

- Help us celebrate by tuning in to KPFT, 90.1 FM.
- Mondays at 9:00 PM.
- And there's still no card here for *Breakthrough*.
- Well, I'm just over it.
- When do they happen?
- They happen at 9:00 AM Friday morning, 9:00 to noon *Breakthrough* with Pokey Anderson and her group.
- And then this next card could win you a whole package full of goodies if you know the name of the songs and all the things because as we go into our fifth year, which we're now beginning in January, we've got all kinds of goodies to give away, including videos and books and cassettes and CDs and God knows what all we're going to throw in there.
- And all you got to do is tell us the name of the songs in the correct order and who sings them, and they're all right here on this little thing. And over the next couple of months, we'll play them so you get them all down and you'll know what to send us. And each week, we'll draw a winner and--
- Well, maybe each month. Let's not push it.
- Oh, well. Well, we'll see what we do. Who knows what we're going to do because we've got a big bag of stuff, girl. Harvey Milk videos.
- Well, Santa.
- I know. Santa, baby. Anyway, every Saturday night.
- Every Saturday night at midnight on *After Hours*, we play music. *After Hours*, every Saturday night at midnight right here on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM.
- Strike back.
- They had one too many margaritas I think. Anyway, this is *After Hours* on KPFT.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

OK. So you're here and you're queer and you're thinking, what the hell do we do now?

- Yeah. Now what? Now what? Or you're out there thinking, hey, I know I am gay or I know I am lesbian. Now what do I do about it?
- And I keep hearing these queens on the radio on Saturday night, but they're only on from midnight to 4:00 and they're gone. And they keep talking about all these groups, but I didn't write down the name of that Queer Nation-- I didn't write down that address or I didn't write down the name of that fraternity at the University of Houston that they were talking about. Or I didn't write down that women's group that means at women's space. Was that parents and friends of what? I got to tell my mom because she's been asking me, how can I find out more? And you can just pick up the phone and call 529--
- 3211.

- And you get these hateful-- and you get the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Houston, right?
- That's correct.
- And about four years ago at 2:00 in the morning, you were sitting here, right? Do you remember that really? I don't.
- I wasn't here yet.
- Do you remember that Ron? Well, that's how you got here.
- I remember I was in that little room with all those records on the wall. And we kept looking at the red light and going, OK, what do we do now?
- What was his name? Kevin somebody was here that night. And some young woman-- who's this young woman that you brought with you now? I don't know if I know her.
- I'm Rose.
- Rose? Well, you certainly are a rose. Rose and Ron from the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard of Houston. And you've kind of been here every year for the last four on the second Sunday in September. Don't you have anything better to do in September?
- I guess not. I don't know.
- Jimmy just said you guys are having training classes. So you do have something better to do.
- Well, we would have something better to do. Unfortunately, we didn't have enough people to make a class this time, so we had to cancel training. Which is a pretty sad story.
- The Gay and Lesbian Switchboard operates sort of like KPFT and *After Hours*. You guys and girls sort of do--
- We get paid very highly.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

- We're paid a lot of money.
- Rose, how long have you been with the Switchboard?
- I don't know. A couple of years, something like that.
- Ron, I know you've been there at least four years.
- I've been there since June of '86.
- Oh, jeez. So you've been there over five years.
- Why do you do it for free?
- I'm a sick mess. No. I do it because--
- That's true. That's why I'm here. Somebody asked me-- I was leaving work tonight and they said, you work all these hours. Why are you going there for free? I said because I'm sick. Crazy. No, really. Why do you do it?

- Because you're not basically. I mean, you're doing your thing, so I can't really say that to you.
- But I know what you mean. Because while few of us do, there are so many of us who don't. And they wonder and complain to us because when they call the Switchboard at 10 o'clock in the morning on a Tuesday, there's nobody there. And they don't understand that that's all volunteer folks. So if nobody volunteers, that means their phones aren't going to be answered.
- And we can't staff the phones, right.
- Right.
- So this particular class was canceled because of?
- Lack of participation. There's not enough volunteers.
- How's everything else going though with the Switchboard?
- It's going great.
- L Real good. Real fine.
- How's money these days?
- Yeah, because that's always been a concern. I know there have been--
- If that's not a personal question. But I know that last year when Ron was here, it was like a real monetary problem.
- Yeah, we were really squeaking. But we've gotten some really good donations. The Switchboard is entirely operated by donations, and we had a couple of grants that came in and some really wonderful donations. So we're all right financially. We've got a lot of plans, a lot of projects that'll be coming up pretty soon.
- Which is kind of weird now. It's kind of sad because now our budget's OK, but we're not getting enough volunteers.
- Why is that? Why do you think that is?
- I don't know. I really don't know. We're starting to think about ways to recruit and get people interested. Some people don't realize that you don't necessarily have to go through full training to get on the phones. You can actually participate with activities at Switchboard which we're going to talk about.
- There are other things to do with the Switchboard other than dealing with phones.
- Absolutely. Sure, Grant-writing committee.
- Because that's something I could not do is talk on the phone. That's why I don't answer these phones here. Because people call up and they go, my life is a living hell. I'm like, well come on over, girl. We'll go have some coffee and we'll get better. And that's a no no. You can't do that.
- Yeah. There's all kinds of things that you can do. Ron and I were talking about that. What are the different things that you can do besides answering a phone in Switchboard? Well, one of them is grant-writing, one of them is working on the PR committee--
- Some calls I'm going to die, Jimmy.
- OK. It's fine.

- Recruiting.

- Well Rose, you're working on public relations, aren't you?

- Mm-hmm.

- So who do you relate to? What about the general media? I mean we're all queers and we don't care. That's why you're here. But how are you received by 93q and PR 104 and KLOL.

- No, we're not approaching that. We're not approaching them at all. What we're doing right now is contacting all of the different organizations in the Houston area and letting them know that we're here.

- You mean gay and lesbian organizations?

- Right. Letting them know that we're here, when our training sessions are, and to try and get a handle on what they're doing because the better informed the Switchboard is about other things going on in our community, the better we can inform the callers.

- You bet.

- Yeah. So that's one of the things that we're doing--

- Well, there's a lot of different things the switchboard does. It's not just giving out bar referrals or--

- Oh, no. No.

- What do people call the Switchboard for?

- Everything. A lot of people call for information and just where things are. A lot of people contact the Switchboard during I think certain times, meaning personally certain times, like they've moved to town. They've moved to town and they don't know where things are, what to do. They've gone through some sort of change in their life where they've decided, well, maybe I need to do something with this time that I have now. And they call with kind of an idea about that but not a real clear notion of where to go with that feeling.

And people call just to talk about what's going on, they need a listening ear. And that's one of the best things that we do, is just listen to people let people just talk about whatever it is.

- Yeah. A lot of people don't have anywhere to turn to. I mean, if you're gay and you're an adolescent, you can't very well-- you usually talk to your brother or your sister about it or your parents. So Switchboard is there for that type of [INAUDIBLE].

- Yeah. Of course, we stress coming out on the show, but if you're an adolescent, if you're a teen and you're living at home, that can be dangerous. There have been cases when guys and women who came out to their parents got kicked out of the house.

- Oh, sure.

- Yeah. You can always talk to us.

- If even just to say-- it's not necessarily that they're calling because they have a problem with the fact that they're gay. I've talked to a caller who said something like, I'm in love. I just want to say to somebody I'm in love. I found this woman, I'm in love.

- That's true. Can you tell if you're in high school and not that many people know. That is something you always want to share with your friends.
- Because you're forced to lie about your feelings. We get that all the time from people that listen to the show. They call up and they're just so excited to share things with us. We get it in our mail. I think that's wonderful. What's the hardest part of being there other than just having to physically be there? I know when you sign up to work at the Switchboard on the phone, you're committed to a certain shift in a certain time, so they expect you to be there. Other than just that physical demand of having you physically there, what's the hardest part of doing switchboard work?
- I bet it's different for each person.
- OK. For you man, you do it. What do you do?
- We all have our buttons. I get very upset with people who call and want to spout religious stuff about why I shouldn't be gay. That pushes my button. And knock on wood, I have not had a suicide call, but many people at the switchboard have. And we're there for suicide prevention.
- I wasn't thinking specifically about-- for me, it's a general feeling of not being able sometimes to do enough, and that comes out of my own wanting to do everything kind of feelings. But frequently, I'll talk to somebody on the phone and I just wish that I could give them a hug or something. And you can't do that. I mean, it's a great service, but it's an entirely a phone service. And when you hang up the phone, you're never going to know what's going to happen really to that person unless they call you back and let you know how it went.
- Do people call back?
- Very infrequently. Very infrequently.
- I've had a couple.
- Have you? Good.
- And it's wonderful to get that message from another switchboard person that so-and-so called back and everything's great or I did such and such and it worked out pretty well.
- But we have to be working here, like you are talking over the air and you really don't get the chance to--
- Well, we do things here that you can't do because we just come and go, hey, life stinks. You know what I mean? When people call up and say, how's it going, you don't know how. Well, my life is a living hell.
- We call each other for that.
- Do you know what I mean? We've got the opportunity to come in and push buttons and play music just to vent our frustration. So how do you do that, Rose, when you get a particular caller who's a religious nut or they've just pulled their head out of the oven or their parents just threw them out of the house and they don't have any place. How do you deal with that?

- Well, all those scenarios are going to do-- I'm going to deal with both of those scenarios in a different way. But I think the hardest thing about switchboards sometimes is getting someone calling you with a real serious problem. And just like we were talking about, you hang up the phone, that's it. You've done everything that you can. I mean, you've listened, you've given them a referral if you can, you've invited them to call back if they need to. But the hardest thing is hanging up and then you may never hear from that person again.

And there are calls that I've taken that I still remember in the back of my mind. Sometimes I'll be going down Westheimer or something and I'll think about somebody when I look at some of the kids out on the streets and just think, God. I remember certain calls. It can be very painful. But we should talk about favorite calls too.

- Well first of all, I want to add before we get into favorite calls, it's one of the things that draws me to the switchboard, and it's that feeling of family with all switchboard volunteers.

- That's something I wanted to mention. You don't work alone, right? You've got someone with you.

- And when I've had a bad call, after that call, sometimes I may have to take the phone off the hook and turn to my partner and say, hey, we need to talk this out or I need a hug or something because I just really had a bad call.

- Yeah. And your partners, people that are there on the phones to look at you every now and then. And you have pieces of paper in front of you and you're doodling and you're writing things and your arms might be waving around. I'm an arm-waver and I'm like, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. And my partner is always there for me. She'll get up, she refills my coffee. Yeah, she's great. So there's a genuine feeling of family. It's real good.

- That's what drew me to it and that's what keeps me there.

- And you said there were high points?

- Yeah. My favorite calls are coming out calls. Those are the best. They are the best. They make you feel so good, really.

- Is it like reliving your youth again when you were that girl or?

- Actually, it's not. I wish that Switchboard would have been around when I was in high school because--

- I know what you mean. I wish this program would have been around when I was in high school.

- Same thing.

- Exactly. The Switchboard has only been around 10 years. Sometimes I think 10 years and I've been there five. But I mean, I do wish it had been around when I was first thinking about all this stuff.

- Wouldn't you like to hide and look 10 years from now at the kids that are listening to us and calling us and see where they will be in their lives? Because you know they're going to be in much better places than we are.

- Yeah. I think it's great.

- I think it's so wonderful and that's what gives us so much strength. Maybe that's why we do it. I don't know.

- Just keeping it together as best we can. That's why we do it.

- What type of person is going to volunteer for the switchboard? What kind of person is going to call KPFT? Let's talk about that in just a second.
- Yeah, we need to talk about that. As a matter of fact, we might have to interrupt you here.
- It's 526-5738 526-KPFT. We're in the middle of marathon and we're going to check with the lobby in just a second to find out what we're doing out there. But like the switchboard, we're here and we need your help. And three times out of the year, we come to you and say, please call us and give us a simple little pledge of support. We take your Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Optima, and I'm not going to go into all that because I just don't feel like saying it.
- Cashing checks. And depending on what your pledge is, you may receive a goodie.
- Yeah. Or you might get two goodies with Ron here. Anyway, if you're out listening and you want to come by, we're at 419 Levitt one block south of Westheimer and three blocks east of Montrose. And we're waiting to hear from you. And we're talking to the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard and we'll be back in just a second.
- Hi, this is Ron Romanovsky.
- And this is Paul Phillips. We're better known as Romanovsky and Phillips.
- If you haven't been listening to *After Hours*, what kind of self-respecting faggot are you anyway?
- Ladies and gentlemen, the following is a subliminal commercial.
- Hi. I'm Dr. Totsy-Hotsy. First off, I want to say I have nothing against disgusting sodomizing homosexuals.
- Kill them all.
- Even though my mother hates them, I'm a doctor, so I can maintain neutral perspective.
- They are evil.
- I have nothing against KPFT, but if it were any good, wouldn't a reputable media mogul buy it? If you care about the health of Houston, don't call 526-738
- 526-KPFT.
- And pledge your support.
- Long distance, 1-800-333-KPFT.
- Instead, support my group, ATLP.
- Help eliminate lesbians and faggots.
- And make Houston a safe place to live again.
- And the Blacks and the Spanish.
- Don't call 526-5738.
- And the Democrats.

- I can't stand it. They make me afraid.
- Afraid of myself.
- Don't call 526-5738.
- 526-KPFT.
- If you don't support KPFT, maybe they'll go away.
- Then I'll be safe.
- OK, Louise. Come here hurry. I have a news rush, I have a news break. Fast breaking story. See, I can't ever get Jimmy in here when things are happening. Louise, what is it? What's the urgency of the newsroom? What's going on? Hurry. What is that news. We have a fast breaking story. I heard something about Queer Nation.
- Oh, well there's a protest going on over on Kirby Drive.
- When is that?
- At the House of Pies right now.
- What are they doing? Are you serious?
- It seems as though the House of Pies has decided to continue distributing the green sheet.
- It's hateful.
- And to think of all the gay and lesbian people who work at House of pies and who-- OK, own. Did I say that? And not only that, but partake of their goodies--
- So we have a word that Queer Nation is down there now.
- They are down there, and they will continue through the bar rush.
- OK. So we'll be back. We may get somebody from Queer Nation. Just hang on, we'll let you know what's happening.
- How much of a break do you get?
- Mary, it's over. How much of a break do we get? Is anybody on the mic out there?
- Richard is on the mic out there.
- You're kidding.
- We've had a question before we go to Richard if you don't mind.
- What's the question?
- Someone asked what the switchboard number was.
- Well, Mary will give it in a minute. What is that number?

- 529-3211.

- We give that so many times. Richard?

- Yes.

- There he is.

- What's going on out there? Anything? If the phones don't ring, we're going to be really hacked off.

- Well, we need to hear some phones ringing now, but however, we do have a number-- we have five pledges here.

- Oh, good.

- So who do we need to thank and all that kind of good stuff?

- Well, we have a Mr. Anonymous here first, and we have Dale, and we have Suzanne, and Chris with a very generous \$150 pledge which entitles him to the listing in the next program.

- And a date with Buddy.

- No.

- Oh, no, no, no, no.

- Well Chris, wait a minute. Are you harry and real man and like-- what else Richard before we get into trouble?

- And we have a pledge from Cindy, one of our dedicated listeners here.

- Thank you.

- And it brings us up to \$330.

- \$330.

- We're off to a pretty good start.

- Well, we're off to a pretty lousy start. It's only like 1:30 in the morning. I need more money than that.

- Well, we need to hear the phones ring. We need to get people to call 526-5738.

- 526-5738 or 526-KPFT. We'll be talking more about marathon in just a minute. If you see those Queer Nation people come by, grab somebody, Richard. Tell them that we want to know about this protest. We'll be checking back with you later, OK?

- OK.

- Bye. Hang up on that, Quinn.

- Can you believe that?

- That's kind of exciting, isn't it?

- Yeah, it is.

- Don't you just love Queer Nations?
- Yes, I do. Can I just say I went to one of their meetings--
- No.
- I've said it, I've said it. They're great, they're great. I liked it.
- Yeah, I do. We've had a lot of people in here and over four years. Different people starting different groups, and you have them once and think, oh, that's nice, and then you never hear from them again. You see them and it's funny--
- We had one group that folded in the lobby before they went on. I am not kidding.
- Who was that group?
- It's true. We had a group come over to be on and they canceled out. They just folded up practically. But we've been screaming and bitching about activism in Houston and how it's not here or wasn't here.
- It is now.
- And then when Paul Broussard was killed on July the 4th, we heard well there's going to be a Queer Nation rally and I thought, oh Christ, another rally. Who cares. So I took off work to go down there. I figured there'll be like 50 people and they were like 1,000.
- Wasn't that incredible?
- It was.
- That was the Houston Stonewall.
- It was something.
- And we were there.
- Did that have any impact on the calls? Do things like that impact the switchboard? Like when people see that on the news, do they call and go--
- Yeah. People are angry. They're pissed off and they want to talk about it.
- And when you get angry and upset, you call and then like say what? What do you say, Mary?
- What are you going to want to do about it?
- Yeah, what are you going to do about it? You're going to go to Queer Nations meetings.
- That's one of the people that I refer people to if you're angry. That a better word?
- It's a much better word.
- If you're angry and you want to do something, want to vent, then go to Queer Nation. They do something. They do things to get you motivated.
- And there are a lot of groups in Houston who are doing things. What about people who want to do things but don't really want to be in the public eye? Where would you--

- That's one of the great things about volunteering at the switchboard, is you can be as anonymous as you want, or like some of us sitting here, you can be as out as you want. On the phones, you are really just a voice and you can put your three Hours in every week and do your part for the community and do whatever beyond that is comfortable for you.
- There are people in kind of sensitive jobs. They can still donate their time to the switchboard.
- Absolutely.
- For whatever reason.
- We don't ever meet our callers. Never. It's strictly over the phone. We never meet. They never come into our building, we don't go out and meet people.
- In fact, the building is a secret, isn't it?
- Yes, it is.
- It's like in Wonder Woman's plane. It's invisible in surface of the city.
- Is the switchboard ever going to be a 24-hour thing in Houston you think?
- We hope so.
- Yeah, it'd be great.
- Is it ever going to be a place where people are paid to sit in?
- I doubt it.
- Isn't that a shame though?
- How many paid staff do you have?
- We have no paid staff.
- Not even like the board of directors or the president?
- No one.
- It's all volunteer.
- And if they start paying, I'm going to be the first in line to get that check.
- So in a city where we spend millions of dollars and 976 numbers and tens of thousands of dollars at bathhouses and bookstores and God knows how much money at bars, we don't spend any money for something as important as a switchboard. Isn't there a lesson to be learned here?
- Wake up, you hateful queens.
- There's got to be a lesson here. I don't know what it is. It's kind of like KPFT.
- Yeah, we keep doing it.

- Yeah, I know. I'm glad you do. Do you know of very many switchboards that are open 24 hours? I would assume New York and [INAUDIBLE] maybe.

- Maybe San Francisco.

- I really don't think that they're open.

- I don't think they are either.

- I really don't. I know I was out in LA last year and they were not open.

- Really?

- Yeah, only in the afternoon and evening.

- Yeah, I know Chicago is that way.

- When I moved here several years ago, I had been involved with switchboards in two other cities. And in both of those cities, the training that I went through, the manual that they used was the Houston Switchboard training.

- No kidding.

- No kidding. No kidding.

- We're that good, huh?

- We're that good.

- Yeah, it's an excellent training program. You will you could learn skills going through Gay Lesbian Switchboard training that you can use on your job. I'm serious.

- With your significant others.

- Absolutely, yeah.

- Oh, how well I know because I've used them.

- Oh, yeah.

- The part about fundraising didn't work too well.

- No, it didn't. Well, I never was good at that anywhere.

- So if this training class was canceled this weekend, when will the next training be in?

- Training has been scheduled for every two months this year. So the next training is the second weekend in November.

- Come hell or high water.

- That's right. We'd like to see a couple dozen people show up, and we're going to be doing everything we can.

- Now it takes two weekends, doesn't it?

- That's correct.

- That's a big chunk.

- It really is a big chunk. And it's really too bad that some people cannot schedule out two weekends of their time. But we have to schedule it out too in order to teach them, so we understand the time constraint.

- And there are people who work. I mean, I work on Saturdays. It's very hard to do things on the weekends that involve having to be up on Saturday.

- We're looking at maybe doing one class next year where the first 12 or 14 hours of the training is done on a weeknight, like a continuing ed sort of three hours a night on Tuesdays or something. And then there'll be one weekend to pull it all together. That's an idea that we're looking at. Training will probably be every 10 weeks next year. We'll probably only do it five times next year instead of six because we've got some other projects on the front burner finally and we'd like to get those underway.

- You didn't get a lot of people this time for the class, but are we staffed? Do we have enough people to man the phones the hours that you want to man them?

- No.

- You're shaking your head Rose.

- It's like I said when we were talking about money earlier. That's so strange. We've got the money right now but we're poor on people. It's disgusting. Yeah because our phones-- we have the mones manned-- the phones manned.

- Staffed.

- Staffed.

- OK, staffed. Jesus Christ. It's 1:35. I'm usually asleep by this time.

- Me too, Rose. I know.

- You can go home in just a minute, baby.

- God, you have to be so politically correct. We have the phone staffed-- we have the phone staffed from 3:00 PM till midnight. It's not happening.

- And there are big gaps. And there will be big gaps until after November when we get this huge training class because people who have been saying, what am I going to do are going to go through switchboard training and they're going to find that they're glad they did.

- Right now wouldn't you say we're about 50% women, 50% men? It's pretty even, which is also unusual. It's usually more guys and girls, but right now we're about 50-50.

- They tell us as tradition that about 90% of the people who listen to public radio like this, marathon three times a year, it's three to four years before they call and make a pledge. You listen for three years before you call. When you think about volunteering-- now I'm kidding. If you had to reach out and touch those people that were thinking, well, I want to do something with all this spare time, but I don't know what I can do, this is the perfect way. Because it's anonymous, you can be away from-- people can't see you. It's really helping people in a great way without having to be out in public. So what do you say? How do you get him to come down and sign up?

- You don't have to man the phones.

- That's fine, Rose.

- You don't have to-- oh, yeah, man, there it is again. You don't have to staff the phone.

- So what do you say to folks who have been thinking about it but haven't done it yet? What are you going to tell them to come down and sign up?

- One of the things that we're going to try to set up for November, it's a new project, is a sort of open-house deal. I mean, not at switchboard obviously, because we can't give out our location. But what we want to do is set up a way like a coffee house sort of set up. This was done back in '82 by the switchboard, the first year that we were around, where people who were new to town or who are thinking about whatever, getting involved in some way can go to this thing, whatever we're going to call it, I don't know what we're going to call it, and meet people who are representing the organizations that are in town, meet people from the switchboard, meet each other, and just talk about, yeah I've moved here three months ago and I don't know where anything is yet.

- That would be really good.

- And face to face with folks.

- Because there's never been in this city-- there's never been anything in this city where we all come together except Pride week. And then we're so busy with the weekend that we don't have the time to talk to each other. We're sewing our T-shirts and pushing our tapes and talking about our telephones. We don't get to talk about each other and find out who you are. That's a hell of an idea.

- Yeah. You'll be able to talk to somebody from the Greater Houston Billiards League, you'll be talking to--

- Girl, take a notebook and we can book a whole year right there that day. No, it's funny because watching you struggle with-- he's asking me this stupid question that I can't answer because you can't answer that, no more than we can answer how come people don't pledge because you have to be willing to want to help and willing to make a difference in something before-- we can't go out and make people call and pledge.

You can't go out and make people volunteer. You that listen you're listening because you think it's important. And that's the reason you need to call and pledge. That's the reason you need to volunteer and work for the switchboard because you think it's important.

- You know when you're ready.

- Well girl, it's time because they're just saying that they're needing people. So quit sitting on your rear and go down there and help them out.

- You don't have to be on the phones. We need people on committees.
 - Absolutely.
 - Doing PR work.
 - PR, fundraising.
 - So you can call. Just call up the regular switchboard hours and say, I'm interested in the classes.
 - Right. Just say I'm interested in joining switchboard.
 - Or I'm interested in helping Switchboard but I don't want to go through training. And that's OK. We do that too.
 - And what about if I have some extra money?
 - That'd be great too.
 - My dog died and left me a lot of money. So you can just call up and take that off our hands?
 - That's right.
 - Absolutely.
 - 529-3211. And hopefully there from 4:00 to midnight, most days hopefully.
 - The best we can.
 - Because I know there have been times when I've had people call, and that's one of the reasons Jimmy got here because he was invited with the Switchboard and came and stuck around to answer our phones when people call us and say, what do we do? You call the case switchboard. I don't know what that hell to do. Call the switchboard Mary tomorrow at 4 o'clock and I have all the answers for you. We don't know either, that's why we tell people to call you. Anyway, is that-- Ed, is that Ed?
 - We're fine.
 - Oh, I know you are, honey.
 - I know. That's right, honey. I've been looking at this man for four years.
 - Look, look, look.
 - I know.
 - Hair. My cheddar, my cheddar.
 - I saw that the first year. What do you think I keep asking him back?
- [LAUGHTER]
- Year after year.
- He doesn't do anything else about.

- Oh, I see.

- So now he's going to try to put me on the spot.

[LAUGHTER]

- Well, they won't be back for the fifth year.

- Can you believe that, that we've been here for almost five years? That's what's scary.

- It's great.

- Can you believe the people we have hacked off? I can't say that word either. Been almost five years.

- And don't you want to though.

- Oh, I love it. I love every minute of it because they come to me and they go, oh, we can't come out of the closet. I'm going, yeah, I work for the Houston Police Department. How racist and redneck can that be, and do a queer radio show. And I face all their crap every day. So you tell me how awful it would be at Foley's to come out of the closet.

- I just got a new job never married and had my switchboard experience on my resume and I still got the job. And they said, hey, your phone experience looks great.

- Isn't that wonderful.

- Thank you. You keep at it.

- Coming out is the only way.

- We're going to just deal with it.

- Uh-oh. Now we're talking about coming out on radio instead of our switch, but it's all connected. It's all part of the same thing.

- Sure.

- Because I remember in 1985 when I was sitting at the Houston Police Department with no radio station to listen to and no switchboard to call and the referendum was defeated. And it said 98% against the queers. And I remember going home and picking up the phone and calling and crying to somebody that listened, and that meant a lot. It meant an awful lot. Anyway, you don't look as tired as you were.

- I'm tired. I promise, you I'm tired.

- You're excused. You can go home.

- OK. There's nothing behind these eyes, I'm telling you.

- Really?

- Ron's propping me up.

- Oh, yeah?

- I am so glad you came tonight, both of you.

- It means a lot. It means a lot to me because in the beginning, for reasons that we won't get into, nobody liked me.

- No.

- Yes. These hateful queens said that guy is crazy. Don't have anything to do with--

- Girl, and it hasn't gotten any better.

- I couldn't get anybody to come on the show and I begged people to come on. And I finally got-- I wanted the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus to come on because it was September and I figured the first show will talk about voter registration and how important that is. But I couldn't get them to come down because somebody, I don't know who he was, was spreading all these rumors about how awful I am. And he's still out there spreading these hateful rumours.

- When?

- I don't want to mention any names, but I just might. But anyway, we were just lucky enough to get the March on Washington, which worked out even better I mean, we started out with a bang with the march. And then the next week, we had the switchboard.

- Right, the second week. I have that tape somewhere.

- I'm so glad you don't have it on hand.

[LAUGHTER]

- As a matter of fact--

- He's got it on hand.

- As a matter of fact, it's right here. Should we play that, Mary? That tape. We'll play it after they leave.

- It should be filed away.

- No. We drag it out when we want to threaten you. We'll play that in just a minute. Do you know what I'm talking about?

- Yes, I do.

- It sounded--

- What is it?

- What is it, Mary?

- Someone wants to know if we're taking calls.

- Are we taking calls? Do you want to take calls?

- Whatever.

- Sure, we can take a call.

- Well Mary, take a call while I queue this tape up.
- OK.
- Brian, hi.
- Hello.
- Did you have something you wanted to say to the Switchboard?
- Yeah. I want to say to you all, I sent in a picture two weeks ago.
- Yes, I know.
- And I just wanted to tell you that I was really happy that you are around because I'm out about my sexuality now and my friends are out about it too. It's like a whole posse.
- 15 years old, boys and girl.
- That's right. We've talked about you, Brian.
- Well, that's all I wanted to say.
- Thanks.
- Thank you.
- Thanks.
- Bye.
- We got a letter from this guy a couple of weeks ago with the picture. Did you happen to hear that?
- This is coming out, getting the guts to write the letter and getting the guts to make the call, right?
- Yeah.
- That's it.
- That's what it's about.
- OK, talk, Louise. I got to play this since you said--
- I am just the last old queen in here tonight, and I just--
- Boy, that's the truth.

[LAUGHTER]

- And I'm just thinking back when I was 15 and I don't think any switchboard anywhere existed, but boy, would it have been wonderful if it had because I was sexually active at 12. This was back in the old days, old days. But I never heard the word homosexual until I was 15.

- Shirley Newman.

- Isn't that strange? Does that sound strange?

- Yeah, no. Yeah, no.

- I had to go to the library.

- Did you? I was afraid to.

- And you have to look at the card catalog under H. And all it says is 6666.

- Yeah, that's all it was. But I was afraid to even go to the library, either the school library especially or our small little public library.

- Because you pull out the H drawer of the card catalog and you know that they know.

- Yeah, they're all looking at you.

- And when you pull it out, it goes [INAUDIBLE].

[LAUGHTER]

Gay.

- I remember.

- You go up and say where's the gay section? And that little old lady, and now where's the gay section plans? Where's the gay section? This young man in the red shirt wants to know where the gay section is.

- That's like buying you know what at the drugstore this time.

- Oh Ron, you're never going to come on this show again.

- Yes, he will. Do you remember four years-- what do you remember about four years ago really? I'm just curious.

- I remember being very tough tongue tied.

- Really?

- Yeah, and very nervous about it.

- Why were you nervous?

- Well, I didn't know if you all had your act together either because it was so new.

- We didn't.

- And it was like flying by the seat of your pants. It was really fun.

- And we still are.

- It was so exciting. And who was with us that night, Catherine?
- Catherine, that's right.
- That was almost four years ago? And we played a song by Whitney Houston or Thelma Houston.
- Yeah, one of those Houston women.
- And when it ended, we pushed the button and-- OK, Mary. Listen to this. Are you ready?
- Yeah.
- Listen to this. Here we go.
- Let's see what happens. Push the button, we're in control now.
- Hi, this is Kevin.
- This is Ron.
- And we're from the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, Houston. And you're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM.
- It's all good.
- Do you know what else? There's significance here.
- Yes, this is an historical tidbit from Jimmy.
- Yes, because of all the promos for *After Hours*, never was mentioned gay and lesbian at all. In all the promos, the very opening of the show never mentioned gay and lesbian until this promo. You said gay and lesbian. You were the first person on this show to say it.
- So you may not have realized that, but that's one of the reasons we wanted you to come out here. I'm serious. Isn't that amazing.
- It's so gnarly. I listened to that tape, I went, oh. No, it's great. It's great. I remember when we did that tape at your place when we talked about the show and you were saying, this is what I'm going to try to do and we're going to do it whether they tell us we can or not.
- See now, they heard your voice the week before because that was the promo that taped.
- The week before. Yeah, on the first show, on the very first show. I think probably you're right, the first one to say gay and lesbian.
- Child, that'll be \$10,000.
- Marathon is over. Call Mary Ellen.
- That's a little bit of tidbits, but y'all don't kind of fall away because we may be giving something away if you know that.
- Yeah, so stay tuned.
- Not tonight.
- Anyway, so we're going into five years and the Switchboard is going into 11 years.

- Yeah, we're going to celebrate our 10th anniversary this fall. The phones were turned on December 21, 1981, so 10 years, and we've got some fun things planned around that.

- And the numbers always stayed the same?

- The phone number? Yeah. I was thinking number of volunteers, what kind of number.

- Boy, it really is late, isn't it?

- It's telepathic.

- OK, you can go home.

- Thank you all so much.

- Yeah, thank you very much for coming down. OK, Louise, what are we going to do now?

- We're going to play music. Well, maybe we're not.

- Let me turn this back just a little bit.

- She's the one that's in control of the buttons over there. Oh, she wants to play that thing with Ron again.

- She doesn't.

- Yeah. To embarrass you one more time before you leave. Actually, are you embarrassed by it?

- It's fun.

- It is fun.

- But it's like seeing old pictures of yourself or something.

- Oh, I hate that.

- It's like what?

- Seeing old pictures of yourself. The hair.

- Well child, nobody can see our hair.

- And a good thing too.

[LAUGHTER]

- Speaking of hair Louise, I'm going to let my hair grow out.

- Which hair?

- My hair on my head.

- You're kidding. As long as I've known you, it's always been a half an inch long.

- Well, that's because when I was a kid, my dad cut it real short. And then when I went to work for the-- when I was in the Air Force, they cut it short and the police departments always cut it short. But my barber has been cutting it, the same guy here for nine years. And I kept telling him because I wouldn't let anybody else touch my head.

He just says it's fabulous flat tops. Unless I was on my knees in the [INAUDIBLE] pose. But I was like, if you ever leave, Alex-- and now Alex is leaving, my barber is leaving.

- You're kidding.

- No. I think just once in my life before I die. So I want to let it grow so I can just pull it back in the back and hide it so they can't see it at work and--

- Like have a ponytail and all of that?

- Yeah, let it continue to grow. I mean, just let it go.

- Won't you look weird.

- And I went down and I even talked to one of these queens at one of these hair places that takes care of hair, and she said, well you let it grow-- she said, you let it grow. And after six weeks, you're like a Girl Scout, and then after about nine months, you'll look like a Girl Scout for nine months. And then all at once, it'll be long and you just don't do anything to it. And I'm like, no, that sounds awful. So I don't know how I'm going to do like not having my hair cut after about--

- You haven't had to comb your hair at any point in your life.

- I know. That that's kind of scary, isn't it? Anyway, kind of scary. Listen Ron, thanks for coming, really.

- Thanks a bunch.

- OK, and we'll see you in another year.

[LAUGHTER]

- No. Actually, you're involved with Delta Lambda Phi.

- That's correct.

- Which is what?

- The gay fraternity. And we're very interested in having that group back.

- Cool.

- Yeah, bring a lot of those hunky boys.

- They are too.

- Hunky men, I mean.

- Make me nervous.

- Of course, when things are going on at the Switchboard, Louise lets us know anyway, but you make sure they let us know. OK. But really from me, thank you very much for being here because it means a lot, it really does. Hang on, we'll be back. It's Marathon and it's 526-5738 526-KPFT.

- Hi, this is Kevin.

- This is Ron.

- And we're from the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston. And you're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM.

- Yes.

- Here we are and that damn thing didn't work.

- Well, how rude.

- Back down to the House of Pies. Back down to the House of Pies, and it's close to the bar run. And Queer Nation is-- yes, they're outside the door protesting because--

- Is this true? Is this really happening?

- Yes. A Queer Nation member came by just 10 minutes ago to tell me about it.

- The Queer Nation is down at the House of Pies--

- Because they are still handling the-- what's that? I don't even know what it is.

- The Green Sheet, that hateful homophobic paper that won't take ads from gay and lesbian people.

- They won't take any type of ads from gay and lesbian people.

- I mean, I've been looking for a husband for four years and I can't put an ad in the damn thing. Not that I want to. I'm going to save all my ads for the Post.

- No, wait a minute.

- We're off the Post. I didn't mean that. We're not going to rag the Post.

- No, but they make a deliberate practice of only taking heterosexual ads. I forget exactly how it's worded, but it's worded in a way to let you know that it's for male and female ads only. Isn't that it? So what you had said before about Queer Nation re-delivering 40,000 of the papers back to the Green Sheet.

And did you notice that when they delivered them, they delivered them in front of the sidewalk in a letter queue. So when those hate-- when those hateful folks came to their office, they knew exactly who brought them.

- And they were like, well.

- And what they're going to do if Green Sheet keeps trying to deliver, Queer Nation is just going to keep picking them up and then take them to the recycling place and selling them.

- And using the money for--

- Using the money for their organization.
- There is a list of great folks who are helping Queer Nation, and the House of Pies is not one of them.
- Isn't that odd?
- Should we like call down there and ask them what the hell's going on?
- We might do that later.
- OK, we'll do that. Hang on, let's try this one more time. We'll let it all this out later. We've been doing that for four years too. Hang on, baby. What happened?
- I don't know.
- Is that turning?
- Yeah, it's turning dear. Do you have it on the--
- Hell, I don't know.
- I don't know either.
- I mean, I'm so damn mad at the House of Pies, I wanted to go down there after the show.
- No. Well, not tonight. Not if they're still handling-- well, you see, you can almost excuse some of them-- some of the larger places that--
- You don't have to push a button. You're in control now.
- Our chains because-- like Kroger. Kroger is having a problem with it because they sublet that space out and somebody else handles what's put in there.
- But you can't just not-- you got to say no.
- You have to say no. You have to say no.
- No, you got to say no.
- Yes. Especially in the Montrose area. They have a lot of nerve.
- Oh, the hell with them. We'll call them up in a minute and see what's going on. OK, let's try this one more time. If this don't work anymore, we're going to the BBC.
- Well, OK.
- All right.
- Hi, this is Kevin.
- This is Ron.
- And we're from the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard Houston. And you're listening to *After Hours* on KPFT Houston, 90.1 FM.

- Mary?

- Yes.

- I'm not going to play that Whitney Houston thing.

- Well, I don't blame you. Or Thelma's either. Oh, we may not play this? God damn straight.

[LAUGHTER]

- 526-5738 526-KPFT. *After Hours* radio, celebrating live from the heart of Montrose. We're here.

- And we're queer.

- And we're waiting on your call to make a pledge at 526-5738 526-KPFT. We're going to check out the lobby in just a second, see what's going on there. So in the next two hours, we're just going to be raising money and--

- Raising hell.

- Are we making you mad? So this is probably the last song you'll hear for two hours. 90.1 FM KPFT Houston. We're here, and Louise, are you there?

- [INAUDIBLE]

- Mary?

- Are you getting me?

- Unfortunately, I'm getting you loud and clear. So what are you doing out there?

- Well, there is just people out the wazoo out here.

- We just had a call, Louise.

- Did we?

- Yes, from one of the faithful. And he said every week we play the theme, but we never play the theme where he can record it. And he was like, would you please play this thing so I can tape it. And I'm like, yes, if you'll make a pledge, we will play it for you. So he just made a terrific pledge and we're going to play it. How's that.

- Wonderful.

- The number's 526-5738 or 526-KPFT. And who is out there to-- who's out there to thank? Have we got pledges, Louise?

- Who have we got to thank?