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talking, dressing, transsexual, gender, cross, person, female, cross dressers, differences, male, sexuality, women, cynthia, crossdresser, people, linda, genitals, sex, wife, coming

SPEAKERS

Jimmy Carper, Sarah Dipalma

- J

Jimmy Carper 00:03

Oh yeah romanovski And Phillips and you're hearing it on after hours career radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and KEOS College Station Bryan. I'm Jimmy Carper and with me tonight is
- S

Sarah Dipalma 00:17

Sarah dipalma
- J

Jimmy Carper 00:18

Tada if you didn't know is
- S

Sarah Dipalma 00:21

if there's a if there's a God he's a queen.
- J

Jimmy Carper 00:23

That's right.
- S

Sarah Dipalma 00:24

I love that you know sometimes you just have to remind yourself there's a sense of humor at all.

—

J

Jimmy Carper 00:34

Even in religion and the the great Ed moonbow is still with us. I got some, I got some crushed for you. Now, right not sir.

S

Sarah Dipalma 00:58

Can you call it pizza? For me? This is Domino's quiere pizza. What would you like? Oh, thank you so much. Just having a little fun here, folks.

J

Jimmy Carper 01:16

Won't happen here. You know it.

S

Sarah Dipalma 01:19

Yeah, that is a good question, actually. Oh, well. Okay, we I started out saying we were going to do some of the best of tapes. Oh, yeah. And we actually are going to try and get to some before tonight. What we have what I have queued up right here is Linda and Cynthia Phil. Oh, my favorite couple. Now we've been talking about cross dressing. And so I'm going to just go ahead and play these two cuts back to back. And then we'll come back and we'll talk about Linda and Cynthia and what they had to say about cross dressing. Want to make sure I'm on the right the There we go. Make sure I've got the right. All right, here we go Linda and Cynthia Phillips. And hopefully this is going to work the first time through let's try this the purposes of the interview for the purposes of the interview, I want to begin with the assumption the listener has heard of a crossdresser and knows nothing else about them. So which one of you wants to explain with professors to the audience? So far, it's been a while since I'm exhausted, or I guess I can define that a crossdresser as someone who dresses in the clothes of the opposite gender. And that's where you have to keep the gender and sex separate because I consider myself a gender female. But anatomically, I'm a male. And I dress in the clothes of a female. I'm live as a female. Okay, now I consider myself a transgender person. And I'm still undecided about surgery. So for the audience acquainted with the differences in processor in a transgendered person? Well,

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02:53

some people think a transgender person covers everybody in our community. I don't particularly think that should be true. We use the term transgender is transgender. So somebody who like you and I live full time as a female. I think that's probably pretty still a pretty good criteria to go by.

S

Sarah Dipalma 03:10

Okay, so for the audience. Now, let's make sure we make a distinction. There's a distinction between gender and sexual orientation. We had Pete Borenstein on the show recently and redefinition of gender was gender is everything you think sex is everything you do. I'm not sure

if that that's quite sufficient, but reasonable about gender is between your ears and seconds between legs. Oh, by that? Okay. Yeah, I like that. That word. Okay, now for this. Will. Alicia, we talked about diversity in gender. And we talked about diversity and sexual orientation. And we talked about diversity in relationship. Assuming your audience has never heard of you before and talk a little bit about your relationship.



03:54

Well, Linda and I have been married 36 years, we'll be married 37 next month. I didn't know about the crossdressing. When we started dating, we met on a blind date. And when the top Jim told me about Linda, before we got engaged, I really didn't understand it. That was back in the 50s. But I thought this was such a wonderful person that it really could not be that big a thing turned out to be a little bit more involved than I originally expected. But it's been fun. Linda, tell me before we got married that don't worry, you'll never be bored. And I have never been bored.



Sarah Dipalma 04:39

Now, it's a huge so you knew before you were married? Yeah. That's fairly uncommon, isn't



04:45

it? quite uncommon. So many, I counsel wives quite a bit around the country and it's not unusual for them to find out after 15 or 20 years that their husband cross dressers and I feel betrayed



Sarah Dipalma 05:01

most of the cross dressers that I know, work very hard to make sure their wife doesn't know, because their single biggest fear is if your wife found that finds out, they're going to be divorced in the morning. And,



05:15

of course, the best way to get divorced is to not tell her before you get married, and then when she finds out, she's for sure,



05:20

you're gonna be upset about it Well, often, the CrossDresser before they get married, feels that getting married will make this go away, you know, he's not going to, it's not going to be prime in his mind. And it's something that reveals like when he has a family and a wife that this just simply won't be necessary. And it may not be at that at that point. But they'll, after a few years, possibly, they'll get in a stressful situation. And it bounces back. And at that point, quite often

they've had a child. And they're scared to tell the why. And then it just snowballs from there, it just gets worse and worse, and they put it off longer and longer. And it's, it's pathetic, it's really sad,



06:13

as a result, over this, and this really is, as you probably realize, and understand this really is sort of a progressive thing, what may not have been necessary when you were 20, when you get to be 40 becomes a necessity, you think, Well, I'm tired of leaving a lie, I'm tired of trying to be a male, when I'm not really a male. And so the next thing, you know, he's thinking about maybe operation, maybe he thinks he's a transsexual, or maybe he thinks that he ought to go full time live as a woman. We see a lot of it. And it really destroys families.



Sarah Dipalma 06:45

But it doesn't necessarily have to be progressive. I mean, I didn't know we were talking about before we started the show, I'm amazed at the number of people who have come into a gender group for the first time that I went to a gulf coast transgender community meeting, for example. This is the first time dressing in public ever. And the first thing out of their mouth is, Hi, I'm a transsexual. And I really want to stop and say, Are you sure you really want to say that? Well, I want to start at the top of the totem pole,



07:12

not at the bottom. That's the status thing. If I say on the T S or transsexual, then that's supposed to mean that I've already bypassed all the little minor things that I've already built myself up from the bottom nine at the top, non transactional, which in art, somehow in our community has come to me, the epicenter of, of



07:30

crosstalk, which is not



Sarah Dipalma 07:39

let's pick for yourself in a marriage, you've been married X number of years. And your husband comes to you and says, There's something I need to tell you. I've been meaning to you for years, but I've been scared to death. And I know men and I tell you, you're going to divorce me. And the truth is that I like the crossbow.



08:00

Well, I think most women are going to feel threatened right off the bat. And they're about right, right. So so the first reaction is I must not be enough of a woman. If you want to dress as as a

woman that I must not be enough of a woman. I hear that all the time. What did I do wrong? Am I not enough for you? Okay,



08:17

I'm not a lesbian. I don't want to be in relationship. And



08:22

I assure them they're not listening. And I tell them I said it doesn't matter if he's dressed as a giraffe and you go to bed with him that does not automatically make you a giraffe. If he feels like he's once feels like he wants to be a woman. That does not make you realize any more than it would make you a giraffe if he dressed as a giraffe.



Sarah Dipalma 08:44

Okay, now, there's there has to be some negotiation here because most cross dressers that I know have gone through something called purging. That is they're trying to make this urge to process doorway. God knows how many times they may have burned their wardrobe. They may have given it away. But the urge has not gone away. Am I doing okay



09:04

so far? That's the favorite method of purging is burning. I have never known why but everybody seems to think that that's the way to do it. You've burned several \$1,000 worth of clothes and shoes and wigs and put them in the dumpster and set the whole thing on fire. I don't know how many people I've talked to that have done something symbolic about the fire. Well, as you know, in a more cleansing, kind of a morbid light. That's the preferred method of suicide in our communities is strangulation because you feel that there is something inside you that's basically strangling the life. And that's why most transgender people commit suicide do it by strangulation.



Jimmy Carper 09:47

Whoa that was amazing because we were sitting here and I was like, oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. And and going right along with it. Just She's so right.



Sarah Dipalma 10:02

Linda and Cynthia Phillips run. Bolton and park in Bolton Park is in San Antonio. It's one of the larger cross-dressing organizations in the country. And they put on these are the folks who put on the Texas tea party, right. And after some of the things that we've said tonight talking about cross dressing and seeing it was the perfect follow up, because Linda and Cynthia get exactly those kinds of calls. One of the things that about about cross dressing, I think that's so

confusing, is that it's such a solitary thing to start out with. Yes, the CrossDresser lives in fear of being discovered by the family. It doesn't understand what's happening to them, and won't go to get anybody tell them what it is. So you're in the middle of no place with this. You're driven by urges you don't understand and understand and surrounded by people you can't or won't talk to. You talk about isolation. Yeah,

J Jimmy Carper 10:58

yeah. Well, and it's probably just very much like being gay and lesbian or coming out, oh, barrel down. It's, I'm the only one no one else could possibly feel the way I do.

S Sarah Dipalma 11:12

But even in Houston, and we get those kinds of phone calls, I get those, I still get those really, it's amazing to me that we are in a city this size, and we've got numerous crossdressing organizations. You know, we've got all these political activists and all that sort of thing. But I'm still it is like the coming out process is oh, it's such an individual thing. Everybody thinks they're doing it by themselves. Right?

J Jimmy Carper 11:35

Right. Right.

S Sarah Dipalma 11:37

I hit a real funny experience it today at it the festival at the West number Festival, and I come in into my life partner about it. I was wearing my transsexual men's t shirt, which you know, I you know, me I'm so usable about things. Yes. It's so happened, we were coming out of leather by boots over on Montrose Boulevard. And there was a beginning crossdresser who was coming up on the other side, on the sidewalk near me, took one look at my transsexual minutes t shirt and absolutely turn pure white was scared to death, I was going to out her. And I thought, honey, I got better things to do with my life. You want to cross dress it, you know, go for it. She actually went and moved to the other side of the street, so she wouldn't have to be near me. You're kidding me. And I thought, now how awful it must be to live a life of fear like that? Gosh, yes, you know, and I was really struck by that. And I thought, here's a person is meeting myself, who's so open. And if you needed advice or help, all you have to do is stop and say, Can I ask you a question? Yeah. And instead runs the other side of the street. And we take care

J Jimmy Carper 12:46

on all sides, isn't it?

S Sarah Dipalma 12:48

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Yeah. And I thought this is a person who's leading a very lonely life must be. And it's funny I have the same thing happened with the drag queens who are living as women. They don't want me anywhere near them. They don't want me anywhere near them, they will run as far as they can go if they see me coming. And again, it's it's it's fear. And the other end. These are drag queens who are living as women, they already feel a double whammy. They feel like they're, they're rejected by the gay community. They're afraid to come and talk to people in the transgender community. And so they're kind of nowhere. And it's self imposed.

J

Jimmy Carper 13:25

That's a self imposed isolation is it doesn't make sense either.

S

Sarah Dipalma 13:29

The Eagles have a song wants to align when a song says, it happens so often that we live our life and chains and never realized we hold the key. Yeah. In in these cross dressers, these examples of cross dressers. I'm talking that I've just talked about, those are prime examples of that. Yeah, they have the keys in their hand, and they they're not using it. Yeah. And these are often the same people who call me later and they're in crisis. They've gotten into a problem with law. And now what do I do?

J

Jimmy Carper 13:56

Or what do I do or the family has found out? And yeah, and like you talked about earlier, it's by being discovered, then you bring up the added factor of the honesty,

S

Sarah Dipalma 14:10

or you change the whole dynamics of the discussion. The discussion is no longer about cross dressing. The discussion now is, can I trust you as a person? That's a much different issue far more serious issue. Linden, Cynthia Phillips talked about that. And I think one of this made a comment to the effect of, well, if you don't tell your wife, it's a guarantee you're going to get divorced. Yes, because sooner or later, it's going to come out in a way that you don't want. Yes. Often what will happen is cross dressers sort of choreograph their being caught. What will happen is the cross dresser wants the secret to come out, but doesn't quite have the courage to tell. So they choreograph it they leave Panti someplace where they shouldn't be found. Oh, are they arranged to get caught in some way? It's a subconscious thing. But but the carrying the secret is just so difficult that it's actually easier to arrange being caught in some way. They arranged their own coming out sort of. And that's a frightening thing to make very strange. It is it isn't. It's not it's it's a case of I can't carry the secret any longer. But I don't have the courage to tell. So how do I get out of this mess? Yeah, you know, and that's, that's shame. That is a that's a shame. If I let me say this, if you're a crossdresser out there, and it doesn't matter whether you're heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, as it makes no difference. There's no reason for you to have to go through all that by yourself. There really isn't. There are organizations in the city. And we've given the numbers earlier, we'll give before we leave. There are organizations in this city where you can call them in complete confidence. You can

call them say, Listen, I'm married. It happens all the time I get calls people who don't want to give me their name. Sure. And I don't ask, you know, you can call and get help. You don't have to go through it alone, unless you really want to, you know, this is this is Houston, this is a big city. You're not going to shock anybody. One thing I would caution you about, however, if it should happen, that your wife does find out is often the wife and marriage counseling is suggested. Be very careful. Make sure that you find a marriage counselor who knows something about cross dressing or when you go Don't set yourself up.

J Jimmy Carper 16:32

If you can go to the Montrose Counseling Center. Absolutely.

S Sarah Dipalma 16:36

Yeah, absolutely. They'll do it on a sliding scale. It's right. They know a cross dressing is, but for heaven's sakes, be careful. Marriage counseling can be helpful if you get someone who knows what they're talking about. If you go to a marriage counselor, who says well, you know, I think cross dressing is a perversion, you got a problem, you got a big problem, you're headed for divorce courts. You know, so be smarter than that.

J Jimmy Carper 16:56

I'm kind of reminded of the scene and Ed Wood, where Johnny Depp as, as, as Ed Wood, is dating his future second wife, and says, and talks about? Well, you know, I like to wear women's clothes. And she says, Oh, yeah. And, you know, he comes out to her about it beforehand. And has, you know, it's the start of this very honest relationship.

S Sarah Dipalma 17:30

Well, the honest relationship is the key part of all that, and it's, and it's often the hardest part, because it's the part where the person has to deal with fear. And that's, that's not easy is to say we're gonna have where I plan to have more folks on talking about cross dressing. And we'll bring the issue up again, I want to go to I want to go next to an area that we've that we had on the show before, on, on February 11th of this year, we did a show with Dr. Collier Cole. Now Dr. Cole is the director of the Rosenberg clinic in Galveston, and I think probably of the shows that we've done, this probably ranks at the top. So yeah, oh, this this is this is great. And there was a caller earlier who called him wanting to know about the differences between sexual orientation and sex, gender, yeah, and didn't get all that. There are there. In this conversation with Dr. Cole. We cover several different areas. And we're gonna go to that next because this is this is a prime example of how to understand the differences in these terms. So that we go Dr. Cole here by asking some of the questions that have been asked been put to me. I've been told by several people in the gay lesbian community that transsexuals are really people who can't deal with their own sexuality. When I go and talk to classes at various universities, they tell me the same thing. So let's start by talking about the confusion, saving, address the differences between gender identity and sexual orientation.



19:10

Okay, what we're really talking about here, Sarah are several issues and, and those issues do involve sexuality. And specifically, we're talking about gender identity, gender role and one sexual orientation. Now, what those break down into is that gender identity is that personal private sense of being male or female. That's something that each individual has a sense of, it's largely biological in origin. It's a very personal sense or private sense of, of one's sexuality. When we're talking about gender role, those things are learned. We grow up in a society we're exposed to a lot of cultural issues, television, friends, parents, churches, and so on. And we learn how to act like men how to dress like men how to act like women, dress like women and so on. And the 30 issue is that of sexual orientation. Again, most experts tend to believe today that that may well be largely biological in origin. And that has to do with, with who you're attracted to, for, for sexual activity for sexual expression. So each of those areas need to be addressed and need to be discerned. Now, when you're talking about basically gay, lesbian people, these are folks whose identity is pretty comfortable, let's say with the male, homosexual, he's anatomically male, his identity is male, he learns how to act like a man, that satisfying to him. But his orientation is that he's also attracted sexually to men. Same thing applies to lesbians, you know, their, their identity as female, they learn how to act like women, and so on. But they're also attracted sexually to women. When we're talking about transsexualism, though, this is a situation where the basic issue the basic problem is in the area of gender identity. That is, one has the sense of being the identity or the sex that is not congruent with your body. In other words, you're born into the body of one sex. But as far back as you can remember, you've always felt and and felt more comfortable perceiving yourself as the opposite sex. And as you well know, this causes a great deal of turmoil and confusion for individuals who find themselves having these kinds of feelings.



Sarah Dipalma 21:26

It brings up another question for some of the callers who who've asked and say, Well, I'm gay, I'm straight, like cross dressing, or I think maybe I'm a transsexual and don't know the difference. If you would talk about some of the differences between a transvestite, say, a transgendered person in a transsexual,



21:44

okay. Again, probably the most easy way to understand this. And it's a way that I often use when I give lectures and share information with my students and residents here at the medical school in Galveston, that is, the cross-dressing should be viewed much like a symptom. Now, what that means is, and they can relate to this, certainly very easy as a fever is a symptom. If you have a fever, it means something's going on. But you really don't know what it is, you know, is there an illness in this part of the body, that part of the body, you know what's going on. So it's basically a symptom that needs to be looked at more, the same thing I find when it comes to cross dressing, people who cross dress do this for a variety of reasons. Some people do it because it provides a sense of calmness, a sense of bringing out their feminine side, we refer to these folks as heterosexual cross dressers or as you mentioned transvestite as the old terminology, then you have people who cross dress for money, they are impersonators, this is a this is business to them, then you sometimes have the the homosexual male, for example, who crossed dresses, in a in a campy kind of way, is making a statement about femininity. But he's

doing this as as perhaps, part of doing shows are your drag queens, so to speak. And then finally, you have the transsexual someone who's cross dressing, because it feels right, it feels normal. So again, there's a variety of reasons that people cross dress. And I think the the role of the professional is really to listen to folks and to try to understand why they're doing it. And so often, though, I think, because of the tabloid shows, and some of the misinformation that's out there, people get very confused when in fact, the more you listen, and the more you work with all these different groups of folks, it makes a lot of sense.

S

Sarah Dipalma 23:38

Another point of confusion comes up in classes when I tell them that I've not had the surgery. Now it reached the conclusion as to whether I will or won't, so that I explained the term transgender and within variably I get from them is, you mean we aren't what our genitals are. I've even I've even had politicians tell me that. I've been told that in classes even by professors. In fact, we had a judge who's, who actually wrote that into a name change case, refused to grant the gender change on the grounds that what your genitals are this therefore, that is what you are. If you wouldn't see if you can address the confusion about what a body presents, as opposed to the way a person feels about their body. Okay?

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24:22

Again, I can understand that's a very confusing issue because for years and years, most people simply focus on the genitals when it comes to identifying whether someone's male or female, those of us that are in this field and certainly are much more aware know that sexuality is defined along a continuum of parameters. One has chromosomes sex, that is whether you're xx or XY, one has hormonal sex. In other words, what is the relative balance of hormones in your body primarily male that is testosterone or female estrogens. Then one has the the anatomy of sexuality. The whether you have the penis and testicles or the vagina and ovaries, then one also has what we call brain sacks. We know now that there are discreet differences between female brains and male brains in terms of anatomy, in terms of biochemistry, and so on. And finally, we have the whole issue of sex of assignment and wearing that is whether you're given the traditional blue blanket or the pink blanket at the delivery room. And then suddenly, people start treating you according to those kinds of cultural cultural expressions, they treat males in one way females another. So the reality is that sexuality can be looked at in a variety of ways. Unfortunately, most people have simply looked at it from the point of view of the genitals. But I think what we're trying to do now is educate the courts, educate the public, that this is a much broader issue. And in fact, in the case of the transsexual, for example, we tend to feel that the person has all the normal, let's say male characteristics, the X, Y, the male hormones, the male anatomy, but something goes wrong towards the end of pregnancy, hence, they come out with a feminized brain. So we can't change the brain. So what we now do in terms of treatment and working with folks is change the body to fit the mind.

S

Sarah Dipalma 26:19

No matter how much talking we do on the show, about gender, about gay rights, lesbian rights, whatever, that's the truth of the matter. What matters the love you leave behind when your God when you call isn't? That's that's a beautiful song. That's the flirtations. Why I love that

song. You know, it's, in a lot of ways, I really consider myself to be a blessed person in a lot of respects. Sometimes I get to feeling like an old fossil.

J Jimmy Carper 26:53

Oh, I know that feeling.

S Sarah Dipalma 26:55

Yeah. You know, I went through a period like that. A few weeks ago, I watched a special about Woodstock and they were presenting it was ancient history. And I thought, my God, am I am I that ancient history?

J Jimmy Carper 27:09

No, yes, we are, actually.

S Sarah Dipalma 27:12

And yet I look back over the course of my life. And it's certainly been an interesting life. I mean, there are probably not a lot of people who can say that they spent time with Abbie Hoffman as an anti war resistor as a civil rights, you know, just a whole career things. And yeah, you look over the course your life. And I realize how lucky I had been that there have been people along the way, who've been kind to me and said, This person might have some potential. Let's see if I can help. There you go. And I really do feel like in many ways, I'm blessed. And I don't know how many people ever take the time to sit and look at that and say, Well, you know, people have been kind to me, and people have helped me along the way. But it does feel good to know that in it feels good to know that I'm going to I'm going to spot in my life right now where I can help some others, I can pass along the love that's been given to me. That's the whole thing of it, isn't it? It really is. And I'd like to think that in the final analysis, when we get down to talking about this group's rights or that group's rights or whatever, that really is, what this show was about, is what what can we do to make life better for each other? Because we all have to live together here?

J Jimmy Carper 28:25

And yeah, part of the show is, is helping everybody get to know everybody else. Yeah. You know, it's that was the that was the big impetus and pulling in bisexuals and transgenders into this show, is that we don't know each other. And we're all in the same boat.

S Sarah Dipalma 28:43

Yeah, that was something that really came through to me when we were in Washington. The fact of the matter is, there are people out there who don't see us as people who are capable of

love. And we're not K, and they don't see us as K pm being people who are worth loving. And I came home with this with the distinct sense that we need, as all of us regardless of whatever your sexual gender orientation here, we all need to learn something about a sense of preservation. Because there are we do have enemies out there, or Yeah, we really there really are people out there who do not mean us well. And the sooner we learn that, and the sooner we learn to work together, the better off we all are. I was I was reminded of something that occurred years and years ago, it was my first my first tour is a Freedom Rider. And we were in two we went into a Tupelo, Mississippi. And this is 1960 something and we went into town and there was a there had been lynching and the person was still hanging in the trade. In on that bus that day were Catholics, Jews, white people. Black people and we were from all over the country. And we were all there because we all saw there was something wrong. And I've often wondered whether we can learn to do that again. Or are we

J Jimmy Carper 30:13

so right? Yeah. When it's sort of like the I use that same analogy for the lesbian and gay community that we only can get together on something like a Paul Broussard murder. Yeah. I mean, it takes something really big to unite us and otherwise, we're at each other's throats.

S Sarah Dipalma 30:31

It will we have to wait until people are hanging from trees till we get it.


J Jimmy Carper 30:34


No, that can't wait till there. Yeah, it's no,

S Sarah Dipalma 30:39

yeah, that's, I really think you're right. If there's anything I think we've we've tried to get across in this show tonight, is that we are starting to learn it. You know, all for months and months and months. On this show. We have been talking about this group and that group. Tonight in one month, we've talked about how in one month it coalesced. Yes, in one month, it all coalesced. It can be done can be done. It can be done what it has taken. It was some people who wanted to make it happen. That's one of the things I liked about this floatation is this flirtation song. Is there the idea of talking about how love is the answer, but more importantly, that you can be anything you want to be Yeah. I told I was at a class speaking to a class and I was telling you a story about my daughter about that. My daughter was telling I was talking about role models. And I asked her who she wanted to be and she was having a hard time deciding between being Sally Ride the astronaut Yeah, Geraldine Ferraro, or her grandmother. And I thought how cool it was that as a female she has a range of options. Yeah, no kidding. You know. And and I'd like to think that we're all going to get there as a community one day to Well, it's time for us to go and I've got some Melissa Etheridge queued up for us to go out. Go out on this has been a great show. I've really enjoyed this and fun. It really has. My name is Sarah DiPalma. And as I always like to leave with the the model from its time, Texas, which is when decorum becomes

repression, the only dignity free people have is to speak out. And this is 90.1 FM KPFT in Houston, and 89.1 fm KEOS College Station, Bryan, thank you very much for tuning in to after hours

 Jimmy Carper 32:37
and stay tuned for musical chairs with Billy Gilbert.

 Sarah Dipalma 32:42
Good night, y'all.