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Tue, Nov 29, 2022 9:31AM 39:49

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

gay, mother, parents, holidays, people, talk, christmas, person, brian, give, family, lesbian, sharon, big, howard, community, houston, queer, bit, closet

## SPEAKERS

Howard McHale, [Introduction], Brian Bradley, Speaker 2, Scott Lewis

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- I** [Introduction] 00:08  
The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature, which may be considered objectionable by some listener discretion is advised. Whoa, it must be Saturday night at midnight because you're listening to After Hours, a continuing tradition on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of After Hours is ready to bring you news interviews and music hear for gay and lesbian people. Just as Gloria Gaynor says in this song, it's time to open up your closets. We at After Hours urge everyone to come out of their closets. By our definition, that means standing up for yourself and taking responsibility for your own life. But if you feel that you can't come out right now because of your age, your job or whatever reason. That's okay, we're here for you too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of After Hours.
- S** Scott Lewis 01:28  
The only thing in this room that's strong tonight is your odor, Howard McHale.
- H** Howard McHale 01:33  
You're a beast, baby.
- S** Scott Lewis 01:34  
Yeah, well listen, I'm talking about our sex life together.
- H** Howard McHale 01:37  
Together? He was seeing the movies.

**S** Scott Lewis 01:42  
Yeah, well, I've watched all your movies.

**H** Howard McHale 01:45  
On my recorder. The one you borrowed never gave back.

**S** Scott Lewis 01:49  
Hey, you have that back. And now I have no sex life because I have no, I have no VCR.

**H** Howard McHale 01:53  
I never did anyway. What do you mean? Oh, yeah, birth was the first time you had sex.

**S** Scott Lewis 01:57  
Oh, birth was the last time I was between a woman's legs.

**H** Howard McHale 02:03  
You never went back in, did you?

**S** Scott Lewis 02:04  
No, please? Oh, I'm out of the water's fine out here. Thanks for offering.

**H** Howard McHale 02:09  
Your mother, Mary Jane. Are you listening honey?

**S** Scott Lewis 02:12  
No, my mother never listens. This is Scott Lewis with my special guest co host, Howard, Big Daddy McHale.

**H** Howard McHale 02:22  
Hey gang back again back again to terrorize Houston. And we have another wonderful guest  
.....

wants to who else is on tonight's call.

S

Scott Lewis 02:28

Tonight we're going to be talking with Sharon Stone. Now, when I mentioned this earlier over at the black tie dinner, Nancy Molida said, Oh, Sharon Stone is going to be there. I'll be there. You're talking about Sharon Stone, the actress right? And I said, No, this one can complete a sentence. Now this is a different Sharon Stone. This one knows what's going on. She has a clue. Sharon is a drug and alcohol counselor. She targets or that's her her main focus. But she also does couples counseling, relationship therapy, family issues, all sorts. And we're going to talk about the holidays, upcoming holiday depression, dealing with families, going home for the holidays. And that's going to come up just here in a few minutes. Also, we're going to give away a session absolutely free of charge worth megabucks, about \$100, at least a session with Sharon to sit down and deal with all those problems that you have. So that'll be exciting. What do we have coming up later? The queer music zone, of course with Jimmy.

H

Howard McHale 03:42

We're going to chit chat. We're going to talk about what's going on in Houston. What's going on the news. Gay rights. I want to talk about this rather large woman in North Carolina the other day with the Christian coalition that's edging up and getting into politics again, and how she was real detrimental on her views on homosexuality and we're gonna chit chat about that for a while going to talk about gay and lesbian television. We've got, we've got only three, three cities in the country have a talk show with gay and lesbian hosts, and a Jay Leno tonight format and we're excited and we're talking about that. I can tell you're excited, Scott.

S

Scott Lewis 04:16

I got thrilled. I am thrilled. I didn't know Jay Leno was gay. But first coming up. We're gonna play a song before we come back with Sharon. It's an old favorite. And I'm going to dedicate it to Howard because he makes me feel mighty real. This is Jimmy Somerville. All right, and we're back and you do make me feel mighty real big daddy man, somebody else who makes me feel mighty real just entered the room, you can put them on continuous mode. I'll get them. Somebody else who makes me feel ready mighty real and mighty proud to be a gay citizen in the city of Houston right now just entered the room and that is my normal co host Brian Bradley. Brian,

B

Brian Bradley 05:04

There's nothing normal about me.

S

Scott Lewis 05:06

Well, it's certainly not that vest you're wearing, honey, that tuxedo.

H

Howard McHale 05:09

A little bright, don't you think?

S

Scott Lewis 05:13

It's those it's those Christmas blinking lights that threw me off. Thank you, Monica. I am so proud of Brian because Brian recently ran for city council position at large number four, which is currently held by Sheila Jackson Lee, who is considered by probably a majority of our community, to be a great friend and someone who has, at least in the circles that I was privileged to travel in or whatever at this time, and I heard a whole lot of naysayers that said, I heard more than one person say that he should have better have chosen his race. I heard more than one person say that he had made a mistake and was doing detriment to the community. And I've heard all of that proven wrong. In Sheila's statement on Wednesday morning after the election. At Council, she thanked Brian publicly for bringing issues to the table that needed to be brought, that issues that she had not paid enough attention to, that he made her aware of. And I was very proud to say that he chose his race very well, because he was outspent by one candidate, probably at least 30 times. And yet Brian received more votes in this election than any of the other gay candidates, almost 28,000 people. And I can't imagine what that feels like to know. 28,000 people in the city said they wanted you to represent them. And so hats off. And to all the naysayers, you know, maybe they should rethink their race next time. But anyway, Brian, I want you because you can only stay for a minute, I want you to shoot off the first question to our guest, Sharon Stone.

B

Brian Bradley 07:06

Hi. I guess not being prepared as sharing a question. I would in staying with the election. I would ask Sharon to just expound a bit, maybe instead of ask a question. I was out in Alief and North Houston and near Pasadena and all of those areas. And I stood there as a gay man with HIV disease. And had people by and large our enemies as they're described us, tell me, that's very unimportant to me. Yeah, I want to hear about zoning, I want to hear about mass transportation, I want to hear about potholes. What are you going to do about them, they did not hold me to quite the same standards, though. I'd want any elected official be held to a high set of standards, then did our own community. And I got to witness again, the incredible sad irony of being someone that's a little bit more known in the community than say, someone that's not. The sad thing is we're still lacking tremendously in self esteem. And that was just brought home to me again, and perhaps, Sharon, you could just expound on the great lack of self esteem that your average gay man may have or your average lesbian. It's incredibly, incredibly important that we overcome that, I feel.

S

Speaker 2 08:26

Yeah, Brian, I can't agree with you more that we oftentimes when we're in the culture and in culture, and I think this is a very important part of keeping our esteem up is doubting ourselves in our own culture, because that's the only place that we really are able to get reinforcement for being who we are. Because all I have to do like, even as you know, in some of my travels, when I've worked with hospitals and forming gay programs, and whatnot, we will get things like

I'd be complaining because they weren't taking our gay people to gay AA meetings. And then in one of the, one of the staff things I was at one day, they said, one of the fellows stood up and said, Well, we these people, meaning the gay people, need to know that a meeting is a meeting and wherever they are, they're not always going to get a gay meeting. And they need to know that they can go to any meeting and addictions are addictions and blah, blah, blah. So I just calmly sat there and said, Well, then why don't we pack the whole unit up and take him to Lambda Center. All of a sudden, there was this dead silence. And of course, the doctor that I was working with, she's all fine. Let's all take 'em to Lambda. Well, they had to have this big meeting at the hospital where the staff made the decision that it was not in the best interest of the milieu to take these people to the Switch. So all the stuff these are just the little tiny nuances that come up that, that show us all the time, that even though people who are supposed to be in the know, and who are supposed to be non judgmental, and, and caring and all that still put us in a different category than they would anyone else. So it's okay for us to go to all the straight meetings but not okay for the straight people to come to the gay ones. And that's just one of many, many, many things I had to encounter on a practically regular basis.

H

Howard McHale 10:35

Sharon, where does self esteem, self esteem, where does it start? Where does it begin in our lives?

S

Speaker 2 10:41

When we're young. And I think the type of upbringing a gay person has, particularly because when you've got someone who's, knows they're different from a very young age. And that there's there are expectations from a family. Every family member has expectations from their parents. Their parents have had a living out their, their own vicarious lives that that may be things that they didn't do, when they were young, they want their children to be have it better, they want them to do more things and be better. But especially when you take a gay child, when they, they come up, and they're they're having to hide out who they are, and everything about them. The most harmful thing that I see people coming into my office, they say if my mom and dad knew who I was, that would kill me, that would kill them. And can you imagine? What a powerful message that is to each individual that would kill their parents?

H

Howard McHale 11:51

Would you think parents that have low self esteem raise children gay or straight, raise them to be, to have real small self esteem themselves?

S

Speaker 2 12:00

Oh, I think so. I and it's hard to know what, what anymore with so much alcohol and drug abuse and all the families. Where high self esteem, you know, you can't really see a whole lot of what you call normal family systems anymore. Because there's a, there's a sweatshirt out that has this guy sitting in this big huge amphitheater all by himself.

S

Scott Lewis 12:32

I love that shirt. I know exactly what you're talking about.

S

Speaker 2 12:34

And it said you know, that convention for the functional families. And so one person by himself, right. And so, you know, if you're going to be teaching the norm anymore, you're going to be teaching people how to be more dysfunctional.

B

Brian Bradley 12:56

Is there even such a thing as a functional family?

S

Speaker 2 12:59

I don't know that there is any more. I mean, I think that there are as much as we can possibly. I mean, no family is perfect. Every single one has got something in it. I mean, we all family seekers, I think sometimes we get this carried a little bit far in going back and calling our families dysfunctional in this kind of thing because all of us came out of family systems that were that either were a little too authoritarian, or maybe a little too lacks, or the parent was alcoholic or that, you know, there's all kinds of different things. But when it comes down to being gay, that is really one of the roughest family situations that any human being can ever come across. And I have always marveled at the wonders of this community. Because we are probably the strongest, most absolutely incredible community that you could possibly come across for all the things that we have to go through. And of course, it's just a, we all know it's a joke when people say to us, you know, you chose to do this, we didn't raise you like this, well, you know, who would want to wake up in the morning, say, Oh, I think I'll be gay today. I believe my parents are gonna hate me, my job is gonna hate me my, you know, I can't talk about it to anybody. And I can only go leave home, go away someplace else to be that way. Because it's too painful for me to face the thought of rejection from everybody I know. So the absurdity of that choice statement. And so coming up when you consider that the gay community is one of the highest income per capita groups in the United States, the amount of hurdles that we overcome to get where we are, yes, there's some self esteem problems in this community. But when you take the overall picture of what we've had to jump over, I think we've done pretty damn well.

H

Howard McHale 14:55

It's pretty funny because when I came out to my mother, and I'll always talk about Louise because I love the woman. She said to me, she said, oh my god Howard, look what I've done. Look what I've done. It's all my fault. And of course, she was looking at me and she wanted me say, Oh, no Ma was your fault. But I looked at her straight in the face. I said, it is your fault, Ma. And she looked at me said, What do you mean? I said, You are a good enough mother, who

showed love, compassion and respect that your son had come to you and explain exactly who he was. I said, what other mothers are, what more do you want from a mother? It was your fault. And you should thank God that it was.

S

Speaker 2 15:31

That was anything to say to her. What'd she say?

H

Howard McHale 15:34

Oh, you know, my mom, I don't know. Oh, Louise, but I mean, if you think about it, it was her fault, because I had enough respect and enough love for myself and her to come out and say this is who I am. And she loved me even more. So indirectly, it is her fault. Do you know, besides that chromosome that's floating around, too.

S

Scott Lewis 15:52

Makes you 28.

H

Howard McHale 15:53

Yeah, thanks, Louise.

S

Scott Lewis 15:54

You know, I just recently saw my mother, and we have a tenuous relationship at best, who her mother just told her, well, Mary Jane, it is your fault. They've discovered this new game gene, and it comes from the mother. And I get so angry at this whole, it's your fault thing. And I just told her, that implies that somebody did something wrong, that something bad has happened. And I don't think anything bad has happened. That relationship is something I kind of want to get into, that, that tenuous relationship, that kind of that strange relationship that so many gays and lesbians have with their parents, which goes back to I guess, very early childhood. We're coming upon a time where a lot of people that live far away or get married have to go home for the holidays. It's probably the only time that you know that I have to go and see and spend a lot of time with my family. And a lot of issues come up that don't come up when you talk to him over the telephone. Like, I want to bring my lover with me. And I expect that we would be welcomed in your house because of he's not, I'm not. Can we talk a little bit about what's getting ready to happen with you know, the holidays coming up? And how it more sometimes affects us, I guess, heavier than it would a straight?

S

Speaker 2 17:22

Yeah, I know, the holidays is probably, are, is the time when the telephone really starts ringing in my office. And for a lot of the same reasons that you're talking about. Because there's, you

know, we've got all this is a big mess in the whole United States anyway, about what holidays are. You know, I mean, we

S

Scott Lewis 17:42

We want love, and we're all having problems.

S

Speaker 2 17:44

We have these families and they all gather at the holidays. Well, first of all. Yeah, everybody is all splintered anyway, in the United States today. So there aren't that many family gatherings like what we used to envision. And of course, so many of the early TV shows, I saw something the other day about what the, the Father Knows Best. And all those kinds of programs. We kind of bought that American myth. And then when when gay kids move away from home, they oftentimes do that. So that they don't have to deal with telling their parents or letting their parents know who they are, until they can kind of decide there are some that I have to really admire. And if you were one of them that went to your family and early on, and were able to say something,

H

Howard McHale 18:36

They said to me, they said, Why are you telling us this? Why do you want us to know this? And I said, because I don't have to lie anymore. Yeah, it's wonderful when you don't have to, because I go home for the holidays. And it's a joyous event. And my lover has come home with me many times. And yes, it is a stipulation where you know, oh my God, what's gonna be like, but I think as gay people, we have to take a little direction in our life, we have to take a little command. We have to say, okay, mother, father, this is who I am. And you have to accept me you have to be and I am your son. I'm your daughter. You have to. My roommate, for example, he de-faggotizes everything when his family comes and I have friends who hide from their family. I'm tired of gay and lesbian people doing that. It's, we shouldn't anymore and I just don't think we have, Scott, when you go home, you should tell your mom, this is who I am. This is and when you come to my home, this is how I am and the holiday should be that the holiday should be sharing and truth time. Am I wrong?

S

Scott Lewis 19:39

No. Sharon, he talked a little bit about something that you hear a lot from gay men and lesbians about the coming out process and a lot of our listeners are young. A lot of them are at home. Some of them are listening to us right now under their pillow in their bedroom, so that nobody knows that they're listening to this program. There's the great story of, and I'm not degrading it or whatever. Telling your parents and the great weight being off your shoulders, I don't have to lie anymore. There's freedom. What's that all about? And is that is that because I don't want to send the message out to these kids, that they need to go run in the other room and tell their parents right now?



S

Speaker 2 20:28

Well, I think Howard hit on it, though. His mother had raised him to give him permission, he obviously felt safer than a lot of children would feel when he went to his mother's that and I cracked down. Because if you're sensing that your parents are extremely rigid, have very, very, very definite ideas about homosexuals and whatnot. And you know, how they've talked about other people, that this is something that they're not gonna probably accept, chances are, it would be better to wait until you're in a little stronger position. I don't even with my own family, they know. But they choose not to talk about it. They and I figured, okay, if that's the way you want to deal with it, I can live with that as long as my other, significant other is allowed to be involved in holidays and involved in everything and they come over to my house and, and I can remember when we were buying a house one time my mother goes through that she's well, let's, uh, you're gonna sleep there any? Oh, that's right. You girls bunk together. That sounds like Louise. Yes. Okay, we bunk together, together. And, and but that's the way she can handle it. And that's all right, as long as the other person was not being excluded. I can go along with it is that, if that's as far as they can go, I don't need to, to have to push it further. However, it had, I had made up my mind that had there ever come a day that there was not going to have the sense that that anyone was going to be excluded, I was going to have to do exactly what you said.

S

Scott Lewis 22:22

Right. So that's not pushing it too far? Telling that parent, the fundamentalist Baptist that my mother is, if my lover is not welcome in your house, I'm not welcome in your house. Is that not too big of a step? Or?

S

Speaker 2 22:39

Well, I guess that's an individual decision. There still are people whose parents are like that, that will go home alone, I would probably do what you're doing. But that's not to say that people who can't, who, who really, really cannot face the fact that they might never be welcomed back in their parents home. And let's face it, I've seen it with people, some people whose parents are so rigid, even people who are ill, their parents have turned their back on them. And being a mother myself, I have a 23 year old daughter, I cannot imagine anything on the face of this planet that would keep me from my child if she were ill. And that's unfathomable to me. But evidently, there are enough people that this is, this is so deeply entrenched in them. And so if the fear is real grave, I guess you know, you can't really make a blanket judgment with everyone.


H


Howard McHale 23:44


One of the strange things about coming out also was that I, as gay and lesbians, we feel that we feel guilty because we're homosexuals. Why? Why do we feel guilty of who we are and what we are and those feelings inside? Whereas my straight brothers and sisters didn't come to my parents and say, Well, I'm a heterosexual.


S


Speaker 2 24:04


 Speaker 2 24:04  
Well, what did you hear about being gay? What were the words?


 Scott Lewis 24:09  
Oh, it's bad.

 Howard McHale 24:09  
Child molester. You're going to hell. It's, the neighbors down the street tell their their children that can't grow up to be like this. This is, this is your mother's nightmare, it's your family's nightmare. This is something that's kept quiet.


 Speaker 2 24:25  
You could be different if you tried. You just haven't had the right girl. This isn't the way I raised you. You're perverted. Sick. So no wonder you don't feel good about yourself.

 Howard McHale 24:44  
So maybe this is where all self esteem comes from.

 Speaker 2 24:46  
Of course, of course and see, we not only get those messages directly, but we get them indirectly from the society too.

 Howard McHale 24:54  
Does it, is ever going to change?

 Speaker 2 24:57  
I wish it were but I don't know if it will my lifetime.

 Howard McHale 25:00  
I mean, my mother, my mother would tell me that when she was young, homosexuality was never brought up. And now look at on the news and on TV, is it just a slow, gradual process that will evolve? To that it wil,I it will be mainstream one day?

S

Speaker 2 25:16

I don't know, what do you think about that?

B

Brian Bradley 25:19

Sociologically, I think that we have moved toward that. That idea, Howard, but I think we're a long way from being quite homogenous. But I was just sitting here biting my tongue, because I don't want to be the therapist when there's a licensed one in the room. But at some point in every adults life, they have to define themselves, I feel, they have to say, it's more worth, more worthy to me to have my own respect than to have my mother's ill respect. And whatever relationship I have with her. Hard choices. My mother is a cancer patient, now, I'm an HIV patient, I'm trying to convince her and her illness through my illness, that it's not a matter of trading, something horrible, for a small amount of currency, who we trade big things for big things. So you know, you may have to give up your relationship with your parents or a sibling in order to have self respect. But in the long run, it's worth it. And you know, who do you sleep with every night, regardless of what, you sleep with yourself. Who do you have to look at the mirror yourself? Who do you spend all your time with? Yourself. Not your mother, not just sibling. So you know, there comes a time we all have to be adults. I think the gay lesbian community right now is an old teenager. It's not an adult yet. And we're maturing, but we're not quite there. And one of the reasons we're not is because we've jumped ahead, and we've not looked behind us and behind us is this whole generation of people that are beginning to experience the same thing that we are, and we're not helping them along, you know, we're not. We just have dotting avenues for them.

H

Howard McHale 26:58

I think it's time that we just kind of take charge of our lives in a real positive light. And if if we can teach Brian the younger generation, the younger gay and lesbians are coming out now that it's paused, look how they're coming out. Now, younger, older groups that are,

B

Brian Bradley 27:11

I think that's probably the not in order not to be speaking a cliché, but at tonight's dinner that was expanded upon. Coming out of the closet is the single most important thing in the world, and you have more to gain than you will ever lose. I mean, on this campaign trail that I was on, I had so many people tell me, by your example, and I think it's a small example, I have learned this much. And I can do this much more, too. Wednesday's newspaper carried a story of a man named Richard Parrott, who was in the hospital. I knew of this man for two years, because he talked to me on the phone, and I tried to empower him. And he was an empowered person. While he was so determined, because of my example. According to him, I'm trying to be modest here, but truthful. According to him by my example, even though he was in the hospital, he wanted to find a way to vote for somebody who was gay, he wanted to find a way to vote for somebody understood his being HIV positive, the man busted his butt to get a hold of me. I got him a ballot, he voted, you know what had a big smile on his face. And he died yesterday. But he died a complete, whole empowered, self respecting human being, something that a lot of 90 year olds, straight as an arrow will never achieve. Because he took the time he

took the initiative, he seized life by the jugular and said, It is mine. I'm not gonna wait for you to give it to me. Because I've given you my whole life. And I've shown you I'm good. But you've thrown that back in my face. You know what, I don't want it anymore. I'm voting for one of my own. I'm standing by somebody who stood by me. And I'm empowering myself. I'm respecting myself, you know, and, How's your relationship with your family? Mine, my mother lives with me with the best of friends. My father's a drunk, been drunk for 50 something years. I've been out of the closet my whole life. And I can remember, telling them at 14, you either got a queer sibling, or your queer son, or you got none at all. Take it and leave it. And that's why my mother raised me too big. So it's good. It's good. They've certainly weathered their storms because of me, but I've weathered other storms because of them.

H

Howard McHale 29:23

And you shouldn't be ashamed of those storms, either. They've been positive, wonderful storms, and how have you enlightened yourself and your family and the rest of the city and the rest of the world just by doing what we do here? What we do on television, what we do on voting, it's so important to feel complete, and that man you were talking about that voted, he finally felt complete. And that's what we need to teach these younger generations of gays and lesbians.

B

Brian Bradley 29:46

Well, it's time to teach our family that along with having us as their family members, comes from responsibility. My sister and my mother both lost their job following my parents on The Oprah Winfrey Show. And I said, you know, quite frankly, I'm sorry about that, I really am. But aside from saying I'm sorry, that's about as much as I'm going to be able to give you, because that comes with the territory.

S

Speaker 2 30:09

But so you made a point here that I think is really significant, Brian. You said the same thing that Howard did, my mother raised me to be vocal, and to say what I felt and whatnot. Now, there are other parents who do not give their children that right. They speak for them. They speak, they're not to be heard unless spoken to, you know, and extremely authoritarian regimes. You know, they're, they're mindless until they grow up, you know, the pleases in the thank yous and whatnot. And these children, I don't think have the skills to buck their parents at that age. See, I think there's a very significant difference here in the way you were raised. And in some of the other people that I've talked with, who,

B

Brian Bradley 31:01

How can we better enable the 45 year old multimillionaire doctor who I know, has a very well known lover, and they defrag the house every time the mother visits, you know, the man writes a check to a major political figure, it helps in many ways. But he still can't do that one thing. And that's to say, I like myself, you know, how can how does a 45 or 50 year old man or woman learn self respect? Or how do we teach it if they can't seem to learn it? Or I don't want to, you

know, say Let's wipe them off, let's count them out. But is there just at some point that we turn our attention to the next generation? I know, I'm not. That's a hard question. I have very limited time on Earth, as we all do. But I think maybe that's where my direction is going. I'm not giving up on the older generation. I'm just refocusing reps a little bit more on the younger one.

S

Speaker 2 31:55

Have you never met a younger one that had the same problem? That this older one?

B

Brian Bradley 31:59

Yeah, I have. But it seems to be a little bit more excusable, when they're 16, than when they're 60. I have a friend who's 55, who told me the other day, my mother's 93, I can't come out of the closet to her, you know, I'll lose my mother. And I said, What would you stand here and you encourage 20 year olds to risk losing their mothers, they've not had 53 years of a good relationship with her mother, and you're still in the closet. But yeah, you encourage young people to come out, you've not done the essential thing yet. And that's be true to your own self. So it's just much harder to deal with that older person has more baggage. But um.

H

Howard McHale 32:39

Many more garage sales down the street. Yeah. Well, why are we focusing only on the mother? It seems that we're, is the,

S

Speaker 2 32:48

I think one of the reasons I've heard both of you talking about your mothers is because your mothers were the more accepting and more understanding and evidently gave me more permission to be more vocal.

H

Howard McHale 33:00

No, my father gave me more. When I came out to him, he said, Well, that's your life. I love you. You're my son, Louise, what's for dinner.

B

Brian Bradley 33:09

I have not a good relationship with my father because I don't respect him. He's a drunk and never take care of us or anything like that. But he's very proud of me and will tell you in a Mississippi minute where he lives that he has a very big 'ol queer son. But maybe we're not talking about them because they're not as overpowering or so.

S

Speaker 2 33:22

**S** Speaker 2 33:32

No, but there's still every single solitary person in this community has parents. And they have different situations. I think it's very real important for people to hear what your parents are like. Their what? What are your parents, like? You say they're Baptist, Scott?

**S** Scott Lewis 33:52

My mother's fundamentalist Baptist, she's very conservative. She, her opinions are like mood swings. She withdrew a very large donation from her church. Thousands and thousands of dollars for new choir robes, after the minister preached for six weeks about gays in the military and how they were so horrible. And she just went and told him you don't know one, this, my son's not like this. But,

**B** Brian Bradley 34:18

In the military, you are.

**S** Scott Lewis 34:19

But three weeks later. Three weeks later, she is telling me well, but it is a choice and you could change. But you know, if I talk to her and you know, inundate her with the message, then she comes back around but then you know, they have her every Sunday and I get to talk to her once a week on the phone.

**B** Brian Bradley 34:43

You don't get the Equal Opportunity dogma.

**S** Scott Lewis 34:47

Right. Excuse me. Let's talk about some of the solutions. We talked about the problems of

**S** Speaker 2 34:59

Well, holidays. I think we probably should get back to a little bit in the holidays because they get real difficult for some of those reasons. And also, I think, not being near families. A lot of times I've heard some people say, well, I don't even think I'm going to put up a tree this year. You know, and they can't, or I just want to avoid the holidays, I don't want to do anything for the holidays. And they get really morose and some of the neat things that I see an awful lot of other people doing. And I think this is something I learned early on, even before I came out, because I've only been out 15 years. And one of those late bloomers, I did everything late, you know. But I got there.

H

Howard McHale 35:45

We're glad you're here.

S

Speaker 2 35:46

Like I'm a late activist, you know, I missed the Vietnam War and all that stuff. I graduated 1960s. I mean, everything passed me by till I got into the, to the AIDS epidemic. That's what I really got into the political stuff. And so I was a single parent for many years. And of course, when you have a child, they need Christmas. Regardless of how much in the poops you are about it or whatever. So I'd always gather up and have a tree and invite people. On the first year I was in, in Houston, I didn't even come out yet. Now, I went to real estate school, met a gal and she and her husband had gone off someplace, and I called her house and her sister was there. And I invited her sister over to my house. And then some guy I picked up at some club, invited him over. And I mean, the three of us had Christmas and all these gift openings. And this guy was an engineer and he was putting trying to put my daughter's toys together and had, I'll never forget it, it was a sunshine family, doll house or something and he put the floor in upside down and I said, Oh God, this engineer's putting all these toys together crooked. And but anyway, it was, it was really that was sort of indicative of all those years of of being by myself and my friends would always get together, I could find people there. So then after I came out and got with a lover, we started to have Christmas Eve parties, we'd have, invite everybody that we knew that didn't have a place to go on Christmas Eve. And then we'd have that Chinese New Year, you know, you each one brings the best present they can possibly find for \$10 and puts it in a tree new draw numbers. And then each person that goes and gets the present, you know, the next one that gets one can either take that person's present or another one under the tree. And so they keep taking each other's gifts away from each other. And it's hysterical, then about 10 o'clock or 10:30, we'd end the party and everybody go to whatever church they go to for their Christmas Eve services. And it was a kind of a holiday tradition. And it made it neat for me because at that time, my lover's parents like Christmas Day, and Christmas Day was all kind of a blow off when I was younger, except for Santa Claus in the morning. And so I loved Christmas Eve because that's when everybody gathered. So I got to have my Christmas Eve with all the people I really cared and loved. And you know, when you get your friends around and singing, we even went Christmas caroling one night. And I think when people can think up things ahead of time of what they're going to do for the holidays, instead of just waiting till they're on top of them, and then trying to figure out what they're going to do. There are really some wonderful things, and caroling and old folks homes and things like that. I don't know what it,

S

Scott Lewis 36:04

It was sounded like a very queer Christmas you were describing there. And you know what? That led me right back to what I thought before that, we have the right to define our own holidays. Absolutely as much as our own identities as much as anything about us. We don't have to hold to anyone's tradition. Christmas itself was a pagan German holiday and then it was taken over by the Christians. Well, you know, we can take it over. Yes, we can make it whatever we want to. I am one of those persons who absolutely abhor Christmas and want to be by myself. And none of that stuff around me. You know, speak for us. I went to JR's like 10 years ago on Christmas, I was happy as I could be because I was by myself. The place was full

of people that were miserable. And they weren't happy until I had convinced him that I was miserable. But there's some of us out there that just don't want to do Christmas and that's okay too. Right?



Speaker 2 39:44

Exactly. I love Christmas. Do you want you want me