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00:00

George, Michael and freedom. If you're really lucky, if things go well for you, that's what you could end up with is the end result of the transition process.

00:12

You bet. Oh, there you go. Here I am. You betcha. You betcha. You know,

00:18

we're just talking. We're just talking. You and I just talking about minutes ago, if you had, you know, if you knew your life was coming to the end, what would you do? And we had, we've had a guest on the show, his name escapes me right now young from from Great Britain. Kenny was named. But he'd say he was talking about his son, Mike Moran, he was saying, he said that, he wondered if his son would be half the man that he was, because he wouldn't have had that great adventure. And he would not have had to have worked so hard to get to be who he ended up. You know, and that's one thing that I don't know if it was a blessing, or a curse, I guess, I discovered was discovered to Henry David Thoreau at a very early age. And he spends a lot of time if you've ever read the book, Walden, he spends a lot of time talking about making use of the time that you have. And what I learned out of reading Walden was live every minute. I mean, that was what I took from it. A lot

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of older gay men who have survived the plague. And seen half or more than half for most of their friends die, realize this also. And it's your it's time to take a reassessment of your life and say, you know, do I want to die without doing this, this and this, that I've always wanted to? Or what's important to me now? is, you know, having the Mercedes all that important, or is it me being happy inside more important?

02:02

Well, that's, you know, we that's how I reached my decision that I was then in the end, I did want to have the surgery. Yeah. We had a scare without that perhaps I had a cancer behind the eye. And that turned out not to be the case. But I had to think long and hard. And it was, it was an odd experience. Because when you know, you've been you think that you have a cancer you. You know, the normal process, I think for most people is oh my god, I might die. Or I might lose my hair or any number of those things. Where the thought that came into my mind is I don't want to die this way. I don't want to die with this body. And that's how I knew is the certainty that yes, I wanted to go through and have the surgery, the sex reassignment surgery,



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SRS, sexual reassignment surgery, and I guess we we should explain to people, people who might not know you that you are you live, you are a woman,



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I am a woman, but I have not had this sexual reassignment surgery yet, yet, and that's something I hope to do. But I think it's an important decision to make. And it's the hardest one a lot of people now more and more people are actually deciding not to have the surgery. And I think in some respects that people like Phyllis Frey and myself have been pioneers in that area. Because we have really campaigned hard and said look, you are not your genitals you know you are a person in the genitals are almost an accident really. You mean it's you know, it's a wash in the womb one way or another. And you have to be able to get beyond that in Phyllis and I have campaigned very hard for people to take their time Don't rush into the surgery. Don't jump into it, think this over you don't get a refund all of those kinds of things. And I think that there's some extent we've had, we've had some success. I get emails from people say you Texas transsexual is down there Why is none of you people ever go for surgery? Well, that's not exactly



04:09

true. But but but it's the freedom to make that decision. Yes, you do. You know who you are. You are are a woman you are living as a woman and and what they do between your legs are what is there may not be that necessary to your life the way you live it and I don't know what when you when you're when you get to a certain age and you think about what you're you're talking \$20,000 Yeah, to have this surgery table in advance payable in advance and you know, is it that important that I have the the surgery or maybe I want to put this money in retirement or because I know it for anybody under 50 It may seem a little difficult to to imagine but sex is not Not all that important, the older you get, it really isn't true. What what is important is love and contentment, and all those other boring things that that you think about in the relationship. But those are more important, much more important.



05:18

I've decided to basically draw a line in the sand. And I've decided that if I do not if for whatever reason, I'm not able to raise the money or whatever, to have it done by the time I turn 50, then I'm just not going to do it. The reason is because you know it's already because it dawned on

I'm just not going to do it. The reason is, because, you know, it's already because it dawned on me that retirement is real. Oh, yeah. And it's you have to have money to retire on. Yes. And if I don't have it by 50, from a financial standpoint, it stops making any sense. At least for me, personally, financially, it doesn't make sense. \$20,000 is a lot of money if you decided if at a retirement age, you're. So I've decided that if I don't do it by the age 50, I'm just going to draw the line in the scene, say I'm going to quit worrying about this. And that's it. I have an orky ectomy which is a surgical procedure. And that's as far as I'll go with



06:09

it. But on the other hand, there are a lot of people who the sexual reassignment surgery is very, very important.



06:18

They're the oldest that I've heard of is a person that was in their 70s, and they had sex reassignment surgery. And I can understand why people would do that. And just that was a personal decision on my part. The thing is that I think it's maybe hard for people to understand, when I say things like, well, you know, you are not your genitals, I get these cross eyed looks like I am not.



06:42

Well, no. And, you know, if you've gone through transition and all of that, you should know that I mean, we you, the transgender community has redefined gender, especially in the 90s. Yeah, it's been it's been going on for a long time. But But now other people are looking into gender and saying, Well, yeah, you know, what does it mean to be a male? What does it mean to be a female and, and so there's lots of ambi grit ambiguity here.



07:10

I was really interested. The other day, I saw the front page article in the voice about the Butch femme. Yes. And as I read the article, I thought, transgender. Whoa, that's



07:21

right. I mean, it's very strong. And I remember those days when, with with my roles were very, very important in the lesbian community.



07:32

One of the very first lesbians that I remember that I knew was a lesbian, or that I remember having ever seen was, I guess, it must have been in the late 60s, wearing the leather biker jacket, you know, with the hair slicked back, like, like sort of the Marlon Brando biker from hell

look, you know, and she was who she had on her arm, this incredibly Ultra fan woman, you know, and I thought, Oh, so that's what being a lesbian. Because it was one of the first times I've ever knowingly seen a lesbian and thought, Oh, so that's what that looks like.



08:08

And for some lesbians that's very important, but not all.



08:12

And it seems that I think those stereotypes are becoming less and less, as we as we move along, liberation has sort of given people the freedom to move away from that stereotype if they choose to. But Jen, but the thing of, it's a funny thing about, about being a transgendered person, it was speaking just for myself here, it's yes, it's, I'm trying to think how to put it. It's some point for me, I came to the conclusion, that with surgery or without surgery, I was a female. And so it didn't matter. Yes. That's a hard decision that most people I think, in our community don't come to, that they still feel like surgery is the answer. I'm not a woman until I have served until I had the surgery. And they're going to get it if they have to go out and rob a bank for the money, which I think is kind of sad. To me. It's almost sounds like you've traded one prison for another, in a way, you know, and I think that's really unnecessary. And then one of the things that I've been very proud of in this show, is that if nothing else, the discussions that we've had about subjects like that, or subjects that we've had with Kate Bornstein, oh, yeah, some of the things that we've talked about.



09:30

If you want to talk about rocking gender, you just read anything by Kate Bornstein.



09:34

Kate is quite a trip. I had a nice conversation with her by email recently, and she decided that she was sick and tired of wearing wigs. This was during the heatwave in New York, I can understand that. So she simply chose to start going up there, you know, without a wig. In fact, she just shaved your head and say, Well, I'm just, you know, now,



09:55

she would do that shave her head, wear a top hat, you know, whatever



09:59

and you know, at didn't faze her a bit. If people stopped and stared at her, she was like, Oh, hey, well, you know, that's nice. I'm getting attention and she just kept moving on down the road. I don't know that I had the strength to do that. But she she writes, she has kind of

redefined gender. You bet. And her view is gender is whatever she feels that morning, basically, yes. Basically, that's the truth of it. If she feels like getting up and doing makeup, she does. Well, that's easy for her to say she's an author, she doesn't have to go to work every day. If you're like me, and you work in a conservative place, like a bank or a stock brokerage and some other places, they have pretty strict rules you better not you might be completely bald, one day, or you're gonna be bald out on the street. Yeah. But that's one of the things I've been very proud of, of the show is that we provoked a lot of discussion in the transgender community. And also, it's funny, some of the things that you and I have talked about on the show, three, four years ago, suddenly had now turned up in places like the advocate.



10:59

I know, yeah, it's, it's, I love it. I love it. I just, you know, I feel like a pioneer.



11:05

Well, we have been pioneers in that respect. And it's been, it's been intriguing to me, I was just got through reading an article in a magazine called *apne. Reader*. Oh, very good. And there was an article and there were a young woman, she was saying that her child, her boy, is a trend is is a crossdresser. She says, because he likes to wear belt, little pink ballet outfits, in tutus and things. And she was talking about how she feels about that. And she wasn't quite sure. From a feminist point of view, she thought she should just sit back and allow it in whatever course this child takes. That's what the child takes. And another part of her as the mother said, Oh, my God, what do we have here? You know, what am I doing? And that's because it's like, what?



11:51

What have I done?



11:53

Yeah, exactly. Yes, exactly. What have I done? And what's been going to become of this child? And oh, my god, what am I into? And it's been very, it was very interesting article. And she, she talks about this whole idea of, well, males have to behave this way. And females have to behave this way. And transgender and transgender people kind of say, Oh, that's a bunch of BS. You know, that that's not I think lots of gay people have participated in that, too. What was it you'd like to say you're in touch with your feminine side or ever?



12:23

Constantly? Yes, and because of that, you know, it doesn't matter to me that I like pink, I'll wear pink, all I want and, and there are no really guy things or guide jobs or, you know, especially to men living together, you know, you somebody's strong in one area and somebody strong in another area, and it doesn't matter, you know, there aren't any



12:51

Oh, that's absolutely true. Well, let me go to another piece of music here actually got two pieces of music that I wanted to use, okay. And talk about this a little bit. For a lot of people, once they get their freedom, in the sense that they've made it through the transition process, and perhaps they've gotten a job. And now they're moving on with their life. A large percentage of people in the transgender community simply move away from it, and never come back. We have a term for it we call woodworking. But for some reason, there are there's a handful of people who does who feel like they have a responsibility to give back. They have a responsibility to help the folks who are behind them in the process. And some of them become political. And they achieve a really bad word in our community. At times they become known as activists Oh out. And I'm laughing about it because Vanessa has just recently had this experience with somebody called her an activist and she was shocked. She was shocked and look around like no, not.



14:06

To me, she's the epitome of activism activism. I mean, she's just wonderful. And and I don't know, I don't know how to explain it, but she just is. She's just the best. Yeah,



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but she didn't perceive yourself as that because there's still there's still kind of a connotation sometimes the activists are bad. You know, you can pick up the voice and read letters to the editor and people will say that, you know, all those damn activists in the Political Caucus Yeah. Are those damn activists in the Yeah, they



14:37

don't gITF they don't speak for me blah blah.



14:39

Yeah, they don't see it. Yeah, they get on their high horse. They don't speak for me. Well, nobody speaks for you. Classic case. Well, that's nobody speaks for the closet. I'm sorry. By definition, you have no voice. That's why it's called the closet okay. I'm sorry. I mean, you go off in the gym. If we have to go off we might as well be careful. might as well be controversial to the end.



15:03

We will always will.



15:06

So some people achieve this title of activist and not everyone accepts it all that willingly but it comes with the territory. In your right, Vanessa is one of them is certainly one of the premier ones. But she's not alone more and more in Houston, we've got people like Monica and others. That's right, and who are definitely activists?



15:26

And really, it depends on on the Deaf how broad of a definition you want, because there are gay and lesbian people who have have lovers and live in the suburbs. And think of you know, think, oh, you know, I'll leave all those activists in Montrose. But they are activists too, because they are living their lives, their neighbors know them as a couple. I mean, they're representing the community.



15:54

Activism can be anything from holding hands in public, you know, to flying the gay pride flag. And the activity, right, it covers a broad territory. And it was interesting when we, whenever my organization has, has done lobbying, people will show up who have never lobbied before. And then they'll say, this was fun. This was easy in and does so in their own way they have become activist whether they apply the terms themselves or not. Yep, because they'll come back time after time now and say, Gee, I can do this, you know, and they get a sense of pride out of it, too. Anyway, these next two songs are about activist. And I want to explain the first one, if you're as old as I am, and you know who Ronnie Gilbert is, Oh, yeah. And we'll all long I don't want to mean to imply she's 111 or something. But she's a longtime folk singer.



16:48

Let's put it that way. He was doing folk music in the 50s.



16:52

Oh, yeah, we bet new Christy minstrels and God groups before that I know. Well, this song is about an actual person, Mother Jones. And I went and look there at look this up Mother Jones, it turns out was indeed an actual person was known as a union organizer in the minds of Virginia and West Virginia. Wow. And in fact, the political bosses of the day attempted to have her assassinated on several occasions, she indeed was being viewed as the most dangerous woman in the world, by union bosses, because she was demanding rights, and she would get down into the mines with the workers. And she was something of a communist. She, although she never had formal ties, she hated capitalism, and you're talking about the evils of capitalism, because she saw these mind workers being exploited. Anyway, I want to explain that because the first song is called agitator. And they talk about Mother Jones. And I wasn't in and I get that magazine in the house, but I never really knew where the name came from. So I got curious and researched it. And that's, anyway, if you want to call me an agitator, this first

song certainly applies to me. And I will accept that with with honors. And the second piece was the second piece is one that Jessica Redmond put on. And you're gonna have to think about this one a second to work his way through. But this is for all Shanaya. tween is rock this country. Now, she'd put this tape together when we went to to lobby in Austin. And this last piece was at the time I first heard it, I thought, well, that's kind of goofy, until I began to talk to some of the first time activist and that's really how they felt they were going over there. They were gonna rock Austin boy, they were gonna walk into their office, and they were just going to show them what they were about. And then this song began to have a different feel to me. And I understood why Jessica did that. So I just thought that would be kind of interesting. We'll put these two songs together here on activism one by Ronnie Gilbert, in the other by Shania Twain, and you folks can let us know what you think about it. Get ready, we're coming to your town, we're gonna rock your country. Before we go, I want before we come back to you. I want to do one more thing. One more song. I just want more. This next one's kind of personal. That's why I wanted to talk about it a second. And we'll help turn on your microphone. I'm sorry. Jimmy is in the other studio today. And I'm not used to that. But this next piece is by Beth Nielsen Chapman who some people may recognize perhaps not. She has been featured in several movies, and a terrific songwriter. And she's had several songs that I've really enjoyed, but this one really has a lot of meaning to make. Because it's called Happy Girl. And when I first started doing this show, five years ago, I was happy Yeah, kinda sort of. Five years ago, I was Really working a lot of stuff out still in Jimmy can tell you I was up and down on the surgery. Yes, I was gonna have no I wasn't Yes, I was No I wasn't. It's been a long but very interesting five years, that's for sure. But the end result of it is I'm at a stage in my life right now where this song really seems to fit me. And if you listen to the lyrics of this song, I think you'll understand where I'm coming from. It's called Happy Girl. And when you hear her explanation of why she's happy, and how her life has changed, maybe the song will make more sense to you. So this is the last song out of the set that we're doing tonight about transition. And this one is just kind of a personal song. But I hope you'll enjoy this this is Beth Nielsen Chapman doing happy girl. And that I dedicate to Laurie who is made me or enabled me to be a happy girl. That song, I love the lyrics in that song, she talks about how she used to spend her time with her head and her hands. And now when she starts to feel like that she will she lays her heart out like a well like a welcome mat. And she's learned to be a happy girl. And she talks about how she's spent her time sitting in a corner. And, and now she doesn't and, and I just know, the lyrics of that song just seemed like they fit me so well. And it's nice to be able to say after the after five years of going through the transition that I am. I'm like a tie, why not like I am a totally different person. And I'm pleased to say that I'm a happy girl. And so that's kind of neat. And that many people get our point where they can say that it's



21:50

very, very neat. Yes. And I, I think I've felt I've been lucky to see a lot of transgenders go and get into that stage to be happy



22:01

in and you know, for those who are at the start of the process, I'm sure they they hear me say things like that and think oh, she's out of her mind is not going to be let's not like that. It is like that. If you if you work at it. If you support yourself, if you surround yourself with good

people. And you give yourself a chance. The people that have really struggled and most of the people who never quite got through this sense of shame and guilt in in. They're just too tough on themselves. That's their to give themselves a chance. Yeah,



22:35

I think that that's the toughest thing to throw off is the guilt and shame that that you're that you're grown up with.



22:44

Well, and it's enforced on you everywhere you go. I mean, watch any commercial. Laurie and I've talked about it watch the Saturday morning cartoons and watch how gender is enforced. You know, the boys all get these action toys and the girls get shaken bake ovens. Yeah. You know, I mean gender is is, is being taught on Saturday morning television, and I'm beginning to understand why feminist objects so strongly some of what they say



23:14

and all of this crap, you just have to stand up and say this does not apply to me. I am not like this. This is the way I am and I'm happy with it.



23:23

When I remember when I was little Jimmy, I guess I must have been about five or six. I remember my father telling me the guys mowed the lawn and women made the lemonade for them. And he was serious, right? Yeah, he was completely serious. And I was raised Pentecostal till I was 14. And you know gender. I mean, gender is like seriously enforced No, quote the Bible to you about how Bible present gender, when of course now I'm not much older. I know better.



23:51

Yeah, gender is what society says it in different societies gender is has been all kinds of thing.



23:58

Well, it's like we've talked about before, what does a woman in Iraq and a woman in California have in common? Nothing. Their biology? That's it? Gender is totally absolutely societally enforced. Yeah. You created. What microphone? Do I need to go to Jimmy? Five, four. Jimmy's holding up four fingers and I'm saying five. You can tell I'm an Aggie



24:25

Oh, boy.

24:27

You're on Roy. Roy is here. And he's been here all those five years that Yes. And as seeing you from the very first night you walked into the studio, and I'm going to shut up and let him talk.

24:41

You know, I know. Sorry. You've been talking a lot about how much you've done for the transgender community and everything. But I and the real faithful listeners of the show, we know better, because you've been a big help to the entire community. The entire gay lesbian community. I you know, folks, I remember, not too long ago before the hatch segment became a segment, a regular monthly segment on the station. How Jimmy and Sarah and myself, we went on down to a hatch meeting for a presentation of our show. Yes. It was a it was pretty exciting meeting and afterwards, you know, somewhere during that meeting, I had this brainstorm hit my head about alcoholism and the community. Yeah. You know, and because a friend of mine, who recently passed away, had a very bad drinking problem. And I want to say, I was thinking myself now who could I get to do this interview to do this show? Right? And I with a little evil smirk on my face, I walked up to Sarah Palmer, and I dumped it in her lap, and she's shaking her head. She was telling me no, no. And I said, Sarah, yes, you can do it. You're the perfect one to do it. And I remember you saying no, I don't know anything. And I said, Sarah, it's like this, it says, I know the issues that the people in the gay and lesbian community are going through forces, many of them into a life of alcoholism, how it says, and how much more so in the transgender, as you can get this show, and you can do it right. And folks, she did that show. And I can say that, we had more calls on that show that night, than we had had in a long, long time. And Sarah, you've done a lot of tremendous good in this community. Many of the things that you have spoken about in the past, may have been directed towards the transgender, transsexual, crossdressing community, but also applied equally to the gay and lesbian community. And there are a number of shows that you had me working my tail off, back and forth. With these callers that had called in during your segment, in fact, I can safely say some of our most popular shows have been during your segment. And from the bottom of my heart, sir, I thank you for really enriching my life and the lives of our listeners. And when Jimmy asked me earlier this past week, if I were to give up the new show, and I told him without without the sentence being out of his mouth, good as with hugs, and kisses, of course,

27:26

no hesitation at all.

27:28

Well, thank you. I've had a lot of fun doing this show. And I've had a lot of fun in the last five years. It's interesting to me, Jimmy, that from the first show, we had people called and said he didn't think I belong here yet. Nonetheless, show we had people. But in between, there have been a lot of people who call and said, Listen, I learned a lot from you. Yeah. And I think that

the one show that I'm really most proud of, I think probably is the one that we did on shaming guilt. Oh, yeah. For no other reason that we actually saved the person's life that night and didn't know it until afterwards. We actually had a person in the garage deciding to kill himself or not listening to our show. And over the course of the show, we talked them out of it. And we were doing that.



28:07

That's what makes it worth it.



28:09

You know, and I've always thought that the power of radio you never know who your audience is, or what they're doing. So that's it for us, folks. We're out of time. Yes.



28:20

You've been listening to after hours career radio with attitude on KPFT Houston and ke O 's College Station coming up and he's standing right there behind Sarah chomping at the bits Big Daddy J bringing you the Red Eye special the beginning of and I know Sarah you love KPFT is blue.



28:39

I listen to it every Sunday morning, and where we leave you the way that we started five years ago, when decorum becomes repression. The only dignity free people have is to speak out. Can I folks? Oh