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SPEAKERS

Speaker 10, Speaker 11, Speaker 12, Jewel Gray, Jimmy Carper

J Jewel Gray 00:01

Okay, we're back here for just a second to remind you that we're giving away two, two, two, two, two tapes of The Crying Game to someone who can answer the question, who was first celebrity to appear in public with the red ribbon on?

J Jimmy Carper 00:19

That's a tough question. You know it?

J Jewel Gray 00:21

Really first few people, tes, it is pretty tough. We've got a lot of great answers, not the right one. What we're gonna do is that shortly after this interview is over, we'll change the question and see if we can get somebody, to see if we can find some way to give these things away. We don't want them.

J Jimmy Carper 00:39

We still have to give away, now these are, these books are compliments of Half Price, Half Price Books.

J Jewel Gray 00:46

Half Price Books over on Wall.

J Jimmy Carper 00:47

Yes. And that particular store has the greatest selection of gay and lesbian books of any Half Price I've ever been to.

J Jewel Gray 00:57

And you can speak with Diane there to help you find, she'd be glad to help you and point you to the gay and lesbian studies or the,

J Jimmy Carper 01:06

And you'll probably see me there because I,

J Jewel Gray 01:08

Yeah, we both shopped there. I was there the other day looking for a book I give, I give a book away often to friends, it's called How to Lose Your Addiction to a Person. And every time a friend of mine breaks up, I give them the book. And then I have to go buy a new one and new and used, I mean, the bookstore, I keep wanting to say new and used. Half Price has always got it? Yes. And so I went up there to pick one up the other day and spoke to Diane for a while. And,

J Jimmy Carper 01:38

Did they have a couple of them there?

J Jewel Gray 01:40

actually the truth is they didn't have it there. I just hit the wrong day. If I go back Monday or Tuesday, it will be there. So that's what I'm gonna do. But we wanted to remind you, you can call,

J Jimmy Carper 01:49

Might get an extra.

J Jewel Gray 01:50

Yeah, yeah, that's the truth. That's what I do. We want to remind you, you can get in touch with us by calling JAM KPFT or

J Jimmy Carper 01:59

526 5738

J Jewel Gray 02:03

And win one of these books, I mean one of these films, The Crying Game, it's a \$79 movie, give us a call.

S Speaker 12 02:14

Has been said and much misunderstood about Michelangelo Signorile, the author of *Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power*. As we continue Josie Ketogio's interview with the former columnist for the now defunct *OutWeek* magazine, Signorile differentiates between political tool and the normalization of open homosexuality.

S Speaker 10 02:36

A lot of people say, well, it's okay to out people that are specifically anti gay in their public policies. But why out people that aren't that are just in the closet?

S Speaker 11 02:46

Well, I think that when you say we'll only out the people who are doing harm, you are making the revelation of homosexuality into a punishment, a negative thing. And as a journalist, I think homosexuality, if we're really going to equalize the discussion of heterosexuality, it should be discussed whenever it's pertinent to a story. Let's say we had the head of the Department of Agriculture, you know, and I was interviewing her about pesticides, right? I wouldn't normally then ask her about her husband. So it would be inappropriate to ask her about her lesbians. But let's say she invited me into her home for a Washington Post Style Section interview, which is a more homey and personal interview. If she were heterosexual, we might take pictures of her children, we would ask about her husband, or if she even were single, and were dating someone, we might ask about the pros. Certainly, if she was living with a man. Well, my feeling is if she were lesbian, then I think that the reporter should be asking, Who is this other woman you live with? What is this relationship? That's a real normalization of homosexuality and heterosexuality. I don't believe in just using outing as a tool. That's when the journalist is making a moral judgment. And it shouldn't be that. The journalist should be doing it whenever is pertinent to the story. I look at Donna Minkowitz's story about Anne-Imelda Radice, the head of the NEA who was brought in after Frohnmayer, the acting head, taking over an organization that had been embroiled in so much controversy regarding gay artists who were denied funding. I thought the fact that a woman coming in to head an organization that had just been at the center of so much controversy over gay artists, the fact that she were lesbian and well known to be in Washington was incredibly pertinent to the story, as was her conservatism incredibly pertinent. Everyone made sure to mention that. I think her lesbianism was pertinent, no matter what her actions would have been. And again, when we're talking about outing, what people don't realize is that you're talking about people most of the times who are out within a community, who are known to be gay, to perhaps hundreds of thousands of people. Anne-Imelda Radice was very well known in Washington as a lesbian, had associated with so many people who were gay and what I loved about Donna Minkowitz's story in the Advocate was that

she was able to prove that she was a lesbian without ever telling you about her sex life or who she slept with or bringing forth anyone who slept with her. She was able to interview old friends, old coworkers, people who said, of course, she identified as lesbian, other lesbians who had her over for dinner. We're talking about people who are out and for some reason the media is letting them in that one area, decide when that is disclosed.

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Speaker 10 05:33

And also, one of the things I was really impressed with in *Queer in America* that I hadn't thought about before, was the extent to which the closeted people can only be sexual by sexually harassing people.

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Speaker 11 05:44

Yes, in Washington, you see this, and it's rampant and it's something people should be very concerned about. Because it's, it's our own people who wind up abusing our own people, which I think is classic amongst so many groups and minorities who are oppressed and something the power structure likes to keep in place. For instance, in the book, I talk about one very powerful legislator, who, because he's so closeted, unlike many in Washington, more than in New York and Hollywood, these people are locked in such an iron closet, they can't even use an escort service, it would be risky. They certainly can't go to gay parties or be with gay people. What you have in this particular case, is a man who is so locked in the closet, he winds up either consciously or unconsciously hiring young gay men, who he himself may perceive are closeted, and gay and confused. And they, they also have a very great respect for him. And so they're put in this situation that's very vulnerable. And he's able to manipulate them and winds up sexually harassing and sexually abusing them. For all the same reasons that you heard Anita Hill tell for why she stayed in a similar situation, they stay in it, they feel their jobs would be on the line. At the same time, they have a strange respect for the man. They're constantly in a tug of war, and they're tormented. And they go on in it for quite some time. But also this man, to preserve the closet on a larger scale to not appear homosexual, votes anti-gay. He had a homosexual scandal in his own past and is always afraid of appearing gay, and why it's abusing others. So the closet, as we see is a very complicated place and a place where one person's closet can affect so many people.

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Speaker 10 07:40

There has been a sort of unspoken rule in journalism, that this is the one thing that you don't say without tons of proof, or someone else having already said it with tons of proof. Why is that?

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Speaker 11 07:53

Well, because I believe that they see it as worse than, you know, abortions, extramarital affairs, boozing, cancer, all sorts of things that they generally talk about. If they find out something about a public figure and is pertinent to a story, they will discuss it. Throughout the campaign,

they thought it was pertinent to discuss George Bush's alleged extramarital affair and certainly thought it was pertinent to discuss Bill Clinton's.

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Speaker 10 08:19

So many of them perceive outing as a as a punishment, because it's perceived as a terrible thing to say that someone's gay.

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Speaker 11 08:25

Exactly. If you see homosexuality as horrible, then the next logical step is that outing is horrible.

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Speaker 10 08:31

The closeted people in Hollywood you point out in the book over and over, say, well, the American public isn't ready for this. And then the people in Washington will say, well, we're not really ready to change the laws, let's wait till public opinion changes, and that people in journalism say, well, this isn't really out and open for anybody yet.

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Speaker 11 08:46

Exactly. And that's why I say in the very beginning of the book, if just one of those power structures broke down the closet, the other two would be forced to, they all sort of know that so, they all sort of say, oh, it's the other two. In terms of Hollywood, I believe that they just simply underestimate as they do in every other way, the public's ability to understand and accept things. If the, if Hollywood is all about fantasy, and what people really want to believe about a certain star. And if they can accept that someone is a caveman or a disciple of Jesus, or a gladiator or anything else in a film, they could accept that someone who is gay, in real life is playing a heterosexual, but we haven't been allowed to see if they could because the industry clamps down and says no, no one can come out, no one can possibly be out, and, and any new stars who are out we're not taking them.

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Speaker 10 09:45

Well, they always make such a big deal about every time they do have a gay character, they're played by a heterosexual actor, and they always have to publicize how heterosexual this person is.

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Speaker 11 09:55

And it's a contradiction again of the industry and who makes it up because it is queer. So many people in the industry from the top to the bottom are gay and as I quote, Shawn Pleshette from Alternatives. In the book, when Hollywood says it can't do anything about it, it's saying, you

know, gays run the industry and, and the industry can't change itself. And you know, they're just saying that they can't do what they can do. You know, they can do it if they really wanted to.

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Speaker 10 10:31

You made a really interesting comparison with with Jews and anti semitism in Hollywood, can you talk about that?

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Speaker 11 10:37

Hollywood has historically actually been an industry that's easily manipulated by the larger power structure of Washington. It is an industry that was founded by immigrant Jews at a time of rabid and overt anti-semitism in this country and in the world. And they were easily manipulated by Washington with the words un-American, you know, with McCarthy coming in, and having purges. The moguls were so fearful of being labeled un-American because they were in such a precarious state as a people that they easily did whatever Washington wanted them to do. They made sure the images did nothing but advocate for the mainstream in the status quo. They certainly didn't attack Nazism or fascism, or any of the other horrors that were going on at the time until Hitler became Washington's enemy. So it was a group of people who were in power, but were being manipulated by a larger group because they were fearful. You see the same thing now. And in fact, many of the moguls are gay and Jewish. At a time when, in this country, the pendulum can swing anyway, for homosexuals. It's a time of rabid and overt homophobia. And it's not McCarthy, but it's Dan Quayle throwing around the words cultural elite, you see this fear take over Hollywood, and you see Washington knowing, it seems for decades, how it can manipulate and change this particular industry.

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Speaker 10 12:09

Why do you see the closeted gays in positions of power behind the scenes as the real enemy?

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Speaker 11 12:16

Well, it's not that they are the enemy, but it's that the closet is the enemy, and the closet mentality that's motivating them. And I think everyone out there who's come out of the closet, knows that when they were in the closet, almost everything they did was the closet talking. And it's hard for closeted people. And I hope there's a lot of closeted people listening, that can really search their souls because it's hard for closeted people, I think to see that much of what motivates them is the closet. But it's something you know, when you come out and you look back. And what we see with closeted people in power is they know what's right to do. They know what they should do. They know what they should say about something, they know how they should help someone, but they are not willing to take the risk, because the ultimate thing they have to preserve is their closet.

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Speaker 10 13:10

Speaker 10 10:10

You have these wonderful little calls to arms at the end addressed to non-gay, but supportive heterosexuals to people in the closet to activists, can you sort of summarize some of those because they're really just really challenging.

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Speaker 11 13:23

It's my queer manifesto. And it's really meant for people to read only after they've read the whole book, because I think that might be a little potent. But I think the book really builds and sets up to this manifesto. And it's really about how all of us, no matter what place we're in, now, we've come to a time where we all have to try to dismantle the closet. And it starts off talking to all queers. And says, basically, we all have to come out of the closet, those of us who are out have to help others come out, we have to come out wisely. If you're a kid, stuck in a homophobic town, if you're living with your parents, if you're dependent on people, if you're in a dangerous situation, of course, you have to be wise, but you have to plan for the day, the glorious day when you come out and you have to come out for your own well being and for the well being of so many others because we need visibility. I talk also to the closeted in power. And I basically say to them, the first line is get yourself some professional help. And I mean that because I think that the closets are coming down. I think that as the gay movement moves forward, and as lesbians and gay men come out more and more, we aren't going to stand for these people in power, oppressing us and staying in the closet and for their own well being, they'd be smart to get themselves some help now and really try to deal with this. Because this is about a movement and a people rising up and they should really be a part of it and be the heroes as the people in power rather than be seen in history as having been part of the enemy and the collaborators. I go on to talk to sympathetic straight people. And really, I think so much of this rests with them, who created the closet. Heterosexuals who forced children who are gay into the closet and who inadvertently make their straight children into gay bashers. And I say to them, that they have to stop creating the closet. And if they're gay, their children, they should be able to be gay. And if they're straight, they should be told that they should respect gay people. And I tell them that they have to also stop respecting the quote unquote, discretion of their gay friends, especially if they are straight people in power, they should be helping their gay friends in power to come out and not be codependent in their own dysfunction. I then go on to talk to the religious right and tell them that we are never going back into the closet and that all we're going to do from now on is try to get more and more people out of the closet, and that we're never going to have them invade our schools, invade our churches, invade our lives, and force their agenda on us. And that ultimately, the biggest casualty in this war that they've declared, is going to be the closet. They don't know what fire they're playing with here. Because in the end, so many of them are going to be I think, revealed as having been very, very disturbed gay people who are now pushing an agenda of hate. At the end, then I talk to all queer activists and I say that the biggest thing we have to do right now is to come together and fight our common enemy, which is the closet that we have to put aside all of our differences regarding gender and race and, and class and political ideology, because diversity is the most powerful weapon. And together we can all and I think I list you know, the gay Republicans and the black lesbian mothers and the gossip columnist, and the studio executives and the drag queens, and the the computer nerds and the business executives and all of the glorious, glorious people in this community across the spectrum. With all of that diversity, we have the biggest weapon of all, much more than the religious right can muster. And that with all the talent we have, if we put it together, we can really rise up and make the world a better place for all queer people.

S Speaker 10 13:24

It's a great manifesto. My guest has been Michelangelo Signorile, who is author of *Queer in America: Sex, the Media, and the Closets of Power*. This has been Josie Ketogio.

J Jimmy Carper 17:57

That means that we're up to another edition of the QMZ, the queer music zone, with Jimmy. Hi. And how's everything going tonight and there's a woman here shaking a piece of paper at me. Yes, Jewel? What?

J Jewel Gray 18:15

I have a question since we had such a tough question, we'll give you the answer. Okay. The answer was Jeremy Irons was the man who the first celebrity to wear the red ribbon in public, Jeremy Irons. Ah, okay, we had the question now we figured this out it's got to be it's got to be an easy one. So get your pencils ready, you know who to call, JAM KPFT. The question is,

J Jimmy Carper 18:37

This is for what?

J Jewel Gray 18:38

This is for the one of the two, the first two people who call in and get this answer correctly gets The Crying Game video.

J Jimmy Carper 18:45

Okay. Polo and Red Ribbon people.

J Jewel Gray 18:48

Exactly. Red Ribbon people. What Houston area activist and well known radio personality once arranged to drive Martin Luther King Jr. around in a pickup truck with a PA system when Houston area locations refused to let him speak. If you can guess that answer, we'll give you a Crying Game video. First two people. What Houston area act-- activist and local radio personality once arranged to drive Martin Luther King around in a pickup truck with a PA system when Houston area locations refused to let him speak. Give us a call KPFT.

J Jimmy Carper 19:21

That's 526 5738, 526 KPFT and the phones are ringing off the wall. That's great. That is

That's 526-5738, 526 KPFI and the phones are ringing off the wall. That's great. That is wonderful. That means people know, people know. Well, we're back to the QMZ with Jimmy. Hi, how's it going? I've got, oh gosh, the QMZ has really changed its flavor in the past, oh, I'd say half hour. I've kind of changed around what I'm going to do. We have two winners. We have two winners. This first thing that I'm going to play is something you haven't heard in a very long time. It's by Yer Girlfriend and the first time it was ever played on After Hours, a certain woman called in to request it because she had heard something else that we played off of this, this CD, the one that the, we won't be silent, but one we played all the time, but we she called in and requested something that was kind of pretty. And it was the second song on the CD called "Full Moon." And that's what I want to play right now. And I know she's listening. So it's for you. Okay, that was Yer Girlfriend doing "Full Moon." That's a really pretty song. And that's for a special woman. And she knows who she is. And she's definitely listening. I know she is. Okay. Back to QMZ. We're doing Atwood and Comeaux. We did, if recall last week, we did "Crying." That's the first and only song that we ever did two weeks in a row, same song on QMZ. This week, we're going to do a different one from them. And it's kind of a artsy song and I really kind of like it. It's called "One More Ride On the Merry Go Round. Oh, you got me thinking about you. That's RuPaul doing "Thinkin' 'Bout You." Yes, indeedy. And that was by request in the QMZ. Prior to that we had Camille Saint Saens doing "The Swan" from Carnival of the Animals and the "Fossils" and "Finale" from Carnival of the Animals. Camille Saint Saens, he was, he was a 18th century, now that, that's not right, 19th century. Yes. 1800. France. Is he gay? He's a tea room queen. From the 1800s, yeah. And I read all about it in The Gay Book of Days, which I actually, I did get my copy at Half Price Books. Plug. No, not a plug because it's that book is, Gay Book of Days, I believe is out of print so I don't mean, you know, you can't, just can't get it everywhere. And let's see. Yes, that was that, that was that, that was that, Atwood and Comeaux, Yer Girlfriend. Okay, it's been a fulfilling evening. Oh, before I go. Gotta tell ya Pansy Division is coming to Houston this Friday at Catal Huyuk. Watch your newspapers, probably the, what the press, or the public news, public news will have it. Because Catal Huyuk always has like, a half a page. So it's Friday, October 22. At Catal Huyuk, Pansy Division, be there, you'll, I'll be there. And to close out by request. Something we've done before by Miss Tourette, who has been in Houston played club Hedonism. And this is a song that Miss Tourette did not do at Club Hedonism, which she had because it's a it's a terrific song. It's called \$70.