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00:05

Then ladies and gentlemen live from Houston, Texas, queer radio with attitude overtop of Monty Python's Flying Circus. This is Ron radio. No, it's

00:16

totally to Celine.

00:18

No, we, you know, we activist, you know, we're just too doggone straight. Like, we're no Darvey the last time I played this, I had people from our community call and write me out. And I'm gonna say it again, have a sense of humor.

00:32

But I think the Monty Python kind of transcends the whole, gay, straight, sexual thing altogether.

00:39

I mean, they kind of fit in anywhere, you know what I mean? Equally, equally offensive to everybody. That's Monty Python.

00:46

And you have seen what was that movie? That was I think the purpose of the movie was to offend everyone.



00:54

No, no, no. The meaning of lying? Oh,



00:56

me? Oh, yes. If this show is nothing, if we are not offensive, we didn't do our job.



01:05

Monty Python would be proud.



01:07

We're in the long tradition that what can I tell you? And still, you didn't do take a walk on the wild side? No. And I'll tell you why. I don't have it on CD. Ah, and the record, the record version that I have is so scratchy, it was it was too bad to be used on the here as well. Okay. And I said, I thought, well, what the heck, we need to lighten up and we'll do some Monty Python. So we did quite okay. The first thing that where I want to play for you now for this, this is from the very first show, full show that I did with Jimmy in October of 1994. And this is very short piece this is is only on. I think this whole this little piece runs about a minute. But I had said that we were going to start out by talking about transgendered stereotypes. And in this two or three sentences exchange, I think I heard every stereotype I've come across in just a few seconds, it's got to be great. Yes. So here we go. This is the first interview that I did with Jimmy



02:15

which will be up shortly. Here we go.



02:20

And I think I said this the last time you were on, but you do not look like a man with a with a dress on. Oh, my endocrinologist will be so happy you said. I say that. And I you know, I don't. This is kind of a learning experience for everybody. So if I step on toes or say something that's gonna hurt some feelings, let me know because this is a gay man's reaction. And I think from the gay perspective of what we expect a transgendered person to look like? Well, it's interesting. I think most people have gotten their education about transgender people from Geraldo, or from Bill Donohue. And it's very interesting. I was talking to a young lady this evening. And she and I have had the same experience we have had talk shows call us, but they won't take us because we're too normal. So the normal people, quote, unquote, if you want to call me normal, you don't you look pretty normal to me. We don't get on the show. Occasionally, we get on the news, and when some when some television station needs something different. But by and large, we don't we don't get seen. And most of the time, we don't want to be seen. We want to be able to go to work, earn a living in blend in. So it's for most people, the objective is to disappear.



03:44

Okay, we're back. Sarah, your



03:46

voice has changed. For the better or the worst.



03:50

about working at it. Okay, um, I wrote down a few things that you have to remember. First of all, this was the first show that Jimmy and I had done together.



04:00

I just gotta say, wow.



04:04

And so Jimmy, is as he said, He's expressing it from gay man's point of view. And, you know, he hadn't been around many transgender people before. In the first thing that he said was, well, you do not look like a man and dress. I have yet to ever go to a class when someone hasn't said that to me as usually the first or second sentence. And it makes me wonder is that what people are really expecting? From transgendered people? They're expecting that we're going to look like men and dresses? I think the answer is probably yes.



04:33

It probably is. You're right about them getting the general public's education about transgender issues, for the most part has come from Geraldo, etc. And it's just not representative and people don't understand that because how else are they going to find out? Well, how many of the general public types listen to this show?



04:55

Martine Rothblatt, couldn't get on a television talk show was very interesting. He couldn't get on



05:00

I think this show is probably one of the few that is representative.



05:04

God knows I try. Well, you know, and



05:07

even the people who are regulars on the show, for instance, I mean, by this show, I mean, after hours, not necessarily your week, don't pay attention to our week. For instance, when Peter was here last time, right, you would not have believed the reactions that went on in that other room, while I



05:26

was sitting here watching with facial expressions that this man is getting an education, he is



05:30

getting more than education, he was getting a mind blowing.



05:34

Ironically, that show was was part of the coming. It was the first show that Jimmy and I had done together. It was part of coming out week. It would be October. Yeah, yeah. And it was it was very interesting, because we were talking about the whole issue of coming out. And one of the points that I have made in the past, is that the only way to change your public image is for more of us to be out. Now, I realize that's not an easy thing to do. And I'm not suggesting everybody ought to go on television to do it. But you know, if you're out to your own circle of friends, that's a good start. You know, and friends talk to friends in it. You have to start somewhere.



06:18

Yeah, it's sometimes turns into telephone game. Those have to be a little careful about



06:22

Well, that's true. No, no, no, that's Sarah. She's about seven foot nine. And she wears about 19 heels and actually am about five foot three. But But you're right, the telephone game starts and look out. Yeah. One of the things that I heard that we talked about on that that little segment was, is it the object of transition to blend in?



06:44

That's an excellent question. And I don't know that we're going to solve it in itself. It's more than one I'll show right there. In fact, this week's well, okay, it was this week for me it was probably a couple weeks ago when it actually hit everybody else's house. The tats newsletter this week has an interesting article in there written by a woman who transitioned in Houston. And she's part she's a teacher at an area I believe Middle School. Yeah, I know who you're talking about. And username. Yeah, I didn't either. And she's talking in there about the three different options that she's identified that people take when they transition. The first is the it's pretty much the way I did it, which was to just, you know, do it on site on the job, and everybody knows, and you just get out, get it out, out front and over with to start with. And the second one, which she had in a fight is Don't Ask Don't Tell was the one that that she did, which was she stayed with the same employer, but changed groups, in this case change to a different school. Nobody there knew her background, nobody there knew anything about her. So you know, nobody's asking nobody's telling and the third one, she says is the drop out drop in,



07:56

which is, which is the most common I think, do you think so? I do.



07:59

I think it's changing. I think it was I don't think it necessarily is anymore. And I had a friend who that she lived in Columbus, Ohio. At the time, he lived in Columbus, Ohio, and was going to the Ohio State University. And this was one of my close friends from college and I got this letter saying, hey, look, you know, I'm, I'm having to transition and I'm like, you know, I'm sorry, but I have to leave my circle of friends. And I'm like, gonna basically disappear. And it was basically it was a nice note on your letter. And it took me several months to find out what city she'd moved to what job she taken, and get back in touch with her but she did the drop out drop in and that turned out to be real hard, but she got through it.



08:43

This is 90.1 KPFT FM in Houston. And 90.1k E O 's College Station, paralegal perhaps



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89.1. So at no point, did I say 19.1? Twice?



08:57

Well, if you're in College Station, you probably know who you are. But yes, you're right to be legal. Let's say that it's at 9.1k os in College Station. Okay, I'm sorry. Go



09:06

ahead. The reason that that is that third option is so tough is because you're you're automatically dropping away from any support system you might have had. I mean, you had these friends for a long time. Likely a lot of them are going to get Okay. are going to be okay with it and get through it. Some of them won't. Are they really your friends?



09:29

I've had kind of a strange experience. I completely backed out of activism altogether. Just said I'm gonna get away from it. And honestly, for my own sanity, I had to do that because I felt like I was being swallowed whole you were burned. Yeah, I was felt like I was being swallowed whole. But I am starting to look for places I'm picking on picking and choosing my spots to get back into activism to some degree. If for no other reason than what you just said, I sort of miss being around those people. If I missed that kind of a support group, right? And I really don't know how people can just drop out to me, it's not just going from one closet to another. That's going from one deep dark hole



10:13

to another. Yeah. Yeah, that don't ask don't tell him is more of a closet the closet kind of approach, or at least it doesn't have it can be, but it doesn't have to be. I have another friend who lives in the DC area. She's I believe she transitioned in 89 had her surgery in 91. And between and after that point, the job that she was working on the company went bankrupt and closed. It's the same one I used to work at. Yeah. And she moved to a new a new job. Nobody knew there. But it's not the thing that that she worries about. I mean, it's not like, oh, you know, I wonder if anybody's ever going to find out and she doesn't expend any energy on it at all. And it's just kind of slipped away from her. I mean, I've caught her literally forgetting.



11:02

It can't be healthy.



11:03

Well, it is when you do it that way. When you when you have to maintain a closet. That's hard. But when when it's just a matter of, hey, I'm getting on with my daily life. How I got here. Well, you know, that's fine, but I'm not real worried about it. That's the approach she's taken. Yeah, I suppose if anybody asked her Hey, you know, there's some things that about you that make me ask, have you ever been you know, transsexual? She probably would say, oh, yeah, okay, fine. She'd be out. But she wouldn't be maintaining. She wouldn't be expending energy to maintain a closet. You know what I mean? Yeah, yeah. So that's where it gets rough. If you've got to maintain every day of your life, wake up, and worry and all that, that's got to kill you. I mean, that's the kind of closet that I escaped from, when I when I couldn't try to hide who I was from myself and the rest of the world anymore.



11:55

I actually went to another extreme in that I almost had become a professional transsexual. And at some point, I had to stop and get in my breath and say, Wait a minute, I'm a human being first. I'm a woman next. And transsexual is third or fourth down now. And my, my sense of balance had gotten completely out of whack. And so I'm very glad that I stepped away from activism, because I really needed to get I need to go back and find me again. Yeah, yeah. And I am looking to for to pick my spots to go back into activism. But I don't think I'll ever go back into it in level that I did before. Because at some point, I stopped being Sara the person and became Sarah, the professional transsexual activist. Yeah, that's and that was that wasn't healthy. That was the other one. That's



12:48

exactly what I'm talking about is that you're Sarah, the person first, my friend is her name the person first, right? She's not expending any energy on being anything other than the person that she is. It's when you have to, to maintain the secrecy that you're going to go nuts. Or in your case, when you have to maintain the energy to be out. It can probably take you



13:11

just inaccurate. Do it. Um, yeah. I mean, there were times that I just really needed to walk away. And couldn't. There was so much going on. And a big part of that problem anxious for quite honestly, is there simply were not enough people to do the work. Yeah. I would gladly, you know, people say me, Well, why didn't you delegate it? Delegate it? To who? Yeah, the few activists that were out and working, were all just like I was, they had 200 things on their plate, only 100 of which could be reached at any given time. Yeah. And, and so I'm looking for, I'm looking forward to getting back into it. But at a much lower level. Yeah.



13:55

So I know I need to vacation.



13:58

So is the object of transition to blend in? I don't know. I think that varies from person to person. Yeah.



14:03

You know, and a lot of it is physical. I mean, there are some people who are gonna blend in some people who are gonna blend in a whole lot better than others. And that's just life do deal or don't that's how it's gonna work.



14:16

Yeah. And that brings me I'm glad you brought you said that because that brought brought me to something that I found here. This was sent to me by the folks it's time. Illinois. A 30 year old transsexual woman was assaulted, robbed and shot as she disembark from the Chicago elevated train at Berwyn station. Now, I know what Berwyn station is up in there. The woman was taking the train at 2am When two young men across from her began to make rude comments. As she got off the train the thugs followed her and attempted grab her purse, swinging her while reportedly gelling what are you what are you? In the ensuing struggle the woman broke free and ran hearing guns shots rang out behind her. It wasn't until she had run a block that she realized she'd been shot twice in the back. In this condition, she was able to crawl to the home of friends from where the police and paramedics were summoned. It was then in a bizarre reminiscence of the Tyra Hunter incident, which I'll explain about in a second. Both police and paramedics refused to assist the injured woman onto a stretcher, which waited only 40 feet away. 4040 feet away. Yeah, one was 41 was hurt to declare. If you can run here you can get in that chair. The police reported this sad case as an aggravated assault. However, after it's time, Illinois began to get into it. It was changed to a hate crime. Gee surprise, and to date on no one has been apprehended. Now, there's the Tyra Hunter case they're talking about occurred in Washington, DC, where Tyra Hunter was a non operative transsexual, she was involved in an auto accident. And when one of the paramedics got on the scene, and they cut her away discover that she still had, she was both male and female, she still had some male genitalia. Instead of helping her he stood off the side and began making lewd and rude comments about her. And even as the crowd began to say to her, why don't you help her? No help came, it wasn't till a supervisor get on the scene that she was helped. And Tyra Hunter eventually died. And as it turns out, she probably would have died with or without this paramedic because of the kind of injury she had. But we don't know. Now here we go again, like you said, probably what it is. Now here we go again, with a case that's beginning to look very similar in Chicago. The people that I fear for most are not the people who pass is that people who can't, because they're the ones that are the most likely to be the victims of this. Yeah. You know, and it seems to me that just as easily could have been really Butch dite Oh, yeah, could have been an effeminate man. It could have been any of those people that I've talked about on the show before that I consider to be transgender. So for those of you who say, Well, you know, this was just a transsexual incident, Cape Horn soundbite



17:11

about the gender oppressed, and she doesn't necessarily refer to just the transgendered people in the world. You know, that it's, it's, it's those people and it's also Joe sixpack, who thinks that that's what he has to do because he's a he? And and, you know, the, the Little Miss debutante who gets dolled up big time, because she's, uh, she, you know, when this this whole gender stuff goes way beyond. It does go where the question goes way beyond just transgender. It's funny,



17:39

we went to go see my account, Mike, our accountant today to do our taxes, and I was wearing a transgender niche t shirt, transgender nation t shirt. And on the back of it, it says, gender oppression affects us all. You're right. Well, it does. So and there's an example. Well, okay, what was



17:53

that Chicago thing? No, that's just another for raise my blood pressure. And



17:58

the chances are that the that the Chicago Police Department or paramedics department will Stonewall. And it'll be just like occurred in Washington DC. They'll try and say, well, we don't know who it was. And Stephanie, and some of the other folks up there are gonna have to get well, we'll get it. Well, I trust me. I know, these folks. They will get in their faces, they will do what it takes. And it's going to be it's my guess is it's going to shave up to be a real ugly incident area. And I've asked myself before, whether something like that could happen here. And I think the answer is yes, it could. Yeah. And so one of the first things that I'm looking at doing back going back and doing as an activist again, is I would like to arrange a meeting with the folks that are in charge of the paramedic court. Interesting and doing exactly this and talking to them about the kinds of incidents that have occurred. And so we don't want that to happen here. Yeah, let's talk about transgenders. transexuals. There are some things you really need to know. Now there's something where I feel like I could do it, I could do it easily. I would be effective at it. And that's the that's kind of my new view of activism. Do what you can where you can, yeah, yeah. You know, so, anyway, all right. All of that brings us to the next subject, where from what you've been hearing is talking about, I think it would be easy to understand how it is that a transgender person could become incredibly depressed and very suicidal. Now that's a subject we've discussed on the show a couple of times of Phyllis Frey is very honest and talking about how she's, she slit her wrists and she shows her scars and I've attempted suicide twice in the past. Um, this next piece is a little bit lengthy. I think it runs about four or five minutes. But this is a story that took I pulled off the internet. I do not know this person. Her name was Felisa. vistamar



19:50

I'm, yeah. I was on city forum the day she subscribed. Is that right? That's right. I remember when she showed up buki. Right. Yeah, I was very Are you surprised to find when she had committed suicide and I was one of the few first couple of people to have made. The CD forum was the very first internet mailing list for trans JV for meeting cross posting. It was It was founded in 88, I believe was when the first issues were put out. And until about 92, it was the only place on the internet back in those days, you know, it was much smaller, but it was the only place on the internet where transgendered issues were talked about. And she showed up, I'm gonna guess that had to be sometime around the summer of 1990 or so.



20:40

Background, and she committed suicide 93 Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So I'm gonna, I'm gonna play this piece. And I this is not intended to be modeling or to cause you to go kill yourself, please, no, no, please don't. Instead, it's just, folks, my concern about this, and this is what I said at the time that we did this show. But I'm gonna say that again, because it was several years ago. As

somebody who's attempted suicide in the past, I know how easy it is to lose contact with reality. And I understand how difficult it is to know that you have sunk to the point to where you are no longer in contact with reality. What I want you to know as you hear this piece, and I hope you will listen to it in this light. If she had just reached out once to anybody somewhere and said, I need help, things might have been different. The thing about depression is, as you start sinking into it, you find become incapable of reaching out. And that's where you have to rely on your support network. You have to rely on people who know you to be able to recognize you as being in trouble. And apparently she didn't have that. She just didn't have it. So, with that in mind, we're going to go to this piece. This is from the very first show I did with Jimmy. This is October of 94.



22:16

I'd like to talk about a subject that is acknowledged in the transgender community, but not discussed. Several months ago, I attended a meeting of a transgendered people at a well known gender clinic in Galveston. At that meeting, the subject of suicide came up, and the moderator asked anyone who had actually attempted suicide to raise their hands. of the 60 people in that room. No less than 50 people had attempted suicide. In fact, several people had attempted more than one. Now, I'd like to think our gay lesbian and bisexual audience would be able to understand how taking on the world with its discriminatory attitude and rejection would lead to suicidal tendencies. For those people who do not understand however, I want to relate the story of Felisa vistamar, a transsexual who is 22 years old, when she killed herself on March 6 1993. These entries are from her personal diary. It was her wish the diary be made public with the hope it might help other transgender people who are experiencing what she felt. At the end of her story, have a pen and paper handy. I'll be giving out phone numbers and addresses where help is available for anyone feeling as she did. November 1992. Sometimes when I am walking outside on a clear night, I will look up and try to find my home among the stars. I must try to do something outside my bedroom. I am becoming depressed, suicidal, even. I have a steady stream of thoughts about utter hopelessness, thought of where I kill myself and how and they will not go away. Maybe if I did get a job, it would only make me suffer longer. I don't like to see living things suffer. I wanted to do so many things. I wanted to help people. I had recently thought I could become a role model for girls who want to become a mathematician or scientist. It's hard to accept I have no place in this world. Nine December 1992. my sexual orientation is a subject I have been questioning since last month. I was tempted to submit a posting to a gay computer network stating that I am no law under a lesbian, and that I am better described in relation to my affectional desires. I found a term to describe me while reading through a newspaper I got to college. The article use the term affectional orientation. My affectional orientation is definitely toward women. my sexual orientation is theoretically bisexual. My affectional drive if there is such a thing is about 10 times stronger than my sex drive. I also I really don't know where affection ends and sex begins. What is that? Also, I believe it is overly simplistic to identify someone based solely on whom they sleep with 21 December 1992 I was doing volunteer work today. Even under casual conversation. I feel uncomfortable and unstable. I cower under scrutiny. My affectional and sexual desires have become blurred. I have them both, I believe. I don't usually have them in public. Sometimes I would feel attracted to someone if I could gather something from their body language. A woman somewhat like me perhaps shy, scared, alone, vulnerable. I want to touch her and fall asleep in her arms. I can't imagine even getting enough affection. My own insecurities closed me in when I am in public. In private, all my unfulfilled desires are pulling me in all different directions. I am likely to do something irrational and impulsive. Soon. 30 December 1992. I went with a friend to the chicken soup brigade thrift store. On the way back I

met a dog. When I first saw her she was barking at me. But then I saw her wagging her tail. She was a golden retriever locked behind the fence. When I got very close to her she put her body against the fence. So her fur would stick through the gate. She wanted to be petty. She seemed starved for affection. She was like me. As I was petting her I saw a lot of my hair fall into view and noticed her fur and my hair were the same color. I wanted to free her from behind the fence and keep her for myself. We could be too lonely animals content with one another. When I stopped petting her and took my hand away from the fence, she barked and turned around I would stay in pet the opposite side of her. I eventually did need to leave my new friend, even when she barked for me to stay. Five January 1993. I am encountering old desires of mine such as swimming. But the comment X has made to me, such as your hands are too large. You are shaped like a boy has made me very self conscious. I wish I was anatomically normal so I could go swimming. If I were normal, I would no longer have any reason to hide behind my clothes. Other than to hide my modesty. I could go swimming without clothes on. I would love to do that so much. But no. I'm a mutant Frankenstein's monster. I hate myself, the physical self. I remember having these feelings when I was a child hitting my thighs with my hands so I would cry. Well, I'm crying now. I am reminded of a sentence in my masculine feminine book stating in Freud's logic, those who struggled to become what they are not, must be inferior to that to which they aspire. It refers to Freud's theories about women who he believes are really castrated males and who aspired to become phallic males. In my case, there is little difference in the logic. I must say that I feel inferior to real women. And I may never be able to resolve that conflict. Five February 1993. I need to plan otherwise I will go mad. If I no longer receive public assistance, I could just remain here until I get evicted. This isolation is making me frustrated. Outside is boring gray concrete, grey asphalt roads and grey buildings. It is a visually deficient landscape. I would like to volunteer in an organization which helps the emotional needs of children or Are children of HIV Positive parents? I must be able to dedicate my time to a child for at least a year. And I don't know if I will be in Seattle for a year. I don't know. Anything. Dammit, I no longer feel part of any community. I have no home. Maybe in this life, I was not destined to live long. I am too different. I can't adapt. I have no future. What is keeping me from killing myself? My relations with people who've grown so distant? No one I care about will miss me. How can I continue to live based on an assumption, I will someday be able to contribute to this society. I should have the right to be selfish. My grief and unhappiness have been too great. I probably was supposed to kill myself when I was 16. Do I not have the right to decide when my suffering is too great. And their diary ends. The program this morning is just one small piece of a huge event called National Coming Out Day. Does this suggest that every transgendered person, regardless of their personal financial or emotional status, should suddenly come out to their family, friends and co workers? No, it doesn't.



31:23

It means that like me, you may relate to the story of ableism VISTA on a very personal level. Perhaps like me, or the 50 other transgender people in the clinic that day, you may have attempted suicide, perhaps more than once. Maybe you've only thought about it. Probably possibly you feel as Felisa did that you are a freak of nature, or you feel alone, vulnerable and scared. National Coming Out Day can have meaning to you. However, there are groups of people aching for the chance to help you. They often have small settings where you can meet other people like yourself, with no more than two or three people at a time being involved. You can and should come out in the sense of accepting that help. With and when I was a child, I used to lay in bed at night and pray that God would fix me. I really thought a bolt of lightning would come out of the sky and I would magically be transformed into a beautiful woman. Well, now we're adults. And we know things don't work that way. But good things can and do happen

if you allow them to happen. I'm going to give you the names of some organizations and their phone numbers. If you are driving home from one of the bars and you can't copy this information, Paul up here at the station when you use home, we will have this information available. This evening I spoke at the Gulf Coast transgender community. That's GC TC for sure. They can be reached at Box 6643 Houston 77266. Their voicemail is 713-780-4282. This group is open to anyone. It does not matter whether you are gay, straight, bisexual or unsure. I advise you to please give them a call. There is the Texas Association for transsexual support. They are working diligently and putting together a program of professionals to provide help. Their phone mail is 713-827-5913. They're also in Houston. Finally there at the Montrose Counseling Center. They're still at 701 Richmond in Houston, and their number is 713-529-0037. They are transgender and bisexual friendly. You may feel like you were only one voice right now. But I assure you there is a growing chorus of transgendered people who are only now finding the power of their collective voices. Come out and join that chorus in the way that's best for you. But please do come out. We need you Joe