

NVR50/NUR50 SS 22ND MAY 1989

INTERVIEWER: You're nineteen and you're in the first year of your nursing training?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm just coming to the end, yes.

INTERVIEWER: When did you decide that you wanted to be a nurse, you said to me earlier that you'd done art, was that 'A' level art?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I went to university.

INTERVIEWER: So tell me a bit about how you got here?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I went to Manchester University to do art and I went to the poly section, you know they have art there and I really liked doing art but I thought that, it sounds really coyish, but I wanted to do something to help people because I really love art and I'd like to go back to it but I felt like I wanted something more at the time and I'd just been in hospital for a long time and felt that I wanted to do something back.

INTERVIEWER: So did you do a year at the university?

INTERVIEWEE: I did yes, just less.

INTERVIEWER: Before that, did you go straight from school, straight from 'A' levels to doing that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So what is the Art Room, is it a joint poly university?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's like a foundation course.

INTERVIEWER: I don't know anything about that, although I work there I don't know about that really. So when you first went there to do art what did you think you were going to do afterwards, did you have any thoughts?

INTERVIEWEE: I wanted to be a professional designer, that sort of line, I didn't really want to do technical art, I wasn't sure, I just wanted to do it because I really enjoyed it but I thought it was a bit selfish, I can do that later in life and also with nursing you've got lots of opportunities, I wanted to go abroad and things like that. I thought it would be quite a good idea.

INTERVIEWER: So was it being in hospital yourself that made you think about nursing specifically?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Were you already, before that, beginning to think that you wanted to do something else?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. When I was doing my 'A' levels I wanted to do nursing but my mum, because I got an A in my 'A' level, she said that I should do art and she was really pushing me so I went and did it. It was good, I really enjoyed it but it's not really what I want to do.

INTERVIEWER: Had you thought for some time that you'd end up at university?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I was doing my 'A' levels and all my friends were going to university, my art teacher and English teacher were all saying I should go to university so I went to university because my mum was on at me, my school, my friends but when I got there I just decided that I didn't want to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Where are you from?

INTERVIEWEE: Originally from Ireland but I lived in Cumbria for a long time.

INTERVIEWER: Where abouts?

INTERVIEWEE: Just outside Kendal.

INTERVIEWER: I know that part of the world fairly well. So when you decided to do nursing, what point was that. Where did you apply and how did you end up here?

INTERVIEWEE: I applied in the middle because you can apply any time you want and I went for an interview in, I can't remember, it was early, not this year but the year before because I applied when I was still at University so I got an interview for this which was a later one so I had to wait around a bit.

INTERVIEWER: So you didn't go back to the course then?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: How did your mum feel about that, did you talk to her about it and not just do it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, well I sort of did it because I didn't want to be pushed into doing things I didn't want to do. She wasn't overjoyed but she said, well if it's what you want to do and she backed me up on it and she said that she thought it was a good profession, that it was worthwhile and she understood why I wanted to do it.

INTERVIEWER: So why here at Manchester?

INTERVIEWEE: Because I knew the area and I had friends at the university and in Bowdon so that's why I came here and I heard that this hospital had a good reputation so that's why I came.

INTERVIEWER: Are you enjoying it, how do you feel now about the decision, was it the right decision?

INTERVIEWEE: I feel good at the end of the day, I like the people, it's a good working team and the patients, you get some grotty patients, but most of them are really nice and really appreciate it and it's nice to be appreciated, just little things. I'm glad I did it but sometimes it's really hard, emotionally as well as physically, I get a bad back and things like that and dirty hands and stuff. I do things I really didn't envisage doing when I joined. I think if I'd known everything now I wouldn't have become a nurse.

INTERVIEWER: So really nitty gritty kinds of things, you just hadn't thought about that?

INTERVIEWEE: I'd thought about them but they hadn't really been on my mind that much, things like getting attacked by patients.

INTERVIEWER: That's happened to you has it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's happened a couple of times. I think it's because I'm tall, it seems a bit of a challenge to some of them.

INTERVIEWER: What are you doing at the moment, which ward are you on at the moment?

INTERVIEWEE: Geriatrics.

INTERVIEWER: Is that where you get attacked?

INTERVIEWEE: Well yes there's one patient that tends to go for people.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, I've done a bit of that in the past, I know what it's like. Tell me what sort of things are most important to you at the moment, is your family still the focus or is it friends or is it work.

INTERVIEWEE: My friends are the most important thing to me and my little sister. My career's really important to me, really important to me, now I don't know whether I'd go back to doing art now I really like it but my family's not really at the forefront.

INTERVIEWER: Is that recent that you've drifted away or has it been going on for a long time?

INTERVIEWEE: I drifted away from my father years ago, because my parents were divorced and I've not seen him for years but my mum, yes just recently.

INTERVIEWER: It's the point of change isn't it, you're making decisions and such like. Is there just your sister or are there more of you?

INTERVIEWEE: No, there's four or five of us and my stepdad so it's quite a big family but my little sister I feel I can take care of her.

INTERVIEWER: How old is she?

INTERVIEWEE: She's about fourteen now.

INTERVIEWER: I have a much younger sister so I know what you mean. So friends, what do you see yourself as integral for a friendship?

INTERVIEWEE: Just loyalty and a bit of respect. I just want to be somebody they can come and talk to if they've got any problems, that sort of thing and I can talk to them and you can go out and have a laugh and not get carried away, people I can talk to, it sounds a bit selfish I don't know whether it is, on the same level. Some people I can't talk to about things, like I like to talk about art and artists and stuff to my friends but some people you can't, I like to talk on a level.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find in terms of other student nurses there were people with lots of different interests and you'd have something in common with some of them but not all. So are your friends mostly here or outside of nursing?

INTERVIEWEE: My closest friends are here because of course I live with them and everything like HELEN. I've got some friends at home but I seem to have grown away from them since I went to university, well I left, but things are different now because I don't get the same holidays and just things like that I think are different. A lot of my friends are doing art or English literature and they're carrying on a lot and I'm stuck behind.

INTERVIEWER: Do you mean intellectually?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, like they're carrying on, they're doing different things and sometimes I feel a bit, not jealous but a bit sad that I left it all behind.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that you're not being intellectually stretched by nursing, is that what you're saying?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I mean we do homework on biology but that's all we do, biology. We did this care study, for a patient, and I did one on a patient where I concentrated on counselling rather than the A & P (?), I got a good mark for it but that's what I'm more interested in rather than A & P, the counselling, looking after people and that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see yourself heading in that sort of direction?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: But not both?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: It just seems to pull together the things you're interested in.

INTERVIEWEE: I thought of doing something like care for mentally ill patients.

INTERVIEWER: But you're going to get through this general qualification first?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I'm the sort of person that if I want to do something then I'll do it.

INTERVIEWER: If I said to you where do you see yourself going in the next five years what would you say, just hypothetically?

INTERVIEWEE: Things are going to change obviously, but at the moment I'd like to go to Australia, do my three years training, I'd like a surgical ward probably and then go to Australia and do nursing over there because I want to see a bit more than England.

INTERVIEWER: What's attractive about Australia, have you got any contacts there?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I've got some friends that live over there, they emigrated and just being in a warm country. I've got a friend who went nursing over there and she loves it, she says it's really great and the money aspect as well. The money really attracts me and I'd like to go over there and do a contract for a couple of years, come back and get a house and do what I want to in nursing. I wouldn't live over there, I'd come back to the NHS, I wouldn't work privately.

INTERVIEWER: That's a principled position that you've got but it would be nice not to be poor for a little while. Tell me a bit about school, I mean you'd get chance to put this on the questionnaire in more detail, whether you had any sex education in detail or any information about AIDS or anything like that.

INTERVIEWEE: I went to a Catholic school from when I was about twelve till eighteen and we didn't do anything there.

INTERVIEWER: Nothing at all?

INTERVIEWEE: No nothing at all. We did biology but it was avoided. We did about animals and all this but it was avoided, we never had any. Apparently some people have these classes where you talk about things like that and abortion, things like that but we never talked about anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: They're few and far between, most schools don't do very much yet.

INTERVIEWEE: We never heard anything but because I had older brothers and sisters I found out about that sort of thing. My mum told me all about it, she bought me a book about it when I was about nine.

INTERVIEWER: So did she sit you down and tell you?

INTERVIEWEE: Oh yes, she was very good about it and when I was very small she bought me a book about men and women, you know a little cardboard thing, so she was really great about it and my sisters were really good about it so I wasn't frightened about my period or sex or anything like that. It was my family that educated me not the school, I never heard anything about it in school.

INTERVIEWER: So did you get the feeling from your family that you were expected to grow up and take charge of your own life and make your own decisions about those sorts of things?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What about boyfriends?

INTERVIEWEE: What do you mean?

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any, have you got one, are you interested in them, not everybody is?

INTERVIEWEE: I went out with a boy from when I was thirteen to when I was seventeen, that was quite a long time.

INTERVIEWER: Was that someone at the same school?

INTERVIEWEE: No it wasn't, it was someone I went to a youth club with and we went out with each other for years and that broke off and then I had another boyfriend who wanted to get engaged so I backed away from that and now I'm going out with a boy I've been going out with for a long time so I don't tend to pick people up and only see them a couple of times.

INTERVIEWER: You've had three quite long relationships.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Have you been out with people for shorter lengths of time?

INTERVIEWEE: The shortest time I've ever been out with somebody for is two months, I don't think I'm particularly wild. I like to get to know a person before anything happens, see if they've got the same interests and build up a trust with them.

INTERVIEWER: So thirteen to seventeen, that is quite a long time. Did you see that as going on, did you expect it to go on?

INTERVIEWEE: Oh yes, at the time until the last year, he expected us to get married and all this.

INTERVIEWER: Was he the same age?

INTERVIEWEE: No he was a year older.

INTERVIEWER: And did that break up when you left?

INTERVIEWEE: It broke up about six months after I went to university.

INTERVIEWER: He left?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it's quite difficult to sustain relationships at a distance.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I was very bitter about it because I didn't know why it had happened but when I moved away I realised.

INTERVIEWER: It is difficult, you just get into so many different things. Yes, I've been through that one! Was that a sexual relationship?

INTERVIEWEE: Not at first, not for a long time but it went that way.

INTERVIEWER: They are quite personal questions but it's confidential.

INTERVIEWEE: That's okay, I don't mind.

INTERVIEWER: It's just a matter of what you feel you want to talk about really. So at what point would you say that it became sexual?

INTERVIEWEE: About sixteen and a half, something like that.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean by that? Was there a sexual element and then you went all the way so to speak?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Or it wasn't sexual at all until that point?

INTERVIEWEE: It wasn't. It was more holding hands and things like that and going out together. We used to share the same friends so it was going out in a group, these sort of things. And he stayed over but we never slept together. But

when I got to about sixteen it got a bit heavier because I was seeing him on and off and I wouldn't go out with anybody else... but when we were sixteen it got a lot heavier and then that's when it all started.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that happened then?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it was just that, well he was seventeen then and I was sixteen and a half so I think it was getting a little more serious and both growing up a bit from the age of thirteen.

INTERVIEWER: Did you sort of suddenly start finding him more attractive? Does that make sense to you?

INTERVIEWEE: No I didn't but it wasn't really me who wanted a sexual relationship.

INTERVIEWER: Right, I suppose that's what I am really asking, tell me a bit about how that happened and how you felt about it?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I had some trouble in the past and I was frightened.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean?

INTERVIEWEE: Well my dad. And I was frightened and upset and obviously he was getting older and wanted that sort of thing and I feel used now..... and so.

INTERVIEWER: That's because of how you feel about the past?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. And my boyfriend, I was frightened of losing him really. At the time now when I think back it wasn't worth having that.

INTERVIEWER: So he put you under quite a lot of pressure is that what you are saying, that you felt you were under pressure?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And what about when it actually happened how did you feel about that?

INTERVIEWEE: I felt awful. I remember crying and saying I just can't do it. It was the worst thing, it was awful.

INTERVIEWER: And did you realise then that a lot of young women feel like that or did you think it was just you?

INTERVIEWEE: I wasn't sure. I had a friend and she had sex and we talked about it and she said that she felt upset when she first had sex. I have never been a person to really bother what other people like, you know if they feel like, even when I was younger I never bothered about what people thought about me or that sort of thing, I have always been well it's how I feel.

INTERVIEWER: Yes sure, it's just that sometimes you think 'what's wrong with me'. Did it get better, did you feel better about it?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: And that went on for about six months or so after that point?

INTERVIEWEE: The relationship went on for quite a while.

INTERVIEWER: It's not that uncommon, it's quite depressing really. How did he react to you not really enjoying it?

INTERVIEWEE: He was embarrassed.

INTERVIEWER: Because he still thought..?

INTERVIEWEE: I think he felt that at the time all his friends were doing it so it was alright.

INTERVIEWER: And you just carried on feeling used basically?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So you split up after he went to university?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and I felt awful about having slept with him.

INTERVIEWER: What after you split up?

INTERVIEWEE: I just felt dirty in a way.

INTERVIEWER: Because it hadn't really developed into anything more?

INTERVIEWEE: No. I feel that a bit different but I felt that after I split up with my boyfriend I feel a bit dirty having had sex and everything and then him leaving me.

INTERVIEWER: He just moved on to the next then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So when did you next have a boyfriend, was there a gap there getting over it?

INTERVIEWEE: No. There wasn't, I went out with somebody on the rebound after that, who I had been in touch with for about three years before as a friend.

INTERVIEWER: Someone in the same sort of social circle?

INTERVIEWEE: No he lived in Manchester and I met him on holiday and we'd been writing for about three years and so I went out with him the same day on the rebound.

INTERVIEWER: You came to Manchester?

INTERVIEWEE: No he rang me up. Which was a big mistake.

INTERVIEWER: And was he the reason that you came to Manchester?

INTERVIEWEE: No not really. No my sister was here at university doing a

INTERVIEWER: So it was a mistake on the rebound, how long did that last?

INTERVIEWEE: Nine months.

INTERVIEWER: Did you sleep with him? How did you feel about that?

INTERVIEWEE: I just did it for him you know.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel because you had done it once that you would therefore do it again if you were going out someone, that having taken the plunge you didn't feel like that?

INTERVIEWEE: No. I had sex with this lad, I don't know why it was just falling into it.....

INTERVIEWER: Sorry this is really quite personal, did you have some kind of a sexual relationship before you actually had intercourse?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Nothing, no touching, nothing?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: So how would you explain that, were you trying to fend him off for that period?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes partly and also he was an Irish Catholic and quite a strong one and that was another reason and I wasn't too keen.....

INTERVIEWER: So what changed, he changed his mind obviously?

INTERVIEWEE: He decided that he wanted to marry me.

INTERVIEWER: So did he persuade you that?

INTERVIEWEE: It sounds as if I have been used as a victim here. No I wasn't an innocent victim, I went along with it because I had been going out with him for a

long time and I couldn't see us finishing in the future and it wasn't a fling. He wanted it and I wanted to make him happy.

INTERVIEWER: Perfectly understandable, but you didn't really enjoy it?

INTERVIEWEE: And I was on the rebound as well which had a lot to do with it and I just wanted someone to replace him in every way.

INTERVIEWER: To blot it out?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. But you can't do that.

INTERVIEWER: No you can't. Well you can try but it doesn't generally work. But you weren't very happy about it?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Better than the time before?

INTERVIEWEE: It was better yes because my past boyfriend saw it as a bit of an obligation you see, because we had been going out with each other for so long and he was so much older and his friends were doing this and that, and I think he felt it was a bit of an obligation you know. So I didn't feel like that because he had told me he loved me.

INTERVIEWER: And was he more interested in you and how you felt?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So did you get some pleasure out of it would you say from that point of view?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So then what happened with that relationship?

INTERVIEWEE: He was getting very pushy about getting married and getting engaged and for a time I went along with it. I didn't encourage him or anything but I just said, 'well we will talk about it another time'. This sort of thing to put it off and put it off. Then it got so he was coming round to the room every night and I would spend Sunday with his family.

INTERVIEWER: Was this after you had actually moved to Manchester?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and his family saw me as one of the family and saw me as TOM's future wife and I went along with that for a bit because I felt secure and I am the sort of person that needs a lot of security.

INTERVIEWER: And you had just left home and such like?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I wasn't so bad over that, it was just that I needed a family figure person, you know someone to take care of me and look after me, that sort of thing. So I went along with it for a long time because of that and I didn't realise what it was. In the end me and HELEN talked about it for a long time and I sorted myself out and thought, well, it's better to stop here and it was about three weeks before our engagement party.

INTERVIEWER: Right so at the eleventh hour. Was he older than you?

INTERVIEWEE: A year, no two years.

INTERVIEWER: What does he do?

INTERVIEWEE: He's an electrician.

INTERVIEWER: So when you said there was an engagement that you had just broken off, was that that or has there been some, because you said there were three?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So when was the second?

INTERVIEWEE: No there was three boyfriends that I had but he was...

INTERVIEWER: He was the final one?

INTERVIEWEE: No I am going out with someone now.

INTERVIEWER: Sorry I am getting my chronology mixed up. So when did you break that off, how long ago was that?

INTERVIEWEE: December, on New Year's Eve I think.

INTERVIEWER: Yes I tend to do dramatic things on New Year's Eve as well. Were you very upset, was it a difficult thing to do?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: It was the right decision then?

INTERVIEWEE: I just felt so happy and relieved and I told him I never wanted to see him again, and I was so happy and he was really angry. He was furious.

INTERVIEWER: Angry rather than upset?

INTERVIEWEE: And he was absolutely furious and so mad.

INTERVIEWER: But you haven't seen him?

INTERVIEWEE: I saw him once with my present boyfriend who I went out with before and he wasn't too pleased when he saw us.

INTERVIEWER: When you say you went out with him before what do you mean?

INTERVIEWEE: We split up for a little bit, the one I am going out with now.

INTERVIEWER: It's amazing isn't it how those sorts of obligations can build up in getting involved with somebody's family and you feel you can't get out of it?

INTERVIEWEE: When we split up that was one of the things. His dad was dead but his mum was alive and he had a very big family, [REMOVED FAMILY DETAILS] and some lived at home and some moved away and so I was on my own here so on my days off I would go and stay at his house and I was really friendly with his brothers and his sisters, and his mum was just like a second mum to me.

INTERVIEWER: So it was all of that that you were involved with not just him?

INTERVIEWEE: And she used to bring meals and send meals up and I used to go for my dinner and go to church with them. I was brought up a Catholic but I am not particularly bothered about things like that.

INTERVIEWER: But you got into that with them?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes because they went and just little things like that. And if they were going somewhere all together like a wedding or something I would go too because it was my future family and that was the hardest thing to leave that, not him.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any contact with them at all?

INTERVIEWEE: No. I saw his friends as well because he had a best friend and his girlfriend and I went around with her a lot so I never saw her.

INTERVIEWER: Because people quite often end up married for forty years on that sort of basis but probably unhappy for forty years.

INTERVIEWEE: And he started getting a bit violent and things and that was really what brought it to a head.

INTERVIEWER: Oh I see. What was that about?

INTERVIEWEE: Really silly arguments about say he wanted something to eat and I didn't want to make it and he would go mad.

INTERVIEWER: Not a good sign for the future is it. Warning bells start to ring. So the boyfriend that you are with now, that wasn't on the rebound?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: It was different but you had gone out with him briefly before?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you meet him?

INTERVIEWEE: I met at a club. He was the first person that I've met that I haven't known before. My first boyfriend I had known him for quite a long time before and TOM I had written to for three years. With DOUGLAS I met him at a club and went out with him the next day.

INTERVIEWER: How did that feel to be with

END OF FIRST TAPE

INTERVIEWER: So what was good about it, actually somebody who didn't have preconceptions about you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and I always seem to get boyfriends who get really heavy about things like ringing you up every night and coming round every other day, this sort of thing. I seem to get them.

INTERVIEWER: Very demanding?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes but this was fun.

INTERVIEWER: That's nice.

INTERVIEWEE: This was fun like going to art galleries and things. It was great.

INTERVIEWER: Is he a student?

INTERVIEWEE: No he works in [HOSPITAL], he's just like a porter. He emigrated to [EUROPEAN COUNTRY] and had a job before that and then he came back and that's all he could get.

INTERVIEWER: How old is he?

INTERVIEWEE: He's twenty-three. It's the best relationship I have ever had.

INTERVIEWER: Is sort of fun and being relaxed the way that you would sum it up.

INTERVIEWEE: No because he also cares but he doesn't pressurise me into doing anything I don't want to. If something is the matter he will ask me and make sure that I tell him and if he has any problems he will tell me, you know, he's fun and he's relaxed but he is also caring. He cares about what I want to do not just what he wants to do.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds good. How did you find him again after you split up, had you kept in touch?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I went to [EUROPEAN COUNTRY] and I rang him up and he was in [EUROPEAN COUNTRY] so I just left a message with his mother and he rang me back when he got back.

INTERVIEWER: So how long have you been seeing him?

INTERVIEWEE: Since February.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see a lot of him?

INTERVIEWEE: I see quite a bit of him yes. I see him about three times a week on average.

INTERVIEWER: But you see your friends as well?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And are you sexually involved with him?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did that happen quite quickly?

INTERVIEWEE: No it didn't.

INTERVIEWER: He wasn't pushing you?

INTERVIEWEE: No he hadn't sex before any way so he was frightened. He didn't know.... because I don't like people who brag and all that..

INTERVIEWER: Did that make you feel that you were in a stronger position?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and also I was worried about not getting anything, venereal diseases or anything like that, so that was another good reason.

INTERVIEWER: It was obvious he wasn't a risk in that sense?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Had you felt that there was a risk in the other sexual relationships?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Presumably the one that you were in since thirteen he had not been involved with anybody before and what about the other?

INTERVIEWEE: No he hadn't either.

INTERVIEWER: Is that something you had thought about quite a lot in terms of the future?

INTERVIEWEE: I hadn't thought about it too much before I started nursing, but when I started nursing.

INTERVIEWER: What set you off, what sort of things did you find out?

INTERVIEWEE: Just people with syphilis and things like that who are mad.

INTERVIEWER: So you have actually come across that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes people who are in hospital through venereal diseases, this sort of thing. I don't know, I suppose I am more aware of that sort of thing as well.

INTERVIEWER: What about AIDS specifically?

INTERVIEWEE: When AIDS came out I had a freak out about it. I don't think I know enough about it seeing as I am a nurse.

INTERVIEWER: Have you been told about it?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you expect to be, do you think you should be?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I do. It's really disgusting.

INTERVIEWER: Is it the sort of thing that patients might ask your advice about?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes people have asked about it and I couldn't say because I didn't know. I said, 'I will get you some leaflets for you'.

INTERVIEWER: Where would you set about finding out what people wanted to know?

INTERVIEWEE: I'd probably go to a place where you could get leaflets about it.

INTERVIEWER: Health Education?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes it's the group pharmacy in the hospital, I would get some of those and if I was really worried about it then I could go to a well woman clinic up the road and ask them about it.

INTERVIEWER:

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So you know where to go if you want information on it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What about contraception, what have you done or not done?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm on the pill, I've always been on the pill since I was fourteen because I had bad periods and I used to pass out and things like that, so my mum put me on the pill. I tried coming off it recently and I wasn't very well because I heard it was bad for you taking it all the time but I don't know what to do at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: So your periods were still very bad when you came off it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes they were worse. I couldn't remember how bad they had been so I just thought I would be alright now but it was awful I had to stay in bed.

INTERVIEWER: The thing is though that you might find out more about that but they might be worse for a few months and then be alright again, it might be worth trying to put up with it for six months?

INTERVIEWEE: I went to the doctors and he said that he didn't know about it and that I would have to go to the well woman clinic.

INTERVIEWER: Yes I would do that because it takes six months to settle down again. It's just putting up with it in the process, especially when you have got a heavy job to do.

INTERVIEWEE: Passing out at work isn't exactly good.

INTERVIEWER: So you have never really thought about contraception?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: But you were on it for different reasons before you needed to?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes when I had sex with my last boyfriend I didn't know his sexual background at first because he was very shy about it. Obviously he had been a virgin and he didn't want to tell me because he thought I would laugh and things so he wouldn't tell me about it so I made him use a condom, because I said, 'Well if you are not going to tell me about it then I want you to use a condom'.

INTERVIEWER: Did you find that difficult to do?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes really difficult.

INTERVIEWER: How did you manage it, did you talk about it before you got into the situation?

INTERVIEWEE: I started asking questions like 'wouldn't it be awful if you got VD and things like that'.

INTERVIEWER: After you had already decided you were going to sleep together?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I had thought about it for a long time before because I had been out with him before for quite a few weeks and so I had given it a lot of thought.

INTERVIEWER: Did he say yes, he would use a condom?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I couldn't ask him for ages I was so embarrassed and then when I said, 'could you use a condom', he laughed because he thought I was going to ask him something really awful. And he said, why didn't you say.

INTERVIEWER: So do you think having gone through that you could do that again?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. If I was going to have another relationship I would never go to bed with somebody who I didn't know their past sexual experiences, I would never do that now, no-way.

INTERVIEWER: And this relationship you are in now, if you came off the pill what would you do?

INTERVIEWEE: We would probably use a condom?

INTERVIEWER: Do you think you would be quite happy with that, have you talked about it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes we have talked about it quite a lot. He doesn't like the idea of me being on the pill because of the thing about breast cancer and cervical cancer, and I smoke.

INTERVIEWER: So it's something you talk about. Is sex something that you feel better about now or is it something that you still see as not being a very positive part of your life?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't really enjoy it at all.

INTERVIEWER: Does he know you don't really enjoy it?

INTERVIEWEE: I think he thinks I am not bothered about it because I wouldn't like to deprive him. I think a lot about him and I am not repulsed by sex, I don't think, oh God. I will have sex but I don't think 'oh, brilliant' when it's finished and really great. I would rather get up and make a cup of tea or something.

INTERVIEWER: Is that because you are not getting as much pleasure as he is sort of thing?

INTERVIEWEE: I suppose that's got something to do with it yes.

INTERVIEWER: To be blunt, do you have orgasms?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that's an issue?

INTERVIEWEE: From what I have heard and read women don't have orgasms a lot, like every time and things like that so I would like to have an orgasms I suppose, but if I don't it doesn't bother me.

INTERVIEWER: Does he expect you to?

INTERVIEWEE: No he will try and do his best for me but he doesn't expect anything from me.

INTERVIEWER: It's a complicated business. Are there people that you talk to about this sort of thing, do you talk to women friends?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. HELEN and my friend across the way.

INTERVIEWER: So you are building up a picture that sex is quite complicated for lots of women?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I thought quite a lot of people really enjoyed it and everything but they don't. I have talked to about five or six people about sex, you know discussions late on at night and after you have had a meal or something. And they just don't enjoy sex and it seems amazing to me.

INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that was? Suddenly it's everywhere isn't it, you know we are all supposed to ?

INTERVIEWEE: It just seems to me that you are there for men and I just can't believe it. I think that a lot of girls feel as though they are there just for the men's satisfaction, they don't feel as though they are being fulfilled in any way. They are just there to excite the men.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel there should be more to it than that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I do.

INTERVIEWER: Do you hope that you might actually find something more?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think my problems are in that, I think it's what has happened in the past really. I would like to enjoy sex.

INTERVIEWER: Some people through the past, is that something that you are actually trying to do?

INTERVIEWEE: I was going to go to this woman in town, like a psychiatrist but not, but I chickened out of that.

INTERVIEWER: Why did you do that?

INTERVIEWEE: It sounds like like self-pity and I hate that in people. I don't know it seems as though I should get over it. I know it's a silly attitude being a nurse but I feel my mum doesn't know and I feel I should talk to my mum but I wouldn't want to hurt her.

INTERVIEWER: So you feel it's difficult to talk to somebody else?

INTERVIEWEE: Another reason why I wouldn't go is that I feel I could break down as well.

INTERVIEWER: Would you be ashamed of it?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I suppose, well I wouldn't be ashamed it's just that if I have to cry I cry when I am on my own. I feel that when patients break down at work I put my arms around them and everything but I wouldn't want people to do that to me. I just want them to keep a bit of distance away from me.

INTERVIEWER: That's precisely what a counsellor would do, keep her distance.

INTERVIEWEE: I don't want anybody's arms around me.

INTERVIEWER: That would be very, very unlikely. Maybe we could come back to that. Can I just ask you a couple of more things. This relationship you are in at the moment, do you see it continuing or will you carry on as long as it's fun and see where you get to?

INTERVIEWEE: I take it day by day really. I don't plan for the future. I had enough trouble with my last relationship and I don't want to get married. My ideal is I wouldn't want to get married until I was thirty. I would like to live my life first and do things.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like marriage is the end of your life?

INTERVIEWEE: No but I think it should be a new beginning and I think you should have a new beginning when you have grown a bit more in yourself and become more of an individual. I wanted to do things like go to Australia and do things like that.

INTERVIEWER: Are children on the agenda?

INTERVIEWEE: Until a little while ago I was really wild about children but now I think they are nicer if Perhaps in my thirties I will change my mind but I

come from a big family and it's a big pressure to get married and have children and these sort of things and I don't want to do that. I don't see myself as doing that until I am in my thirties. I think there is a special time for children when you have grown up yourself.

INTERVIEWER: And when it's what you want to do.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And if that doesn't happen, it doesn't happen.

INTERVIEWEE: I hate this thing that women should have children, if they don't have children they are either infertile or they are hard, cold people. I think that's really stupid, I hate that. You see magazines that say you are selfish. OK if you are selfish why shouldn't you be selfish, you only get one life and it's yours.

INTERVIEWER: I have just been involved with an interview a few weeks ago about choosing not to have children and that's why I did it really, not because I particularly want to talk to everybody about it because I get so sick of hearing all the time that you are selfish, women who don't have any love in their lives, that kind of thing. I don't see myself like that at all.

INTERVIEWEE: Just think from the pain of birth to the arguments of teenage years, I just don't fancy it.

INTERVIEWER: When you have seen a lot of that..

INTERVIEWEE: My sisters have got big families and me and my little sister are different.

INTERVIEWER: I take it your other sisters are quite a bit older?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. It doesn't worry me at all.

END OF INTERVIEW