

[BANGING]

[DEEP BREATHING]

JIMMY CARPER: The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature--

MALE VOICE: Oh, Frank.

JIMMY CARPER: --which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

WOMAN: (SINGING) After hours. After hours.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yes, you've tuned in to *After Hours*, the continuing tradition on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, and music geared for gay and lesbian people. Here at *After Hours*, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common. We are out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets. That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are.

Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DIANE Hey, we're here. Happy Saturday night, everybody.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Whoa-wee! Hello. You have tuned into *After Hours*. And you've got Jimmy Carper and--

DIANE --and Diane Williams.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Uh-huh. And we almost act like we know what we're doing tonight. Here we are sitting around talking like a couple of--

DIANE Talkers.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I know it. And--

DIANE A couple people on the radio.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And there goes-- [LAUGHS]

DIANE [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: There goes the outro. And (LAUGHING) here we are.

DIANE Well, we're just chatting back here. We're enjoying it. And I wanted to say hi to everybody-- everybody--
WILLIAMS: everybody that's out there listening.

JIMMY CARPER: Everybody.

DIANE Specifically, there's a couple of people that might be listening. If you're listening Terry, go to sleep. It's after your
WILLIAMS: bedtime. You've stayed up. [LAUGHS]

JIMMY CARPER: [INAUDIBLE]

DIANE I'm sorry. If you guys are up this late, I'm sure it must be something special.
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Mm.

DIANE Also, I want to talk about lots and lots and lots of controversial things this evening.
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: It sounds like we're going to have a lot of really diverse things going on after hours tonight like we haven't had an
After Hours since, oh, last week.

DIANE I don't know. Gosh. I want you right now, wherever you are at home or in your cars, get out that portable mobile
WILLIAMS: phone, get this number ready to dial in--

JIMMY CARPER: Uh-huh.

DIANE --JAM-KPFT, also known as 526-5738. That's JAM-KPFT.
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Ladies and gentlemen, if you think *After Hours* came out of the closet last week with bisexuals and transgenders,
this week--

DIANE We've got something even more, something harder to imagine, something even more weird. It's--
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Go ahead. I can't.

DIANE It's gay Republicans.
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Ta-dah!

[DRUM ROLL ON TABLETOP]

Right here right on this show.

DIANE Right here in this studio not only do we have a gay Republican, an actual gay Republican in the house--
WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: We have the gay Republican.

DIANE I think we probably-- I don't know if he's "the." Do you think he's-- I think he's probably "the."

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. He's the president.

DIANE He's the president of Houston's Log Cabin Republicans, a lesbian and gay group for Republicans locally.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And I got to tell, you he's hot looking.

DIANE He's a handsome guy.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE He's a handsome guy.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And speaking of hot looking, guess who's coming in later?

DIANE We hope. We hope to see you. I haven't talked to him today. As of yesterday, he's dropping in--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Uh-huh?

DIANE --the fabulous--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: The one and only.

DIANE --the one and only Mr.--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: --Safe Sex--

DIANE --Bart Loesser.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: [PANTING]

DIANE And Bart's going to talk about The Agora, a new group. I got something in the mail from them.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah?

DIANE New group. I don't think they're new.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: No. They've been around a while.

DIANE A year or so.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: But they've been-- I think they're really starting to do stuff now.

DIANE I got something in the mail that said there's going to be an article-- not an article, an advertisement, paid

WILLIAMS: advertisement, in our local newspapers maybe. I don't know if it's one or two. I think it's both of them.

JIMMY CARPER: There's three.

DIANE But the two major, *Post* and *Chronicle* doohickeys.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, those! Those! (LAUGHING)

DIANE Yes, I'm talking about the big ones.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, the big ones.

DIANE The big ones. I hesitate to use the word mainstream because I hate that when you're describing the heterosexual

WILLIAMS: community. So I'm not going to say mainstream.

JIMMY CARPER: These are the alleged-- the--

DIANE Largest local daily--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: The avowed heterosexual dailies.

DIANE There you go, the ones who normally do not take gay and lesbian partnership announcements, the ones who shy

WILLIAMS: away from--

JIMMY CARPER: Men looking for men, women looking women?

DIANE Yeah. Also they shy away from ads for things like flea market-- garage sales. Like, when you're having a garage

WILLIAMS: sale, and you want to put in their, clothing for drag queens--

JIMMY CARPER: No!

DIANE --amazon women and drag queens, they tend to shy away from that too.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: You're kidding me!

DIANE Well, that's what the whole *Greensheet* thing was about when we were protesting them a couple of years ago.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah, well, that--

DIANE So--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: No, but--

DIANE --the *Post* and *The Chronicle*--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah, but it's the--

DIANE --do that kind of stuff too.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: But nobody reads the *Greensheet* anymore.

DIANE That's right. That's right.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Aren't they defunct?

DIANE Except for people looking for houses and realtors. And that's the only people that mess with *Greensheet*.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I haven't read one in years.

DIANE Well, you haven't moved in years, girlfriend.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Ah, I guess.

DIANE OK. Well, that's what we're going to talk about with The Agora, who is a local gay and lesbian media group.

WILLIAMS: They're formed to give gays and lesbians a positive not reactionary, but pro-action positive outlook.

JIMMY CARPER: You're doing good. Go ahead, girl.

DIANE Thank you. Thank you. I'm just tripping over myself over here.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: [LAUGHS]

DIANE Positive to other people-- huh?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Is it, like, gay and lesbian-- well--

DIANE The article says, do you know anybody that--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Queer public relations?

DIANE Yes, queer public relations is exactly what we're talking about. And the article, the ad that I think they're going to put in has a picture of about 10 people. And there are some fine looking people. And we will talk about who's in that ad later.

JIMMY CARPER: OK.

DIANE But the article says that can you pick out which one of the people-- how many people in this group are gay?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, I saw that!

DIANE Yes. And, like, everybody is. And they're all gorgeous people. And down at the bottom it says--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And Greg-- woo!

DIANE --we are just like you. Greg, what a babe, from Out Smart.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Greg is in there, yes.

DIANE Yes, I tried to get Greg to come on tonight. But he's busy. It was kind of a last-minute thing. He might be able to

WILLIAMS: come on next month, though.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, OK, cool.

DIANE So we're real excited about that.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I would love to have him on the show.

DIANE Me too.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I would love to have him. [LAUGHS]

DIANE (LAUGHING) As your very own.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: [LAUGHS]

DIANE And I would like to keep him as a pet, but-- [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: You weren't here last week, but we had our coming out show. And we kind of have to-- I think we have to kind of change our ways of thinking and our ways of talking because we have to kind of really start talking more about queer because now we have on *After Hours*, as a permanent host, Sarah DePalma--

DIANE Yay!

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: --representing the transsexual community. And boy, did she say some good things about you.

DIANE Oh, did she?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: (LAUGHING) Is the check in the mail?

DIANE I should have listened. I should have been listening. Did you tape that? I got to get it. I just love her to death.

WILLIAMS: She's a great girl.

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah! And Gigi and Jay from BiNet are now going to be permanent co-hosts.

DIANE That's wonderful.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: So when we talk about the show being for gay and lesbian, transgendered--

DIANE Queer, queer, queer, queer, queer.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah. That just--

DIANE There's a list of so many things that you have to be politically correct. Like, some people don't like the word

WILLIAMS: lesbian. They would rather be called gay woman.

JIMMY CARPER: I know.

DIANE And some people don't like the term whatever, so.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: We've got Bubba Sue who's a redneck dyke.

DIANE (LAUGHING) That's right.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And so--

DIANE Bubba Sue's not here tonight, Jimmy.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I realize that. [LAUGHS] But we've got to get a new word. Queer is the only one I can think of. If somebody can come up with a new one, hey, I'm all for it. And besides that, I'd have to change the QMZ, the Queer Music Zone.

And tonight, we're going to feature your favorites. We're going to be highlighting Romanovsky & Phillips because they're coming to Houston. They're playing at Rice in a couple of weeks.

DIANE Can I go? I want to go.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: You have to buy the ticket. And it's the usual price.

DIANE I don't get any press passes or anything? [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Hell, we didn't even get any tickets to give away.

DIANE Oh, man!

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I know. And they have a new album now. So we'll be playing, meh, one or two from there. Mary Helen played one or two from their new album Friday night.

DIANE Mary Helen?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Mary Helen on *Lesbian and Gay Voices*.

DIANE I just meant to tell you that Mary Helen not only-- Mary Helen used to be very, very involved with KPFT as a

WILLIAMS: whole.

JIMMY CARPER: Oh, yeah, like, general manager.

DIANE General manager.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE She's now the volunteer coordinator for the People with AIDS Coalition Houston.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yes.

DIANE And from what I understand doing a wonderful job. So I have nice things to say about the work that she's doing,

WILLIAMS: especially over at Thomas Street, so.

JIMMY CARPER: And If anyone out there's listening and knows Mary Helen, I'd like to get a copy of that song that she almost played last night called "Safe Sex Slut."

DIANE Ooh!

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: I really liked it. [LAUGHS]

DIANE I didn't hear it, but you're talking about *Lesbian and Gay Voices*, which is the other-- I guess, the other--

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE --the other lesbian, gay, queer show on the radio Friday nights from 6:00 to 9:00.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: 8:00.

DIANE 6:00 to 8:00.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE So just want to let people know about that if you're not in the know.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: In fact, our very own Sarah DePalma was co-hosting Friday night because Deborah was out of town, and Jack was out of town.

DIANE Yeah.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: (LAUGHING) Yeah, so--

DIANE They're making faces back here.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Ha-ha.

DIANE We got to get going. Got to get going. There's so much happening on this show tonight. And it's already, like, 20

WILLIAMS: after.

JIMMY CARPER: Well, I got some really hopping pieces of music that I really like. I've got Kitchens of Distinction. I've got Luscious Jackson, the dyke band.

DIANE Ooh, I love it when you say that. Could you just say that again?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Luscious Jackson, the dyke band?

DIANE The dyke band, I like the way that sounds.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Yeah.

DIANE The dyke band. Cool.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: So--

DIANE And we've got stuff happening. So like I said, wherever you are, if you're at home in bed, get the phone next to

WILLIAMS: you. Turn on the light so you can see the dial. It's JAM-KPFT. And we're here to answer your questions and to talk about some upcoming stuff. And our guests this evening are Ken Wilk from Houston Log Cabin--

JIMMY CARPER: Mm-hmm, Republican.

DIANE --Republican group. So he will be our first guest.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And he'll be coming up right after all of this wonderful music that you-- oh, and by the way-- see? We started talking.

DIANE What?

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: And we get off on tangents because what I wanted to say is we're going to take your requests for queer music for the QMZ. That's at 525-5728.

DIANE JAM-KPFT.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Uh-huh. And now, you see those buttons there, number one-- well, no, those are the mics. The other one that I have the volume turned up, it's CD 1 and 2?

DIANE Yeah, I see this. I know how to do this.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. You can do either one or the other.

DIANE I'm going to do this one.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: Because we're going to do both of them. So it's going to be your choice as to which one we get first.

DIANE Oh, let's see. What do I like? I'm going to do this one. We'll do this one.

WILLIAMS:

JIMMY CARPER: OK. OK.

DIANE OK. Stay right where you are. Grab the phone and sit back and relax because we got a wild night with *After Hours*

WILLIAMS: on KPFT.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

Hey. You weren't here to say whoa, Jimmy, but I'll say it. Hey.

JIMMY CARPER: Whoa.

DIANE Thank you. Thank you. Well, we're back. And I want you to know that I have a handful of paper. And Jule, if you're out there, this is for you.

[RATTLES PAPER]

OK, Jule, that was for you because I still love you again. I have a handful of paper. And all this paper is about Log Cabin Republican group of Houston and its new president, Ken. And I just want to say it's wonderful to have you here.

KEN WILK: Well, thanks for inviting me.

DIANE Welcome.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: I'm 32. I'm not new.

DIANE You're not new, no. Well, you know, you're new as the president, are you not?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Yes! That's true.

DIANE How new as the president?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Three glorious months.

DIANE And let me ask you, how'd you get involved with the Log Cabin group?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Well, about a year ago, I was working heavily with the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. In fact, I was elected to their board of directors. And I just felt that there was a need in our community to have representation in both sides of the aisle because anywhere where there's been positive gay rights laws passed, it's been through a bipartisan method. And we have that lacking in Texas.

DIANE Well--

WILLIAMS:

[SQUEAK]

Well, we heard that squeak real well. Tell me a little bit about what you think-- this is really important to me. Before we talk about what it means to be a gay Republican, I would like to know from you what you think the differences-- the main differences are in the parties, why you choose to be a Republican instead of why you choose to be a Democrat. I know that's a huge question. But as simply as you can, why do you choose to be a Republican?

KEN WILK: Well, what true Republicanism is, is less government in people's lives. Government does not solve problems, never has, never will. And being a conservative means that we shouldn't have government in our bedrooms. And just like in Texas we have a sodomy law, which, by the way, is by Warren Chisholm, who's a Democrat out of Pampa is the one that insists on having that on our Texas law.

So when you see the word Republican, you see the word Democrat, it doesn't really mean anything. It's what the person does for us. We've got some Republicans out there that care for gay rights in this country, have done tremendous thing for our community. And we've got some Republicans which are a complete jackasses.

But the same can be said for any party. The Democrats got some wonderful people to our community that have done wonderful things to us. And there's people like Warren Chisholm, who, in fact, has threatened the life of Glen Maxey, apparently. So don't worry about labels. Just like painting people with a brush, people think that all gays are this. They're not.

We're everything. And it's the same thing in political parties. We've got good Republicans. We've got bad Republicans and vice versa.

DIANE WILLIAMS: But what makes you interested in being a Republican, in labeling yourself a Republican and starting a group-- or not in starting group, but in being the president of a group of Republicans as opposed to being the president of a group of Democrats? I know that a lot of the people that I know-- I think Texas has been a Republican state for a long time, and the tides are beginning to turn.

And I think that a lot of the reason why people my age are Democrats right now is because we grew up as Republicans. And I think that until we were old enough to ask questions and make decisions on our own, we just stayed a Republican because that's what our parents were. You made a conscious choice to stay or to become a Republican.

And I'm just interested in what makes you choose that? I'm not going to harp on it. But it's important to me.

KEN WILK: Well, that's an excellent point. And the reason-- I grew up in a Republican household, like a lot of people. And it's really easy when you see the hatred and the ignorance about gay issues-- it's easy to just say, well, I'm going to go where I'm liked.

In my life, I realized it was very important to change. When you see something that is misunderstood about us, we need to go out there and change their attitudes. And seeing the hatred of Republican Party-- during the Republican convention, I had a job with CNN.

And I worked at the convention for two weeks. And I saw the way we were treated. And it was deplorable. And I questioned it. And I found that most Republicans don't think they've ever met a gay person or don't understand what we're about, the misinformation.

And I think that if I can go in with our group and re-educate the Republican Party, let them know that we're humans, we're citizens-- in the Constitution, it's life, liberty and happiness. It doesn't discount gays and lesbians. And a lot of people in the Republican Party just have not even heard our voice.

So I'm not trying to tell people to become Republicans or be a Democrat. What I'm saying is that the Republican Party owes us a fair shake. And we're just there to make sure that our voices are heard because we are citizens. And in many cases, Republicans will be elected. And if we don't have a line of communications, we're not going to get our rights like we should.

DIANE WILLIAMS: All right. Well, I thank you for it because I know that it's important that we be represented everywhere we can. Part of the reason that I wanted you to come on tonight is to talk about a couple of things that are coming up. I know we have an election coming up in November.

It's a really big election. A lot of powerful offices are going to be talked about. The governor's race is a very important race. I think the governor's race is more important for the public relations aspect.

I don't think the job of being the governor of a state has as much power in it as even, say, the judge. The County Judge John Lindsay's position, I think, is a much more powerful position than the governor's position. And recently there's been a lot of press on specifically something that I saw originally was something from the Houston press that talked about candidate Stephen Mansfield, I believe is his name.

Yes, Steve Mansfield is a Republican candidate for a seat on the Court of Criminal Appeals. And from what I understand, this was a candidate who came before the Log Cabin group and wanted to be endorsed or accepted the support of the group as a whole and then got some flack in the party.

KEN WILK: It was actually the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, which he was endorsed by them. And then through pressures from fraction groups of the Republican Party pressured him to renounce that endorsement. The Log Cabin Houston doesn't formally endorse candidates.

Right now, we're trying to get education inside the party. We're trying to get education in our community. And we're trying to get a forum for these candidates. Just like when we had Stephen Mansfield speak before a group, we also had Cynthia Crow, who also was forced to-- or was attempted to force to renounce it. And she stood up to the bigots in the Republican Party and says, no, gays and lesbians are citizens too, and they deserve fair shake. And I think when you see Mr. Mansfield, who was intimidated by these-- let's call them-- the hooligans-- they're bullies.

DIANE Yeah, are we talking about Dr. Hotze there, Dr. Old Steven "Mr. Evil Guy" Hotze himself, Mr. Straight Slate?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Yep, and here's a man that he hates gays, and that gives him power, just like Hitler did with the Jews. You "demify." And here's a guy that his only claim to fame is his hatred for homosexuals.

DIANE His hatred, and that's the truth. I don't know how many people out there are aware of this one particular person.

WILLIAMS: This one particular person, Dr. Steven Hotze, is a medical doctor who's trying to split the Republican Party and trying to take over the Republican Party and trying to lead it with the American Family Association. A whole bunch other groups are getting involved with it.

And he's just a plain, old evil guy. And if you know anything about him, if you have a story to tell about how mean he is, give us a call, JAM-KPFT. You know our number, KPFT. Also, I read something in *The Chronicle*. And *The Chronicle*-- I'll just read this little article very briefly.

It says, "Willis accepts gay support after all." This is also about the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. This says, "first judicial candidate David Jennings Willis ask for an endorsement from the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus. Once he got it, he said he didn't want it. Then he changed his mind. So Willis, a Republican running for Harris County Civil Court bench, will appear on the caucus letters and endorsement cards after all.

Willis talks to the gay rights group this week-- talked to the gay rights group weeks ago about his candidacy against Democratic incumbent Carolyn Marks Johnson. But after he won the endorsement, he wrote the caucus on Tuesday, saying he was declining the support, because the group's policies differ markedly from views, opinions, and values of many Republicans. He sent a copy to GOP County headquarters and Dr. Steven Hotze, a Christian conservative leader who opposes gay rights.

But on Wednesday, Willis decided to accept the endorsement, after talking to caucus members. He said he initially renounced the endorsement because 'attention and questions about the gay caucus from some Republicans were drowning out the rest of my message.' But later he explained he decided that on principle, he should accept the support of all voters who back him.

'It's unfortunate that the Republican Party is not more broad minded in all of its aspects,' Willis said. 'Although I believe many Republicans would welcome a more inclusive approach.'" Do you think that that's true? Do you think the Republican Party as a whole are open to a more inclusive approach?

KEN WILK: Oh, absolutely. The head of the Republican Party, Haley Barbour, he's the National Republican Chairman. And he has really reached out. The Republican Party likes to say nine of the last major elections run in this country were all run by Republicans.

But the simple fact of the matter is that eight out of those nine were candidates that were supported by Log Cabin chapters across the country. The candidates that are winning in the Republican Party are the William Welds, the pro-gay governor of Massachusetts, the governor of Minnesota. We just had a run in with the religious right at Christie Todd Whitman, the governor of New Jersey, the Mayor Giuliani, governor of New York.

Here are heterosexual Republicans reaching out, supporting gay rights, not hiding from gays because they know that they can get support from the gay community, that they can stand up above it. In Houston, Texas, where we're a little slow to get on this, we have nothing to offer Republican candidates that reach out for gay support. We [INAUDIBLE] can give them the votes.

And basically, we will cost them more votes than we can get. So it's kind of hard to get Republicans enthusiastic about our support. But if we can look beyond the label Republican and look at the man or woman and what they stand for, I think we'll be pleasantly surprised in the future.

DIANE WILLIAMS: How do you think that your party is being accepted-- your particular caucus, I guess I should say, is being accepted among the national Republicans? Because from what I understand, the platform, the National Republican Party platform as originally stated in the last presidential election, it had all sorts of nonsense on it. It had all sorts of terrible stuff about how that it had a quarantine policy. It had just all kinds of stuff on it.

KEN WILK: It was a tremendously bizarre piece of literature. But you know what? It's not that hard to take over a political party. All you have to do is get involved in the precincts, get to the conventions. Basically, Pat Robertson and his gang just strategically took over our party.

They're a vocal minority. Steven Hotze he's a leader. He's a leader in his own mind. When I go over the Republican Party and talk to the people down there, he's about as popular as a fart in church.

He says that he's a leader. He's just a loud mouth. And unfortunately, when you have somebody like that-- and we use his name over and over and over again.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Right.

KEN WILK: We're giving him credence. He really is-- he was run out of the Republican Party in Austin. He was run out of the Republican Party in Houston. Now he's back involved. And--

DIANE WILLIAMS: He does editorials in both of our papers. Both of our papers will print when he has to say.

KEN WILK: Well, because he's making-- he's a self-promoter. He's making a name for himself.

DIANE WILLIAMS: But who is denouncing him? The only people that are denouncing him are Democrats. The only people that are standing up to him, in the media anyway, are the radical, liberal, "feminazi," lesbian Democrats from hell. That's the only people-- that's how people perceive the people that oppose political so-called leaders like Hotze and-- oh, gosh, there's several others that my mind has just gone blank on.

KEN WILK: Well, Steven Hotze picks on--

DIANE Pat Robertson.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Oh, sure, the crowd, you know? Steven Hotze picks on gays and lesbians. He really doesn't venture too far outside that. He might go after some of the pro-choice people. But he's very shrewd in picking on us because there's no alternative voice.

When he goes Republican deal and says, well, homosexuals are this, that, and the other thing, and it scares the hell out of mainstream America, there's nobody there to say, hey, Steven Hotze, you got the facts wrong. You're not telling the truth because basically you've got ignorance within the party because a lot of the people involved in the Republican Party are suburbia. They don't live inside the loop.

They don't interact with gays and lesbians. And all they see is those tapes they hand out, "The Gay Agenda," scare tactics. It's just like anything else. These people paint us as some kind of horrible thing, that we're going after their children, and we're into sadomasochism. And they take our most extreme elements of our community and scare the hell out of them.

And there's been no voice to counter that. And that's why it's so important, whether you're a Democrat, an independent, if you believe in gay rights, you should support Log Cabin Republicans because we're giving the gay issues to people that have never even met us. When we come to a Republican meeting, and I say, well, I'm with Log Cabins, they think, gee whiz, are you in the cert business or you build summer homes?

I tell them that we're gay Republicans. And the Republicans that are heterosexuals go, I'm curious. There's a quest for knowledge. Is it true about what they say about you? Because nobody's been challenging them.

So we're going in there with a positive and information. We're taking the high road. We're going to try to win the hearts and minds of people that don't have a good impression of us. And it's been tremendously successful.

I can't tell you enough that the ice is melting. But we've got a way to go because we need support. And we need our community to understand what we're about.

DIANE WILLIAMS: Let me-- and on that note, there's a couple of things I want to talk about there. I want to talk about two things, though. One, I want to ask you what do you think-- has it hurt you? What do you think it's done to you personally being involved? Have you received any backlash within the party? Have you received any backlash on your job? Or are you out at your workplace?

KEN WILK: No, I'm about as out as you can get. And what's really funny is that I got involved with the Log Cabin Republicans. And the *Houston Post* ran a really great article on us about, oh, six months or so and had my picture on the front page. And I got to work. And my boss called me in the office, and he sat me down and says, do your parents know you're Republican?

DIANE [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Basically, I've never been ashamed to be a homosexual. It's about as--

DIANE What do you do for a living? What kind of job?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Oh, I'm in the insurance business, insurance investments. I try to help people. So I've been dealing with people all my life. So I'm very gregarious, open minded. And I like people to like me for all my aspects of my life. And like I say, I've never backed down from my homosexuality. But like I say, it's just not that big of a deal with me.

DIANE So you have not received necessarily a backlash? You haven't have anybody threaten you or done any name

WILLIAMS: calling or had-- I know that that's the most petty form of hurt somebody can try to--

KEN WILK: Yes, it does. Well, all my life, I've been involved in weightlifting and boxing. And I'm a pretty husky fellow. I don't have really people come up to me and trying to threaten me.

DIANE People don't call you fag? [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Well, not to my face. It'd be an unfortunate situation if they did.

DIANE OK.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: I just don't take crap from people. [LAUGHS]

DIANE Well, that's good. That's good. Well, let me give you a little now. On that note, let me give you a little. There's an article most recently in *The Voice*. I want to ask you-- let me ask you this question.

Who do you think your enemies are? Do you think you have enemies within the gay community? Do you think that that's going to be a big fight, your biggest fight, a not-big fight? And on that note, let me read you a little bit about-- this is from the *Houston Voice*.

And this is from an article that says, "new log cabin Houston president, real fight for gay right within GOP." It starts out saying, "our diversity is our strength," which is a quote from you, newly elected president of the Log Cabin Republicans of Houston. "According to Wilk, the real battle for gay rights is going on within the Republican Party 'because the political enemy of our movement resides within our own party.'"

And as it goes along in the article, it talks about being pro-gay and being anti-gay within different organizations and the division in our gay community among the Democrats and Republicans. And let's see. It says, "several members of the Log Cabin Republican group stated that at a recent meeting of the Houston Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus, they were made to feel unwelcome by liberal caucus members."

Ray Hill says, 'inclusion is the most important thing,' said Ray Hill, a Democrat and one of the founders of the Houston Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus. And conservative gays, quote, 'think that they are better than and think that their ideology is better than that of liberal gays. Organizing within the Republican Party is a wonderful opportunity,' said Hill.

'But they are blowing it. They are missing the opportunity altogether.' The Log Cabin Republicans have never opposed its real enemy in an open Republican forum, that is the religious right. Hill said, 'I'm not opposed to the gay Republicans. They just need to turn around and see who the real enemy is.'" So what do you think about that statement and the statement that there is division within the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus?

KEN WILK: Well, it's like anything else. It's people that are-- let me just say this first and foremost, categorically, is that we are first and foremost a gay rights organization we are for gay rights for all our community. We're or for gay rights for Democrats, for transgender, transsexual, lesbian, bisexual, whatever you have it.

DIANE WILLIAMS: And do you think that those people are included in your-- would transgender people be accepted as members of the Log Cabin Republican group?

KEN WILK: Oh, sure, just got to just pop in, pay your dues. And like I say, we're vilified. And basically we have no enemies in the gay community. People are going, my gosh, what are you trying to say? I love my gay brothers and sisters. I always have, and I always will.

All I'm trying to do is get them a fair shake and people to misunderstand them. How anybody in the gay community can look at me and my organization say that I'm their enemy-- they just don't understand. And I'm willing to reach out and let them know that we can work hand in hand.

Ray Hill in the past has done wonderful things-- and the future-- working within his area, the Democrats, the liberals. I like what Ray Hill does. And Ray Hill does an excellent job. He's a good voice for our community.

But there's a side of the street that he can't get access to that I can. And I applaud Ray Hill for what he's done in the past, what he'll do in the future. And as long as he's for gay rights, he's my friend. And I hope he feels the same.

DIANE WILLIAMS: I think-- of course, I'm not about to speak for anybody else. But I think that some of the things that I've seen have been-- some of the things that I've seen that people tend to say are a fight between conservatives and liberals within the gay and lesbian community, I don't think personally our fight's against conservative or-- between, rather, conservatives and liberals. I think a lot of our infighting has to do with ageism.

And a lot of our infighting has to do with what's gone on in the past and how we've done things in the past and how we need to do things in the future. And it's really interesting to me to meet you and find out what a young guy you are not-- because my vision of Republicans-- some of the Republicans I've met, and the most recent Republicans that I've known and been involved with the Log Cabin group were all over the age of, bottom, probably 35, 40. So it's interesting to me to see such a young face as a member of that group.

Do you feel like there's a little bit of ageism happening there? Do you think that-- what do you think the difference are between your work and the work of liberal Democrats? Do you work for choice? Do you work for a gay platform that includes many of the things that the liberal Democrats work for?

KEN WILK: Well, there's chock full of questions.

DIANE Yeah.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: [LAUGHS]

DIANE I got [INAUDIBLE].

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: And they're all great questions. And let me first state Republicans, they've been labeled something which they're not. Just like Democrats, I mean, how do you describe a Democrat? They're young. They're old. They're smart. They're dumb.

It's the same thing with Republicans. We're all over the map too. And we're trying to change the stereotypes. And that's what it is, the stereotypes. And it's like anything else. Working strictly for Democrat, liberal, liberalism, and saying, well, that's the route to go for gay rights.

Well, we've got a Democratic Senate, a Democratic House, and a Democratic executive branch. I asked the question, where where's all the sweeping gay rights laws? Where's the Manhattan Project on AIDS?

I've seen the debacle with gays in the military. And I said, well, if that's the best they can do, maybe we could help. Not saying that what they're doing is wrong. It's, like, if you're going down a path, and you're not getting to where you need to go, well, you should take another path or try something different.

The key word here is change. If what we've been doing isn't getting our rights, well, let's try something different. Let's be open minded. Let's not just say, we all have to do this. We all have to support this candidate.

Let's say-- let's face it. The reason we're illegal in Texas is because of a Democrat in the Texas legislature that insisted on having us as being illegal. Now, Warren Chisholm-- and I'm not picking on-- this one Democratic man, he makes his money of buying life insurance policies of AIDS victims. And he also wants to cut AIDS funding.

Now, here's a guy that is besides trying to kill us by cutting our AIDS funding, he's making money off our death. He's trying to take away my civil rights. And he's a Democrat. But we also have some Republicans that are in the same boat he is in. But we need to support the people that support us.

DIANE What do you think about Phil Gramm?

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: What a jerk.

DIANE (LAUGHING) That was the right answer.

WILLIAMS:

WOMAN: Look at me standing here. Phil Gramm wants to become president. He wants to become so president so bad he will kiss the ring of Pat Robertson or anybody who can get him the votes or the money. And that's just the bottom line of that deal.

DIANE And he's a powerful guy right now.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Well, he's--

DIANE He's in a powerful position.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: What is politics? Politics is money, power, votes. If our community doesn't get on the ball and bringing the money for the political end of it or bring in the votes, we're nothing. Just an example at the Gay and Lesbian Political Caucus annual dinner, they didn't hand out a Harvey Milk Award. Now, the Harvey Milk Award is handed out to politicians that have done an outstanding job for our gay rights. This year--

DIANE In politics.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: --there was none. They didn't have anybody that really reached out to our community, did something really good for us. Just like when they broke up a district C. that really kind of diluted us as a political force in town.

DIANE Vince Ryan's--

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Yeah.

DIANE --district that went to Al Callaway that--

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Right. So people don't take the gay community seriously.

DIANE The one I live in.

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: Yeah.

DIANE [LAUGHS]

WILLIAMS:

KEN WILK: We've lost representation. And in this country, if you don't have representation, you don't have squat. And this is why-- and Vince Ryan is a great guy. And I personally like him. I consider him a friend of mine.

But in case he doesn't win, we also need to support Mr. Echols, who's also in front of our community, for goodness sake. Isn't it great to have two guys that really are willing to work with our community running against each other? That's a lot better than having these great slates or people that hate us. Here's two guys that really have positive opinions of our community. So it's not the worst scenario.