workshop is going to be opening for you?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Yeah, we can't wait.

RON She's wonderful.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: She's pretty funny.

PAUL PHILLIPS: Yeah, we've heard.

BUDDY: You've heard?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Yeah, we've heard of it that she's very funny.

BUDDY: She's [INAUDIBLE] now. You want to hear her step in and say--

PAUL PHILLIPS: We've heard her tapes, too. She's very--

BUDDY: She is funny.

PAUL PHILLIPS: --funny. She's very funny.

BUDDY: But the show starts at 7:30 tonight at U of H. And if you'd like to win a pair of tickets-- can we give away two tickets?

PAUL PHILLIPS: Sure.

BUDDY: 526-4000 or 526-KPFT. And if you stay tuned coming up at-- well, I don't know. Here in a little bit we'll be talking to Ron and Paul at length. So you're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT. What song do you guys want me to play while they're calling in for the tickets? One of yours? One of yours?

PAUL PHILLIPS: I'd rather you play one of ours. But if you have a preference.

BUDDY: You have a favorite?

RON Oh, jeez. I don't know.

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: Well, pick something.

RON Pick something? How about something from the latest album. Why don't you play "Straightening Up The House?"

ROMANOVSKY:

BUDDY: All right. Here's Romanovsky and Phillips and "Straightening Up The House" on *After Hours*. 526-4000, 526-KPFT. And caller number 10. Is that right, Jimmy?

JIMMY: Right.

BUDDY: We'll get the tickets to Ron and Paul's concert. 526-4000, 526-KPFT. Caller number 10, call us up and go to Romanovsky and Phillips with us tonight, kids.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

JIMMY: Whoa!

BUDDY: Do we have a winner?

JIMMY: We have a winner.

BUDDY: OK, hang on, John. We'll be with you here in just a second. OK?

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Romanovsky and Phillips live tonight at the University of Houston. You can still get tickets, I guess, at the door, huh?

JIMMY: Oh, yeah. \$10.

BUDDY: What? What? What?

JIMMY: We have a winner.

BUDDY: Oh, OK. You made me nervous when you start-- Hello, John?

JOHN (ON PHONE): Yeah. How are you?

BUDDY: Hey, you want to go see Ron and Paul tonight?

JOHN (ON PHONE): I'd love to.

JIMMY: Not a problem.

BUDDY: Well, we got two tickets for you.

JOHN (ON PHONE): Right.

BUDDY: Who are you taking with you? Me?

JOHN (ON PHONE): No, no, no.

BUDDY: I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding.

JOHN (ON PHONE): [INAUDIBLE] a finger, [INAUDIBLE]?

BUDDY: No. What part of the city are you calling from?

JOHN (ON PHONE): I'd say kind of West U.

BUDDY: Well, the show starts at 7:30.

JOHN (ON PHONE): Great.

BUDDY: And it's going to be at the University Center, right?

CREW: That's right.

BUDDY: Do you know where that is?

JOHN (ON PHONE): Sure do.

BUDDY: OK. We'll be wearing black and blue KPFT jackets. So you're going to have to hunt me up in front of the place because there's not any other way you can get your ticket.

JOHN (ON PHONE): Oh, really, you're going to be out front, huh?

BUDDY: Well, I will be standing on the corner.

JIMMY: He's always out front.

BUDDY: I'll be standing on the corner trying to pick up a man before the show, but you know.

JIMMY: Do you have a hairy chest?

JOHN (ON PHONE): Me? No. Well, a little.

JIMMY: Hey, hey, hey, John.

JOHN (ON PHONE): Hey, listen. My mom's been listening. So hi, Mom.

BUDDY: Hi, Mom. Hey, listen.

JOHN (ON PHONE): I'm listening.

BUDDY: You meet us in front of the auditorium tonight. We'll be there between 7:15 and 7:30.

JOHN (ON PHONE): Is this Jimmy? Who am I talking to?

BUDDY: This is Buddy. But we'll all be there together. And we'll have on black and Blue KPFT jackets.

JIMMY: What will he wear?

BUDDY: You just walk up to us and say, hi, I'm John, and give me those tickets.

JIMMY: Yeah, I'm Jim. I'm the cute one.

JOHN (ON PHONE): OK, Jim.

JIMMY: Not a problem.

BUDDY: Well, listen. Thanks for calling. And thanks for winning.

JIMMY: John, hold on a minute, OK?

BUDDY: Yeah, hang on a minute. We'll see you at the show tonight.

JOHN (ON PHONE): OK.

BUDDY: All right. Hang on. Don't hang up. Well, that was fun.

JIMMY: Yeah.

BUDDY: Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays are going to be here in about four minutes. So stay with us. We've got some new music--

JIMMY: We do.

BUDDY: --from Nanci Griffith.

JIMMY: Oh, yeah.

BUDDY: It's her new album *Storms*. And the song is called-- where are my glasses? "Listen to the Radio."

JIMMY: [INAUDIBLE], maybe.

BUDDY: Well, I don't want those. The song is called "Listen to the Radio." PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, will be here in just a second. So hang with us, kids. It's going to be really nice. Here's Nanci Griffith somewhere. Is she there? There she is. Come on in here, Nanci and say a few words. *After Hours* on KPFT.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Nanci Griffith from the album *Storms* and "Listen to the Radio." You've always got a friend on KPFT Pacifica radio 90.1 FM. *After Hours*, celebrating live from the heart of Montrose. PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, coming up in just a second, so hang on.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ANNOUNCER: Get ready. Any second now, you can run to the fridge and tank up before *After Hours* returns here on KPFT Houston, celebrating life in the heart of Montrose. OK. Get ready. Go!

NARRATOR: If you only had a moment and the world was listening, what would you say about peace? You could say peace is inevitable, that war will end, either through decision or destruction. We have a choice. For the first time in history, it is possible to view the entire planet with all its human diversity as it truly is.

Our world is one world. Peace is more than just an end to war. Conflicts just as deadly are raging on hidden battlefields in our hearts and minds. Let's talk peace, real peace, racial, religious, social, economic, personal peace. Peace is possible because it, too, begins in the heart. Of thought for peace from the Baha'i faith.

CHERRY WOLF: Hi. I'm Cherry Wolf.

POKEY And I'm Pokey Anderson.

ANDERSON:

CHERRY WOLF: We host a show on Friday mornings called *Breakthrough*. It's a show about women and the things we hold most dear, including our love for each other.

POKEY Tune in to *Breakthrough* every Friday morning from 8:00 to 11:00 and hear what you've been missing.

ANDERSON:

[MUSIC PLAYING]

ANNOUNCER: Welcome back to the new gospel revival hour. Ha ha ha. Gotcha! Seriously, folks. It's *After Hours* on KPFT Houston, celebrating life in the heart of Montrose. And now I'm handing it over to the collective to see what they do with it.

BUDDY: What are they going to do with it?

JIMMY: I'm afraid to ask.

BUDDY: Well, here we are. This has been one hell of a week.

JIMMY: It has been. It really has.

BUDDY: I'm still waiting for HPD to call me back. They want me to come tinkle in a plastic bottle.

JIMMY: Yeah, well-- when?

BUDDY: They'll lose that.

CREW: But they want to watch you.

JIMMY: They're doing a background check. And I don't blame them. You're pretty suspicious. I mean, I only worked for them for 4 and 1/2 years.

BUDDY: Yeah. I don't know. That's kind of scary. Anyway, we talk a lot about our parents and--

JIMMY: Well--

BUDDY: --how much they mean to us.

JIMMY: --the two of us talk a lot about the lack of our parents.

BUDDY: Yeah, that's true. And I guess it hurts a lot more around the holidays because when you have mom and dad living down the street, as I did several years ago when I live in Arkansas, and you drive by the house and you don't stop and say hi, or when you do stop and you don't have much to talk about, or you call them up on the phone and you talk about the weather and your job and-- that's about it.

And you want to really tell them what's going on in your life, but you can't because they really don't want to hear it. It's hard to deal with. And we've talked a lot about our families, or the lack of them, and how much it hurts. And it really hurts around the holidays, for me, anyway. Because there's nothing more that I'd like to go to my mom and dad's and spend the Christmas holidays with them or even Thanksgiving. I think I hate Thanksgiving most of all.

JIMMY: Why is that?

BUDDY: Because there's no tree, and there's no presents, and there's only that damn turkey in the middle of the table. And you're supposed to have your family sitting around and enjoying life. And that doesn't always happen. And a lot of times, we, as gay and lesbian people, get cheated from our families.

But we've talked with parents all across the land, and especially here in Houston. And we've heard a lot from the parents that sometimes it's just as hard for them to accept and deal with our homosexuality as it is with us because parents are faced with the same society that we deal with.

JIMMY: That's right.

BUDDY: Except, where they're children. And somewhere, they know that they've done something wrong, and they're blaming themselves. In my family's case, that's how it was.

JIMMY: Let's hear from some experts on that.

BUDDY: Yeah. Every family's not that way. Now, I remember. Roger, my roommate, after listening to *After Hours* for several months and Harvey Milk screaming "you got to come out, you've got to come out," ran over to Bel Air to tell his mom and dad that he was gay. And he sat them all down around the table and burst into tears and cried for about 45 minutes.

I guess they thought he was going to tell them he was dying or something. They didn't know what was coming up. But he finally told them. And it was like, yeah, well, so what? It didn't turn out to be any big deal. And fortunately, for a lot of us, it's not a big deal. Now if you are a parent and you are dealing with your child's homosexuality, there are groups out there that can help you.

And one of those groups is PFLAG, which is Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. In fact, we heard one of the representatives speaking at the beginning of the show this morning-- he spoke at the March on Washington in 1979. And joining us in the studio this morning is Ronalyn? Right? Is that right?

RONALYN: That's right.

BUDDY: And you're president of PFLAG?

RONALYN: I'm president-elect. That will be in January.

BUDDY: Also, David is here. And Paula. Right?

RONALYN: Right.

BUDDY: And I saw you-- where did I see you? At the parade?

RONALYN: At the Gay Pride Parade in June.

BUDDY: Last year?

RONALYN: This year.

BUDDY: This past year. You all are going to have to huddle. So let's move those chairs up a little bit. Jimmy.

JIMMY: Yes, sir.

BUDDY: Y'all get in a nice little huddle, so everybody--

JIMMY: Not a problem.

BUDDY: Well, you can even move that around because I've turned that off.

JIMMY: OK.

BUDDY: Ronalyn, can you tell us what PFLAG is, and where they came from?

RONALYN: Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to just read this.

BUDDY: That's quite all right.

RONALYN: This is PFLAG statement of position.

BUDDY: OK.

RONALYN: And it says, "We, who are parents, friends, and relatives of lesbian and gay persons, have learned that they come from families from all corners of the Earth, from every culture, religious, and ethnic group. Their homosexual orientation is neither chosen nor something they are taught to be, and it is not just a stage they are going through.

There is no pattern to the kind of families they come from, dominant or submissive mothers, weak or strong fathers, single-parent homes, or model families. A gay son or daughter may be an only child, the youngest, middle, or oldest child with siblings who are not gay.

We, who are parents, have learned to be free from any burden of guilt for our children's sexual orientation. And we recognize the expression of love as natural for them and moral. We view rejection of a child by his or her family as a tragedy. We share this stance with you because we are members of close-knit families, who are pro-family in every sense and who affirm traditional values.

We respect the truth, recognize the reality of individual differences, honor the right of each person to be who he/she authentically is. We love and affirm our children with pride and are committed to their entitlements to full civil and human rights." This particular statement of position was adopted just this October, the October of this year.

JIMMY: Isn't that a beautiful piece?

BUDDY: Kind of leaves you speechless.

JIMMY: Yeah.

BUDDY: That's really pretty.

RONALYN: And that's basically what we are. We are a support group for parents, friends, siblings, gay persons themselves, whoever needs us or wants to join us. And we try to educate others beyond the group themselves about speaking out.

BUDDY: Ron, do you have a gay or lesbian child or--

RONALYN: A son.

BUDDY: A son?

RONALYN: And a brother.

BUDDY: Did he tell you?

RONALYN: And a stepbrother.

BUDDY: Did your son tell you?

RONALYN: Yes. Well, yes, he did.

BUDDY: Do you remember that day?

RONALYN: Yes, I do. And as a matter of fact, it-- he had a little surgery, and his doctor told me first. And then John David did, or John did after that. And it wasn't really a shock to me, although I hadn't thought about it. It hadn't occurred to me, yet it wasn't a shocker.

BUDDY: Jimmy, I was digging the other day in a box of junk that I had at the house. And I found a diary that I had when I was in the seventh or eighth grade.

JIMMY: No kidding.

BUDDY: And one of the last entries for the year was something like it's been a great year, and this friend moved away. A male friend had moved away from the neighborhood, and I really missed him a lot. And my grandfather had died, and so on and so forth.

But I remember writing-- or I don't remember, but written in the diary-- I had written I hope that my children love and respect me as much as I love and respect my parents. So even then I was looking forward to that home that I was never going to have. And I don't understand why. I hear all the time people say, well, you chose to be gay. That's not true.

Because for me, for me, I would much rather have been with a wife and had some children, because I love children, to play with and have to take to the park and to the zoo, and have a house with a picket fence and a little neighborhood and fit in. My God, who would want all the suffering that you and I have been through? And I would give anything--

JIMMY: Yeah. But I can't imagine my life any other way.

BUDDY: I can't either, but I would give anything to have my mother and dad here this morning, as part of your group.

RONALYN: Well, we would certainly love for them to be here.

BUDDY: They grew up in Arkansas in a real small town, where there were like 200 or 300 people. Do you think when you grow up has anything to do with how you accept your children?

RONALYN: I don't think it has anything necessarily to do with how you accept your children. I think certainly, in larger cities, people might have a chance to become more enlightened than in smaller cities. I have found that the persons who seem to have the most trouble with it, the parents who have the most trouble with it, are those who are very ingrained in their church.

Religion seems to play a big part. Those who don't necessarily go to church-- not atheists or anything, but those who aren't really involved totally in the church seem to be able to accept it more. So I think that those who take the Bible literally, maybe, have more problems.

BUDDY: Or those who think they take the Bible literally.

RONALYN: Who think they do.

BUDDY: Because I love it when those people call. That's where I throw you know John 3:16 out. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him." It doesn't just say gay, straight, Protestants, Baptists, Catholic, whosoever. And a lot of people would love to scratch that word out.

But my favorite is when you get back to the back and Jesus was talking to the apostles and they said, what's the greatest commandment? And he said, well, the greatest commandment is, "Hear O Israel-- the Lord our God is one Lord." And the second one is to love thy neighbor as yourself. And I don't know of very many Christian people that do that.

Not the Christian people that I've had call us. They tell us to read the Bible. I wish they'd read it and take it literally. And I'm dealing with a kid now that lives up in-- where does he live? In Kingwood, I think, a Kingwood edition. He's 32 years old, and he just can't wait to get married because he knows that's going to straighten him out, and his church is going to straighten him out, and his pastor's going to straighten him out. And he's just in for a world of misery. If he gets married and doesn't try to pursue his own life.

RONALYN: Well, not only he, but his future wife and future children.

BUDDY: I was engaged, Jimmy, one time, did you know that?

JIMMY: No.

BUDDY: Yes, honey. And called it off like three days before the wedding. Because I used to drop her off and go to the bar and pick up a man. Her father was almost like beat the crap out of me. Yeah. I'll tell you that story someday. Paula, how did you get involved in PFLAG? What does PFLAG mean to you?

PAULA: Well, PFLAG means a lot of things to me. I got involved with it in a natural extension because my mom had been involved with it for many years in another city-- actually, one of the original chapters about 14 or so years ago. I had come out of my closet about 20 years ago and didn't have the good fortune of this supportive group at hand.

But later on in coming out to my mother and in my brother, who was also gay, coming out to my mother, she found this group, maybe, through Dear Abby columns, which is a typical media representation for us in a positive way. Or who knows how other why she found out? But she got involved.

And she worked out all of the questions in her mind so that my brother and I were happy and comfortable and well-adjusted people. And she learned that everything about us and about our world was OK. And she gained a lot of support for herself in being involved with other people in the same connection.

Anyway, several years ago after a child that I had was a little bit older, and I had a little bit more time to participate in a service organization, I exposed myself to some of the then current members of PFLAG and gradually got pulled into the web of participation, attendance, and about three years ago, started coming to the meetings fairly regularly.

And I always used to think about the wonderful tales my mother would tell of going to the national conventions, which have been going on now for eight years. And the camaraderie that was felt, the immediate and automatic surrogate family attachments both from the parents' perspective as well as the children's perspectives. And it was a warm and loving atmosphere for a few days every year in addition to the monthly chapter involvements.

And I wanted a piece of that action. I was 2,000 miles away from my mom and my brother. My father couldn't comfortably accept our homosexuality. And in fact eight years ago, when I arrived in Houston just shortly after he died. So he was not able to participate in a parental positive fashion for us.

But I was encouraged and further motivated by my mom's desire to be involved in our lives and not be screamed out and shut out from what was going on with us.

BUDDY: So you've been involved with PFLAG for how long?

PAULA: Actively for almost three years now.

BUDDY: David, what about you? How did you get mixed up with PFLAG?

JIMMY: He's obviously not a parent.

BUDDY: You're not a parent?

DAVID: No, I'm not a parent. Now, I've been involved, I guess, about a year. I got involved basically because I'd visited Denver and visited the Denver chapter. And there's-- this was very, very large, and I felt a lot of support. Unlike the other people that are here right now, a mother and a daughter that's out to their mother, I'm not out to my parents.

And I think my feeling in joining PFLAG was to find that sense of support from a parental group. And that's the nice thing about the group is that it meets the needs of all the people that do come. And that's, I guess, the reason I joined it.

BUDDY: So do you want to come out to your family?

DAVID: I'm not quite ready yet. I guess I go by the basic philosophy that at least right now, I know my parents. And just like I have my right to privacy, my parents have theirs, too. And I live my life as best I can. And right now, I've just decided that it's not quite ready quite yet.

JIMMY: You're doing fine.

BUDDY: What Jimmy? Why are you pointing fingers at me?

JIMMY: I'm sitting here thinking, oh, my god, Harvey is going to come on and just--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

[LAUGHTER]

JIMMY: --screaming, come out! Come out!

DAVID: Well, I think it's very individual. And that's the one thing nice. Sometime I certainly will-- my feeling is if my parents ever asked me, I certainly would tell them. And I don't tell them any lies. But they haven't asked. And I think that at this time, that's the best for me.

BUDDY: Ronalyn, you said that you were surprised--

JIMMY: You don't need to apologize for that. That's the best for you. And that's the best for you.

BUDDY: Ronalyn, you said that your son told you and you were surprised. Do parents not know?

RONALYN: Well--

BUDDY: I didn't play with dolls and put on makeup when I was a kid.

JIMMY: I did.

BUDDY: But do parents not know? You're a mom.

RONALYN: No, a lot of parents don't know. I didn't know. I'm kind of in my own little world most of the time, anyway. So that's probably my problem. But no, I really didn't. It never occurred to me. I never thought about it. John dated a lot.

BUDDY: Girls?

RONALYN: Yeah, girls.

BUDDY: Your son dated girls a lot?

RONALYN: Girls a lot. And so it just never really occurred to me. I didn't think about it. So it was a surprise. Yes, it was. And not an unhappy surprise, but nonetheless a surprise.

BUDDY: You all have a hugging chapter where you can just go and get a hug from a mom and dad if you don't have one?

RONALYN: You can get a hug for me anytime, anytime.

BUDDY: What did say?

PAULA: It's a family-oriented group. And after coming one or two times, even if you hadn't been so inclined yourself, people start offering their arms and wrap themselves around you in family hugs before you get out of the door. And the basic requirement is at least three to six hugs a day anyway to survive in this world. And--

BUDDY: Everybody needs that.

PAULA: --we get at least three to six in the number of members who attend on our monthly meetings. So you get lots of surrogate children and family members.

BUDDY: We ran into that a lot when the NAMES Project Quilt came. I think I was engulfed, I guess, by more families wanting to share love, particularly parents who had lost their children, and either knew and accepted too late or didn't know or found out too late. And those parents were really reaching out. And the love and support from them was just incredible. The Ewings come to mind.

JIMMY: Yes, absolutely.

BUDDY: Mr. and Mrs. Ewing. And their son was so active and so involved. But they miss their son as much as I miss my mom and dad. And what's sad is there are so many of us that haven't died. But as far as-- I don't want to say as far as we're concerned, but the way life is our families are dead to us. And it hurts a lot.

JIMMY: Yes. And it does hurt a lot. And some of us cope in different ways. Some of us draw in PFLAG or the Switchboard or have surrogate families, like me.

BUDDY: You do?

JIMMY: Yes.

BUDDY: Just giving you a hard time.

JIMMY: I know that.

BUDDY: It's two minutes after 1:00. And you're tuned into KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. We're speaking to Ronalyn?

RONALYN: Ronalyn.

BUDDY: Who is-- I'm having trouble with the name, but I always do that. And Ronalyn is president-elect of PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays. Also in the studio with us this morning Paula and David. Paula, do you have a title or are you just--

PAULA: I'm the vice president.

BUDDY: The vice president. Elect or are you sworn-in?

PAULA: No, this is my second year that I've been reelected to. And I recently attended the National Convention, which was held in Novi, which is a suburb of Detroit, Michigan, and came back with an additional title, which I'd like to speak about a little bit later on in the program.

BUDDY: OK. How would parents get in touch with PFLAG? I know one parent in particular that's very involved with KPFT, whose son is gay. And I believe he lives in Las Vegas or somewhere out West. And we spoke the other day. And he wasn't aware of PFLAG. How could parents can get in touch with your group?

RONALYN: Well, we have a hotline number, which is 952-2525. And It is hooked up to an answering machine, so it's answered all the time. And we certainly return every phone call. So they can call that number. We also have a post office box, which is post office box 31853 Houston, 77231.