

LJH8 14.4.89**Emily**

Q. You would like to be a driver?

A. Yes.

Q. In the NAME OF BUSINESS. Is that what your dad?

A. My dad works in a NAME OF BUSINESS, but he isn't a car driver.

Q. This looks good. It looks like you learned quite a lot, well you knew about most of the stuff before. What do you think of the sex education at school?

A. They just tell you what you already know. Well most people.

Q. Do you talk to your friends about these kind of things, contraception and pregnancy?

A. Yes.

Q. Is that who you have mainly learned from?

A. I suppose so.

Q. You have heard about homosexual relationships at school? What did you think about that?

A. It's up to whoever. If they want to carry on, I mean if they want to be homosexuals, it's up to them but.

Q. You're not that interested yourself?

A. No.

Q. Here you have a whole load of stuff about contraception, various methods of contraception, is that mainly learnt from school?

A. Well you can tell your school friends.

Q. Have you done anything much about AIDS at school?

A. No I don't think so. They just talk about sexually transmitted diseases, but we haven't gone into detail about anything.

Q. But you do know a bit about it. How did you first hear about it?

A. What AIDS? I suppose it was the telly and papers.

Q. What do you know about it?

A. Well it's a sexually transmitted disease which can kill you in the end, but it can take years to show up whether you have got it or not.

Q. And about how you can get it as well? How? What sort of things?

A. Sex, blood transfusions, I think that's it.

Q. Blood transfusions not so much now, it was just at the beginning before they realised. What about, when you say it's a sexually transmitted disease is that AIDS itself?

A. No it's the thing that follows up to AIDS isn't it, it's the beginning of it, like, if you get the beginning of it, it can lead to AIDS, but it doesn't always.

Q. Not necessarily no. The virus you can be infected by the virus. And so, AIDS itself is that just, what is it you get when you get AIDS?

A. How do you mean?

Q. Well what is AIDS?

A. It's a disease.

Q. A disease?

A. Yes. A killer disease.

Q. And what you are saying about it can kill, what about a cure?

A. A cure, they're close to a cure, but I know they haven't found one yet. They are still testing for one, but they are close to it.

Q. What did you think of the, there were quite a lot of campaigns on the telly and posters, that sort of thing in the newspapers, what did you think of it?

A. I don't know. I suppose it makes people more aware of it and to use contraception, like a condom or something.

Q. Did you think, I mean, did they mean anything to you. Did they persuade you?

A. I mean I wouldn't catch it, I don't want to catch anything so it's best to use it.

Q. Do you have a relationship at the moment?

A. Yes.

Q. You are in a relationship at the moment and do you use a condom yourself?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you always right from the beginning?

A. I suppose I have taken chances before but.

Q. And do you think that's directly as a result of knowing about AIDS or?

A. No I mean like, I suppose I took chances but no more because I don't want to get pregnant anyway.

Q. That's the main reason, not getting pregnant. How long have you been in that relationship?

A. Only a month and a half but we are really close.

Q. And when was the first time you had?

A. It wasn't that long ago, I can't remember when.

Q. What about, is this the first relationship you've had is it or is it?

A. No. This is probably the closest, but I was going out with some boy for over a year before.

Q. A year. How was that relationship?

A. It was OK at the beginning but then the arguments and the rights and then the disagreements started up and I got fed up with it.

Q. What would you say was the most important thing about your relationships?

A. You have got to feel something, feel a lot for the person, if you're with them for a long time. It was like, the one I was going out with before, it was a case of, I was going out with him for about a year, just over a year and like we did take a lot of chances but we weren't no more.

Q. You felt very strong for him at the time?

A. I did yes, but in the way it ended was all wrong, we used to argue, we used to fight.

Q. What did you fight over?

A. Just stupid things. We used to have arguments, so I used to get fed up with him over a stupid little thing. He gave me a black eye once.

Q. Did he?

A. And I nearly gave him a black eye.

Q. You nearly gave him a black eye. That's right way round at least. What made you do that, how had he provoked you?

A. I don't know. I was getting ready to hit him and I think he was sort of leaning down and I was just about to punch him and as I was about to punch him his face went into my fist.

Q. He threw his face upon your fist? Was it a violent relationship in general?

A. Not violent but I mean-

Q. Would you slap each other around or?

A. I used to slap him around and he used to get fed up with it, but he didn't realise how hard he did hit me, but it wasn't all the time. He never used to "hit me" hit me. I would always start it off by hitting him when we had an argument.

Q. What do your parents think about your relationships with boys?

A. Well she liked my ex-boyfriend, but she prefers this one now. He is much nicer. And we will be getting engaged soon, probably maybe between mine and his birthday, like his birthday is MONTH and mine is in MONTH so split it between them and she has approved of me moving out and living with him, but I said I might leave it until I leave school in June or July and she has approved of it. As long as I am with someone who she likes and that I will be safe and all that and he won't knock me about then she's approved of it.

Q. So that's what you think you will do, move out to a place on your own. Where will you live?

A. Well he's got a bedsitter at the moment but it's only a single one but he wants to get a flat, but he hasn't much chance of getting a flat anyway so we will try and get a bigger bedsit and I will move in and then we will put our names down on the waiting list for a flat.

Q. Have you any brothers and sisters, is it just you and your mum?

A. And my dad and my cat.

Q. What does your dad think then. You've talked about what she thinks this and that I thought it was just your mum, that makes the decisions?

A. My dad likes him as well. Both my mum and dad prefer him to my ex-boyfriend and they both like him and both approve of him and both know that we are going to get engaged, and probably will be moving out this year.

Q. What does he do?

A. He's a REDACTED, my dad.

Q. No, your boyfriend?

A. Well at the moment he's just looking for jobs so he's not working at the moment.

Q. What do you think you will do in terms of jobs when you leave school?

A. I wanted to go to college, but if I go college what I am going to do is motor vehicle maintenance, but I would have to go to college for two years, that would be say seventeen to nineteen. But I don't know whether I will stick it so what I will get is like an ordinary sort of full time job and wait until I'm about seventeen or eighteen and then I am going to the NAME OF BUSINESS and try for a driver, I can't remember if you have to be seventeen or eighteen to sort of get any job, along as it is a job and money coming in then I will try for the NAME OF BUSINESS, probably when I'm eighteen.

Q. You can't drive yet though?

A. No, but seventeen you can have your driving lessons, but the NAME OF BUSINESS will teach you how to drive anyway.

Q. So trainee driver. What sort of job will you get in the meantime, when you say just an ordinary job?

A. Shop job, I don't mind, as long as it is something to sort of keep me alive from now until I start at the NAME OF BUSINESS. Supermarket, I'm not fussy.

Q. What about most of your friends that you have upstairs, are they the ones you go around with?

A. Yes, most of the time, yes.

Q. What sort of things do you do with them?

A. I don't see that much of them, I see my boyfriend most of the time, but I don't see a lot of them. Sometimes we go out, but mostly sort of in.

Q. In? What at home?

A. Well we will go to my house or go to his mums or go to his sisters or just go out anywhere, as long as it is out of the house, it makes a change.

Q. So you spend time together not necessarily doing anything in particular. If we can track back a bit to the stuff about AIDS, the friends that you have here at school, do you think they are worried about AIDS?

A. I should think so, yes.

Q. When they talk about it, do they give you that impression?

A. Well, who isn't worried about it?

Q. Well, I don't know, I think some people think that it's got nothing to do with me, it's another group out there who have got it. But you think people are and should be?

A. Yes.

Q. It is very worrying isn't it. But do you think say, for example you say that you wouldn't take chances now, you have taken chances in the past but you wouldn't take chances now, what do you think about your friends, do you think they are still taking chances?

A. I don't think so. Some girl I know, she's on the pill but you can still get pregnant even on the pill, it's got side effects and all that.

Q. But it's mainly pregnancy you are worried about in taking chances?

A. Yes.

Q. Asking the question that you've got on here, you do say that if you started up with a new partner you think you would be able to ask him to use a condom. Would you feel quite comfortable and not embarrassed in that situation?

A. No.

Q. Some young women, they think that they couldn't do it?

A. Well, if I started up with anyone new, I wouldn't want to get pregnant or catch anything, so I would say something.

Q. And do you think they would take notice?

A. Well if they didn't, I wouldn't.

Q. Right. That's a sensible sort of thing to do. With your boyfriend, how do you decide you would start having a sexual relationship with him?

A. Well we've always been close since the beginning, although I haven't been going out with him long, he's the one I have been closest to most, including my ex-boyfriend, and we both feel a lot for each other. I don't know. We just sort of come round to it.

Q. Do you think you decided or he decided?

A. It just happened, really. It just happened.

Q. Like the time was right. How long had you been together before you decided to have a sexual relationship?

A. It wasn't that long ago.

Q. So it's all quite new really?

A. How do you mean?

Q. Well it's a new relationship, especially since you were in a long one before?

A. When I started going out with him, we both weren't really in for long, we just wanted, not so much a bit of fun, we both didn't want a heavy relationship, but that's the way it worked out though. We are both happy with it. He asked me to get engaged to him a couple of weeks ago, no, about three weeks ago.

Q. That's sort of a quite fast decision in a way?

A. Yes, but it won't be for another couple of months anyway.

Q. Yes so you will be thinking about it. How did you meet him?

A. At a party. I went to his sister's wedding party in the evening. Although nothing happened that night, I saw him the next day and the day after that he asked me out.

Q. So you seem very happy?

A. Yes.

Q. Have you been talking to your friends much about it?

A. Yes. All I do is go on about him.

Q. What do they think?

A. They think he's alright. They get on with him alright. They sort of leave it up to me. Some people might say about his age because he is twenty-two, and, like, he will be twenty-three, REDACTED before my seventeenth birthday. But my mum don't care about the age anyway. As long as I am happy with him. He doesn't look twenty-two, most people think he's seventeen, eighteen.

Q. You are not worried about the age?

A. No.

Q. How old was your other boyfriend?

A. What before, he will be eighteen this year.

Q. So he's the same age as you. Do you think you prefer to have boyfriends who are older, or?

A. They act more mature, really.

Q. Yes some young women think that boys their own age are..

A. Idiots.

Q. What about, thinking about young men and young women having a sexual relationship do you think there is a difference, a double standard of expectations of what is OK for young women to do and what's OK for a young man?

A. Well, it is probably, like, I suppose if a girl has slept with a lot of boys she would be called a slag, but if a boy slept with a lot of girls then it's OK.

Q. What do you think about that?

A. It's wrong.

Q. What do you think could be done about it, if anything?

A. Well, if anyone called me a slag because I had slept with someone then it's tough. That's my business, it's got nothing to do with them.

Q. You wouldn't be affected by someone calling you a slag?

A. No.

Q. It's a bit unfortunate for women in general?

A. I would turn round and say why, are you jealous? That's what I'm like.

Q. Do you think that, you say that you have taken chances in the past having sex with people but you wouldn't now, do you think you would take chances in other areas of your life, do anything that's a little bit risky?

A. Like what?

Q. I don't know, what would you think was risky?

A. I don't know, I don't want to get pregnant by my boyfriend now because we think that we both agree engagement then marriage, then wait a while before we have kids, so.

Q. What about other things, not necessarily risky sexual behaviour?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Well some people think that drinking and smoking and stuff like that is a bit risky?

A. Oh, I don't disagree with them drinking and smoking, just as long as it isn't drugs. He doesn't take drugs anyway because once someone spiked his drink and he..

Q. What about yourself, would you take drugs?

A. No. If I did, mum would kill me. My mum and dad would come on a drugs bust. They don't mind me drinking though. They know that I drink but I'm not an alcoholic.

Q. Just a social drinker?

A. If there is an excuse, like a birthday party, I have a drink. And they just say, it's your fault if you are sick in the morning.

Q. It's not just being sick though is it. Does it make you think the next time, or would you forget the next time?

A. Forget and do it again.

Q. You have never had any drugs or anything what about your friends, friends here who might be?

A. There is someone I know, like, she only takes it like at parties and that, but she is not hooked on it or nothing like that. But I know her, I know her out of school, she's like a couple of years older than me.

Q. Is that your main concern about drugs, that you would get hooked on them or people do get hooked on them?

A. I suppose it's not a case of getting hooked on them, I mean the drugs that are not hookable kind of thing, you take it once you can take it again and again and that's when you start getting hooked. It affects your behaviour and I don't agree with it.

Q. But that's the only person you know personally who has been involved with drugs. Did they talk about that at school, the teachers in lessons or anything about that kind of thing?

A. I can't remember. I am usually late anyway.

Q. Is that when they talk about it, first thing in the morning sort of thing.

A. Yes. I come in at 10 o'clock.

Q. How come?

A. Why I am late?

Q. That you're late, yes?

A. Well I have noticed that if I go to bed late, late, late, I get up early, if I go to bed early, I get up late, late, late.

Q. The more sleep you get, the more you need?

A. Yes.

Q. I noticed there is a book that you have to sign when you come in saying your reasons for being late?

A. I never sign it, I just walk in.

Q. What do they do - nothing?

A. Just tell you don't do it again. If you have a good enough reason. If you are late again you get chucked off the course. Like my mate upstairs she is always late. I am always late but it's nine, half nine, and she used to come at ten, half past ten, like, she did has(?). If she keeps coming in late she will get chucked off the course. It's not a case of being occasionally late, it's four out of five days.

Q. Yes, it's a bit excessive really. But will they throw her off the course?

A. I think if she carries on being late, yes. It's just that I came in late today, but I had to go and see someone so that's a good enough reason.

Q. How do you like this school, what do you think of it as a school?

A. It's alright I suppose. I have been here, this is the only secondary school I've been here like from first year to sixth form. It's OK I suppose.

Q. How long have you been here?

A. Since the first year.

Q. You've been through the whole time all in one school?

A. Yes.

Q. And have you had that set of friends the whole time you have been here?

A. No not really. Like, SALLY I have known her about thirteen years, so I have known her since sort of we were nippers. So, I've known her up until now, but the others not really.

Q. It sort of comes and goes your friends. Whoever is in your circle at the time?

A. Yes.

Q. Were you spending more time with them before you met your boyfriend, were you spending more time with them?

A. Not really. Because like I hadn't finished with my ex- boyfriend long before I started going out with this one.

Q. No right. So, you've mainly been...?

A. So I see them. They come round and bug me, I go round and bug them. That's it really. I see them at school near enough every day, apart from days I am not in.

Q. So you always know you are liable to find them here even if you don't actually find them on a particular day. Do they live nearby?

A. Yes. They all sort of live round the corner from me.

Q. How are you getting on with your mum and dad?

A. I don't argue with my dad but me and my mum have had some bad arguments. Once she threw a shoe at me, but it missed me. That was ages ago. She is the kind of person if we argue she will get to my dad first and my dad will shout at me, but if my dad sees the whole argument he will see that it is not always me to blame and then he will have a go at my mum. Because, like, she was picking on me all the time. You see, I'm crafty, if she picks on me, my dad has a go at her, if I start crying he will have a go at her even more for upsetting me, so my mum says, hey..

Q. So you are playing one off against the other, is it?

A. Yes.

Q. But they are quite happy with the way you are running your life with your boyfriends and so forth?

A. Yes.

Q. Thinking about the AIDS thing again, you said that you thought some of the information that's been coming out about it on the telly and in the newspapers and

things was fairly useful. Do you think there is some way it could be made more relevant for young people?

A. What do you mean?

Q. Well, you seem to feel that young people are listening to it. Do you think they are? They are listening to those messages?

A. I think so, yes.

Q. So you don't think it needs to be put over, they are OK?

A. I don't know. They could just be like a one-night stand or something, they are not thinking anything of it and they could catch AIDS that way, but there again it could be their one hundred and first time and catch something, so.

Q. So you think they should be taking notice of it and you think they are?

A. I should think so yes.

Q. When you said about the condom is the best thing to use sort of thing - What do you think of safe sex, if I said safe sex, what would it mean?

A. Not getting pregnant, not catching nothing. And not passing these things on. I don't think a condom is the best one because it could always split, but there again if it did split, he would know, but I don't know.

Q. One of the things I have been trying to find out is safe sex isn't necessarily just using a condom or something like that, there are other things that you can do which don't actually involve sexual intercourse. Before you started having sexual intercourse with your boyfriend, did you do other sorts of things which didn't?

A. Well sort of kissing, cuddling.

Q. Do you think of that as part of as the sexual part of the relationship?

A. I suppose so, in every relationship, a girl and a boy, whatever, must kiss and cuddle at some time, and if they get so close then maybe they will sleep with them.

Q. Because some people think that it is only sex if you do sleep with them, but the other things aren't really?

A. I suppose, like, it's leading up to it.

Q. What about that group of friends you have here, do you think any of them are sleeping with people?

A. I know that some of them have but I am not too sure about one of them. I know that a couple of them are.

Q. Do you think in the school in general, do you think there are groups of girls who do have sexual relationships, sort of group together and the ones who don't?

A. Not really.

Q. Everybody is mingled together. Do you give advice to the others, the ones who haven't?

A. I mean if they ask me anything, I will just tell them if I know the answer.

Q. Do you think you have been able to find out what you wanted to know, enough about what you wanted to know about?

A. Yes, I think so.

Q. There isn't anything more you that you would like to know about AIDS or sexually transmitted diseases?

A. No.

Q. You know enough to keep clear of it?

A. Yes.

Q. What do you see as your long-term future plans, you've got the next couple of years mapped out, what do see if you put yourself ten years into the future?

A. Hopefully we will be married and have kids. He wants a football team, fifteen so, he made me laugh. If they were little girls, he wants another fifteen. He's only mucking about.

Q. How many would you like?

A. I would like between two and four.

Q. Quite a few, really.

A. I don't think one is right because when you are on your own, like one, you are always spoilt. I'm spoilt rotten but I don't like it, I would give anything to have an older brother.

Q. You haven't been able to persuade your parents of that?

A. It's a bit late to have an older one, isn't it.

Q. Well an older brother would be a problem, they could get you a younger one?

A. Oh no. My mum is too old. My mum had four or five miscarriages before she had me. She had about..... she is too old anyway.

Q. She probably spoils you because she was so glad to get you in the end.

A. Well I suppose. My dad spoils me really. Everything in my bedrooms, I've got a TV, video, hi-fi, computer in my bedroom, sofa bed, Christmas presents and all that.

Q. But you feel that you wouldn't do that with your children?

A. I would sort of buy maybe a telly, but I would go and buy them a video, do you know what I mean, say a computer between them or something, but not as much as what I've got.

Q. It's strange that, thinking you have too much. People are usually very happy to have a lot of material goods?

A. Well, I know I am spoilt. Like my mates who have got brothers and sisters, they have got telly and hi-fis in their bedroom, but they haven't got computers and videos and sofa beds and all that. They say that I'm spoilt.

Q. A nice comfortable life. Do you use the computer much?

A. Sometimes. Sometimes I get an urge to go on the computer. I've had it about three years.

Q. Is it mainly for games?

A. Games, yes.

Q. Is there a word processor or something like that?

A. Just games.

Q. Is there anything that you would be interested to ask or to talk about it - Is there anything you feel you want to tell me that you haven't mentioned?

A. Not really.

Q. Or to ask about?

A. There is one thing that I'm curious of. About a couple of weeks ago my mate suspected that she was pregnant, like she had been going out someone for about a year now, a year and a half, and she suspected that she was pregnant by him but she couldn't tell him, like she wasn't sure and one night she came round to me and she said she had a miscarriage, and she described to me about what came out and I don't know, it seemed like a miscarriage to me, but if she did have a miscarriage could there be like another one up there?

Q. It's always possible I suppose if there had been twins, but it would be incredibly unlikely.

A. Oh right, but she has lost weight, there aren't any twins in the family, but she has lost half a stone in weight.

Q. That could be worry, couldn't it. Has she been to see a doctor?

A. No, she won't go. That's why she came to me.

Q. It would make sense to go to see the doctor because it could be she will need some treatment. Perhaps you should advise her to see her doctor. No. I am pretty sure if she actually has had a miscarriage there wouldn't. Do you think she did anything to have the miscarriage is that what you are worried about?

A. I don't think, she wouldn't have done it on purpose, but she mucks about and all that, you know, we all at one time muck about. And one night she, you know, you laugh so much you can't walk, she got her boyfriend to carry her and he chucked her over his shoulder like a fireman's lift so it could have been that that done it. I don't know.

Q. Well it could have been just, I mean it was sufficiently lodged there, it just came out naturally, sort of thing. But I think if she has been having difficulties like that she ought to do to the doctor. What is she worried about, is she too young or something?

A. She's seventeen, coming on eighteen.

Q. What's the problem going to the doctor?

A. She won't go that's why she came round to me. She don't get on with her doctor. He's a right sort of.....

Q. I think it would make sense though, perhaps you could try, maybe there's another doctor in the practice?

A. You can't change your doctor in the same surgery. You have to change to another surgery. Because she tried that.

Q. Oh, really, because it might make more sense to change or see a woman, something like that. But I think you ought to advise her to try and get some medical advice because there could be a problem. Thank you very much for talking to me.

END OF RECORDING.