

**JIMMY CARPER:** The following program contains language or images of a frank or sensitive nature which may be considered objectionable by some. Listener discretion is advised

[THEME MUSIC]

(SINGING) After hours. After hours.

Oh, yes, you've tuned in to *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude right here on KPFT Houston 90.1 FM. The crew of *After Hours* is ready to bring you news, interviews, dialogue, and music, geared for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and their friends. Here at *After Hours*, we may be diverse, but we have one thing in common - we are all out of the closet and urge everyone to come out of their closets.

That means standing up for yourself, taking responsibility for your own life, and being proud of who you are. Realistically, we know not everyone can do that because of age, job, or frame of mind. That's OK. We're here for you, too. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this week's edition of *After Hours*.

[THEME MUSIC]

Hello, Houston and College Station and Huntsville, and welcome to *After Hours*, Queer Radio with Attitude. I'm Jimmy Carper and welcome to the March third edition, 2001. We've got a packed show, as always. Lots of music in between. The first half of the show, we've got GiGi with Bi-Net. And the second half, we've got 20 SomeThing. And I don't know exactly what they've got cooked up. Bobby's here with me also.

**BOBBY:** Hello.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Hello.

**BOBBY:** How are you?

**JIMMY CARPER:** A couple of things before I get into GiGi, so to speak.

**BOBBY:** So to speak.

[BOTH CHUCKLING]

**MAN:** [INAUDIBLE]

**JIMMY CARPER:** Two weeks from tonight is going to be a very, very special show. It's the weekend that South by Southwest is happening in Austin. And on that night--

**BOBBY:** It's Jewel's night.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Huh? We're going to have Horse.

**BOBBY:** Ooh!

**JIMMY CARPER:** Horse? Yeah, she's coming back. She's coming back. An incredible Scottish lesbian singer from Scotland. OK.

**BOBBY:** That would be-- it would be Scottish people are from.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Usually. And she's going to be there in the first half, and Charlie Pacheo is in the second half.

**BOBBY:** Ooh.

**JIMMY CARPER:** He is going to have Sonia-- an interview with Sonia. And that happened to be the very first song you heard here-- or the song before last, actually-- Sonia from her brand new CD called *Me, Too*, that was the title cut. And following that was a new song from Rodney Crowell's new CD. He's a Houston boy.

It was called "Wandering Boy," and it's an AIDS song about a guy who he grew up-- I believe it's his brother. Anyway, got that. Those, too. Oh, and Sonia is going to be here in Houston playing at the McGonigel's Mucky Duck on May the 24th.

**BOBBY:** Oh, I've been there.

**JIMMY CARPER:** May the 24th. Tickets are on sale now, so get them because you know it's a small house.

**BOBBY:** Yeah, a small house. If you don't get them quick, you don't have a place to sit down.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right. Now, while I've got you here early Bobby, I want to just chat for a minute about Whispering Hope--

**BOBBY:** Oh-oh.

**JIMMY CARPER:** --our favorite place.

**BOBBY:** Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Formerly called the Community Resale Shop, 515 Richmond Avenue, Richmond at Jack.

**BOBBY:** Oh.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah. Yeah, Jack off Richmond.

**BOBBY:** Yeah. Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK

**BOBBY:** [SNICKERS]

**JIMMY CARPER:** The most incredible resale shop ever, except maybe for, the women's one--

**BOBBY:** Second To None.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Second To None. Yes. Both operate in the same manner in that they are--

**BOBBY:** They provide stuff for [INAUDIBLE].

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

**BOBBY:** Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah. Second To None donates all the profits to women's organizations.

**BOBBY:** Right.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And Whispering Hope provides free stuff--

**BOBBY:** To people living with HIV.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right

**BOBBY:** I have been a recipient of many of their second-hand clothes. Most of my clothes, actually, at one time or another, have come from a resale shop. And a healthy chunk of them are from--

**JIMMY CARPER:** [INAUDIBLE]

**BOBBY:** --Whispering Hope.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And Sam [? Stewman ?] over there who is-- [CHUCKLES] yeah--

**BOBBY:** The reigning diva.

**JIMMY CARPER:** --the reigning diva. Yes, he is. Yes he is. He's been doing some sort of project that involves film and people who do poetry.

**BOBBY:** Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Speaking of.

**BOBBY:** Speaking of, yeah, he approached me a while back to be part of this movie that's getting made about people living with HIV, about the Montrose, about the characters that are the Montrose. Again, people living with HIV.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Right.

**BOBBY:** The, uh, you know, I guess I fall under several categories in that character in the Montrose and people living with HIV. And they asked me to be a part of it. So they came to a recent spotlight that I did over at the mausoleum, and they filmed that as sort of a test run for the thing.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And they've done some other filming there, too. Haven't they?

**BOBBY:** They filmed the whole night.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh.

**BOBBY:** They filmed that whole night, not just my spotlight. Hopefully, parts of that will actually become part of the movie. They've asked me to be part of the movie doing some-- actually, being in it, but also doing some voiceover stuff where you, like, narrate bits and pieces of things, stuff going on. And it seems like a really cool idea. And it's supposed to be a pretty big thing.

So again, in an age where we've started to become a little way too complacent about HIV, it's nice to have something that's going to say, OK, there's people still out there who are still dealing with it, who are still living with it, and in some cases, dying with it--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Still.

**BOBBY:** --still.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, it's not over, folks.

**BOBBY:** So that's kind of cool to be part of that. Along with that, since part of it was about them doing my poetry, I recently went to a science fiction convention and had my very first piece of poetry published.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Hey. No, I did not know that.

**BOBBY:** Yeah, they put me as the introduction to the program book at this convention that I went to in Springfield, Missouri. It was very cool. They didn't tell me that-- they told me I was going to be in the book. They'd never said that I was going to be the introduction to it.

And when I opened the book, and I looked at my friends who did this, and I was like--

**GIGI:** Cute--

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's nice. That's nice.

**GIGI:** That's love-- that's cute. That'll work.

**JIMMY CARPER:** But a lot of your poetry revolves around activism, too.

**BOBBY:** Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And it's about AIDS crisis and stuff going on.

**BOBBY:** It's a lot of it. It's about people I've known who have died. A lot of it is about myself and my constant situation-- ever-changing situation with HIV, and just about what it's like to live with it, what it's like to survive with it, and sometimes, not always to feel like a survivor, but somebody who's sick sometimes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Right.

**BOBBY:** Because we can all-- those of us who are living with it and you know this-- we can all put that brave face on it. But sometimes, we don't feel it. We can all smile and go, hey, it's lovely. Life is beautiful. But we don't always feel like that.

**JIMMY CARPER:** But we all walk alone.

**BOBBY:** But we all walk alone.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right. And for folks who think that Bobby's foray into arts and activism is a little on the odd side for Houston, I have to disagree with you because we have another gentleman in the studio tonight who is not unfamiliar to arts and activism. He happens to be GiGi's guest this evening-- GiGi from Bi-Net. GiGi, why don't you take over from here?

**GIGI:** OK, man.

**JIMMY CARPER:** You are.

**GIGI:** Oh, OK. This is--

**ALEX:** Alejandro [? Murua ?]

**GIGI:** Alex.

**ALEX:** Or Alex.

**GIGI:** And he's with Progressive Voters in Action.

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK, wait a minute. Let's have that name again a little slower.

**ALEX:** Alejandro [? Murua ?]

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes.

**GIGI:** [GIGGLES]

**JIMMY CARPER:** (SHAKILY) Ooh.

[ALL LAUGHING]

**GIGI:** You're giving Jimmy shivers.

**JIMMY CARPER:** And let me tell you, folks, he looks like the way that sounds.

**GIGI:** Uh-huh.

**ALEX:** Thanks.

**GIGI:** And I thought it was time to do a Community First segment.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yes, it is. We haven't done those in a while.

**GIGI:** Oh, we haven't. It has been too long. And we've got some big issues coming up in the city of Houston. And it's really important that we gather together as a community and that we get behind the things that affect us. And I want to kind of turn this over to Alex and just let him--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wait a minute.

**GIGI:** --bring up what's coming up. Yeah?

**JIMMY CARPER:** Alex is with whom and doing what?

**GIGI:** Progressive Voters in Action.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, OK. OK. Did I miss that part while I was looking at your--

**ALEX:** No, I think GiGi mentioned that to you.

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK. I'm sorry.

**ALEX:** Well, just briefly about PVA. For some of you all out there who haven't heard of PVA, Progressive Voters in Action, it was started by Grant Martin who was a council member. I'm East Parker's campaign manager myself over 18 months ago. And the purpose of PVA is to build a list of 100,000 registered voters, people who vote good on our issues-- reproductive rights, racial economic justice, LGBT civil rights, and reproductive freedom.

So what we believe in is that we can build as a list. There are sympathetic voters out there. We talk to them face to face, block walks, phone banks. We talk to them during election day. And we start building this list and use this list to mobilize our voters around people that we consider to be good and help get them elected in office.

Right now, we're working on council members in East Parker's reelection campaign. We're also working on Ada Edwards, her first run for District D. She is fabulous, and we're excited to work both with Denise and Ada on the races. And then finally-- which kind of leads up to the bigger conversation tonight about the community is that, they're-- I'm sure you all have heard about this group called Houstonians for Family Values, organized by Dave Wilson.

And basically, what happened is, over six weeks ago, he launched a ballot initiative to amend the city charter to prevent the city from ever providing same-sex benefits for its employees or from providing protection from job discrimination on the basis of gender orientation. And so he sent out these forms to Republican primary voters, and I got a copy of one of them a few days ago.

And it's pretty nasty, and just the whole rhetoric has been pretty nasty. And you can only expect it to increase in its tone throughout the year. But it's basically like if you don't want to let your city council be overrun by homosexuals, please come and vote and sign right here so that we can have this petition official.

And so they're still gathering their signatures. It'll be about May before we find out how many signatures they gather, but there's a strong likelihood that they're going to get their 20,000. I don't think it's going to be difficult.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah. They throw a lot of the Bible in. We're used to that. Every time there's something against us, they throw in the Bible.

**ALEX:** But I think things are really different from 16 years ago. And we're in such a different place. I think the politics, the business community, religious communities, I mean there's just communities of color. This kind of ludicrous ballot initiative and just mean-spirited ballot initiative has really started to-- our straight ally communities, we've started to form coalitions with them.

And I really think this is our year. We've got a great shot at defeating this should it become official, get on the ballot on November, I think we've got a great shot at defeating it because we really have, and are in the process of building a strong coalition of supporters within the LGBT community, but then in addition, outside within the straight ally communities, communities of color, the business community, the religious communities.

It's just amazing to see people really understanding that this fight is everybody's fight.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well, there's a big difference between now and 15 years ago in that for the most part, people are out of the closet. And people--

**ALEX:** Ah, so and so.

**JIMMY CARPER:** --people, well--

**ALEX:** So and so. I mean, I think you're right. I think in greater numbers--

**JIMMY CARPER:** In much greater numbers, or at least out to their family. And when you're out to your family, you just automatically, all of a sudden, have allies because there's no mystery to it. All of a sudden, all of these folks who have heard the thing about, oh, gay people, and without knowing anybody, you can create any mystery you want. And so we've taken that away. And when we take that away, then all the boogeyman stuff that they throw out is meaningless.

**ALEX:** And you're right about the fact that, I think, we are in a different place. I think there are more people that are empowered and that are out and living more openly visible lives, more active lives. And I think coupled with that, I think what also helps us in this day and age in fighting these anti-gay ballot initiatives that I've worked with Dave Fleischer for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force on campaigns in Miami with [? Save Day ?] group, and in Portland with helping defeat that anti-gay proposition 9 called the Student Protection Act, which was really misleading.

And it was really just disgusting that what it would do is that it should not-- it was asking that the Portland Public School should not promote, sanction, or endorse homosexuality. But the consequences would be that counselors could not talk to openly gay or lesbian students because that would be sanctioning or endorsing it.

We actually defeated that. And so that was a great thing to see organizationally, from a national level, different LGBT organizations putting the resources into a local fight, working with the local communities to defeat these initiatives. And having said that, I think that we are in it, really need time to-- this Houston fight, there are other right-wing groups that have seen, that have said, Houston is going to be the battleground. We've got to win this.

And I think that this is really also a test on a lot of different ways. Went in to test again of the LGBT communities around the country to rally behind and focus resources and people here in the city to help the Houston communities fight this and beat the right wing. And I think we can do that. We've proven that in other cities.

It's just having said that, it's an awesome task in front of us to do that. We, at PVA, I think, have been preparing for something like this for the past 18 months. We're really committed, specifically, to action and measurable goals. We always talk about the fact that it's got to translate into three things-- voters, volunteers, and money.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Let me say something here. I have been in the community for quite a few years and know the general apathy, political apathy, of the gay and lesbian community. And I have been just blown away by your emails talking about how many people you get to volunteer and do stuff. What is your secret? How do you do this? It's just incredible. You've got phone banks going.

**ALEX:** Six days a week.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah. How do you do that?

**ALEX:** In two locations. Actually, we have a--

**JIMMY CARPER:** How can you get the gay and lesbian switchboard to have people on the phones?

**ALEX:** Yeah. This morning we actually had 20 volunteers between PVA and volunteers at the training center from the Shrine of the Black Madonna, which is a Pan-African Christian Orthodox Church. I really believe that you've got to give people-- I think the thing is, on the surface, it may appear as apathy. And I think that in the sense that there aren't as many people that are getting involved, but I think deeper down, I think part of it is people do want to get involved. One, I don't think they know how. We don't adequately-- and we're working on that now. It's like, right here is putting the word out about how the work that we do.

Because the thing is, at the end of the day, we don't care about if we're in the papers, or we're on the radio. We do it because it's specific and strategic about why we do it, to bring our message out. But we spend our time doing work. And we believe that actions speak louder than words, and people are going to hear about what we're doing.

They see that we're committed to very specific ways of how we do the work. There's not a drama when you come here. You leave your ego outside the office, and you get work done. And we give people specific measurable goals, and we let them know how it builds into the bigger picture, i.e., re-electing Annise or helping [? Ada ?] get elected, or helping defeat this anti-gay ballot measure.

Last year, with representative Ken Yarbrough, it was amazing. We worked really hard in his district from February leading up through to the November election. We don't take the whole credit, but we really were the only group doing the field operation for those eight months. And he had won in 500 votes in '96, and '98, he won by 154 votes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wow.

**ALEX:** And last year-- and his district is about half Republican Independent and half Democratic, he won by over 7,000 votes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That makes a difference.

**ALEX:** But it's just good old grassroots organizing. And you say, well, what's the magic? I think part of it is, you really give people the opportunity. You give people, we train everybody who comes into our offices. I think part of it is, we really value the fact that people give us their time, and we're really conscious about that. I think GiGi can attest to that.

**GIGI:** And I wanted to kind of break in here and say, what I've seen happen in San Francisco and how they took hold, I think that can be possible here. And it takes just that grassroots organizing and getting the people, and bringing them in, and saying, hey, we can make a difference.

It really takes one on one, making those contacts, speaking to people, and letting them know what's coming and how they can help. And I guess this is time for a little plug, but how can people help and jump in?

**ALEX:** Well, let me tell you this. This is getting back to-- This is going to be our first week. We're having 50 people come in to volunteer at our offices. Tomorrow, Sunday, we have nine people scheduled to come in. Monday night, we have 15 people scheduled to come in. Tuesday, we've got 14 people scheduled to come in. And Wednesday, we've got 10 people scheduled.



I tell you, I really believe you give people something that's structured, you train them. The thing is, we always go into trainings. People are valuable. You don't see them as, oh, this is a cog in the system. This is like, this person wants to do a good job, and if you can help them do a good job when they're there, they're going to want to come back. And that's plain and simple as that.

**GIGI:** And the calls make a difference. I mean, I got on the phone lines, and I was talking to-- I got one person and it was like, what's this about? And I said, well, you can get fired if you're gay or lesbian in your new job. He goes, no! And I said, yeah. Right now, today, you could. And he says, I thought that went out years ago. And I said--

**JIMMY CARPER:** We wish.

**GIGI:** --it's a matter of educating people. Letting them know, hey, it's not the Dreamland you think you're in. I mean, we've won a few spots here and there, but we got a long way to go.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right.

**ALEX:** And you're right. And then just kind of maybe doing a harder segue-- time, schedule, when can you get involved? We are basically a seven-day operation now. We're a living year-round campaign organization, and it's really neat. You just really need to see everybody come out. Times-- phone banks are six days a week-- Sunday through Thursday, from 6:00 to 9:00 PM, and on Saturday mornings from 9:00 to 12:00.

We've got block walks every Saturday, from 9:00 to 12:00. And if you want to do data entry, do some office work, give me a call at 713-521-7161. That's 521-7161.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wait a minute. I forgot to get a pen.

**GIGI:** And ask for Alex.

[LAUGHTER]

**JIMMY CARPER:** OK. OK, so I'm sitting out there, and I finally found my pen.

**ALEX:** Yeah.

**JIMMY CARPER:** So--

[LAUGHTER]

--what's that number again?

**ALEX:** That's great. It's 521-7161, area code, 713. And leave a message if I'm not there, but I'm usually am. Or email me at provoter, P-R-O, voter, one word, P-R-O-V-O-T-E-R, @L, as in Larry, C as in cat, O as an orange, Nancy, Nancy, .com. So it's provoter@lconn.com.

If you can come in during the day, we have some data entry, we have some phone calls to make, but it's primarily data entry during the day. If you want to come help us at night, we've got phone banks, and we really could use your help to talk to voters, because we've really-- are PVA as part of a larger-- I haven't spoken yet About People for a Fair Houston.

**JIMMY CARPER:** No, you haven't.

**ALEX:** People for a Fair Houston is the campaign entity that's been created to actually lead the charge to defeat this anti-gay ballot initiative, of which PVA is the field part. And so, People for a Fair Houston, which is being led by Grant Martin, its responsibility responsibilities to raise that-- oh, God, close to \$1 million, if not more, that it's going to take to fight this.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That was my next question. Where do you get your funding?

**ALEX:** Right.

**JIMMY CARPER:** So Grant's in there doing it.

**ALEX:** Yeah. It's going to take everybody digging deeper into their pockets, one, not only to work on to help get Annise reelected and, again, to help in funding other important LGBT community groups that people already fund. But it's really, again, digging deeper into make writing a check for this People for a Fair Houston campaign. And I can't emphasize enough how important it's going to be to raise that kind of money.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah.

**ALEX:** Yeah.

**GIGI:** And I kind of like to put you on the spot for a minute. [LAUGHS]

**ALEX:** Oh, God.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Here we go.

**GIGI:** Just so that--

**JIMMY CARPER:** When GiGi put you on the spot--

**GIGI:** Oh, I won't be that.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, OK. OK.

**GIGI:** I told you I was going to be nice.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Yeah, you did say that.

**GIGI:** Actually, the spot I was going to put you on is, basically, what do volunteers need to expect from when they walk in the door to do phone banks or to do the block walks? What kind of things are they going to be doing?

**ALEX:** I want that. So that's cool, huh? Thank you. What volunteer should expect for-- if they want to do a phone bank, one thing we're always really conscientious about is time. We start on time, we end on time. We start at 6 o'clock, we end at 9 o'clock. What they expect is that from 6:00 to 6:30, they'll come in, and especially if they haven't done this before, we spend half hour going over just briefly how PVA does the work that it does, and going over the different scripts, the forms that we'll use that night.

And what we do is we call from a list of registered voters who voted at least once in the last four election cycles. So it's not a complete cold call. And we actually are talking to voters in Montrose, so it's not like-- it's like we're talking to voters in Kingwood or something.

**GIGI:** We're not talking to [INAUDIBLE]

[LAUGHTER]

**ALEX:** Not yet. So people can expect to talk to, at this point, LGBT, straight ally, friendly neighborhoods right now and have conversations with registered voters over the phone. It's a real quick and easy script, and the whole thing is we're asking voters if they would support that nondiscrimination ordinance.

And with the block walk, block walks are a blast. And I'll tell you why. I think there's a misperception about what a block walk is. Like, oh, my God, grassroots work. Well, you know, I went to college, and, you know, I just, you know, whatever.

[LAUGHTER]

You don't go with that. Let that go, honey, and just come on out because it's great. Because I used to work for Chase, and Chase is great. I saw a lot of good friends there. But this is a whole different world, and it's actually a really neat world. You get up early in the morning, we meet up at Saturdays at 9:00 AM sharp.

**GIGI:** [GASPS]

**ALEX:** [LAUGHS] Sharp.

**GIGI:** Show me.

**ALEX:** Yeah.

**GIGI:** Ouch.

**ALEX:** Exactly. But you know what, though? Alex baby stuff aside, we have coffee there for people. And well, again, we start at 9:00.

**JIMMY CARPER:** An iPod.

[LAUGHTER]

iPod, baby.

**ALEX:** And we go through the trainings and the scripts that we give everybody, and everybody has a list of registered voters. Again, like at the phone bank, we know where the registered voters live. It's public information from Harris County. And we know they voted at least once.

And so what we do is we knock on doors, and it's a powerful act. It's such a powerful act to knock on somebody's door of a registered voter and ask them, flat out in their face, do they support a nondiscrimination ordinance, including gender and orientation? I mean, it's an affirming thing, especially for an LGBT person is at the other side of the door. And they're just blown away.

We've had these experiences in the Heights when we were doing some of the block walks. And it's just another example of somebody who isn't as sympathetic, but they won't forget it. I knocked on somebody's door, and this is when we were doing Ken Yarbrough district last year, and we were talking about gay adoption. I was knocking on a door. I didn't know what they were going to say about gay adoption. But we get it, that's what you got to do.

And so this guy opens the door. And he's like, uh-huh. And I went through the script, and he's like, yeah? Then he starts kind of looks at me, and he starts looking from my shoes all the way up to my head. [LAUGHS] They're looking at me over a couple of times.

**GIGI:** We know that look.

**ALEX:** Yeah. And he's like, you've got the wrong house, buddy. And he just looked at me, just really kind of stare, and his wife was in the background, their kids. And the kids were playing out in the living room. And she was right there, and she could hear what was going on. And I said, well, that's OK. I said, we're not trying to convince anybody. We're asking people how they feel about this issue about gay adoption. And thank you very much.

Then he grabs-- he grabs the list of voters and that information that I was carrying on my clipboard. He's like, what's this? I'm like, well, this is your name. You're Mr. So-and-so. And he's like, what are these rankings, one through five? And I was like, oh, well, what we do at PVA is we rank all the voters based on how they feel on these questions. And one is somebody who's going to volunteer and really supports it. And five is somebody who's really against that particular issue. He looks at me and he's like, well, I'm a 10.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Ooh!

**ALEX:** But the thing about it is, it's just, I looked at him and I was, like, fine. Inside, I was thinking, you loser, bigot, whatever.

[ALL LAUGHING]

**JIMMY CARPER:** Well--

**ALEX:** But you know what? At the end of the day, there is this gay Latino at his door at 9:30 in the morning-- and he will never forget that, asking him if he believe in gay adoption. His wife was right behind him, and who knows the conversation that afterwards

After that conversation ended, he closed the door behind him, and he knew, and we all knew, that he was discriminatory--

**GIGI:** And bigot. [LAUGHS]

**ALEX:** So you have a whole range of experiences.

**JIMMY CARPER:** It also gave him a face--

**ALEX:** Yes.

**GIGI:** Yes.

**JIMMY CARPER:** --for his bigotry. And that can change things around. And when it's this nebulous thing out there, you can be nasty all you want. Because you don't know. You put a human face, and it makes a big difference [INAUDIBLE].

**ALEX:** One of our board members, and she's fabulous, her name is Maria Gonzalez. She's been with us since the beginning, since PVA was started. And Maria had this wonderful story about a couple of years ago when we were first out in the November '99 elections talking to voters about Annise Parker, and Maria talked to one voter, and she was leaving. I think it was Poe Elementary. It was cold and it was drizzling that day.

And the woman was like in her 80s, and she was having a hard time getting to the precinct, to the entrance. And she said, Maria, it's like, wow, this is great. It's inspiring to see her go and commit to go vote even on day where that are not the best of circumstances. And Maria was like, well, this is great. Why do you do this? And she was, like, well, I still remember when women couldn't vote.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Ooh.

**ALEX:** So you have, like--

**JIMMY CARPER:** Oh, what a great story.

**ALEX:** And that's the fun part about block walking, and going and talking to people face to face, is you're going to see-- you're going to hear these kind of stories--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right. Because even my age, we forget that women did not always have the vote, and they didn't have the vote not so long ago.

**ALEX:** So I want to see the future, you know-- I want to be in the future where I'm 80, and I'm having a hard time getting to that entrance, or maybe. And some little gay sprite runs up to me and ask me that same question. And I'm like, well, you know I still remember when LGBT people didn't have any civil rights. You know? I work towards a day where this will not be an issue.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Wow. [SIGHS] You still got great stories.

[LAUGHTER]

**ALEX:** But PVA, 713-521-7161.

**JIMMY CARPER:** That's right.

**ALEX:** I'm serious. Please give us a hand. We really need a lot of work. We need a lot of help.

**GIGI:** How many votes are you trying to raise?

**ALEX:** I'm sorry?

**GIGI:** How many votes-- voters are you trying to turn out for the next election?

**ALEX:** Oh, well, right now, it depends on the projections, but basically, a lot of people don't vote in the city. I'll start off with that. You've got about 930,000 voters or registered voters in Houston, and depending on the election cycle, this is a municipal one, you have about 30%-plus turnout during a city election. So we're looking at about 300,000 people who are going to vote in November.

And so, if you can imagine, PVA is a database close to 20,000 voters. We have really seriously have to ramp up the work that we're doing if we're going to have any serious effect and impact. And the upcoming race is in November. Our goal for March-- goals, goals, goals. March goal is to add 2,000 voters in one month, which means that we need at least 200 volunteers to make it happen. And they continue to ramp up every month with pride.

It's going to be amazing because what we're going to do is we are going to-- we did this last year, we had 91 volunteers go out with clipboards and sign up 1,700 people in less than a couple of hours. And our goal this year is to bring out at least 125-150 volunteers and sign up a lot more people. It's just going to be an amazing opportunity because there's so much context with pride, LGBT civil rights, and gay people sign up on our list.

**JIMMY CARPER:** It's always amazing to me the amount of queer people who are not registered. And I just want to slap them silly. I do not get it.

**GIGI:** I remember the day when it was still illegal for a boy to wear a dress. No, I'm giving away my age here. And it's like--

**JIMMY CARPER:** That was 20 years ago.

**GIGI:** Yeah.

**ALEX:** And that's a nice skirt.

**JIMMY CARPER:** Actually, 21 years ago this summer.