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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

closet, gay, heterosexual, call, people, letter, woman, talk, started, media, lesbian, listening, homophobia, feel, outing, book, tonight, play, closets, dedication

SPEAKERS

Speaker 10, Speaker 11, Speaker 8, Speaker 9, Jewel Gray, Jimmy Vaughn, [Together], Jimmy Carper

J Jewel Gray 00:01

So I would say her show was pretty prepared. But she was, yeah. And all the books were given away, five books. Where's the list of books she gave us? She had a list, it all written down on a list somewhere.

S Speaker 8 00:11

Is it okay I'm having,

J Jewel Gray 00:12

Can you have this book? She wants this book, you're having a,

S Speaker 8 00:15

I really need this book right now.

J Jewel Gray 00:18

Okay, Gay Relationships by, whose it by?

S Speaker 8 00:21

No, I don't know if they're bi.

J Jewel Gray 00:23

No, not bi. The author is, familiar with. The author, author is Tina Tessina PhD. She's the author of How to Be a Couple and Still Be Free. Now, I've read that book. I have it on my very shelf. Am I not loud enough? I have it on my very shelf. Gay relationships for men and women, how to find them, how to improve them and how to make them last. Now, this is a book, the first caller we get, I'm going to give, you give me your address. Is that what we're going to do? Have them come down here and pick it up. Put a,

J Jimmy Carper 00:57

We haven't discussed this halfway.

J Jewel Gray 00:59

Because I know postage might be pretty high for this first stage, for our program.

J Jimmy Carper 01:03

No we're not.

J Jewel Gray 01:04

So you'll have to come by the station. Pick it up. We'll label it with your name and you come by the station sometime.

J Jimmy Carper 01:08

Wait a minute. What happened to, hey, oh, hey, what happened with those sources?

J Jewel Gray 01:15

Yes, I'm here.

J Jimmy Carper 01:19

What happened with the two tapes that we were going to give away?

J Jewel Gray 01:24

We're giving away The Crying Game to, well, we have a caller. So we're gonna give a book away. Then we'll give, we're still are waiting for the trivia answers. I think that was a bit hard.

J Jimmy Carper 01:33
Oh, okay.

J Jewel Gray 01:34
Polo, I think that was a bit hard. We're gonna have to get a little gentler. Our crowd is uh, maybe most of our crowd may not have been conscious at the first time,

J Jimmy Carper 01:43
That may be it.

J Jewel Gray 01:44
The first celebrity wore a red ribbon.

J Jimmy Carper 01:46
We are giving away a copy of, actually, we have two copies to give away of the Crying Game.

J Jewel Gray 01:51
\$79. Yeah, that were giving away here. And it's a special movie at that, I've seen it.

J Jimmy Carper 01:57
For the, for the first two people who call with the right answer to the question of

J Jewel Gray 02:03
Who was the first celebrity to wear a red ribbon in public? Cool.

J Jimmy Carper 02:09
Do we know?

J Jewel Gray 02:09

Sandra Bernhard. You got the answer? It's not Sandra Bernhard.

 Speaker 8 02:14

But Polo said that CBS called him and asked him for the answer, and he wouldn't give them to us. We have an exclusive answer.

 Jewel Gray 02:23

We have the answer. There. We have phone call.

 Jimmy Carper 02:25

Oh no. You have to call at 526-5738.

 Jewel Gray 02:28

5738, JAM KPFT.

 Jimmy Carper 02:32

That's right. Now while we're waiting for that to happen. That last song you heard was called "Obsession."

 Jewel Gray 02:40

"Obsession."

 [Together] 02:40

By Fem2Fem.

 Jewel Gray 02:43

Who have been cruising through the Houston area on and off for the last two months.

 Jimmy Carper 02:46

As a matter of fact, they were at Club Hedonism Thursday night. And I have a report from Scott Lewis who was there saying they did a fabulous show. They did like five or six numbers. Oh and

a half hour worth. And we're going to have to let, you know, remember when Jim was talking a little bit before about, about Scott and you know, he was yeah, yes. Yeah. Scott. Scott is out with Fem2FeM tonight. Did you know that?

J Jewel Gray 03:19

Scott is out with them tonight. They are, the little turd is out with them tonight and didn't mentioned it to me. Well, tonight you know he's rubbing elbows with his famous and near famous and I'm getting jealous.

J Jimmy Carper 03:30

Tonight is their night off and gave up and they wanted to party and you know they played club Heaven and met him and just called him up and said hey, why don't we go out on party Saturday night, so they're out somewhere. I don't know where.

J Jewel Gray 03:47

Well, maybe if we are exceptionally lucky, Scott might divert their attention and maybe he screws by here between now and three.

J Jimmy Carper 03:55

He and I discussed this.

J Jewel Gray 03:56

Yes.

J Jimmy Carper 03:57

And it was like well, you know just kind of take it for, you know, maybe they like, these women like to have a night off every once in a while and not,

J Jewel Gray 04:05

We're a night off, are we not? We, let's hear it.

J Jimmy Carper 04:07

We are night, certainly a night off.

J Jewel Gray 04:12

And I can get, I could give some, such special interview. I give great interview. Oh, look, he's at the door.

J Jimmy Carper 04:21

Yes, that's what we're afraid of.

J Jewel Gray 04:23

I give good interview?

J Jimmy Carper 04:24

We're gonna be playing a lot of Fem2Fem throughout the evening.

J Jewel Gray 04:27

Well, that and the fact that they're in town is secondary, that other fact that we're going to be playing all that is because my baby likes it. So we can play it because she likes.

J Jimmy Vaughn 04:36

He is not worthy. He is not worthy.

J Jewel Gray 04:40

Fem2Fem is in town.

J Jimmy Carper 04:42

And that that came from Jim's own mouth. Yes. Yes.

J Jewel Gray 04:45

Yes. Yes. So we have a winner congratulation. We do. Robert Rodriguez.

J Jimmy Carper 04:52

Don't give out the name.

J Jewel Gray 04:52

No, no, no, no.

J Jimmy Carper 04:53

We have,

J Jewel Gray 04:54

At 555-4141, free book. Yes for the book. Oh, congrats to Robert for the book. Now Robert, what we're gonna do is put your name on the book and put it in our our mail slot. And when you come

J Jimmy Carper 05:11

We're gonna stick it in our box, Robert.

J Jewel Gray 05:13

Stick it in our box, and,

S Speaker 8 05:15

Jackie.

J Jewel Gray 05:17

And you come in from station and ask him for it out of our box,

J Jimmy Carper 05:20

When you walk in, there'll be a

J Jewel Gray 05:22

Wonderful little lady there.

J Jimmy Carper 05:23

English woman named Annie who will say, hello love.

J Jewel Gray 05:26

That's right. That's exactly what she was. Just like that, too. It's wonderful to be around here.

J Jimmy Carper 05:33

And you just say hey, I'm looking for, I'm so and so, and I'm looking for the After Hours box.

J Jewel Gray 05:39

That's right. She'll know exactly where that is to because she listens to After Hours. Right. So Robert, we're going to put this aside right now. And we're going to give away we are still giving away two movies.

J Jimmy Carper 05:50

That's right.

J Jewel Gray 05:50

Full length, motion pictures. We're getting such response yes,

S Speaker 8 05:54

We've had two callers and both of them are wrong.

J Jewel Gray 05:57

Both of whom are wrong? Okay, we're still trying to callers, you guys can call back if you find if you have another answer. All right. We're gonna do some radical techno, I requested tonight that we do some upbeat and popping music. I've been over to Heavens tonight. What's that bar in the middle, at, not Heaven, in the middle of the ranch?

S Speaker 8 06:14

In the middle of the ranch?

J Jewel Gray 06:15

Queen bees and the ranch?

S Speaker 8 06:16

I don't go out.

J Jewel Gray 06:16

Ecstasy, that's what they call it. You don't go out? Me neither. Listen. I was I went into that room and they were like eight people there and the room was just absolutely filled with smoke and I thought these are the smokiness eight lesbians I've ever seen. Now I realized they had the smoke machine go in. I mean, for just five seconds. I thought God Almighty can these lesbians smoke. Then I saw over on the stage, they had the smoke machine going. But we're going to do what, what do we got? Oh, yeah, you got to do the Fortuna. I love that.

J Jimmy Carper 06:47

Your absolute fave. Your absolute fave.

J Jewel Gray 06:50

I love that. I love that straight. I still have to bring it down. You know, I should dig it out and play it. Nobody would want to hear it. It's just one of the things, I got the original one, the original.

J Jimmy Carper 06:59

We have to, we can play it on other shows here, too. Yeah, you played Cur--Carmina Burana, right?

J Jewel Gray 07:08

Or, or Yeah. And I have the I have the CD at home. I listen to it all the time. Ah, you know, I occasionally get into some real educational and intelligent music.

J Jimmy Carper 07:17

Well, you know during the QMZ tonight we're going to hear from Camille Saint-Saëns.

J Jewel Gray 07:23

Oh, wow.

J Jimmy Carper 07:24

Today, well, no, no, no, no, no, the third of October is his birthday. And he was very gay. Very gay. So I've got a couple of pieces from him.

J Jewel Gray 07:35

All right, so we're going to do this now. We're going to wait a minute or what are you going to do? You got to dash across the board. Okay, push buttons. Okay, okay, I turn off you turn on. Okay, that was that. That was that, there was those, that, by the way there was it? Yeah. Hey, I didn't say we had clever repertoire here, record. What is that? Well, nevermind. Reputation. We don't have any reputation. Okay, I have a letter here. Letter get letter.

J Jimmy Carper 08:10

Should we get letters? Golly, golly, golly.

J Jewel Gray 08:12

We didn't know whether to take this seriously or to take this lightly or to be angry or to be like apologetic.

J Jimmy Carper 08:21

I got angry.

J Jewel Gray 08:22

You got angry? Yeah. Well, four pages of spewing anger at us because we didn't do a dedication seems like girl, whoa, this is a hot letter.

J Jimmy Carper 08:30

Yes.

J Jewel Gray 08:31

But we I have to say that if you call down here and this is to you and you know who you are girlfriend. If you call down here this many times to make a request, you've been requesting the wrong stuff. Because we only play gay music down here, you got a couple of requests on here. Did you see these requests?

J Jimmy Carper 08:49

Huh?

J Jewel Gray 08:50

Do we have that stuff?

J Jimmy Carper 08:51

No.

J Jewel Gray 08:51

See, we only play gay music, gay music done by gay people.

J Jimmy Carper 08:54

The station doesn't have that ,you see this is, this is kind of top 40 stuff and this is an alternative station, we don't get, we don't get this kind of music from the record companies. So since we're identified as alternative, we get alternative music and we get you know, like commercial stations get like 25 or 50,

J Jewel Gray 09:12

We get Mr. Rogers.

J Jimmy Carper 09:13

Copies, you know, we get one.

J Jewel Gray 09:16

Mr. Rogers doing his songs from Mr. Rogers Neighborhood. We got a lot of that.

J Jimmy Carper 09:23

And most of the music you hear on the show is bought by me.

J Jewel Gray 09:27

By you, the music buyer.

J Jimmy Carper 09:29

And when it comes down to it, and I look at my wallet and I say, I have enough money for one CD this week. Will it be an openly gay artist or will it be a top 40 artist? Guess who wins out.

J Jewel Gray 09:44

So we wanted to address and I don't know if I'm gonna give a name out here.

J Jimmy Carper 09:47

I'm not particularly upset because I know this woman.

J Jewel Gray 09:50

You know this woman? She says she's a supporter of After Hours but, she started out if you were faithful supporter wouldn't you've known that we only play gay and lesbian music and artists.

J Jimmy Carper 10:01

Well, we don't always, we do have,

J Jewel Gray 10:03

We have some themes, they have to be connected in some way. In other occasions when we drift off from that for this theme and that thing, Garth Brooks, we played a couple of times. He's not gay, but he sings about a gay.

J Jimmy Carper 10:15

That's right.

J

Jewel Gray 10:16

Not a gay thing, but accepting people. Okay, the first song we played tonight, she is not a lesbian, but she's singing a song that connects with our,

J

Jimmy Carper 10:25

And that's right. And all the songs on her her CD are gender, not, non gender specific.

J

Jewel Gray 10:31

So that they can go either way, right? So we want you to understand that if we don't play your music, because, and you've that, you've requested over and over and over and over again. It's probably because of that. It's certainly not because we're trying to ignore you or because we forget you exist. So as a way of apologizing, I'm quickly scanning over this letter here. As a way of apologizing, I thought that rather than tell you, girl, get a life, we'll go ahead and do this like you want us to. We're supposed to be a little irreverent here. I hope you appreciate that. It says here, whether or not you're able to play at least one of these songs, please also send out this personal message to Vivian M. And Patricia V for me. You know those people, too?

J

Jimmy Carper 11:19

No, no, no. I know the woman who wrote the letter and I kind of remember somebody coming to me and saying, Hey, do you have these two songs, but I don't remember it being a dedication.

J

Jewel Gray 11:32

So to Vivian M, because,

J

Jimmy Carper 11:35

Because I pay attention to dedications.

J

Jewel Gray 11:37

Because our faithful supporter said that she would be taping to Vivian M and to Patricia V. Tell them I said, I love you both. And I wish I could be with you both right now, Vivian, and I'll visit you when. This is like a letter. Vivian, I'll visit you when you move to New Mexico. And Patricia, you are sweet. You are so sweet. Your letters are just too beautiful for words. So let me tell you here, it says, so guys, and After Hours, please don't brush off this letter. This is a very special dedication. So okay, there we go, girlfriend. There's your dedication. And please, if I'm on the air, ask to speak to me, they'll put you on hold and I'll come and talk to you directly. We'll get,

we'll take care of this stuff. Oh God, do I have a friend named Joy Roy? Roy Joy? Does somebody want to talk to me? Is that what it is? Okay. So there we go. There's one letter down and done. Okay, let's, let's take care of that letter. Okay, okay. Let's get that next letter. What's the next letter we got?

J Jimmy Carper 12:47

No, hey.

J Jewel Gray 12:49

It was nice. It was a kind of different letter. And I really know this isn't it. Where's the one that was typed that I was so taken with. Oh, on the bottom?

J Jimmy Carper 12:55

Yes.

J Jewel Gray 12:55

That I was so taken with, what's this one, got something in it? Oh, I see. Yes, I see. And I kind of wanted to read this letter. It's an old letter. And unfortunately, we didn't get it in time, what we had or talked about.

J Jimmy Carper 13:09

We mentioned it a little bit on the air. And we've, we've mentioned the, the word that that woman wanted to use.

J Jewel Gray 13:18

And it's specifically because I want you people out there to know that we really do have a following. You're not the only one out there listening to us. You sitting there in the dark with your earphones on or in your bedroom with your pillow, your head and your transistor. You're not the only ones listening to us. And here's some letters from people who you know, both want to criticize and want to tell us how wonderful we are. And we accept both with open arms and look at what we're doing and examine how we're doing to address these issues as we're, as we're given them. But I want to read this letter was written on September 17, this year. To the cast of After Hours. I've been composing this letter in my head for a long time. Even as I type this, I'm still being a bit, a bit apprehensive. This is a real letter from a real woman with a real problem. Please do not dismiss this as a hoax or a joke. Hear me out and you'll be able to read this the sincerity and the conflict in my words. First of all, let me tell you a little about myself so you can understand me better. I'm a woman. In my early 20s, I grew up in your run of the mill suburbia USA, I consider myself to be a very strong Christian. I graduated from university in the

southwest region of United States and I'm now pursuing my graduate studies. I've been dating the same man for a number of years now. Oh, don't lose me now. Don't lose me. It gets better. For, for a number of years now, where do we go?

J Jimmy Carper 14:36

Hmm.

J Jewel Gray 14:38

And we both are making plans to get married. I love this man dearly and would never do anything to hurt him in any way. He is perfect in so many ways and there's nothing I would like more than to be his wife. Many people that think that we are the perfect couple. I have a wonderful life. I have been blessed with a good family. I have a very, I have very little good, I have very little good friends. This is my choice. I'm very selective with the people I choose to surround myself with. One would never suspect the problem I have, I'm viciously lonely. I feel so alone, because I'll never be able to tell anyone that I am attracted to women. I'm really confused as to whether I'm, whether or not I'm a lesbian or bisexual. I mean, when I see a beautiful woman, woman, I'm attracted to, these uncontrollable feelings will emerge. my alter ego just wants to talk to that woman and say anything. The fear in me causes me to suppress those feelings. I know the stigma attached to being homosexual or bi. I don't honestly know if I could ever handle all that pressure. I have a few lesbian and gay friends, but I could never reveal myself to them. I'm not good enough. I'm not good enough friends with them to do that. And besides, I would be clueless as to what to do next. Ironically, I think my boyfriend would be understanding and empathetic. But I know our relationship would be in some insignificant or significant way be altered. He is my only stability and the only person I trust completely. It's a shame that society will never know that someone who they perceive as normal is very unlike them yet the same. I have been a loyal listener to the program for a while now. I always had to listen with earphones so that no one would know. I still do. I can't thank you all enough for being out there. You are my only connection to the open lifestyle that I will never be able to live. I guess I'm what you, you'd label a f'm. Maybe I set beside you in a class or stood behind you to local grocery store. I look just like any other breeder. I wish I could read the publications published by the gay community. I'm just so terrified, even by publication, I would love to speak to other bind lesbian women, but I would never go to gay bar, because for one I don't drink. And secondly, I would be terrified. I don't know of any other place to speak to anyone except for all of you. It's really helped me writing you. I feel, I feel as if I finally come face to face with my feelings. You have my permission to read this on the air. I know I'm not the only one out there. But you have to understand that I will never meet anyone who I trust enough to tell this to. I can't ever call you at the station because I just fear someone recognizing my voice, I would be more than happy to correspond in writing, just requested on the air. If you receive this letter, blah, blah, blah. Thanks again for hearing me out. Thanks for having me show like After Hours for all the silent messes like me. And that's kind of letters that we get here. This is not the first time we've got a letter from somebody who couldn't come out.

J Jimmy Carper 17:21

That's right.

J

Jewel Gray 17:21

Who's listening on the earphones so that nobody else knows what they're, what they're listening to. And our loyal and faithful listeners. So just to let you know out there, if you're listening and you're just a little afraid somebody's gonna hear you or see you or catch you listening to the station or you have to flip it off when somebody comes into the room. You're not the only one. There are a lot of people out there like that. Do we have a phone call?

J

Jimmy Carper 17:44

Gonna have a song for that woman.

J

Jewel Gray 17:47

Okay, we have a song for that for that woman. And here it is. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Roy. Roy just won a book, a book. What did I call it? It's called Love Between Men: Enhancing Intimacy and Keeping Your Relationship Alive.

J

Jimmy Carper 18:11

And how did he win that?

J

Jewel Gray 18:12

He won it by getting the question about when was Hairspray filmed? And he called and the answer was the summer of 88. Oh, so and even knew who was in it. Ricki Lake, he knew all the names.

J

Jimmy Carper 18:23

So now you have to get a new question.

J

Jewel Gray 18:25

Yes, a new question. This is my, my friend who comes to volunteer at the care center and does some creative things with the care center. So he called and said, I know, I know, I know. Oh, so there you go. Roy. You keep up listening. Yeah. All right. And you got something from an interview?

J

Jimmy Carper 18:44

I do

J Jewel Gray 18:45

You do.

J Jimmy Carper 18:48

What we talked about before the Michelangelo Signorile interview about Queer in America.

J Jewel Gray 18:55

Right.

J Jimmy Carper 18:56

Before we go to that, though, let's, let's kind of bone up here on what we're giving away and what the questions are.

J Jewel Gray 19:01

We still have two movies.

J Jimmy Carper 19:03

Okay.

J Jewel Gray 19:03

And people are calling for the book. S

J Jimmy Carper 19:05

o question is still out on that?

J Jewel Gray 19:08

And who was the first celebrity to wear a red ribbon in public? Uh huh. And we're still taking calls and if we don't get a, if we don't get an answer in the next 30 minutes, we'll change the question, let you try again.

J Jimmy Carper 19:21

Okay. Because it's a tough one. You got to have a new question for that.

J Jewel Gray 19:25

And then books. What do you think? What kind of question? Let's see.

J Jimmy Carper 19:28

You said you were all trivia tonight.

J Jewel Gray 19:31

I left my book at home. I was all trivia earlier. You're going to go to this interview?

J Jimmy Carper 19:38

Okay. I'll tell you what, for people who have been listening to After Hours in the past few weeks, earlier I talked about playing Camille Saint-Saëns tonight during the QMZ. There was another classical music composer that I've, that I've played a couple of weeks in a row, played some classical pieces. And if you know who that is, call in and you'll get a book and that's the number is 526-5738.

J Jewel Gray 20:13

JAM KPFT.

J Jimmy Carper 20:15

And while we're waiting for all those phone calls, we're gonna go to this interview.

J Jewel Gray 20:21

There you go. Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick.

S Speaker 8 20:34

There's someone on the phone who wants you to play this.

S

Speaker 9 20:39

Michelangelo Signorile, controversial columnist for the now defunct OutWeek draws on the lessons of outing in his current best selling book, Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power, examines the structures that maintain our invisibility. This Way Out's Josie Ketogio and Signorile, talked about the origins of his analysis.

S

Speaker 10 21:01

At the time that you first started writing this, you were like, at white hot heat, being an activist planning demonstrations, manipulating the media with sound bites to get the kind of publicity that ACT UP and Queer Nation wanted to get? How did you realize that there were these three centers of power, and that it was in fact closeted gays and lesbians that were a large part of the problem?

S

Speaker 11 21:22

I really was operating in such an instinctual way, I think. I was operating just from all the pressure that we were under, and really not analyzing what it was that I or others were doing. And after a couple of years, I started to see a bigger picture. You know, why was I always attacking Hollywood? Why was I always attacking Washington? Why was I always attacking New York? What was it about these three, and what was the binding thing and it was the closet. Then an editor from Random House had approached me, my editor, Mitchell Ivers, who's very openly gay and had been following me for a while and said, I think you should write a book. And it really wasn't again, until I started doing the research, that the thesis became bigger and bigger, that there was this trinity of the closet, which I call New York, Washington and Hollywood that I think really keeps the closet clamped down the power structures of the media industry in New York, the political system in Washington and the entertainment industry in Hollywood. I was finding, for instance, in my work at ACT UP in the media, that so much of the problem with getting publicity, were closeted gays that who were editors, or reporters who really thought that what we were doing was too far or too much or too radical. And it was beyond that sort of, you know, straight kind of homophobia or, or straight quote unquote, news judgment. They were very threatened by our very out of the closet feeling. So I started to look at that. And I guess when I started working at OutWeek, then and started to do more stories about Washington and studying Pete Williams and the Pentagon, I saw how that same closet was there, how it was the people who were closeted, who were most averse to helping gay people because they were protecting their closets. At the same time, I remember attacking so much of the popular media and popular culture for homophobia, so many films had been homophobic television shows, and at the same time, there was a, an invisibility. Either we were demonized, or there was an invisibility, I started to look at the people in Hollywood who run it and why this is happening. And I again saw the same pattern, powerful closeted people trying to protect their own closets in order for them to move up the power chain.

S

Speaker 10 23:32

You also came at this originally as a journalist, so why don't we start by talking about journalism and what made you realize that outing was an essential thing to do and exactly what outing is for people that don't really understand it?

S

Speaker 11 23:43

Right. There's such a misconception of outing because of the way the media has portrayed it and distorted it and distorted me, I think because the media has a vested interest in those distortions because so much of outing or what I do is an attack on the media. Basically, I had been in the world of entertainment publicity in New York, and had been publicizing Broadway shows and films and entertainers, etc. to many of the columnists in New York who cover the beat. And what I saw was that homosexuality was completely taboo. Not only were we never to talk about stars who were homosexual, but only glamorize those who were heterosexual. But we also were supposed to turn homosexual public figures into heterosexuals.

S

Speaker 10 24:30

Explain the practice of planting items in columns, because I learned about this from your book. I didn't really know about how the columns worked before I read Queer in America.

S

Speaker 11 24:38

Well, we would give gossip columnists say two pages of items, people like Liz Smith, who's syndicated to hundreds of papers across America and has really an enormous impact on pop culture. We would give two pages of items and every other item would be a free item, that would be a juicy item, a juicy piece of information that we had to be meticulous about. People don't realize that gossip is more meticulous than you think. Stars and celebrities and agents freak out when it's false. Then the newspapers and the editors freak out too, it had to be very meticulous. And every other item in between the free items was a client item, it was an item about one of our clients. So they would pay us off for the free items by mentioning a client item. And that's sort of how the world of gossip works. It's all payoffs of information, information that's sold and traded. But all of it or most of it, when it was about public figures and who they were dating or who they were getting married, or who they responded with, or who was the hottest couple. It was always about heterosexuals. If you knew that two people who were gay had just gotten together, that was a no, no, you could never give that to a columnist, if you did, they would never report it. Part of the system was that the columnist themselves were closeted, and knew that their subjects who they were writing about as heterosexual were also homosexual. So you had homosexuals helping other homosexuals to stay in the closet. Beyond that publicist, many of them were gay. In fact, some of the top publicists in New York are lesbians. Many of the film people in the Broadway people were gay men. So it was really an industry made up mostly of gays, or very much of gays that was keeping the closet going. You know, it was all closeted people keeping the closet going. At the time, I really didn't see a problem with it. I was as sort of, for lack of a better word, brainwashed into all of this as everyone else. This was just the way things were and the way they had to be. You didn't question it. It wasn't until I was politicized. Years later, through ACT UP by the AIDS crisis, and then through ACT UP, that I just started to see things so much more clearly, you know, ACT UP, just sort of teaches you, just going to meetings and sitting there and listening to people and people had come from every walk of life and from, from so many other movements. And I think it was really the feminists and the women at ACT UP, the lesbians who really gave me a vision of how oppression works. And, and really, I started to look

back at everything I had come from and said, Oh, my God, all of this is a sham. This is perpetuating homophobia and the closet and the closet is destroying us. And so I really started when I went to outreach shortly after my ACT UP experience, started to analyze those columns, and look at what was going on, what I had done and what was going on at that time, how the colonists were still doing that. And I started to report about it. My column was basically deconstructing gossip columns, gossip magazines, etc, and seeing how they treat queers. And what I saw was that they were making us into heterosexuals or keeping us completely invisible. When I started to report that and use the names because I felt well, how can I report on this without telling what I know if I know it for sure. And without telling that the colonists themselves were gay, you right? How could I do that? Well, doing that is what Time Magazine decided was outing. I had no idea that was going to become a huge controversy. But it did. It blew up and it was completely distorted. You know, I was called to McCarthyite dragging people out of the closet, when I felt what I was really doing was analyzing the media and trying to equalize and normalize the discussion of homosexuality to that of heterosexuality, that we talk all the time in the public about heterosexuals. And we never talk about people as homosexual.

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Speaker 10 28:39

And we specifically talk about their heterosexuality. See, that was the key point for me that I realized when I read your book was that we're always talking about who they are sleeping with.

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Speaker 11 28:48

And if we're not talking about who they sleep with, we certainly are talking about the fact that they are heterosexual. We will certainly show someone with their wife or children or whatever, we will even report a sometimes that someone is single. So when people say, Well, this is all about what people do in bed. I say, well, no, it's not. It's really about just reporting if someone is gay, you know, I've made that distinction that I think a lot of people don't see I've made in the book that I think so much of our community has come to in recent years, that there's a difference between sexual identity, whether or not you are gay and what you do in bed. When people say to me, well, what you do in your bedroom is in the privacy of you own, it's your own private life. I say sure enough, but outing doesn't report what people do in bed it merely says they're gay. And I don't see that as any different from saying someone is straight.

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Speaker 10 29:54

In part one of Josie Ketogio's conversation with Michelangelo Signorile, the man who made outing a household word discussed his definition of what is private and what is not.

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Speaker 11 30:05

I think we tend to couch our entire sexual orientation and identity as being private. Whereas heterosexuality is not private, sex acts, or who you sleep with, or what you do, or where you do it, or what position you like may be private, but to say that the fact of being gay is private, when we are also coming to a time when we are saying, as a community that we have a rich

culture, and that being gay is like being a woman or being black or being a Latino, that it has to do with your identity, then how can the mere fact of being gay be something that is absolutely private?

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Speaker 10 30:46

This week, Signorile analyzes the impact of the closet in his own life, and follows the theme of his new book, Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power. I was very moved by the stories you told about growing up gay, and about the ways in which you, as someone who knew you were gay, but didn't want anybody else to know, persecuted the other boy that ,that you knew was gay?

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Speaker 11 31:11

Yeah, when I was a kid, I realized that I was gay at the age of, I think five. I probably realized that earlier. But my memory can only go back to five, I had something very powerful in common with girls, and specifically with my cousin, Mary Lou. I couldn't figure out really what it was, but I definitely had a powerful connection. And Mary Lou and I used to talk about the boys we had crushes on. And at school, the same thing, I felt this powerful connection with girls, and I felt alienated from the boys. Boys are taught that any boy like that is who's different is a faggot, a queer, a sissy. They're told to ostracize that person, and call him names, those names even though they don't know what that is, their parents tell them that. And so I was beat up and spit on and kicked and, and really stunted my personality. I tried to stay quiet. I tried not to draw any attention to myself. I just stayed in silence. But what I also did well, among many things I did to try to prove I was not this queer, horrible person, but I was as macho and heterosexual as the other boys was, I would beat up the other kids who were called queer. The strategy being that I wouldn't appear as if I were like them, that I could show that I thought they were freaks too. So I became a gay basher in order to prove I wasn't gay. One particular fellow by the time we were in high school. His name was Anthony Larocca. You know, by that age, I was already sexually active, so was even more conscious. It wasn't so unconscious. I knew I was this deeply closeted homosexual dating girls while I was having sex with boys, and also hanging out with a rough crowd to prove I was heterosexual. And I would do what everyone else did to Anthony Larocca, which was while he sat on the bleachers during gym class, he was very frail and quiet. His way of dealing with this was to just sort of drop out completely and escape. My way was to throw basketballs at his head the way everybody else did. Sometimes his glasses broke or fell off, when he put them back on. And I'd go home and cry all the time. But I felt that was my way of dealing with it. That was his way. Years later, at an ACT UP meeting, he'd come up to me and tell me how brave I was for the work I was doing. Well, I was very humbled, to say the least.

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Speaker 10 33:48

So tell me how you were able to extend your life experience to this analysis of what the closet did to gay people in power.

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Speaker 11 33:56

The closet is not this wonderful refuge, this place to help us and keep us in hiding. And that we have a right to. And the truth is that the closet is a place we're forced into with no choice at all, and where if we have any, right, it's to be out of the closet. Those in the closet are psychologically tormented. We all were tormented psychologically, as children, we were forced to be something we weren't. And when you put people like that in power, it plays out in detrimental ways, not just to themselves, but to all those gay people over whom they wield power. So many of the people in power, they never got to that point that I got to where I came to terms with my sexuality. They are still throwing basketballs at all of us, but on a massive scale, voting against us, sitting by and letting homophobia just mushroom all around them, allowing films to be made that demonize us or not making any films about our lives. Sitting in media empires and allowing homophobia to be spewed at their own newspapers or magazines. All to preserve their closets. I realized how so much of what I was doing back then was what they're doing. And I guess I feel that I now have to try to break this chain of the closet and homophobia. And I feel that one way to do that is to try to normalize and equalize the discussion in the public about homosexuality, to not give public figures the choice to remain in the closet because that really is what it comes down to. If people feel that every aspect of their life can be delved into as a public figure, except their homosexuality, then they will take that easy way out all the time, stay in the closet, and ultimately oppress many of us.