

[THEME MUSIC]

- (SINGING) Afterhours, afterhours.

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[MUSIC - "STAR-SPANGLED BANNER"]

- It's a good question. Where are we going to live when we trash this place?

- That's another thing we haven't talked about tonight.

- Oh, well.

- Trashing this earth. And if you think dropping all the bombs isn't trashing this earth--

- Not only that. Did you see that he dropped that oil in the Persian Gulf over there?

- Incredible.

- You know what's even incredibler, incredibler-ler-ler than that, is that at one time, they were dumping toxic waste and barrels into the ocean?

- Yeah. And that was the norm. That was the accepted thing to do.

- They took the toxic waste out in the ocean and barrels and dropped it in. Like it's poison, but it's in those barrels and it'll be OK on the bottom of the ocean. We got on this roll a while ago and I was going to play this song, I'll do it now for Stephen Little.

I was talking about my grandfather dying. And I wasn't going to play it, but I'll go ahead and play it because it's a song I play every time I talk about things like this. I also want to play it for--

- It's your song. I've got my song.

- Hand me that twit, would you please? Not that twit, this one. I also want to play it for someone that I didn't know personally. His name was Aaron Shannon who died on Friday, January the 25th. And he was lovers with a friend of mine. Let's see. Stephen Little, I couldn't think of his name, also died last week.

And Steve Little was the young man who was fired from Randalls because there was a rumor that a friend of someone that he knew might have aids, so Randalls fired him since they're a homophobic food store. Well that's an old Randalls.

- Also what isn't talked about lately is that Steve and Fred were both instrumental in curbing queer-bashing in the Montrose. In fact, when he was on the show, that's what they were talking about, the queer-bashing going on and steps to avoid it.

- Yeah, because they didn't take it. They got beat up in front of their house and chased the folks down. But anyway, Steven died and Aaron died. And although I didn't know Aaron, I know Rodney. And Rodney's having a pretty tough time in life right now, as we all are I guess. So we'll play this for Aaron and for Stephen and mostly for my grandfather because somebody called during the news and said, I'm sorry that your family so screwed up. Well, I am too, but that's OK too.

I remember as I said earlier that my grandfather was someone who loved us as a kid. And I remember going to his house every summer in Tennessee in Memphis, that's where he lived. And as we would drive away, my mother would say, oh, this is the last time we'll see him alive. And she just cried and carried on. And here he lived 97 wonderful years and had a wonderful life.

And he was at my father's funeral last April, and they said that he really doesn't have his mind, he really doesn't know what's going on. And as we sat in the funeral home, he looked at me and he said, that's my son over there and I sure do hate to give him up. He's the only son I have. And I said, yeah grandpa, I know. And he said, and you're my grandson, aren't you? And I said, yeah. And I thought to myself, well, he's really not as crazy as the family thinks he is. He knows what's going on.

And I remember at the funeral, everybody was sitting there, the family was all together, my mother and my two brothers and their families were all huddled around that family core and I was sitting over to the side watching my grandfather hold my grandmother's hand. They had been married for over 50 years. And I watched as the preacher was preaching and the family was crying as grandpa patted her hand and said, Rosie-- that's my grandma's name. Rosie, it's going to be OK.

And at the funeral when they took him out to the cemetery and got ready to do whatever it is they do there, I stood with my grandfather while they buried his only son. And he looked at me and smiled and said, buddy, it's going to be OK. And I believe he's right. And I am very, very grateful for having that time to spend with him because as is with a lot of us who are not only gay but move away from our families as we grow older and go about our own little travels in life, we were separated for many, many years.

And although I didn't get to spend a lot of time with him, I did get to spend those few moments with them at my dad's funeral to remind me that hey, everything is all right. So for all those that we've lost and for all those we're going to lose and for those poor kids in the Middle East that we bombed ourself-- it's so funny they said, well, we accidentally bombed some of our own troops. Child, do you realize how many people get killed in war or they're shot by their own folks?

It's war, baby. Bombs are going off and bullets are flying and you're just killing everybody. If you want to kind of see it in a Hollywood frame of mind, rent the movie *Born on the Fourth of July* and you'll see what I'm talking about. But in the meantime, it's going to be OK I guess.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hey. How are you?

- Oh, I think we cut him off.

- We cut you off, baby. Call back. Hey, Matt.

- Jerry, call back.

- Hey, Matt.

- Hey.

- What's on your mind, baby?

- Oh, not much. I'm sorry to hear about your grandfather.

- Yeah, you know what they say, stuff happens.

- But you know what, he sounded like a real beautiful man. And somebody like that, you never really lose.

- Yeah, that's true. That's why I didn't get so excited about it. You know what I mean? I didn't want to get all worked up about it. I went to work and I said, well, my grandfather died, and people said, oh, I'm sorry. And I said, oh no, don't worry. He had a wonderful life. He was a wonderful man, and I'm really grateful for all that.

- But I mean, with a memory like you had at your father's funeral, in any time anything goes wrong, all you have to do is remember what your grandfather said. It's going to be OK.

- Yeah, that's true.

- My mother's a real bitch and it didn't have anything to do with me being gay.

- I know. Isn't that a rip? They should send parents to parent school or something.

- Yeah. Anyway--

- And you turned out pretty damn good, I must say.

- Thanks. Maybe it's because I'm gay. But I was just going to say that you know there's a lot of folks in the gay community and there's plenty of people out there willing to point them out to us. And we should concentrate on the positive things and what we can do to correct the negatives.

- That's true.

- You bet.

- Yeah. And I served in the military for 4 and 1/2 years, and I have questions about what's going on. But I also know that while I was in the service, I realized it and the people around me realized that we were in the service so people would have the right to protest. That's what makes our country great is that people don't have to go along with the majority.

- What branch of the service were you in, Matt?

- I was in the Navy.

- Oh, really? I was in the Air Force. Was the Navy as much fun as we've heard?

- Well, I wasn't out even to myself, but I knew and everybody on the ship knew of at least seven people out of a crew of 250 people, at least seven people were open enough that everybody knew they were gay.

- How wonderful.

- And it was no big deal. Matter of fact, it was used. If you went against-- if you put somebody off or something, that's how being gay in the military is used against people is to oppress.

- It's just like at the police department. If you're out, there's not a whole hell of a lot they can do about it.

- As long as you're a good homosexual.

- Yeah, exactly. Well, we're not. Thanks for calling, baby.

- Sure.

- Hey Jerry.

- Hello.

- How are you? I'm sorry we hung up on you.

- No problem I just want to give you my condolences on your grandfather. I just enjoy listening to y'all. When you said he told you at the funeral it'll be all right, that was the last thing my dad had said to me. And that just brought back some real good memories and I wanted to thank you for that, buddy.

- Well, it's true. Everything is going to be OK.

- Well, you have a good night.

- OK.

- Peace to you, babe.

- Thanks.

- Thanks, Jerry.

- Bye-bye.

- Bye.

- 526-4000 and 526-KPFT. What are you shaking your head for? Everything's not going to be OK?

- Come on, Frank.

- Come on. Actually, it's not. I mean, we say it is, but it's not. It's not. It's not.

- It's never going to be a perfect world.

- No. So forget it.

- All right.

- Well, no. That's not the point. We can't forget it, we've got to work toward it. But as long as we know it's never going to be perfect.

- 526-4000 or 526-KPFT.

- See, I just love it when people call and they say like, well, there's plenty of people that point out the bad things and all this stuff, and they're pointing out the bad things. And they say, we never hear any good things. They're being negative about being positive. It's like so call and tell us some positive things. Don't just call and complain.

- Yeah, well, I agree. I think we should all run off to an island together. Just get naked and have sex from now on.

- Goodness.

- David.

- Yeah.
- Hi, how are you?
- All right. How are you?
- All right. What's going on?
- You've been talking about your grandfather a lot tonight and I just wanted to ask you, why is it you said you didn't go to his funeral now?
- Why?
- Yeah.
- Well, for one reason, my mother didn't call and tell me that he had died.
- So you didn't have a chance to get out there?
- He died on Sunday, and I found out that he died the day before the funeral.
- I was just wondering. It brought up a lot of thoughts about my own mother because she's been having trouble with her father all her life and we just found out that he's dying right now of cancer. And she's debating whether she should go out there and see before he dies and try and make peace with them or if she should just wait until he dies and go to his funeral because she can only afford to go out there once.
- Well, I would go but it's like I would go and beat my head against the wall at my mother's until my forehead was bloody. And she wouldn't listen, so why bother going? No, I wouldn't go.
- I think it's all an issue though of how you feel about yourself though. Do you need to reconcile with your mother or are you fine the way you are now? Do you feel good about the situation?
- That's the answer right there, because I feel good about my grandfather's life and that's all that I have to care about.
- If I'd had the same problem, I would have wanted-- for my own sake, I would have wanted to try and make some kind of amends with somebody that I didn't get along with because once they're gone, you can't say that to them anymore.
- It makes me crazy though too, this whole business with funerals and funeral homes and that financial burden and all that expense. I had this friend that his father died and as his father was dying, he said, hell, these people don't come around to see me while I'm alive. I don't want to see them when I'm dead, and they get tons of flowers. So why bother after someone's gone and they don't know?
- Baby, funerals aren't for the dead, they're for the living.
- Exactly.
- Well, as long as you have your good memories about your grandfather. I think that's enough to hold you through. And I hope that you will be feeling better about all that soon.
- Yeah, I do. Listen, thanks for calling, baby.

- OK.

- 526-4000 or 526-KPFT. Hi, baby.

- Hi, guys.

- How are you? Turn your radio down.

- Turn the radio down.

- Let me turn it down, let me turn it down.

- Turn the radio down, the radio down, turn the radio down.

- Is that better?

- Is it down?

- Yeah.

- OK.

- Much better.

- Who's this?

- I mean, you're talking about your grandfather, I had a grandmother that passed away a few years ago. And it's not just a grandmother, but a real close friend of mine died here about a year ago. I've really been grieving that for a long time since she died anyway. And what I was saying is-- you were saying it's going to be all right.

But anyway, I had one of those little deals where I felt like my grandmother touched my knee, which she used to do after all the funeral and everything, and it was like, yes, it's going to be all right. You know what I mean?

- Yep, I do because when my grandfather died, I was only 12 years old or 13 years old. I had this awful time with dealing with his death. And I had this--

- I didn't really have a hard time dealing with the death because she had pancreas cancer. And I knew that she suffered and I knew she lived her life and I realized that there was a better place. And so that's why I felt the way I did.

But while I was there at her house because that's where we stayed when we had to visit, it was like-- I was laying in the sewing room, which is where she spent most of her time anyway. I was laying there, I couldn't sleep. Laid down. I felt a touch on my knee, and that's what she used to do all the time even though there wasn't anybody there. Does it make sense?

- Yes, it does. And that's exactly what you've got.

- It's all on how you feel about it.

- The memories, the spirit of the person that's still with you.

- What part of town are you calling from?

- I'm calling from Harris County in Humble.

- In Humble. Well, thanks for calling.
- Take care up there.
- OK, you too.
- Thank you.
- 526-4000 or 526-KPFT. I guess nobody has anything to say about the war or gay rights or the lack thereof. And I guess there are no police officers who want to go to bed with me after the show.
- Or maybe at any other time. I don't know.
- One called earlier.
- One what?
- One officer called earlier.
- Yeah, right.
- And I think somebody out in the lobby got him.
- Yeah, right. Girl, I've been at the police department since 1984. There are no gay cops that are going to be calling anytime soon, so don't even worry about it.
- No, they're too busy going out to the BRB. Oops, did I say that?
- And the bars and the bars and the bookstores and everything else. Who cares if they don't have any rights? Oh, wait a minute, that's another story.
- I got something I want to do tonight before we--
- How long is it going to take?
- About 30 seconds.
- Because we're done. OK, 30 seconds. We'll start this. Go.
- We got a little confused because the extended marathon and all of that and you were going to be off last week or you had kind of thought about-- don't time me.
- You have 15 seconds.
- We were going to do a pre-Black History Month show last week by doing kind of a gay history thing. Well, forget all of that. What I want to say is--
- Your time's up. Thank you very much for bringing it to our attention.
- Wait a minute. For Black History Month, I want to do some stuff. And you know I like poetry. And the greatest one of the greatest Black poets, male poets, is Langston Hughes of the Harlem Renaissance and lived to be a pretty ripe old age. And he did a little something that I kind of like that I wanted to dedicate to you.

- Is that all?
- No, I'm going to recite it. Now, I'm not Black, so I don't have the right accent here.
- Oh boy, this could be fun.
- It is going to be pretty fun.
- Turn your recorders on. This is going to be a keeper.
- I know I'm no actor either. It's called *Still Here* by Langston Hughes. I've been scarred and battered, my hopes the wind done scattered. Snow has freezed me, sun has baked me. Looks like between them, they done try to make me stop laughing, stop loving, stop living. But I don't care because I'm still here. That's for you, baby.
- Well, that'll be \$2 for that extra time.
- Thank you.
- Hey William.
- William.
- OK, I'm here.
- Good.
- What's going on?
- Oh, what's up. I was looking at something in the paper about a service man who joined the service about 15 years ago, and he admitted that he was gay.
- Perry Watkins.
- Right. And he sued, and after about 10 years of litigation, he was given all his-- he was discharged for being gay. And after 10 years of litigation, he got all his backpay. I'm surprised you didn't bring that up.
- Oh, we've brought that up a thousand times. I guess you just haven't heard it.
- No, we've talked about that lots.
- But Perry Watkins just won a hearing in the supreme court, the United States Supreme Court.
- Yeah, we just haven't talked about it tonight.
- They said that--
- I've watched you about the last-- well, I'm not gonna pick on you. But I been listening to you for the last three or four nights.
- OK.
- Yeah, they said that they couldn't discriminate against him because he was gay.
- Because he told them.

- The reason they couldn't--
 - He was open.
 - --is because he was open about it.
 - So are you saying that any gay [INAUDIBLE] now?
 - No. No, no. That's not the precedent that's set.
 - But you said if you admit you're gay in the beginning and get in then--
 - No, you won't get in. If you admit you're gay in the beginning, you won't get in. However, if you are accepted and then come out, they cannot discharge you.
 - See, he served for 14 years. And most of that time, they knew he was gay.
 - He re-enlisted several times.
 - I'll give you another example. I went to work for the Houston Police Department in 1984, and I started doing *After Hours* in 1987. So all at once, they didn't just jump up and go, ooh, he's queer, let's get rid of him. Because I had already put in '84, '85, '86, '87, about four years of good service there. I just didn't tell them I was gay, but nobody asked either. I mean, if they'd have asked, I'd have probably have told them.
 - But how many applications do you fill out that state gay or non-gay.
 - I filled out one trying to get a job at the Harris County Sheriff's Office before I went to work for the Houston Police Department, and the seventh question on the application said, have you ever committed a homosexual act? And I put yes. And the next question was, if yes, when? And I put this morning.
- [LAUGHTER]
- That morning, huh?
 - I didn't turn in the-- I didn't turn in the application. But when I went to HPD to apply, they didn't ask if I was homosexual and they didn't ask where I slept and they didn't care that I lived in Montrose. I was honestly afraid they were going to. Because, number one, I didn't want to lie. But number two, I really needed the job because I was getting hungry.
 - That's just about as bad as when they ask the question are you Black or white.
 - It's the same thing.
 - So when you put down Black, you can just forget about it.
 - It's the same thing, but you can't hide the fact whether or not you're Black or white. But you can hide the fact that you're gay.
 - In a way, you can. Because you turn in an application-- let's say I'm Black, and I put down white. The application gets turned in and it's processed, all right?
 - But I think--

- By people who don't see you. Oh, OK.

- Well, when you show up on the job, they're going to go, mm-hmm.

- That did happen one time when I put down white. And then when they called me in for the interview, it was-- [INAUDIBLE]
interview focused on the fact that, oh, you made a mistake on your application.

- See, that's what happened. That's what happened years ago. Rosa Parks said no, and the whole Black community went to war over their rights.

- But they knew it was not right. But they looked up and knew that she was Black.

- Exactly. Nine years later after Rosa Parks said no, President Johnson signed civil rights legislation into law. That's because Black people got together, Black people marched, white people marched with the Black community. We stood together and won those rights. When the Stonewall riots happened in 1969 and the gay community said no, the gay community was hidden in the Black and Hispanic and white and all that.

- Hey, I got more thing to say. I know your time is beginning to run out.

- Well, we're running out of time real fast.

- Yeah, you're right.

- The thing that's really making me mad--

- What?

- And I wish you would comment about it, and then I'm going to hang up. So they are asking the American people to support the troops in the Mid-East, which is sort of a backhanded slap. Because they're not saying support the war. They're saying support the troops. But anybody who goes out and support the troops is actually supporting the war.

- Exactly.

- So the develop this crowd to create a rally because people think they are supporting the troops, when actually, they're supporting the war. Only way they can get people to support the war if they act like [INAUDIBLE] to get people to support the troops.
[INAUDIBLE] more to go.

- I support the troops, but I don't support the war. Thanks a lot.

- Thank you, baby.

- Kevin.

- Yes.

- How are you?

- I've listened to a lot of-- I'm doing fine. I've listened to a lot of talk shows on KPFT and I was just struck by just how nice everyone's being on this one. It makes me feel real good. Also I heard--

- They usually are rude?

- No, no, no. Well, I've heard a lot of rude talk shows. But also--

- We've gotten our share, believe me.

- They've been nice tonight.

- Well, on KPFT this week, I heard John Stockwell speak, and he's the top-ranking CIA agent ever to go public. And he was saying that George Bush set up Iraq to-- like Iraq came to the United States and asked permission to invade Kuwait.

- They did.

- Yeah. So this whole thing is set up so George Bush could, through American blood, basically create a new world order where the United States is this big policeman on the planet to make up for the fact we owe more money than anything.

- See, that did happen. They did ask, and everybody said yeah. And then after it was all over, they kind of went, whoops. Just like we sold those guns and all those bullets to Iran and then decided that it wasn't such a good deal, just like we helped Noriega--

- Now you can't even look at these news reports anymore.

- It's just like we helped Noriega fund all that drug trafficking. And then--

- Operation Just Cause.

- --just about the time he started talking, we thought that wasn't such a good idea.

- Well, he also premised it by saying that the whole war on drugs is really ridiculous and that Ronald Reagan's contras sold drugs to triple and quadruple the congressional spending.

- Exactly.

- So Ronald Reagan is like the biggest drug dealer in the country.

- Listen, they're behind the drug sales down in-- the government's behind all that.

- In the 5th Ward.

- Do you really think that there's a war on drugs?

- Well, it just amazes me. I remember cocaine in the '70s, and it was a certain amount of money. It was a rich man's drug.

- Well, don't worry, baby. We got crack now and everybody can afford it.

- Well, the funny thing is that how come something that's twice as powerful as cocaine and is supposed to be super concentrated cocaine is like \$35 and \$25 and only available in the Black community?

- 'Cause see, baby, you have to have drugs for all price ranges.

- They can sell more of it too. But anyway--

- Well, I listen to the show and I really--

- Thank you.

- Thanks for calling. What part of town are you calling from?
- Houston, of course.
- What part though?
- Spring Branch, where all the gay men are married.
- I know that's right, honey.
- OK, bye-bye.
- Bye. All the gay men are married. OK, we got to go. We'll see you next week. It's time to go and--
- And it's time for "Blues for You."
- Yeah, so stay tuned. And they've got a special--
- Where Kathleen and Terry is back.
- --super guest star will be here in a moment. So hang on. We'll see you next week.
- We love you, babies.
- Yeah, we do. Bye.

[BLUES MUSIC]

- Hi, there. This is BB King. You know, the guy who plays the guitar called Lucille? And you're listening to 90.1 FM. That is KPFT Houston, Pacifica's listener-sponsored radio. Tell 'em, Lucille.

[MUSIC - BB KING, "WHY I SING THE BLUES"]