

LJH13 20.4.1989 (Break on tape)**Jade**

Q: ... interested in in this piece of work that I'm doing at the moment is how young women think and feel about their relationships. What would you say is the most important relationship for you at the moment?

A: At the moment?

Q: Yeah. (Pause) All kinds of relationships, not necessarily relationships with men or anything like that.

A: (unclear) .. trust in friendships, understanding each other, and getting on alright.

Q: Is that in relationships with your girlfriends or -

A: And boyfriends really.

Q: Do you have a relationship at the moment with -

A: I've got boys as friends but no relationship.

Q: Mm. What kind of things do you do with the boys who are friends?

A: (unclear) .. chat to them, well sometimes I ... with them, go to parties with them and all that, most likely I see them, say hello and chat to them, that's it really.

Q: What kind of relationship do you sort of imagine having in the future. (Pause) Do you think about it much?

A: Not really. It doesn't really cross my mind.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: What's on your mind mostly these days?

A: Exams. Schoolwork. What I'll do next year and all that. That's mostly on my mind. And ... and all that crap. That's it really.

Q: What are you going to do next year?

A: I've applied to ... College to do a media studies course there, it's a year, but I'm thinking, if I don't get into that college, if I don't get into college, what am I gonna do then? I think I might stay another year in the sixth form to do the (?) B.Tech National and then after the B.Tech go to do the media studies afterwards.

Q: So it's media studies you really want to do?

A: Yeah, journalism.

Q: Yeah. What gave you the idea of doing that?

A: It was sort of like - I like communicating with people, sort of like ask people questions and find out about their lives and all that. I find it interesting. And I like travelling as well.

Q: So you think that's the kind of job that would give you those possibilities?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. You're living at home at the moment.

A: Yeah. The whole family. Yeah. My mum, my gran, my sister, ... three cousins, and my uncle, but he's rarely there, so you know what I mean, he's there sometimes, then he's not there. And that's it really. My little two cousins what comes during the week 'cos her mum goes to college again, so they have to go to nursery and my gran tries to look after them and everything. So it's a big family... noise.

Q: And your mum works as a [CARING PROFESSION]?

A: Yeah, [RESIDENTIAL CARE]...

Q: Oh, yeah. How do you get on with the crowd at home?

A: It's okay. We all get on. We'd have a chat, crack jokes, go to parties together. We all get on fine actually.

Q: Yeah.

A: We have big arguments.

Q: What d'you argue about?

A: Well I had an argument with my cousin the other day, he was arguing about - my other cousin, she said something to her and she didn't like it so they weren't speaking, and she was repeating it to my sister, and so I told her that the thing's

done, ended, so why shouldn't people let it go? And she told me to shut up and then we just started an argument then and now I'm not speaking to her.

Q: Ah. What do you think the chances of making up are?

A: Okay. We sort of like - there was me and my sister and my cousin and my sister's friend all sitting chatting yesterday, chatting about everyday life, like a party my friend's gonna have and... all sitting down listening to each other's stories and everything. Like when we have a argument we always sort of like chat anyway, a few weeks, three to four weeks afterwards.

Q: Ah, so it's not too bad. You don't harbour grudges.

A: No, no.

Q: Like a lot of people don't speak for twenty years.

A: No.

Q: None of that stuff, you work it out. So one of the other things that we're interested in talking about is the sex education, that you are having, if you are having it still.

A: No, we don't have it no more.

Q: You don't have it anymore? What age were you when you were having it mainly?

A: Round - from the first year from thirteen ... up to the fifth year. Fifteen.

Q: Did you find you were learning much from it?

A: Well I used to find it quite - sometimes you used to find it boring, sometimes you used to find it interesting.

Q: Which were boring, which were interesting?

A: Like the first year to the third year was boring, the fourth year to the fifth year was interesting. That's when the AIDS started coming in, they were chatting about AIDS and all different kinds of contraceptions and all that crap. That was quite interesting. But... it was sort of like... sex education, it's sort of like sit down and have, girls, sort of like, girls here and boys there, all chatting about sex education... it was okay. You learned quite a bit from that lesson.

Q: Yeah... You were talking about the sort of sex education that you were given at school, which bits were interesting, which bits weren't; and then you mentioned that you got more interested when they were talking about AIDS. Was it mainly school that you heard about AIDS from or -

A: I heard about it from...newspapers, media really, sort of like people chatting about it.

Q: What did - what do you think you know about it? What do you know about it?

A: What do I know about AIDS? Er - that it's a sexually transmitted disease. You only get it if you have sexual intercourse with an infected person. You can get it by kissing, but a really long sort of kiss, but that's only a little bit in it so - that's really it really. That you can die of it, you don't really see the symptoms until years after, isn't it?

Q: Mm. Do you see any difference between HIV and AIDS?

A: I don't really know much about HIV but - I don't really know much about that one.

Q: That's the virus which actually causes the -

A: AIDS

Q: Yeah, well it weakens your immune system so that you then can be - get these various diseases which people die of with AIDS. So there's a bit of a distinction between the virus - it's that which you can have for years and not even know that you've got it, and then that will develop with some people into AIDS. Do you think - when you say you talked about it with friends and other people and so forth, do you think that it's affected people, knowing about AIDS, that it's affected the way they think about sex, say, for example?

A: Well I think with some people it does but these young people today, no.

Q: You think they don't take any notice?

A: They sort of like take notice but not that much. They say that sort of like they can't catch it from people they know for years and everything, they don't think he's

got it or... people in general kind of like take notice of it and everything, but normally I just don't think people are really taking notice of it really.

Q: Mm. Do you think they should?

A: Yeah. Actually they should take notice of it 'cos, d'you know what I mean, they could die of it and they could spread it and give it to other people and make them die and carry it on.

Q: Mm, yes. So they should be changing their behaviour. What about you, would you - has it affected the way you think about sex?

A: In a way, yeah, 'cos you don't know - these days you don't know who's got AIDS or whatever, or who's got a disease... you just say no, you're scared you might catch this or you might get pregnant and everything so - yeah, I think it's changed from over the years as well.

Q: How did you used to feel before?

A: ... no I can't do that, I'm scared I might get pregnant, get in trouble ... that's how I used to think before. Still the same but since the AIDS come, it's sort of a big longer now.

Q: So you think - I mean - do you imagine having a sexual relationship in the future?

A: Yeah, in the future. Yeah, in the future. I don't know how many or how far but I - yeah.

Q: But if you met somebody that you were interested in, these things would certainly influence the way you thought about it, would they?

A: Yeah.

Q: 'Cos some people think it will and then when it comes to the crunch it won't.

A: Well you hear a lot of stories about how sort of like with a condom they just sort of like punch a hole in it on spite and everything so - I don't trust boys today.

Q: You don't trust them?

A: I don't trust them at all.

Q: So you were saying that some young people today think they're alright because they know the person well and they trust the person.

A: Yeah.

Q: You think that's wrong?

A: Well you can't trust - you don't know what they can do, what they can have or...

Q: Yeah. And it's pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases that you'd be worried about?

A: Yeah.

Q: In that kind of situation. So how do - I mean how do you - you say it's kind of like, it's a long way away, it's kind of difficult for you to project onto the future and think about the relationships that you might have, but have you got any ideas about them? I mean do you think of marrying in the future, having children?

A: I think of having children.

Q: Yeah.

A: About six. Well as they come, but it even puts me off it now and then, marriage and stuff, settle down with one person.

Q: No, but you quite like the idea of children.

A: Yeah. I've got so much in my family that I get so - get used to them and everything, so -

Q: Yeah. Do you help look after the children in your family?

A: I look after them every week: dress them, take them to school, discipline them, everything.

Q: Mm.

A: You know, I mean -

Q: Yeah, so you think you'll just continue with that, and maybe a husband but then may not be, it just depends. What about - you go to Pentecostal Church?

A: Yeah, but for the past...around - I've been twice since the year started and that's it really. I'm not really stuck to just that any time I have a party I come back late and I'm too tired to get up to go to church and then my sister's been sleeping with someone for some weeks now, three weeks now, so I don't really go no more. Plus they come too early in the morning, like when I'm just getting up, that's when they come. We just say we're not ready and everything, we say next week but next week it's still the same thing.

Q: Yeah. What, do you think it's gradually dropping off, that you don't - you probably won't go back?

A: Yeah. I think gradually we won't go back but - we might go back sort of like in between but not now -

Q: But had it been - had it been affecting your life, the religion, I mean were you very involved at one point?

A: Not very - I used to go like every week but I weren't really involved in it, sort of like I used to go, oh we have to go to church tomorrow, get my clothes out, set them out, then go. But sort of like you know, like you can sit in a class here, get really into the lesson, and when I get home everything I've learnt in the lesson, it sort of like disappears but it's sort of like gone way back in my mind and then like the next week it comes up. During the time like on a Sunday - like during the week, don't really think about it until Sunday comes back round again, that's when I really think about what my lesson was about and everything. That's it really.

Q: Mm, so it's really - it's not a permanent part of your thinking. Do you think it's affected the way that you think about relationships, about whether or not you'd have a sexual relationship?

A: No, not really... sort of like it's better to sleep with one person and get married to that person and live with that person for the rest of your life -

Q: Which you don't agree with at all?

A: No because sort of like you could have arguments and disagreements during the marriage, get a divorce and everything, marry again. But they don't see it like that, sort of like if you don't marry then you've got a child and sort of like - how can I say? Out of their class sort of like. 'Cos this girl, she used to go there, she was - she used to be a Sunday school teacher, and she weren't married and she had a child with this guy, and she don't come back no more. It's sort - they don't really chat about her and involve her in stuff no more so she just don't come back.

Q: Mm.

A: They think it's a bad thing and everything.

Q: Yeah. How do you feel about that then?

A: I think that's wrong, 'cos she's been there for some time and she just wanted a sexual relationship, or she just wanted a child; do what she want. It's her life really isn't it?

Q: Yeah. So you think that's affected the way that you feel about actually going to church...?

A: Yeah.

Q: You don't really agree very much with -

A: No, I don't agree on that part, I've told them that I don't agree on that part.

Q: Yeah.

A: We have big disagreements about it and these big discussions in the class and everything, but as I say, it's just the way it was.

Q: Yeah. Do you think there are other people who go to the class that feel the same way that you do or do you think you're out on a limb here?

A: No. Quite a few people - my sister, my cousin, quite a few people, like the young ones like us, we sort of like disagree about that subject. We say that not every man's ready to get settled down and everything and if you're going out with this guy, you might get pregnant, he leaves you; if you do that you can't go and find another one and marry it and he don't wanna marry you 'cos you've got a child and

everything; so you're on your own there. And, you know, it's situation... you have to deal with when it comes to it and everything.

Q: So it's sort of being more realistic.

A: Yeah.

Q: They're coming at the earlier stage of saying you shouldn't do it at all and you're saying, well, what if you have? Then you've got to deal with the situation.

A: Yeah...sort of like, they say, if like you come church every week and meet a nice Christian man who wants to settle down and get married that - but we just say we wanna live our lives and see what the outside world is really like and everything.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: And come back to it afterwards if we've got time.

Q: So religion is sort of going - is sitting a bit - bit back at the moment. When you talk about having sexual relationships and so on, you're emphasising the sort of dangers involved for women, like pregnancy and things like that. Do you think that you take risks in other areas of your life, do you do anything a bit risky in other parts of your life?

A: I take a lot of risks sort of like -

Q: What do you do?

A: Sort of like everybody says you know, man's world and man has to do this and man has to do that and man has to ask out women and man has to ask a women to marry him, ask the girl for a dance and everything, and I don't think it should go like that - I think it should go two ways. One time, now where was I at? - I was at this place and this girl... and her friends, they told me to go up and ask this guy for a dance... thinking why don't you lot; they said no... they say yeah, they say ask the guy for a dance. They say no, the guy might... So I went, alright then, and I went up to the guy and I asked the guy for a dance, he said yes. So I danced with the guy... and they couldn't believe it, they said no, they can't do that, the guy's gonna think me a slag. If you sort of like like the guy, like if a guy like a girl you ask her for a dance and everything, you're not telling the guy that he's a slag and everything, but it's just the way, carry on, that's the way life is, isn't it?

Q: Mm. Yeah. Well I was wondering about that. It's like the sort of double standard, that different behaviour's okay for men and not okay for women. So you don't think much of that?

A: Well my friends don't but I just think that it should be equal in everything, man, marriage, relationships and all that crap.

Q: Mm. You think you've got much chance of getting that?

A: Actually in a way, yeah, in a way, no.

Q: How d'you mean?

A: Sort of like, some of the guys I know, they're okay and sort of like I can just chat to them openly about any subject and anything, I could ask them to do this for me, or ask them to do that, ask them a question I wouldn't think of asking a girl, and everything, but some men you just sort of like draw back in your seat sort of quiet and all shy with them.

Q: What do you think makes the difference between the two, I mean what -

A: I think it's the way the relationship works, sort of like how close you are, how you trust this person and how you understand him, this person.

Q: So you feel if you're close with a person and trust him then you can ask him questions that you wouldn't perhaps ask a girl.

A: Yeah.

Q: But these - I'm trying to get at what, what is the feeling you have about this other category, you know, these ones who you feel shy with. How do you feel, what are the other feelings that you have involved?

A: What do you mean about...the other feelings...?

Q: Well I don't know, like there's one group of boys whom you feel you can trust and talk to and there's another group who you feel shy with. What do you think makes you feel shy?

A: (Pause) Their age group.

Q: What, are they older?

A: Yeah, some of them are. Yeah, much older. The way they chat, and that you sort of like know that they've got a woman somewhere else or a child and - you sort of ... go all shy and everything, and you get, you're young, don't know nothing about this, don't know nothing about his life and everything. I really can't say much about that but I just sort of like feel all shy and go all quiet; sort of like when you know a guy likes you and you - you sort of like come on strong and everything. Like when they're chatting to me I just keep laughing and everything, they're chatting to me, and they touch me, I just sort of like flinch away from them... like when they're really showing how they like me and everything, I go shy and everything.

Q: Do you think it's - I mean, do you think it's because you're a bit young and you don't know quite how to handle it or something? Or is there something that you want and you don't quite know how to get it? I mean, would you like to pursue a relationship with one of these people?

A: Um - what can I say -

Q: What do you think?

A: There's WESLEY, RICKY, another guy called JOHN, this guy I met on holiday; RICKY - no, WESLEY - no, JOHN - he's okay, sort of like... I sort of like had a relationship with him but he thought, he thought I was sort of like flirting with his friends and then flirting with his brothers and I didn't take much notice of him and everything. Really - I don't think.. I just don't think guys trust me. Just sort of like they say that - that I chat to everybody, I chat to a lot of people like if I'm walking up the street, I'd smile at people and everything, and if they smile back then you get to chat and everything and I get to know them and everything. So - like if I'm walking with a guy they say, who's that guy, and who's that. Like when I was on holiday for example...

(TAPE BREAKS HERE)

Q: Well anyway, we were talking about all the suspensions, you were trying to remember how many.

A: Yeah, three or four suspensions I had and ... but ... the amount I had was - in my school we weren't allowed in the class, we weren't allowed in the school building at lunch and break time, and the teacher always used to be ... I used to always sort of like walk in when they're not there ... and when they'd come sort of like we'd walk into the classroom and sit down... Mr. ... the girls was all chatting to him, we was chatting to him and then he let us in, and then the teacher came, and then he changed his views, he say get out and everything, and I'm gonna shut the door. Listen, what got into you and everything, and he said I'm not going, it's me, he said we can come, we said we came in, he's sent us out now just 'cos ... so ... (?) I sat on the thing and he turned round and he pushed me. Listen, who are you pushing? So I pushed him back. And then when they told the teacher she called me in and everything, so me and the teacher was arguing, and then he turned round, the teacher said that if I don't be quiet, if I don't answer back, I will get suspended. But he was going really on about how I ain't got no manners, how I'd been brought up with no manners, so I carried on, so - she told MRS. PHILLIPS, and MRS. PHILLIPS, she can't do nothing about it, she'll have to suspend me, so I just got suspended for that.

Q: Mm.

A: And another teacher -

Q: How do you get back in when you've been suspended, do you have to sort of behave well for a while or -

A: No, they said that - they said sort of like, they send me home for some days, like send me home for a day, two or three days, or sometimes weeks, two weeks and all that you get suspended for.

Q: Mm. What do your family say when that happens?

A: I just tell them my side and everything and they just go - sometimes they go oh, sometimes they wanna phone up and ask to find out about what happened, to find out their side and everything. Most times they say okay, you just tell them to do work, sort of like schoolwork, if they've got no schoolwork, stay at home. That's it really.

Q: So do you think you are - I mean do you think the work part is okay despite all these disruptions and everything about - in the relationships with the teachers?

A: It's okay.

Q: Yeah?

A: Okay.

Q: And do you find it okay coming into school or are you ... about coming in?

A: Yeah. Okay actually, 'cos I don't like staying at home. Got too much... and always arguing and crying and all that.

Q: So it's quite good to come in here really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah... What about your friends, have you got many friends here?

A: I got too much.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Sort of like... everybody in the year, I know quite a few people actually.

Q: Mm.

A: Sort of like sometimes we just sit down and chat, sometimes I say hello to them and everything, that's it really. But I've got three main friends ... and we just sort of hang around together, sometimes KIRSTY ... That's it really.

Q: What about friends outside the school, what sorts of things do you do?

A: With friends outside school?

Q: Well, and what sorts of things do you do outside of school with your friends from school? What kinds of things do you do?

A: Things like - we go to pubs, we go to parties but - I don't mean ... 'cos they go sort of like... they go sort of like jeans and trainers party. 'Cos the kind of clothes they wear, they go to the same parties but everyone just wears them kind of clothes, like I see them in jeans and trainers and jumpers, and that's the sort of parties they go to. I don't like parties like that. I... sort of like you go to it like christenings and you all dress up and you see... immature little boys and everything. I don't like going parties like that. But they prefer going to parties like that and everything. So we don't really rave and everything. But it's all like - we go to people's houses, we go chat and everything. They go to clubs... they go there with all them - I say little boys, the age group I'm in, I don't really get on with... and when they go ... just sit and watch... and everything. And that's it really.

Q: But you're more interested in the older age group?

A: Yeah.

Q: So what do you think about the future, what are your plans, what are you thinking you'll do?

A: In what? Career-wise?

Q: Career-wise.

A: Sort of like - go to college. I sort of like want to get - I don't wanna work in England, I sort of like want to work in America. And work sort of like...

Q: ... in magazine journalism?

A: Yeah. But sort of like just start off in England, get a job on one of the newspapers and work my way up... I think... 'cos I wanna travel and live my life and everything.

Q: And then sort out the other things.

A: Yeah.

Q: The children but not necessarily the man. I'm sorry it's been so disrupted today, it's been very interrupted, but is there anything that you'd like to ask me about at all? Since I've been asking you questions constantly -

A: No, it's okay.

Q: Yeah. What we were thinking of doing in the research is maybe coming back to people that we talked to this year next year to see how they're going on, if anything's changed. Would you be interested?

A: Yeah, sure.

Q: Ah, good. Would you give me -

A: - home address -