

**LJH30 6.7.1989**

**Caitlin**

A. Yeah, when I mentioned to a couple of girls I was coming here they sort of said... you know... I'm sure it's not the end of the world, alright?

Q. Yeah, we keep it strictly to ourselves, you don't know the lengths we go to to keep it strictly confidential. I mean obviously we'll be writing about what people tell us but it will be so embedded and so, you know,... that... So as I said, I mean the main thing that we're really interested in is how young women feel about their relationships, what their relationships mean to them; so... asking what is or which are the most important relationships for you?

A. Sex ones or just any ones?

Q. Any kind of relationships.

A. My parents and my friends always come first. My parents most of all, my mum is my best friend, I confide everything to her.

Q. Yes.

A. - and that actually does put a lot of pressure on her because if I'm seeing anybody, I mean I just had an affair with a married man, that sort of thing, you know, and of course I tell her and then of course she gives me advice, I go away and then she sits down and thinks Jesus Christ, what's she doing and, you know, starts worrying, which is fairly understandable obviously. So, yeah, definitely my parents and my friends before anything. I mean my one and only very very steady long-term boyfriend, we finished because basically I was so obsessed with my relationship with my friends. As far as I was concerned that came before anything. Boyfriends come and go, friends don't, good friends don't, so as far as I was concerned, they came first, and I didn't wanna risk losing them at all, spending too much time with him not them, that sort of thing. So -

Q. Was he putting pressure on you to spend more time with him?

A. Well he didn't seem to understand, he didn't understand why -he was very blasé about his friends, he only had like one close male friend who was - I mean obviously girls tend to be, well you tend to think of girls as having best buddies more than guys do, you know, or whatever - and he just didn't really understand the fact that I was - yeah, he'd rather I spent time with him than my friends. It didn't get to the stage where he wouldn't let me go out with my friends or anything like that, but obviously I wouldn't let that sort of thing occur, but I mean things got a bit dicey... other things and we broke up.

Q. Mm. How long did that relationship last?

A. That was for two months. That was very... but actually that has scarred me very much emotionally and I haven't been out with anyone properly since then, and I don't want to again really, I mean I got so badly hurt, and it frightened me to be so close to somebody sexually, pers - you know, everything, you know, to reveal so much about yourself to somebody who was prepared to - I was, what, sixteen at the time that I met him, I'd never been that close to anyone before, and the worst thing of all was that when we finished he cut me off, despite the fact that we were at college and I had Communications Studies with him, that sort of thing, he refused to admit that I existed, you know, as far as he was concerned we'd never known each other, and I could not accept that; and I was so hurt by it all that I don't look to get involved with anybody now. You know, if I'm seeing anyone at all I'll - I'll be totally scared off of any sort of long-term relationship really.

Q. Mm. Was that your first sexual relationship as well?

A. No, no, no, no, no. Well it was the first proper one, yeah, but no, I lost my virginity at fifteen and - I think actually, come to think of it, yeah, I think it was - yeah, I lost my virginity at fifteen to a guy and then moved into this relationship, you know, a couple of years later and that was this - that was the next sexual relationship, yeah. But it wasn't the first time, it was the first proper time, I mean I lost my virginity, I was drunk, it was a one-off and, you know, that was that. It was - not a mistake, no, but something that wasn't meant to be permanent so that was that, finito, and then I met this guy who ... got a bit heavy.

Q. How did you feel about it at the time, I mean you say it wasn't a mistake, but you were drunk and -

A. Yeah, I don't think it was a mistake as such but it was a case of - it wasn't something that had to be done or anything but -

Q. What, you mean talking about losing your virginity?

A. Yeah. No, no, no, it was - I was fifteen, I'd just started to go to parties, it was a time when, you know, the fourth, fifth year at school, whatever, had started to go to parties, I'd been interested in boys for a while but not like that, so this was the sort of time was I really starting to decide to get around sort of thing, you know, just try things out, that sort of thing. And I, you know, got off with this guy a couple of times at various parties and I was always very drunk, I mean I did drink a lot at that period, stupidly, I don't drink anywhere near as much now, I think that put me off for life, neat Pernod, that sort of thing, don't touch the stuff now - and it happened and I didn't see him again after that, I don't think, if I did it was a case of just passing in the street or something, but there was never any mention of anything permanent being there.

Q. Mm. And you had no expectations as well?

A. Well, I knew being realistic nothing was gonna come of it, I mean he was a few years older than me and he'd had a lot of girlfriends and I knew that basically, although I was pretty accessible at the time, you know, I'd talk about him all the time at school, you know, just go round to a friend's house who he lived next door to just to see - hope I could see him sort of thing, yeah, I had a crush on him, I was obsessed with him, but I knew it wouldn't become permanent, and, knowing the sort of guy he was deep down I didn't want to, you know. I wanted someone to get hung up on for a while so, you know, that's what I did.

Q. Mm. Was the relationship with the other guy, that turned out badly as far as you were concerned, how did you feel when you were actually going through that relationship?

A. It's funny, it really really changed things because before I went out with him I was very anti-marriage, anti-steady relationships or engagements, I couldn't see the point in it, and while I was going out with him we even considered getting engaged, things were - I was in love with him, he was in love with me, and although it was pretty turbulent we were very very close, and I wanted it to continue, but having been hurt that badly I now am again very anti-marriage, very anti-engagement, but not purely because I wouldn't want to get hurt, not from a personal point of view, but just my opinion in general, I don't happen to agree with marriage or anything like that, I'll probably change, I don't know, but at the moment that's the way I feel. It could well be psychologically the result of that relationship, I'm not really sure. But at the time, at the time I felt - I think one of the reasons it finished was because at the time I felt so stifled, I'm very independent and I was so used to being my own person, doing my own thing, just suddenly to have to consider somebody else all the time, to have somebody - 'cos he virtually, he didn't live with me, but we were at college together, he'd come round to my house, stay overnight, come to college with me the next day, we'd be at college all day, it was very stifling and I got very

uptight and irritable about it, you know. I didn't necessarily want him to go away, I loved him, but enough's enough, you've got to have a break, you know -

Q. Yeah

A. - it was very very heavy, suffocating I suppose.

Q. What made you turn that relationship, what made you decide that that relationship would become a sexual relationship?

A. I think - well, we were going out with each other, I'd go back to his house after we'd been out somewhere perhaps, we'd do the usual kissing, cuddling, heavy - it progressed into heavy petting, and because I was going out with him and he was my boyfriend, we were close, we were friends, all that sort of thing, I was quite happy for it to progress further. He was a virgin, so he said, I'm not necessarily entirely sure of that but anyway that's what he said, and it was just something that happened, it was - can't explain, can't explain it. Don't know. It just - it just seemed a natural progression but - I was, I was supposed to go - we talked about it, we talked about going on the pill, contraception, that sort of thing, before it actually happened, and I had very bad periods at the time, and I was at home once and I had a very bad period, we had to call the doctor out. She decided that I should go on the pill with it so we were quite pleased, it was killing two birds with one stone, so that was sorted out, but in the end it did seem to be that that was all that was holding us together, just a sexual relationship, it was so good, it was - you know, we were arguing, you know we weren't well matched, we weren't soulmates or anything, you know, that was all it was towards the end.

Q. Mm. Have you found the sexual relationship satisfactory, satisfying, pleasurable?

A. Yes. Yes.

Q. You sound a bit doubtful.

A. Well, I'm not - I've never, in all the sexual relationships I've had I've never - it's never been like it is in the books, I've never, you know - I'm sure it could be a lot better but - yeah, it was okay, yeah.

Q. What about - well I suppose it's difficult to say with the other one -

A. The first one?

Q. Yes. Oh, God no. That was just - I mean maybe it would have been but I mean we were both drunk and it was just - I hardly remember anything at all about it really, it hurt, that's all I remember really.

Q. Yeah.

A. Instant thoughts were, panic, was I pregnant, had I caught anything, that sort of thing, but he'd used a condom... pregnant, and I think probably that was the sort of - that was the point when I realised that - that it couldn't - nothing more could happen, it had been building up to the fact that I had a feeling I was gonna have sex for the first time with this guy, and once that had happened and I knew there could be no relationship in it at all, you know, it wasn't - 'cos the first time hadn't been wonderful and earth-shattering and we weren't - didn't decide we were made for each other, you know, that was it really.

Q. Mm. Have you had those kind of ideas before, do you think, about the first time that you -

A. What, that it would be -?

Q. - had sex that it would be earth-shattering or -

A. Well I was reading - I mean I tended to be reading all the magazines, all the girl - girlie magazines and also things like - all problem pages and they all warn you the first time won't necessarily be wonderful, don't build up your expectations, all that sort of thing, so - I really

wasn't expecting, I was just curious, didn't expect it to be that wonderful, I knew it was probably going to hurt and if I hadn't been drunk maybe I would have been more self-conscious, a little more thinking to myself more about it, considering it more, analysing it a bit, but I wasn't, you know, that sort of thing only happened when I was going out with my boyfriend the next time, that's when we started really getting involved in talking about it, you know, working out - experimenting a bit more.

Q. When you say - you - I mean you seem to be a very independent sort of person, did you feel - and in fact it was constraining in certain ways in your relationship - did you think that you had the control that you wanted over the sexual aspects of the relationship, I mean...

A. Well it's funny actually, we often talked about this and he -he said that he decided he was - that I was very dominant in the relationship overall but he was more dominant when it came to sex, but that's just a personal preference, so - but it - for the first time felt I was wanted, I was desired,...somebody wanted to have sex with me as a person, you know, and that was nice but - no, there was no control situation or anything, you know, it was - towards the end it was what we both wanted, it was what we both wanted, we were both happy doing it so - you know sometimes I wouldn't feel... quite in the mood or something, you know, but there was no power play in that. He'd sometimes get a little bit - he'd a very very big inferiority complex actually as far as I was concerned, in as much as - well, academically, that sort of thing, friends-wise, that sort of thing, life in general he felt he was far more - he felt I was superior to him. That caused a lot of problems - but no, as far as sex was concerned, you know, no, no big hang-ups there.

Q. What kind of problems did those other factors cause, do you think?

A. What, his inferiority complex -

Q. Yeah, that he felt inferior, yeah.

A. Well, at first it's - not flattering as such, but it makes you stop and think yes, maybe I have got certain qualities, maybe I have got it good in some aspects but after a while it tends to get a bit -you don't like to be around somebody who feels so worthless and who doesn't have a high opinion of himself. He really didn't have any self-esteem at all. I'd try and help him - I remember once, he didn't come round to my house, he just rang me up once and he was feeling really down, I just gave him advice, he wasn't sure about his exams, 'cos we were going through the exam period, he wasn't sure about that, I helped him on that. He used to get - because we'd sit together in class, that sort of thing, if I got higher grades than him he'd act a little bit miffed, you know, and I'd be obviously pleased. And it would have been nice if he'd been pleased for me, which sometimes he was, and I was always pleased for him if he got better than I did, you know, but - he tended to feel that he was of a lower class to me I suppose, I don't know, but he did feel very inferior in a lot of ways and that made me think, you know - somebody who's got self-esteem is attractive, who's got confidence, somebody who hasn't isn't - it fluctuated, sometimes he was, sometimes he wasn't, you know.

Q. I was wondering if he was trying to sort of undermine you in some way.

A. Sometimes - I don't know, I don't know, he - he, he - I don't know - I don't think so. No, he - he always helped me a lot with my problems, I mean I - I wasn't - I don't know why he felt inferior 'cos I had a lot of problems at the time, I mean his - his - the problems we had between us, which... - it all sloshed together at some points, you know, and all my problems all seemed to come together at once and in fact it wasn't until several months into - several months towards the end of the relationship that I suddenly realised it was probably him that was causing my problems, you know, the fact that I wasn't happy being in this relationship, that was making all my other problems seem bigger, so really talking to him wouldn't be the best idea

because after a while I'd be saying to him, well such and such a bad mood is causing problems, like... just say to him... you are the problem, you know. He always tried to help me in various things but it was always things like my friends, things like I'd say to him, you know, I'm not spending enough time with such and such and I'd get paranoid about things, I'd think that my friends were going off and doing things without me and I'd rather be with them but at the same time I wanted to be with him and - all this sort of thing, you know, and he didn't understand that, didn't really want to I suppose, didn't want to ... my problems really.

Q. But you were still - I mean you were distressed when the relationship came to an end?

A. Oh very much so. It ended several times actually, we - we went out with each other for three months, and he was far more involved than I was. This is something that actually was very significant. He asked me out, I hardly knew him, it was just something, we were in class together, we got to know each other, got talking, he asked me to go out with him somewhere and then we decided to make it permanent. His friends actually warned me that I wasn't into that sort of - warned him that I wasn't into that sort of thing, you know, and I warned him that I wasn't either; and I at the time worked in a HOLIDAY CAMP seasonally, and I went down there for Christmas to work over Christmas, and he said to me before I went, he said, you know, if you do start seeing anyone else while you're down there, that's it, we're finished. I said fair enough, you know, I went down there, got off with somebody else, came back, very callously told him with no consideration at all, because I didn't feel a great deal for him at the time, and we finished. He was very upset, he moped around for several weeks; and then he started to go out with somebody else. I got jealous and we talked about it and got back together again. But then - that was like at about the beginning of the year, that was about January time, and for the rest of that year we were going out with each other all the time but there were a lot of periods where one of us - I mean I found out he saw a married woman, he got off with a couple of people, I got off with a few people I didn't tell him about, but basically the one big thing that really really bugged me more than anything was that he always claimed to be very faithful, one of the old school, this sort of thing, and made me out to be some sort of scarlet woman. Not - not because of what I was doing at the time but because of - I told him about things - probably - perhaps he was a bit niggled that I wasn't a virgin when I met him and he was, that sort of thing. And, you know, I'd tell him about times - other people I'd been with, other people that I'd been out - you know been out on a couple of odd dates with or something, and he used to get very very insecure about this sort of thing, and it turned out in the end that he was just as bad as I was and he couldn't practice what he preached, you know he made me feel very bad for no reason whatsoever. And when it finally finished he finished with me for somebody else, also at college, so I had the double - I had to suffer twice, I had to see him with somebody else as well, and the fact he cut me off without a word, wouldn't even speak to me. I really couldn't handle it, not at all. And that's when I found I had no need to worry about my friends because they were all there with me, they were very supportive indeed, very good.

Q. Mm, yeah. When you saw other men during the period that you were with him, were you - I mean were they sexual relationships or just dates?

A. No, I didn't have sex with anybody while I was going out with him, nobody at all. He used to get very very jealous. I worked - having finished at the holiday camp - during this next year I was working at a - a golf club and restaurant part-time while I was at college, and although I was - I just had a - just a friend - just - I made a mistake, I went to a nightclub once when he was on holiday with all the people from work, and I got off with a guy - a guy there. I didn't tell

him about it, and when he came back from holiday he told me that he'd got off with somebody while he was on holiday and he was now going out with her. This was just one of the many rumpuses that we had, you see. So - that sorted itself out in the end. But I didn't have sex with anybody while I was going out with him, it was just a few kisses really, a couple of people, that sort of thing. And in fact, one of the guys rang me up and wanted to pursue things and I said no. I actually - one time during the relationship we went to a party, a college party, and I went with a friend of mine, and I just wanted to have a really good time, you know, planned to get a bit drunk I suppose, ended up getting horrifically drunk, did several things to embarrass myself. I understand entirely that he was very very embarrassed indeed, I didn't even recognise him when he arrived at the party. But it was a one-off, he'd never seen me like that before, he was obviously horrified, I probably would have been if I'd seen him like that, and I think - he tells me that I had - somebody kissed me or something happened, you know, and he was understandably upset and it took a long time to bring him round from that one. So when it - I - I felt bad, but I wouldn't have felt anywhere near as bad if I'd known that he was doing exactly the same thing himself.

Q. Yes, yes. It's sort of like the double standard really.

A. Oh, it is.

Q. Do you think that's very prevalent, the double standard...?

A. It's something that I get very niggled about, very much so indeed, yeah. It very much bothers me if I read any interviews - I read a couple of interviews recently, they do surveys in magazines and things where they say what are - there was an interview the other day asking a collection of men: if your wife got married - if your wife got married! - if your wife had a baby, would you expect her to stay at home, this sort of thing, you know, would you - how would you feel if you saw her flirting with somebody, would you - like if a woman asked you out, this sort of thing, you know; and, you know, I do get very irate about that sort of thing. I wouldn't say - I'm not a women's libber or anything like that, you know, but I do - I do think women should be entirely equal. But on the other hand I do tend to like things like - it is nice if you're out with a guy and... opens the door for you, this sort of thing, you know, I don't - normally in discussions I normally say sort of you know, that shouldn't happen, you know, why should you be treated like that, why should he expect to do this sort of thing, why should he pay for you, you know, but it is - it is a nice gesture, it is nice, so I can't claim to be very adamant about it I suppose. But no, I do - I do get very upset about the double standard, very much so, I suppose that's - that's why at the moment, I'm going through a bit of a period at the moment where I tend to be a bit sexually active at the moment in a - what would be deemed by society I suppose as a very male, male attitude I suppose, not - I mean, it's funny actually, my exploits recently have been - one of my friends works in a pub and she has - I know several people down there, and she's told a lot of people all about it because it is very - it is prime gossip actually, you know, people at work, all this sort of thing, you know. I spent a whole week the other week at the NAME OF HOTEL with a gentleman from work who's come over from WESTERN ASIA. That sort of thing, you know, to them, is all very prime gossip, it's very juicy gossip, so they get told, and instead of being labelled, as I would have expected, of being a slag or whatever, I went into the pub and I actually got a slap on the back from a guy there who said, good on you, well done. Which is the sort of thing they would do if it was a guy, you see. And that is one of the double standards I do get very irate about, when the girl sleeps around she's a slag, if a guy does it he's a stud, you know, regardless of precautions, that sort of thing, you know, just, .. the idea of it. And I've always said... no reason why not, if you don't want to get involved with

somebody. You know, so that's what I've done recently and... I'm sure they're all privately thinking, slag or whatever, but it doesn't bother me, it's nothing to do with them, and I'm happy doing what I'm doing, I don't want to get involved and actually got a bit of praise for it...

Q. So do you feel you're distancing yourself from these guys, you're not serious about any of them?

A. I think it's because - oh, no I'm not serious about any of them but purely because they are completely unavailable, they're completely out of my reach; if I came across somebody who - 'cos I'm going to polytechnic in September -

Q. Mm.

A. - quite possibly the same will happen as did at college last time, I might meet a guy and get involved with him because it's the sort of place where you tend to... boyfriends... But when I'm at work I mean for example, this guy, the last guy I slept with, he was- he was married, there's obviously no way that that's gonna go any further, you know, it happened a couple of times and that's all it was, you know. The time before that, this guy that came over from WESTERN ASIA, I mean all this - I mean it's completely unthinkable that anything would come of it, you know. I don't know if I'm deliberately choosing people who are unattainable, I don't know.

Q. Mm, yeah.

A. I don't - I think it's because of my work environment, I'm not - I don't - because I'm not at college or university at the moment I'm not - most of my friends that I'm seeing now tend to be female, I'm not mixing with the sort of people that I could form a relationship with of that sort, you know, I'm not mixing with men of my own age, all the guys at work are a lot older, so there's no way that that sort of thing could happen so -

Q. So this - the latest one, the one that you said - the married man that this happened a couple of times - do you still see him at work, I mean -

A. He left the country actually, he's gone to UNITED ARAB EMIRATES(laugh) - they do go when they go - he's gone to UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. And the one who - the one who was over from WESTERN ASIA, the one that I spent the week in a hotel with, he is probably coming back to this country, back to the company - he was due back about now but he'll probably - he'll probably be back in about a month's time, so something might happen again, and it might not, I don't know. I think to be honest I'm brainwashing myself really, because I'm the sort of person who does get very emotional and I can get very emotionally involved, and I think I'm brainwashing myself now that I mustn't get involved 'cos I'll get hurt. I've just got these messages going through that, okay, you can go out with a guy, sleep with him if you like, but just don't get involved because you're bound to get hurt, it's one of these facts of life - if you're with a guy you will get hurt, I think that's what I'm trying to tell myself and I'm just trying to make sure I don't get hurt. I've not got at all upset about this, any of the guys - when the married one, when he left the company, I felt a bit upset and I knew that if I stopped to talk about it and let myself be myself again I would get very upset about that - when the other one went back to WESTERN ASIA I could have thought to myself, you know, oh, am I ever gonna see him again and this sort of thing, which in the past I would have done but I'm forcing myself not to now, I just force myself to carry on with life and just let it be something in the past.

Q. What about the sex, is the sex pleasurable with these guys?

A. To be perfectly honest, no. Yes, it is, yes, it is and it isn't. I mean, as I say I've never yet had a very fulfilling sexual relationship but it's not been the sort of relationship where it would be, I mean the one who I stayed at the hotel with, yes it was, it was nice, but I've never found sex earth-shattering -

Q. Yes, you were saying -

A. - so I never build up any expectations at all and it's - it's nice, it's a good thing, it's a nice thing but, you know, it's something I could live without if I had to. I mean I did, I was celibate for virtually a whole year recently, so - not, not wonderful, no, it could have been better, but I think you need to work on something like that and there was no way I could with any of these guys at all so -

Q. Mm. And have you taken the pill -

A. No, I was on the pill, I'm no longer - I was, I went - when I - when that boyfriend who I was on the pill with, when we finished, I started seeing a guy at that golf club where I worked. Ironically my boyfriend thought that I was seeing him anyway. I wasn't, so as soon as he finished with me I was seeing him, and I was still on the pill then, and then I came off it, I went... and then I came off it completely, stopped taking it, and then I was celibate for a whole year. Now I'm starting - I think probably I will go on the pill just before I go to polytechnic actually. I mean there were all side effects, you know, all the headaches, putting on weight, that sort of thing, having to remember it, the worrying and panicking if I didn't take it, that sort of thing, but there was no need because I wasn't sleeping with anyone so I came off it.

Q. Yeah. What precautions - or did you take any precautions -

A. What, recently? ... (laughter) Did you take any precautions?

Q. No. Which is something that has been absolutely filling me with panic and dread recently. When I was - the guy at my hotel, I had my period the first night, I was just about on the last couple of days of my period, I was still bleeding and so we were pretty certain that we were ninety per cent safe, I mean I knew we weren't a hundred per cent safe and, you know, I should have really said, you know, it doesn't matter, we should still take precautions, but I was pretty sure, so when I was with him I didn't and then when I - during that week when I finished my period, he withdrew... so - and I was pretty sure that I wasn't getting pregnant and I found that I wasn't, so that was okay. I actually went out for a pregnancy test the other day because of the last guy... and used it - we had sex on Thursday night and I used the pregnancy test on Saturday or Sunday, I think. I'm not entirely convinced, you know, there is a chance I still could be because, although it showed up negative, obviously it isn't a hundred per cent, and also I'm not sure how long it - I was gonna ring one of these helplines actually that was on the packet, because I'm not sure whether it's best to wait a while so that you can be absolutely definite, that sort of thing, you know, so rather than panic myself I thought wait a week, you've only got to wait a week 'til my period's due and then I'll know for certain, then I'll do something about it. But I mean - I've got a - I've got a gut feeling I'm not, but I'm still not a hundred per cent sure. That's always been the biggest worry of my life, getting pregnant, because I do not want to have children at all, ever, planned or not planned, so that is a big fear of mine.

Q. So it's a bit contradictory, having sex without -

A. Yes, very contradictory, yeah. I've always been very, as I said, I was - you know, I knew at the time that I was very silly, very very silly indeed; I think that's why I went on the pill, carried on taking it - even after my boyfriend had finished with me I was still on the pill, in fact I wasn't... to the doctor and saying look I should come off this, I'm not having a sexual relationship at the moment, and then he said, are you sure? I said no, I'm not sure, because the worst thing I could ever do is get pregnant and you can never tell what's round the corner, I may not be sleeping with anyone at the moment but if I am... and I think at the moment I'm just putting off and putting off going on it, you know, because I wasn't expecting either of these past relationships, they came completely out of the blue, and so okay, I might have seen him one

night and the next - the next I actually thought to myself, oh my God, I've got a spare pack, I thought, should I start taking it now, I thought no, that's stupid, it won't work at all, you know - the whole packet (laughter).

Q. ...

A. No, exactly. So I thought no, go to the chemist. I actually did, I went straight to the chemist. I was - it was funny actually, I was - I'd been at this hotel for a week and of course it was very difficult because I had to stay at the hotel... go into work the next day, so I was going straight to the hotel from after work, and I was having to buy clothes during the day, you know, things to keep me going sort of thing, and one day I was out buying clothes, I was buying him stuff, I was buying everything and I just rushed into Boots and thought, my God... condoms... what's best, what do people normally buy, you know, 'cos I'd never bought any before, you know, and they said well, have some of these, quick, you know. So I took them away with me. But I've always had this loathing of them. I mean, obviously with AIDS, you know, everyone is being - well you know, made to feel, you know, just, regardless of whether or not it's pleasurable, you know, it's sensible, which is fair enough, but - although I really do think about it a lot, I don't know why, it goes straight out the window if I'm - no, not straight out the window it doesn't, no, it's always - there's always this nagging at the back of my mind, you know, you don't know what you could catch, you could get AIDS, and it's always immediately afterwards I really start panicking, you know. But I - I don't like - the last two guys, okay, they're probably bastards, whatever, you know, they all said, you know, I said something I think and one of them said, oh you're not gonna make me wear one of those are you. And I could have said - I should have said, yes, you know; but I wanted sex as much as they did and I didn't want any aggro. I don't like the things, you know, all that sort of thing, you know; and I just - I just didn't think, you know, so - I thought straight after, you stupid, stupid girl, you know - and immediately resolved that next time I would, you know.

Q. Mm.

A. I suppose really that carrying them round in my handbag makes me feel a little bit better, you know, 'cos I know that at least I've got them there. But it's no good having them there if you're not using them either, actually, is it?

Q. Yeah. One of the questions we asked on the questionnaire was would you feel confident enough to ask somebody to - to use one.

A. I - I - I mean the first time I lost my virginity, I was completely panic-stricken about getting pregnant then and - instantly I think I - I can't remember exactly what was said but I remember - I remember him using one, I think I must have said something about, you've got to or something, I mean it hadn't been planned or anything, neither of us had got anything, so it turned out that we were in a friend's house and he did so - you know .... I was so drunk I really wouldn't be able to tell. Plus it was the first time having sex and I was so drunk I wasn't focusing correctly and I had my eyes shut anyway so - I was just sort of like laying back and letting him do everything and so afterwards my mum - 'cos I went rushing home, I said - are you sure, are you sure -... yes, don't worry, he did, you know, so that was alright. But - yes I mean, I read an article about AIDS yesterday in a magazine which said the best ways of approach - the best ways of bringing up condoms into the conversation if you are about to have sex, how best to tactfully say, you know, say things like: did you see this AIDS documentary last night? Would you believe, some men expect women to have sex with them without using condoms? - That sort of thing, to make them shamed into using them, that sort of thing, you know. But it's obviously an equal responsibility, so - I mean if he's not - I mean if I'm

using condoms purely for - if the guy isn't bothered about getting me pregnant or just isn't thinking, isn't bothered about AIDS and I am, then obviously it's down to me to say, look I'm not doing it unless you use a condom. Which is obviously what I should have done, it was in the back of my mind so -

Q. Are you worried about AIDS?

A. Yeah, absolutely terrified, but I said to someone - we were discussing having AIDS tests the other day, me and my friend, and we both decided that if we thought we had it, the only reason we would get tested for it - because I've been talking about AIDS testing recently, my mum said she thinks it affects your life insurance or something, things like that, inasmuch as, you know, they won't, you know, they think you're a dodgy case, but - and I thought that was outrageous, you know, I think everybody should, you know, be screened; but on the other hand, if I had it I wouldn't want to know, the only reason I'd want to know is so that I don't pass it on to anybody else, that's the only reason. There's no way I'd want to know.

Q. Yes.

A. No way whatsoever. 'Cos I mean it doesn't develop for a while, I don't know how long, but I mean it's not something that you get like a cold, you know, you don't know you've got it and so I'd rather not know I had it. ... rash like commit suicide but I wouldn't want to know, wouldn't want to know at all, except for somebody else's safety.

Q. Mm. When did you first hear about AIDS, can you remember?

A. It was - well, whenever it first - whenever it first hit the media, I think, really. There was probably a couple of newspaper articles I read about some sexual disease called AIDS, I didn't take it in properly, just thought, oh God there's another one, and then when it fully hit the media, when the big explosion happened and TV documentaries, that sort of thing, you know,... don't know, there was one on television, a big one about AIDS and I watched that and, you know,...

Q. Did you feel that you knew enough about it then, that you found out enough from those documentaries?

A. Oh, no, I really don't think with a killer like that you can ever... that sort of thing, I mean obviously, the people who research into it still finding out stuff all the time, I mean, as there's no known cure, there's a lot I want to know. I mean you read such contrasting - I mean there was obviously the big thing at first, people saying, oh it's okay, it's only homosexuals get it, you know, you think that's okay, next report you read, you know, no it's not, you know, heterosexuals as well, some - some people say can you get it from oral sex and then there's this case where you did, you know, it's complete panic, absolute hysteria really.

Q. What - what - what do you think of AIDS, what do you think it is, you know, what is it for you?

A. Well a lot of people, especially my grandmother, have been saying that's nature's way of punishing promiscuity. I personally think - I mean without knowing its origins it's difficult to say, really - I think it's, it's obviously tragic, and I think it's a bit- to be perfectly blunt it pisses me off, because I - I have this philosophy, right, that everything that is good, that you enjoy in life, or the majority of things, certainly... the majority of people I know enjoy, it's all bad for you, there is something there, junk food, cigarettes, alcohol, all that sort of thing, it's all bad for you: sex, bad for you because you can catch something, there is nothing that's completely, you know, safe. And I thought well this is it, this is the one thing that, you know, that's really put a damper on everything, you know -

Q. Yeah.

A. And then it was a case of, my God, the fact that it can be -you don't know you've got it, that it can be just through one incident, you can trace, you know - it's the fact of having to be so certain of the person that you sleep with, you have to know everything about them, you know, and I don't think you really can. If you meet somebody and you want to have sex, unless you use a condom, you can't really, you know. You've got to stop and think, you know, who have they slept with. I mean I remember this documentary, they showed you, they gave this - not a sketch or anything, but you know, they had these characters and they said, you know, gave them names and said, so and so's slept with so and so, but before that A had slept with B, before that, A has slept with -and all this, you know, it went all the way back, you know, and it just - and also the blood, the blood transfusions, that is also - another terrifying thing about it...

Q. Well they've... that one here now, haven't they -

A. Yeah, yeah.

Q. Although it's still a big problem in Africa. ..

A. Mm. I mean I've heard that that's where it stemmed from, well came - the roots were in Africa. As far as I'm aware, at the moment the only way to be - to safeguard against it is by using a condom during sex, and everyone says, you know, make sure you're, you know... - drug addicts, that sort of thing. I mean immediately I was like going back over the years thinking my God, who have I known who was a drug addict sort of thing, you know.

Q. And had you known anybody?

A. No, I don't think so. I mean - I know - a lot of my friends used to just smoke, have a joint now and then, that sort of thing, but I don't - I don't think I know anyone who ever injected it. But you read silly things - well, terrible things, about people standing on a needle somewhere, you know, or in a - in a, a nurse in a hospital, you know, accidentally getting stabbed with a needle, you think, oh my God, if it can happen like that, you know, it's - I was actually going back over the last - even now I'm still going back through all my sexual partners and thinking who on earth, you know thinking, trying to think of that person, what they were like, what their sexual history could have been, you know, trying to reassure myself that I was okay, and so you can never be sure. And especially the last two, the one I stayed at the hotel with, you know, I'm very worried about that one. He's a guy who travels around a lot, has a lot of health checks, blood checks, that sort of thing for that sort of thing. And - we actually had a conversation in the pub about it at work, with people at work, before I slept with him, and some of the things he said made me think that, you know, I mean he'd obviously know if he had it with all these health checks, that sort of thing, but you can never be a hundred per cent sure. It still frightens the hell out of me.

Q. But when you say - you said ... recently you haven't taken these precautions, I mean do you think that you'll be able to get yourself in a position that you will? I mean, given that you hate the condom as well -

A. Mm.

Q. What about safe sex then, what do you think of safe sex as being?

A. Well, I just said - well I suppose that a lot of people interpret it as reducing your sexual activity, don't sleep around and you won't get AIDS, you know, that's the big message; but now it's a case of - you know, if you use a condom, that's, you know, that's okay. I think - safe sex I think is putting a complete damper on sex but it doesn't have to, this is what a lot of people are saying, you know, you don't have to stop altogether, just check out your partners, use a condom, you know, make sure you know who you're sleeping with. As I say, you know, I think that - that does, obviously it does spoil things a lot, you've got to think of other people, you've

got to think of yourself, that's why it's such a big worry, you know, thinking - It's a risk, you know, and it's a case of do you gamble, do you take the risk, but it's not just you either, because if you get it and you sleep with somebody else, you know, you're gonna pass it onto them so it's, you know -

Q. Well I was wondering about other things apart from - I mean sex which didn't include penetration. Sorry about this cough...

A. Seeing as - actually, seeing as you asked me earlier, did you find it enjoyable or pleasurable, I find everything enjoyable and pleasurable except for the actual penetration, so I mean - why bother? I think really, if you're with a guy and you are going to do everything but, it's obviously a big tease, and actually sometimes -you get yourself so psyched up to the stage - sometimes I really do want actual penetration and if he suddenly says to me no, you know, if the roles were reversed and he says, don't wanna get pregnant, don't wanna get AIDS, you know, I'd be pretty cheesed off as well, you know. But yeah, I suppose - like yes, it is, it is -

Q. It's the other things that you enjoy -

A. Yes, exactly, yeah. Probably more than that, although I do enjoy that as well. It depends - it depends who it's with, you know, it really does, but it's - I suppose it's something that you think, like a guy is - not traditional, what's the word? - you know, it depends, "did you score last night?", and if they said everything but, you know, or something, you know it's that sort of thing. Yeah, I wouldn't want to be - I wouldn't want to lead a guy on at all. If he wanted to go the whole way, he - and this is, this is AIDS aside I suppose really, if only just purely for my own - I just didn't want to do it, for whatever reasons, I think I would have to have made that clear to start with, you know, because it must be very frustrating. I mean the times that I've actually said - got so far and then said, got my period or something, you know, and that's when they say okay, never mind, still go ahead, you know, and that's when I'm pretty okay about pregnancy worries, you know, but - yeah, I think if everyone were to just make the most out of the personal side of things I suppose, or not the actual - if such a big thing wasn't made about the actual penetration, the actual having intercourse, then, you know, it could make things a hell of a lot safer. And also reduce pregnancy risks and all the other diseases you could get as well, so -

Q. Yeah, that's not a bad idea really. Most of the publicity just concentrates on the condom really, it doesn't -

A. Yeah, exactly. Well this is it, this is why I was going on about that, because some... think of, but - and of course there is that build-up, isn't there, I mean the actual climax, physical climax, is a release, and a sort of - you know, that's - that's the final part, you know you've built up to all that, so if you build up and then stop you - I probably would be left thinking there's something missing, you know, it's not quite right here, you know, have to bring it back down to earth again somehow.

Q. But you could have a climax without necessarily having intercourse.

A. Well, yeah, this is what I - well personally on my own that's what I... That's how I got through a year being celibate.

Q. ... some people put on their questionnaire that they learnt about masturbation at school, we were slightly surprised about this -

A. Yeah, well I think it's the sort of thing that teachers, especially when I was at school - I think my sex education teachers, in fact one of them - I don't know why she was a sex education teacher, but she was the most nervous woman I've ever seen, and she really didn't want to discuss anything about it at all, which is ridiculous, so that sort of issue would be mentioned by

one of the lads at the back of the class would say something, and a load of giggles, and he was... for mentioning it, you know, and then the teacher'd blush bright red and try not to say too much about it. But it's the sort of thing that I think is - I never frankly talked about that sort of thing with my friends until a few years ago, I suppose really, and even now it seems to be a bit taboo with some of my friends, you know, it's not the sort of thing you actually say, well do you? - you know, unless you're drunk or you'd have to be very very close friends, you know. But it's not something that I was ever - you - you'd get booklets and leaflets and things about avoiding sexually transmitted diseases or what sexually transmitted diseases were, avoiding being pregnant, conception, pregnancy, how it occurs, all this sort of thing, you know, puberty - but you wouldn't ever get one on masturbation, you know.... sort of let them get on with it if they want to, you know.

Q. But sometimes I wonder, you know, how - how young women find out about it themselves because it's almost... as if it's like a male...

A. Yeah, yeah, obviously, yeah. No I mean it's something that -I started doing that very very young, very young indeed. I don't know, it's just something - a lot of - I noticed some people write in to magazines and say well, I've heard about it, what is it? or something, you know, or what exactly do you do, I've never got any pleasure out of it, you know, and they go to the respondent, you know the agony aunt goes into details: do this, do that, you'll find it wonderful, you know, relax, all this sort of thing. But I mean I personally didn't need any of that sort of thing, it was just something that... I suppose curiosity about all your parts, sort of thing, and then finding out, oh, you know, that's nice, I'll stick to that, you know. But always something that's never discussed with my parents at all, unless it was mentioned in passing, you know, just jokingly recently, anything related to - there's a lot of sexual innuendos more recently, as I've grown up, you know, flying around the house sort of thing, you know, that sort of thing might crop up but not something that I've ever actually - like you might say, have you ever had sex, that's - it's funny, isn't it, but you're more likely to say that, that causes less blushes I think than saying, do you masturbate?

Q. Yes. Strange - yes. Some of the people I've asked about it have been sort of - well, you know, I know it goes on but I wouldn't do it myself.

A. Yeah.

Q. So I can't tell whether they do or not... tell me... yeah. Do you think that many of your friends are worried about AIDS, I mean just to get back onto that one again. Do you think people are worried and concerned about it?

A. Yes, but I think that like me they are well aware of it, finding out facts as and when they can, but at the same time not necessarily abiding by the laws, you know not really taking all the precautions that they could. I mean during all that big panic, yes, everyone was talking about... (tape change) But I think it's one of those things that there's a big scare and then it dies down a bit. With this I think everyone's still keeping it in the back of their minds, there are still statistics... I mean things like the statistics can be so - they're very frightening but at the same time it's not a case of AIDS is on the rise. AIDS is on the increase, it's not a case of that at all, it's a case of more cases are being discovered, so, okay, you can now say such and such - so many people have it but it's not a case of, you know, fifty people had it last month, a hundred people have got it this month, that means that in the last month fifty people have caught it, it's not a case of that at all, you know, so that's what I'm trying to tell myself, you know.

Q. Yeah.

A. So I'll just try and rationalise all these scary stories, but, you know, it's - people are... - the majority of my friends, I think really have got steady, are in steady relationships where, you know, something has been sorted out, they're well aware of each other's sexual history, they don't feel that they should worry other - you know, it's not - I don't think it's a case - it's more an immediate thing, like pregnancy, ... worried about rather than AIDS. I mean if you're in a pub talking, you know, somebody might bring it up and say, you know, what about that, but, you know, I think - I think the majority of my friends know about it, are worried about it, but because a lot of them are in steady relationships are not so worried as somebody like I should be.

Q. Yeah, right. And they think, so it's not really -

A. Mm. Unless something in the past has happened and they might have got it then but - once you might have got it, you might have got it, so it's a case of looking into the present- into the future. You think you've got it, you take the decision to go and get tested, you know, if other people say to you for your own knowledge if you want that, but now that we know about it it's a case of now take precautions, you can't change the past at all and -

Q. Yeah, definitely. When you talk about - I mean it's a bit risky what you've been doing

-

A. Oh, definitely. It's very risky, yeah. I think that's probably why I came along, why - I don't know why, it was just something that made me think... you are dangerous, you are taking risks, and you... stop it. But it's - I think the only - I think you can't necessarily until the late stages - I'm just speaking purely - I haven't a clue about this, I don't really know, but you can look at someone and you don't necessarily know they've got AIDS, you can pass them in the street, you don't know they've got AIDS, they might not know they've got AIDS, so you're having a sexual relationship with somebody and it isn't immediately apparent, you know you don't look at somebody and think I fancy him but oh, God, he's got AIDS, no I won't, you know. You still go ahead all the time and it's just that worry in the back of your head. So it's not something that - I mean I suppose with other, other sexual diseases you can't tell either, but it's not something that's apparent, and if you're the sort of person who doesn't worry about something unless it's apparent and visible then you've got a problem. And it's the sort of thing that I tend to allow to just rise up every now and then. Yes, I know, I know I have been - this is what my mum's been telling me, it's what a couple of my friends have been saying, that I'm taking risks. I keep telling myself like - there was the first one, the guy at the (?) hotel - I'd been celibate for ages and ages and ages and so obviously I wasn't worried and I felt quite - not content or anything, you know at least I wasn't panicking at that stage - why the big - when the big scare blew up I wasn't worried. But I was still - I'm worried now 'cos I've just had two sexual relationships and, you know, after the first one happened I thought okay - I mean it's shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted - but after the first one I thought right, that's it, no more, you know, it's a bit like going on a diet, you know, okay, it starts tomorrow, you know, I'm not gonna take any risks again. Because these have been just like out the blue - I haven't expected them to happen, so that one happened, I think oh, God, think straight, CAITLIN, don't do it again; the next one came along, you know, and I'm pretty sure that now... nothing else is gonna happen, I can't see anything happening, but even so it's not the attitude to have at all, you know, ... taking precautions. There's no point, you know, sitting and worrying, you know, so - I'm gonna sit here and say well, you know, I resolve that I will now become AIDS-conscious but, you know, it's very likely...

Q. Do you think you take risks in other areas of your life at all? Do anything that's risky?

A. Nothing springs to mind.

Q. Drinking, you said you don't drink as much as you used to -

A. Oh, I smoke, that's a hideous thing to do, yes. Yes. I think that with smoking, I mean I used to be a very very very very... anti-smoking to come across really, I mean my mum and my aunt who I live with now - I mean most of my family belong to ASH, that sort of thing, but as I said before, all the things that I enjoy in life, and I think the majority of the population might enjoy in life,... are bad for you. Smoking's bad for me, I know it, I've always known it, I smoke, I'm a smoker, I smoke twenty a day, and again it's something that - there are visible signs with smoking, you know, yellow fingernails, yellow teeth are horrible signs of smoking, but again the damage can't necessarily be seen instantly, you know, and it's another thing that you just - is at the back of your mind. It's in the back of my mind, I am worried about it but I keep - with smoking I don't say I'll give up tomorrow, I'll give up tomorrow, I don't want to give up smoking, I enjoy smoking. I don't drink heavily now, no; I go to the pub quite often after work - I went through a stage actually where I just didn't drink at all, I didn't want to, I didn't enjoy the taste of alcohol, I couldn't get drunk, I couldn't even get to the stage where I was just a little bit tipsy and that's fine, so I just stuck to cokes and things, you know, but recently, you know, in the pub I might have - I mean after - work has got very very heavy lately, I'm very much bogged down with work, and the release of going to the pub and having a drink with your friends, you know, I do feel like sometimes - very occasionally I do think, I want alcohol, you know, that is what I want, that is what will relax me, but - normally I'm not bothered if it's alcohol or if it's not, you know, I haven't got... which I'm pleased about. So I think the only other big risk I do is smoking. I stopped driving, that was a risk.

Q. You stopped driving?

A. Well... I wrote my car off, had another car for two days, wrote that off - that wasn't, I wasn't a dangerous driver, I wasn't taking risks in that way but... risky.

Q. What, that was just an accident?

A. Yeah, yeah, that was a case of taking my eyes off the road and not thinking for one minute, just - just, well a split second, a split second I just wasn't concentrating and I was - I was only going at about ten miles an hour I think. It's lucky nobody was hurt.

Q. Including you.

A. Well I ended up in hospital, I had to go for a head X-ray which they then said to me - they came to give me the results...

Q. What, on the X-ray they put...?

A. ...

Q. Yeah. The job that you're doing is a temporary job or -

A. Well I came out of college with three A-levels, not wonderful grades, not good enough to get into university or polytechnic, not at least the ones that I applied to, I must have chosen the wrong ones - but I think I could have got in somewhere but I wasn't completely a hundred per cent sure I wanted to go into higher education, I thought no, I want money, I'm very materialistic, very money-minded, one of my big ends in life is to get a lot of money, I thought I want money, I'll go to work, that's the thing to do. Didn't think I could handle a long academic period, didn't want to waste people's money in that way either so I thought, well go to work, so - actually at the same time my parents decided to move to the SOUTH COAST OF ENGLAND. I said I'm not being a pensioner at eighteen, I'm going to London thank you very much, so I went to London, I live with my aunt in SURREY, and I took up a three month temporary position and I knew it - I knew it was only three months, because I just wanted to sort myself out, decide what I wanted to do. That was as a receptionist somewhere. I then decided I'd

carry on with ..., re-apply to polytechnic, which I did, I've been offered a place. Since January I've been working in this advertising agency in SOUTH WEST LONDON. They do not know I've been offered a place at polytechnic, they mustn't know I've been offered a place at polytechnic until I hand my notice in, but I'm adamant now that I am going to polytechnic. For a long time after I got the offer I thought do I want to, do I not, I just didn't know, but some of the things at work recently, I've decided I don't want to stay there and I think I'll - I need more qualifications to get where I want to get to so -

Q. What are you gonna do at polytechnic?

A. I'm doing Business Studies, HND Business Studies with a - it was supposed to be with an advertising and marketing option; as soon as I accepted my offer they wrote to me and said it's all changed, it's no longer advertising, it's just a marketing option now, so I thought, well, I'll do it all the same, marketing's the backbone of advertising anyway so I thought I'll do it anyway. So it's only a two year course, so - the same period of education as when I was doing my A-levels, you know. I was supposed to have saved up money though, I haven't managed to do that. God knows how I'm, gonna come down to a grant, I really don't know.

Q. You said that you weren't interested in having children or getting married or anything like that -

A. No. Nobody has -

Q. Where did that come from?

A. I don't know. Nobody has ever given me a good reason to have children - I don't like kids, I don't like children, never have, maybe it's because I was such a horrendous little brat when I was a kid, I really was terrible, but I do - I'm an only child, I don't like other children at all, I don't like children - nobody has given me - I've had a lot of arguments with groups of friends and work colleagues about this sort of thing but I have not yet heard a good reason to have children, certainly not one that would make me have children, you know. No doubt I will probably change my mind, I may well get broody, I don't know, I may want to have children when I'm older if I meet the right guy, I don't know, all these things are sort of things that I don't want to think about now but may well happen, but at the moment I don't want to have children. Somebody -somebody actually said to me that's selfish, I really couldn't see that as being selfish, I mean as far as I'm concerned I have enough trouble leading my life, certainly not - I'm certainly nowhere near ready to have - I mean looking... bringing a human life into the world, I've made so many mistakes with mine, still trying to sort mine out, got a long way to go, and want to do a lot with my life, I certainly don't want to be tied down to children and, you know, if you have a child it's a big responsibility and I'm not prepared to take that responsibility. Maybe I will be one day, I don't know, but as far as marriage is concerned, yeah, sure I could meet the right guy one day and think yes I want to but again, I still, you know - the idea of getting married - I mean I'd love to get married for the day, you know, wouldn't it be nice to... No. Probably because I'm so anti steady relationships at the moment I wouldn't want to, not at all. Probably - maybe it stems from that relationship where I got hurt, and I might get hurt again, or I don't want to get tied down with one person for thirty years or something. It doesn't turn me on at all.

Q. There's a lot of pressure on young women to - to get married or to look for a steady relationship of some sort.

A. Yeah.

Q. Have you experienced that yourself?

A. I've only experienced it, I mean like I said to my parents the other day, you know you're not gonna be in-laws don't you, and they say yeah, fine; and you know you're not gonna be grandparents. Fine, dear, fine. Okay, good - dad relieved he won't have to pay for the wedding. And I said - my grandmother actually keeps saying to me, have you met Mr. Right yet, you know, all this sort of subtle thing. No. I - I - the other day somebody - I mean I can't cook, I have got - I just cannot cook at all, no way, microwave food, that's fine; I was at home the other night with my cousin ADAM and his girlfriend and I was whacking something in the microwave, you know, and having great difficulty, going to great lengths to understand the instructions on the back of the packet, and JULIE said to me something about, dear, you're going to have to learn to cook, you realise; I said well, well- why, you know, apart from my health, I suppose but I mean microwave food - this is quite healthy food apart from the fact I'm microwaving it, you know. They said well what about when you've got a man to - a man to keep; I said, what! ...No, I haven't had any pressure except - oh there's a girl at work who is Indian, I don't know she's some - some Indian religion, whatever, and she - I do not envy at all. Her parents, apparently you're on the shelf by the time you're twenty-four, I think, or something like that, and her parents are pressuring - it's almost an arranged marriage sort of thing, you know, and arranged marriages I get very violently annoyed about arranged marriages, anything like that, I really do. I'm very sympathetic with her at the moment because she has found a guy who she's being going out with for ten years, on and off, and she wants to - but he's not of the same caste, her parents don't know,... that sort of thing, and I think it's just too much aggro, I don't see why anyone should be pushed into that and I haven't - if somebody talks about women should be married, when are you going to get married sort of thing, I always violently oppose it, I always say, well, why?... They might look at me as if I'm a bit weird I suppose, and... but I just think to myself, well that's - that's society, you know, maybe it'll change, maybe it won't, but I'm not planning on conforming just yet.

Q. Is it something about the state of marriage, I mean do you think that marriage is a bad idea in general sort of thing?

A. Oh yeah, I mean I might get married for a bit of alimony I suppose but (laughter) there was a time when - there was a big thing like this, another statistical blow-up - a time that one in three -was it? - no, three - yeah, one in three marriages were... breaking down. I mean my parents split up when I was eight or nine I suppose, they separated. My mum had a kind of affair, which is probably why she's not keen on me having affairs right now, she had an affair and - and that's when we moved, we moved from - we moved house with her, sort of thing. I didn't understand then, nobody told me that she was having an affair at the time, you know, they just told me there were problems and, you know, I was - I saw my dad crying for the first time, you know, it was a very very emotional time, I was upset but I didn't know why I was upset, I just knew that mummy had gone, and it sounds like they might get back together again, which I'm incredibly pleased about because they are so happy now. I suppose they are - they should be a shining example to me of how good marriage could be, you know, but, you know, but -

Q. How old were you when that first happened?

A. I was about - I think I... I think I was about - I don't know how long this affair went on for, I suppose it was around the time I was about eight, seven or eight, that sort of time, you know. I lived with my dad, my mum left home, and she went to stay in a flat in LONDON BOROUGH - not with this guy because he was married and he lived down the road from us sort of thing, but I didn't know about it at the time, I was later told about it, but apparently I - I think they said either I phoned her up or she phoned me and something I said or just talked to her, but I don't

know, she just decided that was it and she was coming home, you know, and she did, and everything was fine, it worked out and - you know, you know, everything's fine there now... SOUTH COAST OF ENGLAND... members of the Green Party or something or other, you know, they really really are, I'm really pleased for them. But well I think, yeah, because so many marriages - I know of - I don't think I know of any marriages where there've never been any problems, especially at work. My boss is married and ... how many women he sees, and - and I was talking to a guy the other night who was married, he has a lot of problems, he was talking about marriage and he was saying, oh you can't necessarily just say it's a bad thing, you know. And I said well I suppose it could be a good thing but, you know, so many do break down and it's so much - it hurts, I don't know, it might hurt just as much as if you'd been going out with somebody, you know, just seeing somebody, for it to break up, but as far as I can tell, breaking off an engagement or breaking of just a relationship is far less traumatic and turbulent than a marriage, especially where children are involved, you know, definitely.

Q. That's what creates most of the problems, I think.

A. Yeah. I think it's not wanting to get - maybe it's - I don't know... born a rebel, I don't know. I must be because it's just - I don't want to do anything that's expected -

Q. - expected of you -

A. - ... I was expected to go to polytechnic and university but I didn't go, you know, supposed to do this, supposed to do that - not, not - not that consciously because I mean it's not - nobody says to me, you know, you must do this, you must do that, but having done sociology and that sort of thing at college, studying society, this sort of thing, communications, knowing what you should do, you know - I don't necessarily think that's what I should do, I better not do that, you know, I think about it first and society also - although society, you know, says marriage, you know, you should, you know you should really get married, you know, at the same time it's showing us again that it just doesn't work, you know, all the time so - maybe I - maybe I just am rebelling against things, I don't know.

Q. What's your image of yourself? How would you describe yourself to somebody, what you're like?

A. ... What am I like? I always tend to divide this up if I can but I shouldn't really. I actually - having ... from this evening I sound very opinionated but I don't tend to get het up about things to the extent of joining rallies and that sort of thing, so I wouldn't say that I - no, I just think I'm not doing that, final, you know. I - I - no words come to mind actually: well, as I say, independent, I suppose non-conformist and rebellious after - things I wouldn't have described myself as before; lack common sense - I'm intelligent but I lack common sense...; irritable at times - very moody, very moody, which always sounds like a description of somebody who's always in a bad mood to me, but it's not, it's not like that at all, my moods always fluctuate but I get very irritable very easily. A very good friend - I care a lot about my friends and my family, that sort of thing; outgoing, outspoken. Nothing really springs to mind.

Q. How do you think others see you, your friends, do you think that that their - their view coincides with yours?

A. When I was doing communications studies, all the theories I've done on this... that sort of thing, you know (laugh). Let's think. I've often wanted to know this, this is one of the things that I've often wanted to - I want people to say, what do you think of me, that sort of thing, and they normally come out with, you know, loud, outspoken, funny, moody - all the things I've said actually, yeah, it does, it does coincide a lot. There's a lot of things I think I am that a lot of people don't think I am, I mean that bugs me, when I say, you know, I'm such and such, they

say, oh no you're not; you know, that really winds me up, you know, if somebody - I know myself more than they do... they see what they see which is what I put across, you know, and if my signal's gone out wrongly well, you know,... sort things out a bit, if that's how I really think I am, you know, if the signals don't come out correctly it's... how I am.

Q. Well, there's something else going on, you're putting out - yeah, you are something else, ... from yourself. Like some of the things you've been saying really, you know, that you think one thing and do another -

A. - do another -

Q. Yeah. I had a few straight questions about AIDS I was gonna ask you... where did you first hear about AIDS? - I've asked you that one, didn't I?

A. Mm.

Q. What is AIDS?

A. It's a disease, it's a killer disease, not always sexually transmitted. Basically, as far as I'm aware it's - can only be transmitted through blood, infected blood, i.e. needles, drugs, that sort of thing; sex - penetration, exchanging body fluids, that sort of thing, you know.

Q. What about HIV?

A. Yeah, yeah, it's all -

Q. What's the difference between HIV and AIDS?

A. Well, HIV doesn't always get blown up into AIDS does it really, it's just - I don't know, I've never - I've never been actually told HIV is this, you know, you just hear so-and-so was HIV-positive, you know, if you're HIV-positive obviously it's a very bad sign and then you sit and worry and wait... wait for it to blow up into - into AIDS, which it's got a strong chance of doing, but - I don't know the actual details, I don't know what it is. I mean I've seen documentaries where they show you under microscopes, all this sort of thing -

Q. Yeah.

A. - you know, but it goes in one ear and out the other, I'm afraid.

Q. Well, it sounds like you've got the distinction together, I mean HIV is the virus -

A. Yes.

Q. - that you catch which - which may develop into AIDS, and they keep changing the proportion... proportion of people who have the virus who will actually develop AIDS. And the virus sort of destroys your immune system -

A. Yeah, yeah, that's it, I knew that as well, yeah -

Q. - and then you -

A. Yeah, that's what - that's the big thing - you know, it destroys your immune - yeah, so that's when - you get - you're vulnerable to other things, aren't you, then.

Q. Mm. Do you think those early campaigns about AIDS had any effect on you at all -

A. God, yeah.

Q. - I mean did you think they were any good or -

A. Yes, but it was such a panic at the time - yes, yes, they were effective, I mean the television adverts, there was a lot of controversy over that, it was a bit too much of a piece of frightening drama really, a bit of artistic - you know, gravestones all this sort of thing, you know. 'Cos a lot of the time, because I'm interested in advertising and I was studying advertising at the time I was sitting there watching it for that, you know, thinking -...of this, you know - I wasn't thinking of the message, but the message I don't think came across. It just came across as a killer then, you know, this could kill you. It didn't give you so many - it gave you facts - the leaflet that came through the door, there was that leaflet that everybody got, I hung onto that for a while,

you know, that I read, hung onto, but it was - it was - it was such a big thing that if you are curious, you know, there's a lot that you should want to know about. And you've got to watch - I mean I - I like - I'm one of these people who likes things to be put simply, if I'm learning something I want to know everything, I want to know it slowly, I want to know it in very simple terms, you know. So I want to be told X, Y, Z, you know. And I want to be told - I mean I suppose diagrams, whatever, you know - I don't like things being given to me - I don't like being hit with a load of complicated data that I've got to work out, you know, I'd rather know it simply, so I would rather - which the leaflet did, I mean obviously the idea was to just state what would help you, you know. So I've not - the biological side of it, you know, as I said, things under microscopes and how - you know, that's - I want to know facts more than anything -

Q. Mm, yes.

A. - straightforward simple facts, then if I'm interested, build up and learn more, you know.

Q. ... affect you as well. Do you think there's anything - does anything strike you as being important about how they should get those sorts of ideas across to young people at all?

A. I think - as far as I know, they're doing it, I mean -

Q. You think it is working?

A. ... brilliant, brilliant condom advert at the moment, that one "make sure you don't go too far without one", I think that's great, that's really good. Somebody actually said to me today, don't you think that's a good advert, you know. And yeah, I think the advertising - the government - I mean they've been criticised for not advertising enough, not giving enough information. They do, I mean there's all these helplines, I mean there's - I think there's plenty of information about it, I think the advertising campaigns are good - I mean... it's a horrible word, saying "advertise" AIDS, but the, you know, awareness campaigns, whatever, you know -

Q. Yes.

A. - they are good and they are all - as far as I can see there are a lot of avenues that you can go up to find out more, there's a lot you can - it's not something that's - you're told about and then you're shut off from finding anything out about it, I think, you know, I don't think there's any big gap in it at all.

Q. So you think the problem's the other way around, it's people getting the information and not doing anything about it.

A. Yes. Yes. I just - I suppose my big - my big - yeah, I just wish that it wasn't - I wish there was some other form of contraception other than a condom, from a sexual point of view I wish there was some other form - I mean as far as I'm concerned, drugs, that's not gonna worry me at all, you know, I'm not into drugs, don't know anybody who is at the moment really, so that's not the sort - my - my problem is the sexual side of it, of catching it, you know, so I personally wish that it wasn't a condom that was gonna. ...

Q. ... One of my colleagues went to the International AIDS Conference and there they were selling lots of condoms, all sorts of types, and they had a female condom which you put inside, sort of, provides a lining -

A. Yeah, or - what, a bit like a cap sort of thing, I mean -

Q. ...

A. ... Oh, covers it all up. Yeah.

Q. So I expect they'll be testing that one... soon.

A. I think... at one stage when they really were going mad about there was a sketch on Spitting Image, going condom crazy, and there was all these, you know, the most outrageous-looking

condoms you've ever seen in your life... obviously very very good for the people who made condoms, you know, I mean they must have made a lot out of it but -

Q. Mm, yeah.

A. Mm. I think - I think - I think it's - I don't think there's a big - I think - I think everyone knows about AIDS, nobody could possibly say they've never heard of AIDS, nobody at all. There are plenty of places they can go to, books, leaflets, telephone lines, there are still programmes going on now about AIDS, you know, it's not a case - it hasn't died down completely. Okay, the newspapers aren't so hysterical about it but it's not died down completely at all, you know obviously because there's more cases coming to light, you know, more statistics are being thrown at us and more places are being set up to help, you know, and - I'm quite happy with the way it's been handled -

Q. Handled.

A. Yeah, a horrible thing to say but I - I - I - I -

Q. Yeah. No real criticism.

A. No.

Q. Yeah. One of the things we're gonna ask young women to do for us is if they would keep a diary for a short while, say for a couple of months or something like that, which would be writing about how they feel about their relationships, and what they're actually doing, you know, describing what they're doing in their relationships. Would you be interested in doing that?

A. Yeah, I'd be very interested - it would have been brilliant a couple of months ago... now but - I mean I do keep a diary anyway, you know, always have, always do, you know, I still - and it tends to be the times that I tend to write in that are when I'm having a relationship anyway, so in effect I do keep one already, but yeah, sure, quite happy to.

Q. I'll probably send you one shortly, I've got your address - you've given me your address with your aunt -

A. I think so, if it's SURREY -

Q. Yep.

A. But I'll be leaving there in mid-September on ... That'll probably be another good time to... (laugh)

Q. ... I'll send you one and you keep it for a couple of months, then send it back and then tell me where you are and we'll send you another.

A. Alright...

Q. And the other thing that we're interested in from maybe interviewing some of the young women that we talked to now in a year's time to see how things have changed or something.

A. Mm, mm, fine.

Q. Good. That'd be great.

A. Obviously I wouldn't be at that address -

Q. ... Right, well, what about your parents' -

A. Yeah, the best thing is to take that one down -

Q. Write it down on the back of - I tear this back paper off so that like anything... isn't kept with the rest of... it's hidden... It's only there until I've spoken to you.

A. Right, well, you should always know where I am.

Q. And is there anything that you wanted to ask me at all?

A. No, I don't think so, no, no, nothing - nothing springs to mind. I mean, how many people are you interviewing?

Q. We're gonna interview about a hundred and odd in London and a hundred and odd in Manchester, but there are many more people doing the questionnaire than we actually interview, I mean we'd like to do more but...

[REDACTED]