

**LJH21 16.6.1989**

**Angela**

A: ... school committee, and then I did - and then I went to school governors meeting...you know when the government said that schools could opt out and the ILEA was no longer the (?) service and schools could go to a local authority, and Camden came down and put forward their proposals for what they wanted for education in this borough, and they thought, well, it would be nice if we had someone from the sixth form.

Q: Yeah.

A: A committee just representing the sixth form and listening to what was going on and I went. I asked some questions, and they said to me oh, would you like to... so I...

Q: Right... involved. Did you fill in the questionnaire? Oh, great. Terrific... Good. I might double up on some of the questions, what you - what you said...

A: ... I've got two stepsisters and a stepbrother who I don't really see, they live quite - across the other side of London, I don't really see them, but it's just more my brother.

Q: Right.

A: The question that you asked about education, mostly things I... at home or -

Q: The sex education?

A: Yeah, 'cos my mum thought that it was very important that we learn home values first before we learn them at school, so if there's anything that we learn at school we go home and ask her and she'll explain for us, which I think is a good idea, myself.

Q: And that's general about everything, is it?

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Q: What did you think about the sex education in particular at school?

A: Oh, well, actually we did not have sex educational classes. We did biology and we did - well, science, and biology was part of science, and then we had RS, and in the biology classes, that was in the third year, they just went through functions, just the basic functions, the bare functions, and they didn't talk - they didn't talk about the pill to us at all or anything like that. I knew about that from - obviously from the media and from my mum. And then in the fourth and fifth year when I did biology they went through just the functions, it was very scientific, it wasn't anything to do with your attitudes to sex or anything, but in the fourth year and fifth year Religious Studies we went through different... beliefs, that was our actual thing for the fourth and fifth year, and we had really big massive discussions about everything and... RE teacher, 'cos I went to a C of E school, and he was the lay chaplain as well, so we were saying to him, well why can't we have sex before marriage, what's so wrong about that? - and sort of had these big topical discussions, and of course there were occasions of different religions, there were Greeks, there were English, you know, it was really a good mix in the class, so everyone had their own beliefs from home and we all discussed that. So that's where I sort of learnt sex education basically.

Q: Yeah. That must be quite interesting hearing the different -

A: It was. And I think really for a church school - people tend to think that you just - you get preached at. Well MR. GREEN wasn't like that at all, he was very - he was very open to discussion and he was saying this, and I believe this, why do you believe what you believe? And people would say - it's good because it helps you not to just accept everything, and question things, and you ask questions, which is good.

Q: Mm, yeah, definitely. So - yeah. You say here that you're Christian but you –

A: Well, I don't say - call myself a Christian 'cos it's got so many different angles to it that - people just sort of say well, you're a Christian, you must be this and that, but I believe in God.

Q: And do you think that it does affect your - that that affects the way that you run your life, or... just principles?

A: Yeah, I suppose to an extent, to an extent, and not a hundred per cent though. I - I run my life according to how my family - I suppose I follow my family's values, and - and I suppose I look at things and I work out for myself how I... And I don't just sort of say, well look, because I'm a Christian I must do this or I must do that.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: ... so no.

Q: So you make your own judgements about these things.

A: Yeah.

Q: I just wondered because some people - I mean I've spoken to quite a few people of different religions, some of which... have been quite - had quite strong -

A: Rigid.

Q: Yeah, views about sexual behaviour, and they're quite varied in their response, I mean they're likely to make their own decisions. They use that as a sort of reference point rather than -

A: Right.

Q: - as a sort of...

A: I think you can't just stick to a dogma or a belief, you - the world changes so much that you have to - you have to fit in, you can't just be standing out from it and there it is in front of you, you've got to - you've got to live in it, it's around you so you have to adapt and you have to - not - not give up what you believe, but you have to really assess things all the time,... according to changes you have to reassess things.

Q: The other thing - I mean one of the things we're very interested in, apart from finding out what your sex education at school was like, is relationships. I've been asking a few people what is the most important thing about relationships for them.

A: Oh, yeah. I think it's - I think it's getting to know other people, it doesn't matter which sex they are, it's getting to know other people, and it helps you 'cos you - everyone's different, we're all different personalities and if you - I mean you can't just stick around with the same bunch of people all the time, you have to actually get to know people personally so that you learn how to deal with people on a personal basis. And if you have a close friend, be it male or female, it just helps you to develop yourself as well because them being close to you, they can tell you things about yourself that you didn't see, and you can tell them things, and you help each other because you're so close. And - well the friend that I - I've got two friends that are very close and they're both older than me. I mean I usually prefer older people for friends for some reason, I just do, and I mean both of them are very helpful to me, very helpful, and I'm very close to them. Relationships, I tend not to sort of rush into things, I prefer to get to know people as a friend first before I decide to sort of go into a relationship because I get very wary, I've seen too many people just come crashing to the bottom from just sort of rushing into things, one-night stands, and so I wouldn't do it, I'm just really scared of things like that.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Have you had a ...?

A: No.

Q: You haven't had many...?

A: Well, no, not really. I'm nineteen and I haven't had sex. Well, 'cos I just don't want - it's not for me. I don't really - you know, I think, well I'm much younger. When I'm more mature than I am now and I can sort myself out, when I don't have to be under the wings of my parents or anyone else, and I can think for myself and so I don't have to, every time I'm in a mess, have to depend on my parents. I think they need to have a life of their own and you can't just be, you know, at the age of nineteen, you know, sort of crying and weeping on them all the time, they've got to, you know - they've got to let you go first, and when I've left and I can sort myself out, then I think I'm more sort of mature enough... not until then. I think I can do without it.

Q: Yeah. One of the other things we're interested in - I mean you sound as if you've made very strong decisions about how... your life, or sexual life; one of the other things - to what extent people feel they will be able to have control over what happens in a sexual relationship. How do you feel about that?

A: The thing is, you see, I don't think... young to actually get involved -

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: - whereas a friend of mine, PETER, said... what you've never had, you can't miss. And I mean how do you know how it feels and all the emotions that are involved, until you actually do get that involved? And you have to take things day by day, I think, when you get yourself involved in a new situation. And you see you can't just plan, it's not - it's not something that you can plan. I don't know, I just - I just don't think it's something that you can just sort of say, well look, this is gonna happen and that's gonna happen, because you don't know, you really don't know, things can change so much.

Q: That's right, yeah. But do you feel - when you talk you say you don't know what's gonna happen, you have all these emotions and feelings which are likely to influence what you do -

A: Yeah.

Q: - you expect it to be like that, I mean you expect that if you get into a close sexual relationship with somebody, there will be a lot of things that will influence -

A: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

Q: - that you can't make a decision. Like I mean we're asking young people if they feel they would be able to suggest the use of a condom or something in a sexual encounter.

A: Yeah, I think - I think I would for safety's sake. Firstly I don't know - I just - I really feel very - I get very annoyed when I see young girls pregnant and they don't know - like they either don't know who the father is or they don't want to admit who the father is, or the father's not there to support them because - I think that children are really - I mean I'm not - I don't - it's not that I don't want children or I don't like children, I do like children very much, but I feel that children need to be given a chance in life and I believe that it's really sad for a mother to have to bring up a child on her own. My mother had to bring me up from the age of four to whenever she got married again, on her own. And it had an effect on me, I will not deny that. And I feel that you need a balanced relationship with your father and your mother, you can't have that when you just - when the - when the man isn't with you or when the woman isn't with you, and you're growing up... it must have some effect. So I think I would definitely use some contraception, but personally for me I don't think I can use the pill, because on my father's side I think they get very

high blood pressure when they use it, and my mother's side they tend to get -... not cervical cancer, but it triggers off things. I can't think what it is. It's - anyway, it's to do with women anyway, and so I think it would be unsafe for me to just try - use it, unless I used a very weak form of it and then you have to top it up with something else anyway.

Q: Mm, yeah... use a condom. But it's mainly about pregnancy that your fears are -

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: You - you don't have very much contact with your father at all?

A: I see my father once in a while but we argued a long time ago and I haven't seen him since. He phoned up and said he was coming around to see us and I haven't seen him. He didn't come so, you know -... have got a stepfather, you know, so -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: ... On the question about AIDS, I don't think it's - I don't think it's that - I think it's pretty difficult to catch AIDS. I don't think it's that easy as everyone's making out. And I think, working in NAME OF HOSPITAL in the [NAME OF DEPARTMENT] where you are liable, you can pick it up - if it was as easy as everyone said, knowing... working in that department, because I mean they - they deal with - every Saturday I always get somebody that gets - some people, they've either got hepatitis or they've got AIDS or they're likely to have AIDS or something, and I haven't picked up anything, or at least I don't know I have, and I'm not afraid. I don't - I don't - if I had a friend or a boyfriend that I thought, or I knew had AIDS, I would be - I'd stay with them to the end, I don't think it's - I wouldn't just reject them, I don't think it's fair. It's - it's something that's a virus, and, well people have cholera, they have dysentery, they have all sorts of nasty things, and their family stuck by them, their friends stuck by them, so I wouldn't, you know -

Q: How did you avoid - I mean how is it - is it transmitted, you say it's difficult to transmit, but how is it - how do you think you catch it?

A: It's through blood, through semen; very unlikely but there's a very slim chance of through saliva, and through body water issue you can catch it. But I think - I'm not sure if you can catch - catch AIDS from someone by having sex with them once. I'm not sure.

Q: Well it would rather depend, I mean, what - I mean what happened in the sexual encounter, wouldn't it?

A: Well, yes, I'm talking about sex without any -

Q: - any protection -

A: - any protection, I'm not sure if you can actually catch it once. I think catching it through blood to blood contact is much higher, you get a much higher risk. They have - there has been - I don't know if it's rumours or if it's actually true, of nurses catching it because they've been - like blood to blood contact with patients, this is long before they actually knew this thing existed or anything. I think - I think that the blood side is much - much easier, for you to catch it. But I mean I've been working with - well not actually holding and handling blood so much, but I've been working with lab firms that have got blood all over them and I haven't - and I haven't got anything on my hands really to protect me. I haven't got AIDS.

Q: But I think you'd have to have - I mean, you'd have to have cuts on your hands for it to get into your -

A: Yes. But, no, but then, the cuts are so small and how much of that blood is actually gonna get into yours? You'd have - I think you'd have to have a pretty open cut, and it

have - it have to be bleeding, and that person have a pretty open cut... bleeding for that - for it to mingle enough, I think.

Q: I think it does have to be - yeah, I mean, if dried blood on a...

A: Well, that's right.

Q: ... fresh blood on a person.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: It would be dangerous. I think that's how possibly some of those nurses might - might have got it, they might have had a small cut on their own hand or something.

A: Right, yeah.

Q: Something like that. Where did you first hear about AIDS, or when were you first aware of hearing about it?

A: Oh. I was in the - was I in the doctor's surgery? I was in the doctor's surgery and - I don't know what it was for, well I think it was an earache or something, a very long time ago, and they had this picture of this man and his hair was completely shaved. It was on the front of the magazine, I can't remember what it is, actually - no, it was Plain Truth magazine, and it was in - Plain Truth actually comes from America - and they were talking about AIDS in San Francisco. And I didn't know what AIDS was. And it was a long time ago, it was long before it'd even started to appear in any real way in this country, and they were talking about people demonstrating against homosexuals and saying that, you know, that they're going to cause an epidemic in San Francisco, and they've all got it. And of course this magazine was focusing on that. And what was really - what really caught me about the picture on the front of the magazine especially, was the fact that the doctor that was treating him was dressed up in something akin to a space suit.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that's where I actually - that's where I actually learnt about it. I didn't even - I didn't even know what the actual letters stood for but I knew AIDS was some disease that homosexuals had, and you should stay away from homosexuals, and you should be very careful that any man that you slept with wasn't homosexual, because you're very likely to have AIDS. That's what I picked up from that magazine.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that was - goodness, I don't know. When did it - I think - when did it start -

Q: It was about 1981 or something like that, that it started to be recognised in the States.

A: Well, it could have been about '82, '83 possibly, when I read that magazine.

Q: Yeah.

A: So that was - and then it was about '85, '86, '87 that it's really been a big thing over here. So that was a good time before -

Q: Yeah. And how has that influenced the way - I mean you obviously - did you reject that interpretation at the time?

A: No, because I didn't know anything else, I had nothing to counter it, I just took it for -

Q: ... accepted it -

A: - and I was much younger then as well.

Q: Yeah.

A: I just accepted it. And what was - I think what was sad about it was that I had a friend at school who was gay, and at the time he didn't want to admit that he was gay, and I

was - 'cos I used to be a librarian and I used to - and he was also a librarian and he - he fancied this boy who was also another librarian, and he was snubbing him all the time, and he was getting very hurt about this. And I was the only person who used to talk to him, and he would cry about it and say, you know, he'd say, "I don't fancy NICHOLAS at all, no, I just wanna be a very good friend of him, and we were best friends for a long time and why all of a sudden he's just being like this". And I really... all the time. And then, not long after reading this thing, he came into school with this girl who was - who was lesbian, she was actually bisexual. She'd made up her mind that she was bisexual and he'd made up his mind that he was gay, and the two of them got together and they were rather good friends. And she was a punk and she used to have this hair - colour in her hair, people used to say, you know, look, you could turn her upside down and paint yellow lines in the road with her, it was this colour. And she - and to be in a church school with - it was - it was - I think it was much more Christian-orientated in those days; and to be in a church school with somebody who was so quiet - she used to have long hair, long plaits down her back - and suddenly when she gets into the sixth form, she just suddenly lets loose, and she's got all these chains and all these things around her arms, and these belts, studded belts, and she's got this yellow hair. And this used to be attractive to me, I used to say, "oh isn't this wonderful!", you know, and I used to - I was very curious about it all. But she used to have these colours in her hair and - and for somebody then to turn round and say, on top of that, you know, well, I'm bisexual and I'm proud of it, and then her - and then she'd drag somebody else in and say, well listen, listen (name), you know what the problem is, and why not admit it that you're gay and be proud of it, and he came along with this as well. It was some - you were utterly rejected, you'd be utterly rejected in that school at that particular time, and no one would talk to him, and he was really taken the piss out of so much. And she actually left school but he was in the sixth form so he had to suffer this for a year. And I was so afraid of him I wouldn't go next to him for a while, you know. And then, I don't know, about two, three years later I saw him again and we were talking, and we're really good friends now. And very good friends now. So - I mean of course it's out the window, that theory.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I suppose my religion hasn't really - hasn't altered the way I... I do - I do personally disagree with homosexual relationships, I just - I just think that it's biologically wrong, myself, personally, but it doesn't mean to say that I would just - I want them all shot, or I want them or, you know, totally away from me or something. I'd - I'd like to be friends with them, they're ordinary people. Their lifestyle might disagree with mine but at the same time I - I mean I don't think there's anything wrong with me being friends with them. And I know some people say, well, you know, you're living in a left-wing borough - it's [NORTH LONDON BOROUGH], and they've got these - this gay rights and all that; and I disagree with that in a sense that I disagree with people saying, well there should be - you should have a special unit for black people, you should have a special unit for gay people, you should have a special unit for handicapped people. Society shouldn't be like that. We're all ordinary people and why should people have special rights because of the colour of their skin or their sexual orientations? Everyone should just be accepted and say, ah, and I think that, you know, if you come in, you want a job, your sex, your preferences, have nothing to do with that job. As long as you can do it that's fine, that's what qualifies you for it, you don't need to have - you don't need to be

screened for it. And you know where they ask on forms, what ethnic minority are you, do you have a sexual preference - that shouldn't be on forms in the first place, it should be your qualifications, what you can do, your past experience, and that's it, you should be judged from that. And not from the colour of your skin or anything else. So I disagree with them for that reason.

Q: ... that particular view. But sometimes if they're doing sort of ethnic monitoring, they might be trying to balance things up, I mean they might be trying to do positive discrimination.

A: But how - how are they - you don't - you don't know the results of what they find. You can know about it nationally when they - when they do talk about it on the news, but how do they know about [NORTH LONDON BOROUGH], what [NORTH LONDON BOROUGH] actually finds? And seriously, I mean, especially for gay people, their life - their sexual life is private, it's between them and their partner or their partners. Why should they have to write down on a piece of paper that they are gay? It's their life. It's - you're discriminating against them, the mere fact that you're asking them for their sexual preference or for the colour of their skin or anything, or that they're handicapped, you are being racist or biased or prejudiced immediately.

Q: Or sexist. Or whatever it is.

A: Yeah. You're being prejudiced immediately and I think it's wrong. I really do think it's wrong. I think they should just say - I think what they should do is say, well, listen, it doesn't matter what someone's colour of their skin, it doesn't matter if they're handicapped, you can make sure that there are ways of them getting to work, that the passages are wide enough that they can get through and so on. And, you know,... even worse, I mean there's nothing - it doesn't stop them functioning properly, they can hold a pen, they can write, they can type, they can do what they want, you know. That's what I think.

Q: Mm, yeah. Well, I mean I agree with you that everybody - that people should be judged like that; I suppose the - the reason why these sorts of attempts are made is because people aren't judged as equals...

A: How do you - how can you spot a gay man or gay woman?

Q: Well, like your friends who were making a very strong statement about it...

A: That's - that's only because - that's only because they knew that he was very close to MARK, they just didn't like the way he was close to MARK, I mean if they didn't then they (?) spread it. And then us, of course after he decided he was gay he thought - he thought he would flaunt it and so he would - he would walk in a particular way, just to flaunt it basically, to get over this - this - this inferiority complex he had, he thought, well I'm gonna flaunt it and make myself really used to it. But - I mean, how can you spot a gay man?

Q: Well, you can't can you...

A: Well, there you are! It's nothing to - it's really stupid, I mean - it annoys me, it annoys me that a borough has to spend any money at all on that... They can have their switchboards, I think that's important for them, they do need it because society is against them and they need to have some sort of support, but to - to monitor them as to how they get into jobs, you're discriminating against them already, and certain people who don't like them will use that as a way of discriminating against them, I think.

Q: Well I think that is the danger, the danger of it that that sort of information can be used positively or negatively.

A: Yeah, well you've got to file and store and computerise... you really don't know what it is. You don't know how that can be used in the future.

Q: That's right. A change of local...

A: That's right.

Q: Yeah. No, I think these are very sensitive - all these are very sensitive sorts of issues. But on - on the - back to the AIDS issue, you - so you sort of - you rejected that particular, those earlier messages about -

A: Yeah. Yeah.

Q: Do you think that it affects the young people that you know? I mean you say you mix mainly with old... people, but do you think, say, people at school or people in your wider friendships are affected by it?

A: I think people - people that I've met are fairly liberal, fairly liberal. But of course it needs to be tested, because you don't know if they know anyone that's gay, and they might - you know, of course people always go "no... I think he is, I think she is", or something, but the test - really, it needs to be tested first. If they've reached a situation where they're quite close to somebody and they told them that they're gay, how would they react? That's the way to test them, and that hasn't been tested as far as I'm concerned. I don't know. So I can only say from the attitude that I see that I think they're liberal but I mean I really don't know... when the time comes.

Q: Yeah, right, right. What about AIDS, do you think that's influencing... change in the way that they think about anything, I mean not just about gays, but about their own sex life or -

A: Well I can say it's - it's making people certainly much more aware. If you picked up a book about going to university a long time ago, it would either have not mentioned the sex life of university students or else it would have - it wouldn't have discouraged people from having many partners. And you go into a library now, and in a book on "University - How to Survive it", they will definitely say to you, well, now that AIDS is blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, we would advise, or, don't think that you're going to have that many partners, it's not like that, see? So it has - definitely must have affected young people's attitudes, and a long time ago, I'd say in the second year, that's when I'm about fourteen, thirteen, fourteen? - there would be people who'd go to parties and there'd be just one-night stands, left, right and centre, and I'm sure now everyone's gonna be rather careful.

Q: Yeah.

A: Nobody wants to get AIDS, nobody knows how it's been - how it's gonna be cured. But in a - it has done some good because, on Channel 4 the other night, what's-his-name, Julian (?) Cook - this thing that they have this star test or something, it's before Channel 4 News, and he was - he quite unashamedly stated the fact that he had VD at fourteen, and that people shouldn't be ashamed of it and whatever. And so it has helped people to sort of come out and say, well look, it's out in the open now, it's on the table, let's discuss it. So it has had a positive effect and it's got negative sides.

Q: Mm. Did you - have you seen many of the government campaigns or stuff that's been on television?

A: It's really yucky. It's more - it's aimed at drug-users though, it's aimed at drug-users, and I have actually done a drugs project which I got a prize for, and that was when I

was in the fourth year, fifth year, and I - after doing that project - that involved police, social workers, leaflets, booklets, it involved so much that I positively decided that any - every - anyone would be crass to even try using any form of drugs. And I feel that even marijuana to an extent, because it - it makes you curious to go on to something else. You see, because it's illegal, if the government made marijuana legal, you could go and buy it in the shop, and it wouldn't make you - you know when you're doing something that you know is wrong, and - and there's a definite law against it, you get tempted to find out if you can get away with the next thing. And I think if the government made it legal it wouldn't have the same effect, but the fact that it's illegal and you have to do it quietly or something, there's always this temptation to think, I wonder what the next thing will be like, I won't get caught, I'll just try it once, and some people are gullible and they would do it. So for that reason I'm against it, I think either the government legalises it or else, you know, I personally wouldn't take it.

Q: Do many of your friends take it?

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you tell them - do you tell them what you think about it?

A: Oh, they all know, "oh, ANGELA doesn't like that". And not only that, I don't like smoking, like I can't stand it and after a while, after a while of being in a room full of smoke it's just gonna affect me really badly, and my eyes will itch and I'll, you know, it's horrible, I can't stand it, it burns my nose, my throat. I don't like smoking generally, so I mean that's just another form of smoking that I don't like.

Q: Yeah.

A: No, I don't like it.

Q: What about - I mean, that's coming onto the idea of doing things which are a bit risky. What about other areas of your life, do you do anything that you think might be a bit risky?

A: Give me an example.

Q: I don't know any, usually I say to people, well some people think smoking and drinking is risky. But you don't smoke. Do you drink?

A: I drink, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I don't - I don't drink wine, I drink strong stuff.

Q: Yeah.

A: But - I don't know, I... have to admit - I suppose it's - it sounds really like, you know, you're a killjoy, but I've never been drunk. And I drink an awful lot. But I think it's because I've been gradually, just sort of gradually drinking more and more over a long period of time that just my system has become more immune, and I get to a point where if I feel a bit woozy I don't - I just stop, 'cos I don't enjoy it any more. But I've never been drunk. I suppose... Saturday 'cos everyone will just be there, everyone will be at a friend's house and they'll be all celebrating the end of their exams and... what will be happening then. As long as - as long as I can get home - I'll tell you, one day we were on the heath and we were all drinking, and we were all drinking various things, and I had sunstroke, and honestly - and - and - and the drink was warm as well, which just makes it worse, and I thought - I thought, oh no, how am I gonna get out of this park and get up to Archway and get home? Oh, no. And as soon as I got to the - I thought, I must be drunk now, I definitely must be, because I don't know how to get home, and as

soon as I came out of Hampstead Heath and stood by the zebra crossing and saw this massive lorry just zooming past, that just sobered me up altogether, I just managed to get home. But no, I don't know, risky - I think - I think going into relationships where you're not sure what you want is risky because you can end up doing things that you wish you never did, or wish you did do things and you didn't do them.

Q: Do you feel that you've done that at all?

A: Yeah, I think, yeah, going into a relationship; especially one of them, I didn't go into it the right way, and we just broke up, and we just wouldn't talk to each other for a long time. I talk to him now but we wouldn't talk to each other for a long time. And I suppose - yeah, the wrong attitude on both sides.

Q: How do you mean?

A: Involving friends. Your friends know everything that's happened. That's one of the reasons why I wouldn't - I would not go out with someone inside school. And since you hang around with people inside school quite a lot, and if you don't have a lot of people outside school that you hang around with, you don't tend to get into relationships that quickly; because people tend to go out with people inside school. And I - and that's happened to me, and never again, because I - I just would not let my friends know anything about my relationships, they can really spoil things and some girls can be very bitchy. That's happened to me, and that's one risky thing that I did and I will never do it again -

Q: - do it again.

A: Ever. No. No. It's just - it's just the way people are.

Q: Yeah. Did you - you came to this school just for the sixth form?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you'd been to this other school?

A: Mm.

Q: And that was a single sex school, the other one, was it?

A: No, I - I - I don't know why I put single sex, no. It's NAME OF SCHOOL, it's mixed.

Q: I don't know whether you did - yeah, mixed you put, single you crossed out, mixed. Right.

A: I'm thinking of myself, single? - no, I'm in a mixed school. No. It's - that school was where I had all the problems and... at that school, I'm so glad I left it because - well, there were some very unpleasant characters in that school.

Q: Yeah. What kind of... - what kind of problems did you have?

A: Well, going to that school, there were some - there were some black children, black girls in particular, who mucked about quite a lot, and, since a lot of black children - I mean there was only one or two of us that didn't join the bandwagon, and they felt that you were being white if you did work, and if you - and if certain teachers liked you, you pretended to be white. And I used to get - I used to be really frightened to go to school at times. And then, of course, then there were friends that you had who you thought were very much your friends and you'd - and you'd talk to them and let them know about this boy that you liked or that boy that you liked, and soon enough it would be all over the school. And that spoils things very much because if you were friends with that boy and they are a particularly withdrawn character, they don't like the fact that their names are all over the school. And - and if you're not that well liked anyway, I mean you might be liked but not that well liked, I mean you're not one of the big shots in the school, it

just makes it a little bit worse. And then if you like somebody that was, you know, very well known, and everyone else liked him, and you're gonna get a lot of other people, everyone's vying for this one person, you know –

Q: Yeah.

A: - it just makes things worse. So being in that school - yeah, and they really were very horrible, very horrible. And on the last - not on the last day, it was on the last week, last week it was... last day, they beat up quite a few friends of mine. So I didn't come into school for the last week, I came in for my exams and then left because they were being so horrible in the fifth year. They just decided that they were gonna just bundle everyone that - that was - that they thought was a goody-goody. And the thing is, it really affected my schoolwork because it went right down and - and towards the end I thought, well, why don't I just muck about for a little bit? And that was - that was detrimental, and I failed most of my exams because of that, partly because of the affair and partly because I thought, well I might as well just join them for a little while.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it didn't work - didn't help... first place, I had to resit them, so -

Q: Yeah, yeah. They were quite influential at that school, then, do you think that -

A: Yeah, well, when you have - when you have - you see, you've gotta have one person with a particularly very strong character, and a couple of other people with strong characters who agree with them on the majority of things, and if you've got this small centre it can attract quite a lot of people, and that's what happened, you see. And then you have the few on the outside which just don't seem to fit into that way of behaviour and that way of life and - and they - and they think, well look, you lot are the odd ones out, and we outnumber you, let's pick on you. And that happens. And teachers can't do anything about it. I don't expect teachers to, I think teachers are there to teach you, they're not there to sort out squabbles in the school playground, that's - parents should make sure children behave themselves, or maybe they should teach them to have manners and respect for other children. It's not the job of the teacher.

Q: Mm, yeah. That was one of the questions I was gonna ask you, were the teachers able to handle it, or did they realise what was going on?

A: Well, they didn't because you didn't want to tell them. You - you just didn't feel that it's right to tell an adult. You thought, well I can sort this out myself. And then you didn't tell them until it was too late, and then when they did try to sort things out, it only made things a bit worse, because they would give them a detention or somebody would get suspended, and when they came back they would come back with a vengeance, you see.

Q: Yeah, yeah. It's hard to know what to do in that kind of situation, isn't it?

A: That's it, yeah.

Q: So is it a relief to leave there and come here, or -

A: Well, I wanted to leave there anyway, you get fed up of being in a school after five years, you want to go. And I just stayed there and did my resits and then I came here. And I just wanted to get out of the whole environment, and also there was this - there was this culture - this culture - where everyone - you had a particular way of dress, so if fashion came in it would - you - you'd need - even within a school uniform, you'd be surprised how people can vary with a school uniform -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and make you feel left out. If your parents thought, well look, this is the way schoolchildren should dress and you're going to school like that, and everyone else's parents weren't thinking in the same way, you could feel awfully left out. And you just had - these trends of behaviour, trends of fashion, trends of slang. And my mother is - especially my mum, she is very much against slang using, and she always says, "listen. You're speaking slang, you make sure you keep it in the playground outside the house. So it's within the playground, outside the house". So not inside the classroom. It's always like amongst your peers because when she was growing up in THE CARIBBEAN, it was all - her mother always said, "listen, I don't want - I put - I will laugh when you talk outside and say this, this and this, whatever, the slang words then, but don't bring it inside the house, learn to speak properly when you come inside". So she carries this attitude and I think it's good, we do learn how to speak in a decent way, and also at the same time you can speak with your friends, you know, the same type of language, you know?

Q: It's like having two languages really, isn't it?

A: Yeah. But that - that's how I've been influenced, and you - when you - I don't know, when you've been grown up in a different way to quite a lot of the people, you do feel left out, because, you know, the same things they can get away with, you can't. I - I never, I wouldn't dare try things with my mum, she's always the type of person, some way she's gonna find out, and she'll take me to task with it, you know. And I think in a way I suppose you feel all the better for it really.

Q: Mm. Well, it gives you a sort of strong basis to go from. Well, it's like you were saying earlier on, that when - that... away from home and the family, you'll be able to make your own like decisions and be -

A: Yeah, I think - I think in a sense I think my mum would be very pleased because she - I want her to realise and see that all the work that she's put in to my brother and myself over the years, and my stepbrother towards the end, has not come to any bad use, and it will be very well used. And she'll see me - she likes to - she likes to feel that I've got my children around me and I feel nice and safe with them and I've grown them up and here they are, they're all with me. And I think she needs to sort of be able to sort of say, well listen, it's my husband and myself now, we need to have some time to ourselves, and - and like DOMINIC and I just stand on and watch them enjoying themselves for once, and - and she can actually see us taking those values that she's given us and evaluating them, because not everything... She always says to me, truly you'll be a better mother than I have been, because I'm a better mum than my mother has been, and so it will carry on.

Q: ...

A: And so she knows that I will be able to evaluate some things and pick up the good things and the bad things, and of course I'll make mistakes, but then my children won't make the same mistakes, you see, and...

Q: But - you say you think you will have children. Let me ask you about the future. Okay, let me ask you about children - what do you think about children?

A: I - I don't know, I'd like to do so much with myself that - I'd - I'd love to have kids but it's - I'd have to be devoted to them. I really don't like to see children just chucked about from place to place. I think it's so important that they feel wanted, and that involves taking a lot of your time, and why have children and then regret it later? Or just think,

well look, I'll just hand them over to my mum and she'll sort them out for me. It's not - it's not fair on them, they need to get to know you, they need to have a stable home, you see. So if I had children it would have to be my very late twenties, early thirties, I don't want to deliberately set out and have a (?) mongol child, you want to have a child that, you know, at least try and have a child that you can handle. And I think I'd try and plan it very much so that I didn't feel disappointed, and so that they could fit into my lifestyle and they wouldn't feel left out and I wouldn't feel guilty.

Q: Yeah. So what are you gonna do in this gap in between, ... future?

A: I want to travel as much as possible and meet people from different cultures, I think that's really one of the things that I find important for myself, it's to meet people from different cultures. And - and to get to know someone that I can trust and I can care for, and that's gonna take a long time, because it takes me a very long time before I can really trust someone that deeply. And - and after I've done that then I think I'd be prepared to settle down.

Q: What sort of work do you think you might be doing...?

A: Anything that involves - that gives me enough time that I can travel and that I can do my work - I want something that's flexible and I haven't found a particular career that's really flexible yet...

Q: I think they can all be a bit - I mean all occupations can be difficult, especially in... Maybe what you should do is get - there are a couple of good books around which describe all the sorts of different jobs.

A: That's what I need, I need something like that.

Q: Yeah, there's one by a woman called Ruth Miller, I forget exactly what it's called but it should be - I should imagine they would have it in the Careers Department.

A: Yeah, it's the Careers, yeah, I could ask, yeah. I need something where I can really get my teeth into and it's got to be something that I can enjoy. See I know for example that I like - I like crafts, I like things like silkscreen printing and... and I'd love to learn how to do weaving and that, but that - that'd be something for my spare time because I'm the type who - I can - I can do a really nice pattern or a really nice drawing or something, but it's got - it's got - I've got to have a certain, just a feel for it on that particular day, then I just get it done. It - it's got to be - I have to have a job where I can really enjoy it and dedicate myself to it, and then it would be just perfect, I'd stick at it.

Q: Yeah. Maybe something in the designing area, designing, producing materials and patterns and things like that.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's worth looking round into different possibilities. I suppose I've got - in my (?) narrow mind, I mean, when you said journalism, that sounded good to me, you know, anything in the academic line or something, but it's me being so rigid in my thinking. I think to go off in a more kind of creative, artistic direction, that does give you a lot of scope and freedom, and a lot of sort of... and satisfaction in your work.

A: It does, yeah, it does, it does. It does.

Q: Can I go back and ask you another question about AIDS, I forgot to ask you before -

A: Yeah.

Q: - which is about safe sex. What do you understand as being safe sex?

A: How does the government describe it -

Q: How does the government describe it.

A: It's using a condom, that's the sort of thing the government describe - and not having so many partners. Trying cutting down the amount of partners you have and using - using these methods of safety. And apparently they're now saying that if women use the cap - is it the diaphragm? -

Q: Mm.

A: - that it just decreases the risk as well as a man using a condom. I've heard that now. That's safe sex.

(Interruption)

Q: Right, let me ask you a couple of quick questions, then. No, to pursue the safe sex thing - that's what the government says about it, do you think there's anything else that might be involved in safe sex?

A: Well, that's the physical, the biological side of safe sex, isn't it? But you have to be involved - again it's going back to relationships and how well you know the person, 'cos - I mean if you're gonna just have - you - you - it's all - it's all very well to have sort of - have - have - have a condom always at hand and always have the diaphragm or the cap or whatever you wanna call it, and that's - that's nice and safe, but what about the emotional side of it? I mean some people can just get fed up after a while of all this. I mean -

Q: I see what you mean, yeah... dragged together through all of that. Well, I was also thinking about - I mean that's assuming that you're gonna have penetrative sex really, isn't it -

A: Yeah...

Q: - but you might - what about doing it without - without that, I mean -

A: It won't be - you won't get the full satisfaction as well... satisfaction.

Q: Yeah, yeah, it's hard... to say when you haven't actually experienced it but, yeah. You have to find out, I guess. What about - I mean in these relationships that you have had -

A: Yeah.

Q: - I mean you describe this as a sexual relationship, do you do - I mean do you do other things apart from - apart from sexual intercourse? - other sexual type things?

A: What do you mean? Sorry.

Q: Well when you have - in your relationships -

A: What, in the relations that I've had or -

Q: Yeah, that you've had or the...

A: I haven't had a sexual relationship.

Q: Not actually - well not - look, let me start again. When you talk about sex, what do you think of?

A: Well, I think of penetrative sex really.

Q: You do.

A: Yeah, and I suppose the climax that leads up to it.

Q: So other sorts of things like hugging and kissing and stroking, those other sorts of things people do -

A: Yeah, but I mean - but then at the same time that (?) could never be for meanings as well, I mean - I mean 'cos I mean you - you - you can hug and kiss your friend or hug

and kiss your mother, and it can have different meanings. I suppose yes, if you have a relationship with someone else it does have a different meaning altogether, I suppose, yeah, I suppose I agree that that could be safe sex as well, couldn't it?... But then it just - it would just get - I think you'd just get bored after a while.

Q: You would?

A: Yeah, you'd wanna move on, you know.

Q: Yeah. Well, do you feel like that in the relationship that you're having now at all?

A: Yeah, yeah, you do wanna move on, but then you've got all these friends, you've got to say, well look, listen, what do I really want? And ask yourself the question, and discuss it as well, I think that's very important, you've got to discuss it because why should - why should everything you want happen and not him? You've got to - even if it means a compromise, you've got to have a compromise somewhere, I mean like -

Q: Does your current - would your current boyfriend prefer to have sex in the relationship?

A: No, no, because he's not prepared to settle down and it would mean - I think, well for both of us - both of us recognise that it means very serious - and we - we're more very close friends rather than prepared to sort of go off into sex.

Q: Yeah.

A: And such. And I think because he - because he's the type of person that can get hurt and he doesn't want to get hurt again, and I mean I don't wanna get hurt certainly, we're gonna take it as slowly as possible. So that if he says, well, look, I don't want this, and I say, well, look, that's fine, you know, you can try someone else and I won't get upset about it because I haven't involved myself too much emotionally with him, and well that's why, I just hope it works out.

Q: Right... Let me ask you one more question, which is - which I've been asking everybody and some people have a lot of difficulty with - but what - what is your image of yourself?

A: What do you - you mean what do I think of myself? As a person? How do I see myself?

Q: Yeah. How do you see yourself as a person?

A: I - now, I went to this - this place, this - I was very curious about it 'cos it said Church of Scientology, and I went in there and they had this personality test, and I - and according to their test I was very negative, totally negative. He said that I was very cynical because I asked what the Church of Scientology is, and you had to sort of - marks, either sometimes, maybe, yes or no, to all these different questions about your relationships with people and they said that I'm very shy and I don't want to - and I don't want to come out. But I don't think that that's true because I mean I do - I try and get myself involved in things. Like for example I'm curious, I came and asked you what the survey was about 'cos I wanted to know, I wanted to know why this and this because I want to know things. So I can be - I'm a curious person and I like to try and find things out for myself, and I don't mind giving my views but I don't like to impose them on other people. I don't like to say to people, look, you must do what I do, or you must believe what I believe. I like to sort of leave them open to think about what I - what I believe. And I just like other people to respect me and I like to respect other people. As far as relationships are concerned, I know that I'm timid. I'm very timid. I think because perhaps it's my first time, and - or the first times - just means that one's very different

from the other and until you've really got a good sort of mixture of them all, a good sort of feel for it, it's the first time you're sort of venturing into the field, you don't really know what you're doing, and you have to be timid, I mean it's a natural response, whereas... be rather foolish. But no, I don't - I don't really know. Yeah, I'm timid, in - in my relationships, sexual relationships, very timid and very wary. So that's me in a nutshell.

Q: Do you think that your friends' image or other people's image of you is similar to your own?

A: Yeah, I think - I think people can see straight through me.

Q: Yeah.

A: I think they can. They know what I'm like, they always say to me, ANGELA, you're like this, and I say I know that's true, I know. And they know - they know that I can get very upset about things, you know. If I - if I know something is exactly right and they say when they do something wrong, you know, I can get upset. I tell you what a lot of boys say about me, is that I'm very much like a mother, for some reason. And they keep saying to me, ANGELA, will you stop being like this, you know, you don't have to be a mother to me all the time. I don't know, it's just that I - I suppose I have a caring attitude to people as well, and that - and that affects my relationships as well, because around that goes all of the things -how do I - how do I do things and at the same time show that I care? Rather than just be mindless about things, so that - that does affect my relationships with other people too.

Q: Well... probably out there wondering what I'm doing. Thank you very much for talking to me. Is there anything that you wanted to ask?

A: Not now, no.

Q: Right. One of the other things that we're doing is we're asking young women whether they would keep a diary for us for a very short time, for a couple of months or something like that, which would just describe their feelings, what they're doing in relationships.

A: Yeah... the other day I was saying to myself, now that you've left school, ANGELA, you can actually write a diary, you can - and you can monitor yourself. And I - and the reason I want to monitor myself, I want to know what happens as the month changes and I get towards my feelings, I want to know how I change -

Q: Yeah.

A: - in both thought, feeling, attitude, and I want to know - 'cos I want to work out what - why I get such bad period pains -

Q: Yeah.

A: - I really want to work that out. And since my doctor's useless I'm gonna have to do it myself and that might mean having to really meditate and work out what you're feeling inside, and then see if you can actually put that into words and write it down. So I will do that.

Q: Oh, great. The other thing about the period pains is you could go along to Brook Advisory Clinic because they advise people, not necessarily only about family planning and that, but they do advise you in general about -

A: Well, you see, it's not that - I don't want to take the pill, and that - that seems to me to be the main thing they're gonna offer me, but I don't want to take it because I don't wanna take the risk of making myself ill.

Q: Yes, as you were saying before, given your family background.

A: I don't - I don't - no, I don't actually understand the full - the full repercussions of it, but as far as I know it's that they get high blood pressure from taking it for a long time, and I don't wanna go and deliberately make myself ill so I've got to find some type of natural way, or else take a proper - I've heard there's such things as proper hormone pills, you know, like natural hormones, rather than artificial hormones as the pill is. Is there such things?

Q: Well, I'm not too sure about that, I should think - I mean, there may well be, maybe a (?)homeopath or something like that would be the person to go to, someone who's into...sorts of...methods of...

A: Yeah, yeah, well that's what I hope to find. Yeah, I'll have to find something like that and see if that works.

Q: Yeah,... alternative. I'll see if I can find out where would be a good place for you to get information on alternative methods.

A: Yeah.

Q: And the other thing we were gonna do is maybe come back and interview a few people next year, to see what's happened in the intervening period -

A: Yeah.

Q: Would you be interested?

A: Yes, yeah. Hopefully I will be around and not -

Q: Well I - you've given me your address have you -

A: My address. I think...

Q: ...

A: Right.

Q: Right. Well thanks very much. It's been extremely interesting.

End of interview.