

**LJH34 26.9.1989**

**Kirsty**

Q: ... send them away to be transcribed, the tapes, by people who, you know, would never come into contact with you at all. Well, thank you very much for agreeing to come and talk to me. It's very nice to meet you. What we're trying to do with this piece of research that we're doing is to find out how young women feel, and what they think, about their relationships. So can I ask you what's the most important relationship which you have or have had, any kind of relationship, not necessarily with men or whatever.

A: I think the most - well the most complicated relationship that I can think of is the one between me and my mother.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: You're living with your mother at the moment?

A: Yeah, at the moment, yeah.

Q: Yeah. How's that, what can you tell me about it?

A: It's not - we get on very well now, but we had a very difficult time when I was a teenager, it was a very difficult time, I'm surprised she didn't throw me out, but we get on fine now, but I'm trying to move out again at the moment, we're still a bit close.

Q: Have you moved out before or -

A: Yes, I have done, yeah. I moved out once when I was sixteen to go and live with my boyfriend and then very recently I was out for a couple of weeks when I broke up with a boyfriend...

Q: On the questionnaire it looked as if you'd had quite a few relationships which were quite steady longish relationships -

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Can you tell me about some of those - I mean - let me - let me take you back into your past - tell me about that first relationship that you moved out, was that the first one -

A: That was the first major relationship, yeah. He's someone I still see actually, he's a friend. We were still going out with each other last year, we seem to go back to each other every now and then, but first of all it was when I was fifteen, and we fell madly in love, and I actually went to live with him for a while, and he was the same age as me, when I was sixteen I went to live with him for a while. And then we kept breaking up and getting back together again. And then we didn't see each other for about - that was for about three years, and then we didn't see each other for about three years, he went to COUNTRY, and then we got back in touch with each other last year and saw each other again. But again it didn't work out so we're just friends now.

Q: Yeah. What do you think - I mean it must be different each time, the reason why it didn't work out -

A: Yeah. I don't know, when I see him now we're both much more grown up than we were before, much more mature, and I think it could possibly work; but the first reason why it didn't work out when we were younger was because he used to get quite violent. He'd been beaten up as a child and he couldn't express himself in any other way, so he'd get violent when we were having arguments; and the last time we got back together again, I'm not sure of the reason really, I think I'd just fallen out of love with

him, and I was hanging onto him but I didn't really love him. So I realised that and then we broke up.

Q: Yeah. Was he violent the second time around?

A: No. He wasn't actually violent, I was always frightened that he would be, the anticipation was worse really, but then he never actually was, but I was always frightened, so that might have had something to do with it.

Q: That first time when you first started the relationship, was it the first sexual relationship that you'd had?

A: Yeah.

Q: And how - how did it come about, I mean what made you decide to make it into a sexual relationship? Did you decide or -

A: Well, we both actually decided it, it was his birthday, and we just decided that we loved each other and we actually got engaged at this time, this was when I was fifteen, and we decided we wanted to be together so we decided to have a sexual relationship.

Q: Did you use contraception the first time?

A: Yes, we did, we used condoms, yeah.

Q: Have you always done that or -

A: Used contraception? I actually got pregnant after that, we did use condoms when we first started out but I went to the doctor to ask to go on the pill, and the doctor wouldn't do it without my mum's permission, and I felt there was no way I could face my mum - she didn't talk about things like that, so we carried on, and we used condoms sometimes, and other times we didn't, and I got pregnant. But then I had a miscarriage -

Q: Yeah.

A: - so that solved itself really.

Q: Was that very upsetting or was it...

A: It was pretty awful because, apparently the nurses told my mum that I almost died, and I said to her I was having pains, and she thought it was appendicitis, and then I told her that I was pregnant. I lost a lot of blood and the doctor came, I went to the hospital, and it seems that I lost a couple of days, I think I was unconscious for a couple of days while they operated, and when I woke up she was very good but it must have been awful for her. I felt that I'd really gone against her, I'd really upset her, but I mean I'm still upset now, when I see babies and things, I get very broody. It was pretty awful.

Q: Do you think you - that you plan to have children at some point anyway?

A: What, then -

Q: No.

A: Oh, will I, oh yeah, I hope so, yeah.

Q: Yeah, yeah. At the time that you had that it must have been quite early in the relationship.

A: It was, it was probably about six months on that I actually got pregnant. Yeah. And -

Q: ... trauma, it didn't - I mean you kept together -

A: Yeah, I think it brought us actually closer together although it caused complications 'cos my mum - 'cos I was under sixteen when I actually got pregnant, and he was just over. She was obviously very upset about it and said that she was gonna take him to court, but she never did, but it caused complications because whenever he came round there was - there was trouble obviously -

Q: Yeah. That must have been very difficult at that point for you.

A: It was a very difficult time. I think - a few years later I actually had a bit of a nervous breakdown, I think it had probably got a lot to do with that, because I blanked the whole thing out, and for a time I couldn't even remember having a miscarriage or anything, and then suddenly it all came back, so that was a lot to do with it.

Q: You must have been at school at the time as well?

A: Yes, I was at school. I think also the worst thing about it was that it was all hushed up. So even my father doesn't know, my brother - and I felt that I couldn't even talk about it to anyone. Even my mum, she was very understanding but I couldn't - it's only recently I've been able to say how I feel about having lost a baby, I wasn't really encouraged to talk about it, I felt that I couldn't really mourn it.

Q: Mm, yeah. Do you feel you're working through that now a bit?

A: Yeah, I've - I've actually - I've got a lot better relationship now with my mum and we can talk about things like that now, I don't feel so ashamed. I felt dirty at the time.

Q: Yeah.

A: ...

Q: Yeah. Well it was good, I mean that the - I mean she stood by you as it turned out sort of thing, even though you were expecting that she wouldn't -

A: Yeah. No, she was - she was very good. I thought I knew - I knew she would be like that, whatever I'd done she would stand by me.

Q: Mm, yeah. So, when you think about it now, I mean can you talk a little bit about it, I mean how you felt about -

A: About actually -

Q: About losing the baby.

A: About losing the baby. I felt very confused because obviously when I found I was pregnant I didn't think that I could have the child because I was still at school and I didn't feel I could give it the right - I mean I didn't have my own place or anything, and SCOTT had a job but it was nothing that could really support us, and also... didn't wanna tell them, so I thought it wouldn't be an ideal time to bring a baby into the world, so I had gone to ask about an abortion. The doctors were giving me a hard time because the two doctors in the actual practice... and none of them seemed to sort of act very fast. I know that there's a waiting list and everything, so I was told that they - they'd do what they could and put me in for an abortion, but it wouldn't be very quickly. And so - I had the miscarriage and I woke up, and I was actually in a ward with all pregnant women, which made me cry non-stop for a couple of days.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I think I - the worst thing was I felt really dirty because the nurses didn't seem very friendly, everyone seemed to be against me, I was the only one in the ward that wasn't - wasn't pregnant, I just felt ashamed really of it, but also I mean I did really want the baby although I couldn't practically -

Q: - have it, yeah.

A: I just - I felt very confused because I felt I might have killed it myself in wanting to have an abortion.

Q: That was where the guilt was coming from -

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: - I was wondering about that, it wasn't so much about the sex, it was about the fact that the baby had gone.

A: Yeah, I felt that I'd killed it, it wasn't what I wanted.

Q: Yeah. But - you wanted it as well as not wanting it -

A: That's right.

Q: - both of the things were in there.

A: Yeah. And I didn't know which way to turn.

Q: Yeah. So after that did things - I mean things got a bit better with your mum after - after a while -

A: It took an awful long time with me and my mum to actually - like I say, I think we've only actually ever talked about it maybe this year, and that was about seven years ago.

Q: Yeah.

A: So it took an awful long time, we just used to skate over the subject every time it came up.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I've always felt really bad about it.

Q: Yeah. What about the - what about SCOTT, did things - how were they with him after -

A: We were a bit closer for a while. Those - when I actually came out of hospital and mum let him come round and see me - she wouldn't let him come to the hospital - and when I was at home and I made a special effort to - to dress up and look quite happy, and he was actually quite angry with me for not being iller, he thought that I was too happy.

Q: It'd been too easy for you.

A: Yeah, that's right, he thought I wasn't upset at all and I was just trying to put on a brave face really.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: But that didn't come out for a while, he didn't tell me that straight away, but that's what he told me afterwards.

Q: Mm. About the violence. What was your reaction, I mean had you known that he was violent before or -

A: No. I knew about his background, when he was - actually when he was a few months old he was found apparently on the floorboards in his parents' house, he'd been beaten up and bruised and he was taken straight into care, and then apparently when he was younger in care he experienced quite a bit of violence. So I knew that he hadn't had a very good life and I think I made a lot of allowances for that. So when he - I don't think - I think he probably - he actually hit me the day that I had a miscarriage, he hit me in the stomach and I was wondering -

Q: Was that before... -

A: Yeah, that was about an hour before -

Q: Yeah.

A: - so maybe that could have been it, but the doctor just told me that it was just like nature's way of saying that you aren't ready to have a baby. I didn't tell anyone about that, I couldn't, if I'd told my mum she'd have never let him near me again. But he - he only just started getting violent then, but every time he was violent then afterwards I'd get an awful lot of sympathy from him, he'd feel very sorry and he'd be very nice to me, so I think sometimes I thought it was a means to an end, it was - I got a lot more attention from him than I would have got normally. I never got - except for that incident I

never got very badly hurt, I mean it would just be a - sometimes a slap round the face or a punch or something like that, just... capable of... A lot of the time when I was staying round his house I'd run away, I'd run away in the middle of the night because I'd be frightened, and he'd come after me, and then I knew that I didn't - if I kept running and I didn't stop when he called me then I think he would have done something worse. But as I say, it was only - it was the slaps and punches mostly.

Q: Mm. But obviously - I mean as you said this was one of the reasons why you broke up, I mean it built up -

A: Yeah, it built up. I mean I was very very immature at fifteen emotionally, I think, and I think that's when I actually grew up and realised that I didn't have to take that, that I didn't need to have that, and I think I always thought that it was just part of loving someone, that it got very volatile, I didn't think that you could be so emotionally involved with someone and not be volatile. So I just - I think I literally grew up and realised I didn't have to.

Q: Yeah. So after you split up, what did you - what happened then, you went back to live at home?

A: Yeah, I went back to live at home. I wasn't actually living with him for very long.

Q: Yeah.

A: I went back to live at home and not a lot happened really, I mean I went out with lots of people, but I always felt that I really loved him. And I knew that he'd feel the same as well and he did. So he'd phone up say once every year or something -

Q: Yeah.

A: - out of the blue and that would give me a jolt and then I'd realise that the person I was with I didn't really love as much as that.

Q: Yeah. That must have been a bit difficult -

A: Yeah. I think I just kept looking for that - that first thing when you first fall in love, I kept looking for that all the time, I just didn't find it.

Q: These other people, they were some long, some short relationships?

A: Yeah. There was one soon - quite soon after I'd finished with SCOTT, I went out with JONATHAN, and that lasted I think two or three years. And that was mostly - I couldn't - I found it very difficult to have a physical relationship for a while, I - it started off as a physical relationship and then for two years I was actually celibate, I wouldn't sleep with JONATHAN, but he was very understanding, and it was mainly like a spiritual relationship really. We got on very well, we were almost like friends, and then after - after two years of not having a physical relationship, I just thought there must be something wrong here, and I split up with him. I thought we were really just friends and I was really leading him on, because he was thinking of marriage and - and like living together for always, and I knew there was something wrong. I didn't want him physically so -

Q: Do you think it was just him or do you think it was that you didn't want anybody?

A: I didn't actually want anyone, I don't think, but I still didn't - I wasn't actually attracted to him in that way. I could still look at people and think that they were attractive, but I didn't - I didn't want to sleep with anyone at that time.

Q: Why do you think that was?

A: That was around the time when I had like the nervous breakdown so I think that probably had an awful lot to do with it, I just cut myself off from most people, I never saw

any of my friends, I just - I stayed with JONATHAN all the time, I mean we were just together every day and he was the only person I could really sort of tell how I felt all the time. And he was so good at listening, so I just avoided everyone sort of thing.

Q: So I mean he was supportive in another way somehow -

A: Yeah.

Q: - I mean he's - like - almost like therapy -

A: That's right, yeah. He was very good.

Q: And it was at the point where you decided that maybe you were - were you thinking that you could have a physical relationship with somebody?

A: Yeah. I started feeling restless, I suppose, in a way, I just - I felt - I knew that there was more, I just wanted some - some passion out of life I think it was. I just - it was actually just one day I decided, a Sunday, I just woke up and decided, this is it, I've definitely got to finish it. Just went round and told him. I don't think he actually believed me at the time but - and of course we said we'd try and remain friends but - we see each other occasionally but we're not really friends. We've lost everything we ever had.

Q: Yes. Well, rather a complicated relationship. What happened after that one?

A: After that one then I - I seemed to go through quite a few people. I think I was quite merciless at that time. I seemed to have lots of relationships with people, I went a bit wild. But then I think I needed that for some reason, it didn't harm me at all, that actual period, 'cos I just seemed - I got through quite a few people. Mostly that were friends as well, and I slept with them, and the main... it was all very uncomplicated, which after the last two was what I needed.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And what about - I mean when you said you'd been celibate, you hadn't really felt like having a physical relationship, I mean were you enjoying these physical - were they actually satisfying? Or some may have been and some not.

A: I don't think I've ever found anything completely sexually satisfying, I think my main reason for actually having physical relationships is the cuddling and the affection and everything, I don't really get a great deal out of the sex, because I think I cut myself off a lot of the time. I don't seem capable of actually closing my mind and I always, sometime - well, most of the time I start thinking this is really dirty, I think probably from what I was brought up with as a child, I just think - it just always seems wrong to me, although I'm probably sort of very liberal and I don't feel anything like that is wrong, it just seems to come into my mind all the time, it makes me feel guilty so - it's mostly for the affectionate side of it...

Q: I was gonna ask you about that from a different sort of direction really, asking what - what you think of as sex, what is sex for you?

A: Ah, a difficult one. I don't know, it's very difficult. Because I think - I mean even touching can be sex, I don't necessarily mean the intercourse, but any sort of intimacy. I don't know, I just seem to remember, when I was younger any sort of intimacy on TV or anything like that, I used to get very embarrassed about if my mum was there. It might be because my parents both got married very young so I've never actually seen her kiss or cuddle a man or anything like that, and I've just - I just feel it should be like behind closed doors sort of thing. Although that isn't really what I think, I mean -

Q: Yeah, it's complicated, isn't it?

A: Yeah.

Q: You say your parents broke up when you were young?

A: Yeah, my father left when I was three. And she did marry again but that was a very strange relationship. He was - my stepfather was quite violent, and he was a bit - a bit schizo I think. He used to do - he was another one that - he found some diaries of mine when I was about fourteen, I think, when I had a boyfriend and we were just like petting and stuff like that, and I wrote it in my diaries, and he told my mum and he phoned my dad up and made him come round, and they all sort of confronted me and said that - I remember my stepmother saying to me, why is sex so important to you? I couldn't understand it 'cos it didn't seem - I wasn't saying it was that important, I just wrote down my experiences, but it was a bit dangerous to have done that.

Q: Well it's not surprising that you've got this feeling that, you know - because I mean it's a bit heavy for them all to come down upon you like that.

A: Yeah. They thought there was something wrong with me. I - I just - I mean I always avoid the subject of sex with my dad because I know that there are still things that...

Q: You still see him then?

A: I still see my dad, yeah, occasionally.

Q: And your stepfather is still with your -

A: No, no. Things came to a head when he did that, my mum just couldn't believe that he'd read my diaries and done that, and so she - I went to stay with my boyfriend's family at that time, and that's when she... pay him off, to get him out of the house.

Q: Yeah. But he had been hitting her anyway -

A: No, he hit me.

Q: He hit you?

A: He hit me. And he was just - he was quite sick, he used to do things like loosen the tyre, the wheel on the car, and it came off once when we were in the car. Just with my mum. And he was just a bit strange. But I mean she knew what was going on, she'd been trying to get rid of him for ages, but it was part his house so that was difficult.

Q: Yeah. But at that point she didn't sort of - she -

A: Yeah...

Q: Yeah. So she's not been with anybody since then -

A: No... that worries me quite a bit.

Q: Mm. Does that mean it's very worrying that - the other thing I was gonna ask you about was about your - you didn't say you were religious on the questionnaire -

A: No.

Q: So this feeling about sex and everything wasn't from any sort of religious conviction that it might be wrong or something, it was coming from something that was in the family -

A: Yeah, I think it must. I went to church an awful lot when I was young but the vicar that we had was quite liberal, I never remember him saying anything about that, but no,... that respect at all...

Q: Yeah. Well I mean I think that experience with, you know, your diaries and everything, is pretty dramatic -

A: Yeah, yeah. Very upsetting.

Q: And then again with the miscarriage, I mean, it's enough to make you feel badly about yourself.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But what about - let's - let's... question a little bit away from what you were saying, it's more about the idea of safe sex. When you say that it's - it's not so much the sex that's important to you, it's the cuddling and the other sorts of things, and that sex for you isn't just intercourse -

A: Yeah

Q: - what do you think of as safe sex?

A: Safe sex. Well the first thing that comes into my mind with safe sex is using condoms.

Q: Yeah.

A: I know that safe sex can be just touching each other and anything else except for intercourse, but it always seems to me ultimately all - sex always leads up to intercourse, so I always just think of safe sex as just using condoms.

Q: Yeah. So that intercourse would be a part of it -

A: Yeah.

Q: - the ultimate aim. Because I was thinking about before - I mean that relationship that you were having with the guy when you wrote your diaries, I mean you might well have been doing things which were on the way towards sex.

A: Oh, they definitely were.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Which is probably why they got so uptight.

A: Yeah. We were so - both of us were so naive, we never probably would have got there anyway.

Q: Yeah. But it was - it's interesting really, I mean I've been talking to young women, to find out that those aspects of the sex which they enjoy quite often aren't - I mean it's not the penetration at all, it's the other aspects, but that they feel that that's the point of the whole exercise ... when you get to that point.

A: That's right, that's what it seems like.

Q: Yeah. Well I don't think it necessarily has to be like that.

A: No. I don't know, it just seems that's what's expected, I think.

Q: Yeah. Thinking about expectations, I mean when you were at school and you were having this relationship with - with SCOTT, did you - were - were other people your age having that kind of relationship? - or, not necessarily that kind, but you know, having -

A: No, no one that I knew was. One of my friends was actually quite disgusted with me 'cos she thought it was - it was just - she was very prim and proper and she said she would never have sex until she was married and she thought it was wrong. But I was the only person I knew that was having a sexual relationship.

Q: Had you had any sex education at school at that point?

A: No. I'd only ever been taught at school about periods, I'd never been taught about sex. I didn't really do biology, so I didn't hear in that way.

Q: Yeah. So it was a bit limited.

A: I - I read an awful lot anyway, I've always read a lot, so I'd picked up most things.

Q: Yeah. And you had a bit of difficulty discussing it with your mother as well.

A: Yeah.

Q: You didn't get much from home really.

A: No. I mean she was - she's not religious but she still - she still was then with the idea that you don't do it 'til you're married, she never had done so she thought that was the way - but she's changed an incredible amount in the last few years. I think the freedom

from men has actually changed her and she's very, very, liberal now. And she doesn't think there's any problem with living together or anything.

Q: Mm. Sometimes it's a bit disconcerting when your parents change, when they -

A: Yeah.

Q: - when they've influenced you so much at a certain point in your life and you suddenly realise that their views have changed and you're still carrying around their old views.

A: Yeah. Yeah, well the way she says it to people is that she's actually been educated by me now... which is quite good.

Q: Yeah. What about AIDS, I mean to get to one of the other issues that we were talking about in this research, when did you first hear about AIDS? Or can you remember when you first heard about it?

A: I think it must have been - I can't think when it was, how long ago it was, but it was definitely off something on TV. I think when it was all - when it was hitting America it wasn't so much about over here, but it was something about San Francisco, and it was - it said it was - I'm not sure, at the time it was really just gays, they were saying it was just gays and there was no problem with heterosexuals -

Q: Yeah.

A: - I'm sure that's - that's how it came across to me anyway, that they said at the start that everyone thought of it as a gay plague and that's how it...

Q: That was quite a lot of the message. So you reacted to it like that, you felt that -

A: Yeah.

Q: - it wasn't a problem.

A: Well I thought it - it was awful, but I didn't think it affected me. But I was still worried about it.

Q: Have you found out more about it over time?

A: Yeah, yeah, I've found out quite a bit about it. Because my cousin's gay so he's told me quite a bit about it anyway, 'cos he's - he's worried about it.

Q: So you feel as if you've got enough information to be going on with - I mean what do you think - what is it, what is AIDS?

A: It's - I don't know what the actual words stand for, but it's when the immune system breaks down, as far as I know, and even things like a common cold can be serious 'cos you've got no means to -

Q: And what about - how do you get it, how do you -

A: You get it in substances like secretions. You get it in saliva - I'm not so sure about saliva, there's a bit of controversy about that I think, but... secretions or anything like that, blood -

Q: Yeah.

A: That sort of thing.

Q: So through needles and -

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. What about the difference between HIV and AIDS?

A: I think HIV is when you have the virus but you're not necessarily going to be affected by it, you're a carrier but not necessarily going to die from AIDS.

Q: Yeah. So you can give it to others if that -

A: Yeah, you can carry it...

Q: Yeah, I mean there are sort of - there are various estimates of how many people who have the virus will actually develop AIDS, I mean it changes because the time span... probably about 75% or something, I think, will probably develop, but it is variable. The saliva one is quite strange really because I mean at one point, they said it could be passed in saliva, but you'd need to consume a pint and a half or something. (Laughter) The imagination boggles. But I think that one... it's not too certain, I mean it's obviously not a very efficient way of transmitting it.

A: Yeah.

Q: So what do you think of the - have you seen any of the campaigns, like the ads in the newspapers or on television about -

A: Yeah.

Q: What do you think of them?

A: Well they seem quite effective to me but sort of looking at friends and colleagues, they still don't seem to be getting the message across because people are still thinking that there's something that just affects gays or needle users, and they just don't seem to be getting the message. Or a lot of people that I've spoken to, they're saying, well what the hell, you have to die of something, they seem to be so careless, they just don't... So I think - I think it was a big mistake in the first place for the media to make - to make out that it was just gay people, 'cos it really - that's the message that's hit home and nothing else.

Q: Mm. People just don't think it's relevant to them.

A: No.

Q: Yeah, I think that's true of quite a lot of the people that I've spoken to. Do you think - are you - you're frightened of it yourself are you, or -

A: I think - I don't feel so bad about - I would feel awful with my family and everything, if I caught it and that was the way that I died, but I don't - I'm not particularly worried about dying, but then I always feel if I'd carried it onto someone else then I would feel very, very, bad. That's what worries me more, is actually passing it onto someone else.

Q: Yeah. What about catching it yourself, I mean do you worry about doing things that might cause you to catch it?

A: Oh, yeah, I mean when I have sex now I use condoms, although that isn't - I know that isn't completely foolproof, and also, as far as possible, I don't go with people that are overly promiscuous, but it doesn't really make an awful lot of difference, does it?

Q: It's hard to tell really.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Yeah. So basically, you go for condoms as a way of dealing with it -

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Well I mean it's - it is certainly better than nothing, isn't it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Have you - during that period when you were promiscuous, were you using contraception then or -

A: I was on the pill then.

Q: Right, so -

A: I was on the pill for - ever since I had a miscarriage...

Q: So sometimes you've been using both.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. You mentioned that on the - in fact, I've found that with quite a few young women that I've spoken to that they - it's like the pill - they wanna be absolutely certain that they're not gonna get pregnant.

A: 'Cos it's not only AIDS that worries me, also things like, you know, the other sexually transmitted diseases -

Q: Yeah.

A: I actually contracted.... and it was only by luck that I actually got an infection in my eye which is the same thing and they actually found it in my womb, but it could have made me infertile, and that worries me, the sort of diseases you can catch where you don't have any symptoms, and then all of a sudden you're infertile. So that's sort of part of the reason as well, I use condoms.

Q: ... I mean, very wise. But what do you think about relationships in the future? On the questionnaire you said you - that you - I asked you to project yourself a bit into the future -

A: Yeah.

Q: - and you were saying that you hoped you'd be in a steady relationship.

A: I hope so. I can't really see it happening -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but all the ... - as soon as I do get into a steady relationship and it goes on for a couple of years, then if I'm not getting the attention that I'm looking for, then I seem to break the relationship up. I tend to want what we had at the beginning all the time, I want it to carry on all the time. But that's what I would like, to have a steady relationship, to have children.

Q: You've not got anybody in mind particularly at the moment.

A: No, no. I've just broken up with someone recently so -

Q: How was that relationship, had it been long -

A: It was six months, but it was a very important relationship actually, we were very much in love but, again, as soon as I got bored, I just split it up.

Q: ...

A: I don't know. I think I just want so much attention all the time. I'm a very attention-seeking person, which is pretty horrible, I don't really like - ... space for myself but I don't really like it.

Q: What about - thinking why it is you want the attention.

A: I don't know, I think I might have missed out a bit not having my father there. You know, even when I see him, I don't think he's ever cuddled me, he kisses me on the cheek, but he's never actually given me a hug or anything. Whereas my mum is very demonstrative, she does that sort of thing. Maybe it's that, I think maybe I'm used to having some attention there 'cos he doesn't pay much attention to me.

Q: But then they do pay you attention at the beginning, but it's when they start - when they start getting used to you that you -

A: Yeah, that's right, when they sort of start taking me a little bit for granted -

Q: Yeah.

A: - I don't know,... more attention.

Q: Yeah. So it's you who normally ends the relationships.

A: Yeah.

Q: Even though... latest one as well.

A: Yeah... Although I don't - I don't know, I always end it because even though I'm not the one that actually says it, I do something which I know is gonna make them break the relationship off.

Q: What kind of thing do you do?

A: Get off with someone else and tell him...(laughter)

Q: I was wondering that, I didn't want to assume it straight away.

A: ... I think ending it is very, very, difficult. It was very difficult with JONATHAN because he was such a good person, it was incredibly difficult, and I always think ending it is more difficult than actually having someone do it to you. But no one agrees with me.

Q: ... Some people can't handle it at all and stay in relationships forever because they don't know how to get out, or something like that. So do you feel in fact that - that you - that you're in control in relationships?

A: Yeah, I do.

Q: That you decide how it's going or -

A: I think I always make sure I'm in control. The person that I was going out with, I went out with my last boyfriend's best friend before I went out with my boyfriend, and he said to me that I was totally in control and that I had all the power in the world really. I do believe that in general women have more power in relationships than men do.

Q: You do?

A: Yeah, I believe they've got more power to manipulate.

Q: Mm. How?

A: I just think that women in general are more cunning than men, I think we can - I don't know - it's just we can use - it sounds awful, feminine wiles to make people do things. Or I think - I think that's what I've done in a way. I think a lot of the time I use sex in that way.

Q: Yeah. And you haven't felt that they've put pressure on you to do things that you don't want to do in the relationship?

A: That has happened, yeah, I mean this last relationship's dragged out longer than I would have wanted it to. It's been quite painful for me which doesn't - I don't normally get so affected... but maybe I didn't have quite as much control as what I would have liked. This person was a lot more independent of me than I would have liked, that's why I got very frustrated in the end. So - he didn't seem to need me, that was clear, he didn't seem to need me as much as I'd been needed before.

Q: So that's the way that you like your relationships to be structured in a way, that you're the one who's needed and they're... on you?

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Quite interesting, 'cos quite often it's exactly the reverse, isn't it, there's much more dependence on the man.

A: Yeah.

Q: So what do you think about - I mean, thinking about another relationship, do you think you'll do probably the same pattern again or - do you think there's movement?

A: Yeah, I think there's movement. Before I always thought I'd always... be able to have a relationship (?) there's always people there, I always had people in the background, people I'd gone out with before that wanted to carry on going back out with me, and if I finished with someone I could go back to them all the time, which I've done a couple of times. I do that with SCOTT, we go back to each other after a relationship, but - I don't

know, I think I am starting to get more mature now and more - I think this last relationship's taught me quite a lot. I wanna concentrate on a career now and not be so - not get so involved with people. 'Cos usually if I go out with someone I see them every day and it's very, very, intense,... which isn't really the right way to carry on.

Q: I suppose that might explain why, when you get to the point where - I mean if it's so intense, you're sure to get bored with it at some point in a way, aren't you?

A: That's right, yeah.

Q: ... other things. What about the other things, what have you been doing, as a career?

A: I've been working in finance at the moment, but this has made me decide to take exams 'cos my last boyfriend WORKED IN FINANCE, he was - he had a degree and he was quite sort of brilliant in his field, and it made me very frustrated that he had these qualifications and I was really just a clerk working in finance, whereas I know I could do - I could do more but I never actually got around to doing it, probably 'cos I've been involved in so many relationships and given them everything.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I decided to study, and I'm studying for a professional qualification now.

Q: As an accountant?

A: Well, not quite, as a - it's finance-orientated but it's as a - to be a company administrator. It sounds quite good.

Q: Are you doing it full-time or in the evenings or -

A: No, I'm doing it in the evenings.

Q: Well, that was one thing to come out of that relationship... Yeah. So where are you working at the moment?

A: I'm working at NAME OF COMPANY at the moment.

Q: So do you think you might stay there or once you get this qualification - I mean you could move up through the (?) firm or move out -

A: I could do, yeah. I mean it's a bit difficult there at the moment but - my last relationship, FRANK, he was actually working there when we met, and there had been a bit of trouble at work. He had a fight with his best friend outside my house because of me, and also some other people had to... It's a bit difficult. Two people who actually... because they had a fight. And I don't think I actually engineered that at all, it just came about, so things are still a bit shaky there at the moment.

Q: Yeah. What, you've been having relationships with people there?

A: Yeah. It sounds a lot worse than it is but FRANK's friend that I was going out with before FRANK, we were very very good friends, we were very close as friends, and FRANK always thought differently, he always thought something was going on, so he eventually had a fight with this other SCOTT, a different SCOTT. And then when I finished with FRANK I just went out for a drink with someone, an auditor, and then it seemed that SCOTT was actually in love with me, and hit this auditor for going out for a drink with me, which I'd never realised, I (?) obviously hadn't. And that came about and they both got dismissed for having a fight over it.

Q: Complicated! How did you feel about that, I mean didn't you feel - they're getting dismissed, what about you getting dismissed?

A: Yeah, well I got - I had to have a disciplinary, I had to say whether I'd actually done anything to cause it, but they - they said that it came out that I hadn't. But - for one of

the first times in my life I think I was genuinely surprised by someone's reaction to things that I did.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't think - I - SCOTT was very close to me at the time, he was a very - he was my closest friend and the time, and it was just a bit of a shock. Which upset me again because the male friends that I have I always seem to think that they're not just friends with me, they always seem to want something more, which - which I resent quite a bit, because, you know, I want people to be friends with me, to be friends with me, not just because they want sex or something.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: So it was a very bad time. Also, I felt terrible because two people had been dismissed.

Q: Yeah. When you say - I mean, you want male friends without the sex, but it sounds as if you've had it on both ends so to speak, you've had friends who've become sexual partners -

A: Yeah.

Q: - and sexual partners who've become friends -

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: - so I mean... passed through...

A: Sometimes it just frustrates me that I can't seem to have - I mean I got off with a very close male friend who's been a friend of mine for about six years, but I still know that if I said to him one night, let's have sex, that he would do it. I know that he's attracted to me in that way, which I resent because it seems that he's not just friends with me just to be friends, but he's maybe always thinking something else is gonna happen.

Q: Yeah. Are you thinking that? I mean, do you have that lying in your mind at times as well, I mean when you say you want them just as friends do you like the idea that possibly they might want sex as well, or you might want it at some stage but you don't particularly want it now, or -

A: The people that I've actually have just always been friends with I wouldn't be attracted to in any way. I probably like the idea that they're attracted to me, obviously, 'cos it's flattering.

Q: Yeah.

A: But obviously the people that I've had relationships with before, before that now I'm friends with, I wouldn't - there probably are times when I would turn round to them if I was feeling lonely or something and say that - well, not say that, but just engineer it in my way, where the people that I've always just been friends with I wouldn't want a relationship with.

Q: In a way that sounds a bit - I mean when you say you've usually got these people in the background who you can ring for when required, as if you're almost keeping kind of the potential of sexual activity with some of them, maybe called on (?) to a stage -

A: Yeah, I think that's what I do, I think I'm very afraid of being lonely and if I don't have a boyfriend I get a very low self-image and I - my ego goes down quite a bit and I need - need people to make me feel wanted again. That's probably what it is.

Q: Yeah. Well you seem to be quite successful at it. Yes, it's interesting that you're seeing it - you know, you can see that that's what's happening, but now there's something else which is giving you self-esteem which is the work, I mean -

A: Yeah, yeah. I think I can analyse myself reasonably well, I know exactly what I am, I don't like it very much but I can't - I try to stop it and I just can't seem to.

Q: Well, sometimes it's incredibly difficult to do it by yourself however much insight you've got into it because it's got a hold on you somehow.

A: Yeah.

Q: ... speaking generally... sort of thing. I mean maybe sometimes it's helpful to have some outside help with it, you know, you could go and talk to somebody who could give you some advice or counselling, something like that. Have you ever thought of doing something like that?

A: Well at the moment I'm actually under the doctor because I have a problem with depression as well, which normally happens when I haven't got a boyfriend, but I don't think it's just - there never seems to be an actual reason for it, I just get very low and I sometimes get suicidal as well. So, I'm on tablets at the moment, anti-depressants from the doctor, and I've got to go back to her this week, she's gonna see if someone can speak to me. 'Cos I've got an eating problem as well.

Q: Yeah. What's that?

A: I just get very - I'm just very hungry, I feel at the moment that I've lost quite a bit of weight, and I find it difficult to eat in front of people at the moment. I mean I've been...

Q: Yeah. Well I'm sure it would be a good idea to see somebody about all those things really. Well one of the things I was gonna ask you about was - it's really to do with this, I mean (tape change)... in a way you've taken some risks in your sexual life, I mean at the very beginning when you got pregnant; and then a bit in that period when you were describing yourself as promiscuous, I mean you weren't taking risks with pregnancy because you were on the pill but it was quite risky in other respects -

A: Yeah.

Q: - do you think you take risks in other areas of your life?

A: I'm not sure, 'cos I lead - I lead quite a steady sort of life except for relationships and things like that. I live at home, I always - I have a steady job. I think I play it quite safe.

Q: Mm, it's all sort of channeled into that particular area.

A: Yeah.

Q: But I was thinking about the eating thing because that's taking risks with your body in a way, isn't it.

A: Yeah. But I think - yeah, 'cos at one point I went down to seven stone and I think I was just trying to see how much weight I could lose, and I think that's another attention-seeking thing as well, because I was trying to see how much weight I could lose before-

Q: - anybody would notice.

A: Yeah. When people didn't notice, and to see just how far I could go. 'Cos I - as I said before, I feel - a lot of the time I get suicidal but even when I'm not suicidal I still don't really care an awful lot about living and so it doesn't really worry me to go that far.

Q: Yeah. So that's really - I mean that's really - it's all taking risks with yourself, isn't it?

A: Mm, that's right.

Q: So it's a more sort of general - general approach.

A: Yeah.

Q: When you feel suicidal you - you don't know why you feel suicidal, it's just something that comes.

A: Yeah, I usually go into - I mean the doctor says at the moment I'm in acute depression, I usually - I just get very, very, down, and then after a couple of days I just - I just can't see any point. And - it's a bit worse now 'cos I started driving, I just passed my driving test, so - last time I felt suicidal I was on the motorway. Sort of taking... risks there. It's just very selfish, really.

Q: It is a bit, yeah. I think it's important for you, I mean since you're seeing the doctor, maybe to try and get to talk to somebody because I think it may - it may help to be able to talk through the things, to look at them.

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean you've got a lot of insight into - into it yourself, but you just need that - that little sort of extra push of something from the outside doing it with you, really.

A: Yeah. Some sort of direction, I think.

Q: Yeah. Because I think it's incredibly difficult to do it by yourself, you're just - when you've got so much that's been constraining to operate in certain ways, to try to get out, however much you know about what you're doing, is just too tough. So I think you must - you must pursue that, try to find somebody.

A: I - the doctors I've spoken to before have always thought my problems weren't that serious but there's - this is a different doctor and she's taken it quite seriously, 'cos I told her I actually, you know, tried to commit suicide, and I really was - I was playing it quite dangerous on the motorway, I was on tranquilisers there so - she's taking it very seriously, she's quite nice.

Q: Mm, yeah. Well, of course it could be another round of your attention-seeking -

A: Yeah, could be.

Q: - but on the other hand I mean that's - what did you do before, there's something behind that -

A: Yeah, a problem there, isn't there -

Q: Yeah, and that's what - that's what you want to get out, because I mean you might be successful, you might try to seek attention in such a big way that you actually successfully kill yourself, mightn't you.

A: Yeah.

Q: So I think it's something to be wary of. Is it... thinking about the relationships again, I mean is there something about to come forward from the background now or...?

A: Well, I've seen SCOTT recently -

Q: Yeah...

A: - and ... we're good friends at the moment but he seems to - he seems ready to come forward again.

Q: Yeah. But you're not so ready?

A: I seem to - I think I'm going through my celibate phase again, I just don't seem to want anyone in that way. I want to be cuddled and I want to be - have someone be fond of me, but not - not to be physical. Which I know he wouldn't understand.

Q: Yeah. If I were to ask you a question, it might be a little bit difficult - what - what would you say is your image of yourself? How would you describe yourself to somebody else?

A: I'd... very bad... It's all the things I don't like in people. If I had to describe my personality, I think I'm socially quite awkward. A lot of the time I just don't want to talk to people. I avoid even going on buses, just worry if someone's gonna try and make a

conversation with me or something. And then sometimes if I'm with people I know I can be very loud and very boisterous, but then I am always, I think, attention-seeking and especially in male company. I think I'm definitely very different in female company than male company.

Q: Mm. That - it sort of - it just keeps running through everything you say - it sounds as if somebody's put that label on you very early on and that you're carrying it with you somehow. Do you think that's... think that?

A: No, I do think -

Q: It may not even be true. I - I've accepted it because you say it to me, but it may not really be true.

A: Yeah, I was - I know at school that I was always labelled as - I always had a few names attached to me, but - probably because I was the first person that I know to have a sexual relationship - and -

Q: Did that upset you or did it please you, I mean -

A: It didn't upset - I don't think it upset me, it made me want to - the people that were saying it weren't the sort of people that I wanted to be friends with anyway, so it didn't - well, it just made me wanna fight them even more, just, you know, be against them even more. My stepfather always used to say that as well, he used to call me names. He used to often do it to my mother just to upset her, and he used - when my dad came round that time, he told my dad lies and said that I used to come downstairs and have no underwear on, things like that, just trying to entice him, it was just - I definitely had no idea of anything like that, he just made that up completely. But it still embarrassed me to think that my dad thinks - he believes that, he definitely believed it at the time. Yeah, I -

Q: Do you think there was anything going the other way, I mean, from your stepdad, I mean that it might have been putting onto you something that was coming from him?

A: Yeah, I think possibly there could have been. But I just found him quite revolting, ...probably because I hated him anyway, but it's just, when he did that that was the last straw, I just felt totally humiliated when he said that, in a roomful of people. My brother was there as well, my brother had also heard things about me and had a real go at me about it, things that I hadn't done. It just seemed that people always were putting labels on me in some way for things that I hadn't even done, so I probably thought, well, they think I'm doing it, I might as well go out and do it.

Q: Yeah, yeah, I can see that. Is your brother older or younger?

A: He's older, seven years older.

Q: Do you still see much of him now?

A: Quite a bit, he's - he annoys me a lot of the time because I think if my dad's not there, he tries to be a father figure. He's actually married and moved away, I mean he's always - he was never there anyway, he was at boarding school and so I never actually knew him as a brother, but he does try and do a big brother act and I just try and avoid that.

Q: Mm, yeah. It's a complicated family relationship as well.

A: It is, yeah. In different ways.

Q: Do you think that other people's image of you coincides with yours? I mean almost it sounded as if you were giving other people's image of you rather than what you think you are yourself.

A: Well people either really like me a lot or they hate me, people don't just seem to think of me as someone that's just there. I don't really know... image, I think I'm - I don't know,

I think a lot of girls think I'm quite vulgar. Out - out of my friends we are often - like we usually see a group of men, you know, we tell rude jokes and that sort of thing. No, all the girls that I get on well with are tomboys, and if I make friends it's usually male friends rather than female friends, I usually find them too insipid a lot of the time.

Q: Mm. Do you think that's something to do with - I mean, what's expected of women. Do you think that you do things which aren't exactly -

A: Yeah, I fight against that.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. I'm quite extreme about that, quite an extreme feminist, and I spend a lot of time doing walks and collecting for various charities and things, and anything that is - I just - I think I've always just tried to stick out a little bit. And then when I got to my teenage years I was trying to conform, and I couldn't do it. And that used to upset me, I just wanted to be normal, and I just couldn't get there.

Q: Yeah. Couldn't figure out what it was. No, somebody's written a book called Typical Girls, question-mark, 'cos she's trying to go out and find some typical girls and they're all quite different.

A: There's no such thing really, is there?

Q: ... typical girl. I suppose one has in one's head, you know, what is an expected behaviour, whoever it's coming from. And it sounds like you had a bit of pressure from your friends as well, I mean you said about this friend who disapproved of you -

A: Yeah. In fact, she worked out quite well, though, because she - she's quite promiscuous at the moment so... (laughter)

Q: Are you still friends with her?

A: Yeah, there's three of us and we were close friends at school, I and we've remained good friends ever since. It's quite good, even through the various boyfriend troubles and times when we didn't see each other at all, we're still very close.

Q: Mm. That's good.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. To have relationships like that.

A: Although I think I put a bit of an act on with them. If I have any real serious problems, when I'm really depressed, I go to my male friends. I'm sort of not very keen on letting my female friends see that I'm depressed or anything, I like them to see me when I'm feeling strong.

Q: Yeah.

A: They come to me when they've got problems but I never let them see that I've got problems.

Q: Yeah. So you feel more comfortable talking to men about that kind of thing.

A: Yeah. I think it's because I'm always saying to my friends, you must never let yourself get upset over men, you must do this, and I wouldn't like them to let me - for them to see me making the same mistakes.

Q: Yeah. So you go and talk to men. But do you get - I mean, do you get the comfort that you need? I mean you did from that guy, the one who you spent the two years with being celibate with -

A: Yeah, JONATHAN, yeah.

Q: JONATHAN, yeah.

A: Well, STEPHEN, the friend - the one that's been friends with me for quite a few years, he's - he knows how to deal with me, he's very good in that sort of situation, but the closest friend I had was this - this other SCOTT, the one that was FRANK's friend, and - I don't know why... in that situation I actually stole FRANK's friend 'cos I felt threatened by him being so close with FRANK, but he really - we were really close, I could tell him anything, and now, because of this problem, he's been dismissed from work, he's not talking to me anymore, which I - it's quite a loss. I was closer to him, you know, for a long time.

Q: Mm. It's interesting the two types of talk you were talking about, though, you can talk to men about the problems that you have and can't talk to women, but to women you can talk - like say, talking dirty about men or something like that.

A: I don't like to be seen as weak by women, you know, I don't like to - it's just - I'm always telling them, I'm always telling my friends how to react to problems that - and when they're upset I mean, I comfort them, I think I'm - I'm quite good at listening, but I'm always saying to them, you mustn't let men get on top of you -

Q: Yeah.

A: - so I want them to always think that I'm on top of men all the time.

Q: Right.

A: Which obviously isn't true.

Q: Yeah. Yeah, although you also - I mean you said to me too that you feel... more of a power position in a relationship.

A: Yeah. But this last relationship has evened it out a bit, which makes me feel quite angry. I'm actually - I'm actually missing the relationship.

Q: Quite a lot to think about. I mean, I've got quite a lot to think about from what you've been saying. Interesting the way - the different ways that you can react to men. Do you feel a bit... of your women friends when you say, you know, that you're not - you're trying to keep from them any weakness that you have -

A: Yeah, I do, I feel like I'm putting on an act.

Q: An act, you said that, yeah. Don't you feel that you might be missing out on getting something back from them? You give them comfort and support when they need you - that you might be able to get some from them?

A: I think I'm always frightened that if I did break down or anything in front of them, that they might not wanna be friends with me anymore, which is a bit - I mean I've been friends with them for a long, long time, but I always feel that if I'm not happy and boisterous and everything I normally am, that they're gonna think, oh, she's no fun. You know, I can't - whereas with my male friends they don't seem to be looking for that all the time.

Q: Or you don't feel that you're gonna give it to them.

A: Yeah. As I say, I don't feel that I have to keep it up.

Q: Yeah. When you tell these guys how you feel about things, do you trust them?

A: Yeah. I trust - I think I trust most people, I'm not - I'm not very secretive, I'll tell most people anything. Yeah, STEPHEN, the one that's been a friend of mine for a long time, I do trust him a lot.

Q: What about double standards between the expected behaviour of men and women, I mean do you think -

A: It's still definitely there. I think I'm quite - I've got double standards in the same way because, when people are saying things like someone's a (?) dyke or whatever other terms they use, a lot of the time I'll say there's no such thing, you mustn't say that, but then there have been times when I've actually thought it and ended up angry with myself for thinking it. Because I don't think - that isn't the way it should be, but that is the way we're sort of programmed to think. And it still worries me a bit.

Q: And that guys don't - you know, it's okay for them but it's not okay for us.

A: Yeah. It's like with them the more the better, with us the fewer the better, it's - we've got to save ourselves and - I still - I still talk to men that say they'd like to have a relationship with a virgin or something, it just - I don't know why they think that. Or it might be perfectly true, but it just worries me the way people think, it worries me, I feel very guilty for actually thinking it sometimes...

Q: Yeah. But you get guilt on both sides of it, don't you, because you feel guilty about what you've done yourself.

A: Yeah.

Q: I mean, would you say that you regretted some of those relationships that you had?

A: I don't think so. I don't think the actual relationships were at fault.

Q: Yeah.

A: Even when I was promiscuous, I think it's what I needed at the time and I wasn't - as long as I wasn't hurting anyone it didn't matter. I don't think I hurt anyone.

Q: And you don't - I mean you felt good about that anyway -

A: Yeah.

Q: - I mean you were saying that was what you wanted.

A: Yeah. I think it's just - I just had this incredible guilt all the time about lots of things.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Only I was thinking about, you know, being able to talk to guys, but the idea about the double standard, that - I mean maybe in a way it's easier to talk to them because they're - they're more like - if you're talking about the problems that you have with guys or with your sexual relationships or whatever - is that what you talk to them about?

A: Yeah, a lot of the time, yeah.

Q: Yeah. That they're - they'll be more sympathetic because that's more the kind of thing that they would be doing or something like that -

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: - that it would normally be a man in the manipulative role or something, what do you think?

A: Yeah, I think so.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: Or am I jumping -

A: No, it's probably right, I've never actually thought about it. Yeah, I don't think -

Q: I mean you've got good reasons for, like, not talking to your women friends because there's some way that you want to be with them, and you want them to think of you -

A: Yeah.

Q: - but then there has to be some reason for why you feel okay talking to the guys as well.

A: Yeah. I really don't know. Yeah, I just - I just feel I have to be a role model to the women friends and the male friends are different, they're just - most of the time they seem to want me for what I am, although sometimes they want a bit more, but they don't seem to sort of - I just open up more to them. I always have. If I was in a whole crowd of men I would probably react quite well, whereas if there was a few women there that I didn't know then I would probably go very, very, quiet.

Q: So - the relationship with your mum again, you feel that that's improving and beginning to -

A: Mm, we get on very well at the moment, there's hardly any arguments.

Q: Are you able to talk to her about your problems with depression and the -

A: I try not to too much because she would just worry. I haven't told her that I - that I feel suicidal or anything because she would - it would worry her. I think a lot of the time when I actually want to take overdoses and things like that, what's stopped me is I know it would completely destroy her if like me or my brother were to do anything like that. I think even an accident would be terrible, but we're all she has now really, she doesn't have anything to focus on except me and my brother, and for actually one of us to commit suicide, and she would feel - it would destroy her. So that's probably - I always feel very guilty about wanting to kill myself because it would damage her so much.

Q: Well it's probably good you feel guilty about wanting to kill yourself, it stopped you from doing it... worried about... I hope you're gonna go and, you know, pursue this idea of talking to somebody.

A: Yeah, I've got an appointment at the doctor's tomorrow.

Q: I think that was most of the things that I wanted to ask you about. Do you think I may have left out something crucial - but I asked you about AIDS, didn't I? (laugh). Is there anything that you'd like to ask me about?

A: Well I know this is because - this is for the AIDS project for women at risk but what exactly is gonna happen?

Q: What is it, what are we doing? Yeah. Well, I mean we're interviewing quite a large number of - well, about a hundred in London, a hundred in Manchester, all between the ages of usually sixteen and twenty-one, and a little bit at the upper end of that age range, and the idea is to find out, as I was saying to you at the beginning, to find out how they feel about their relationships, what they actually do in their relationships, and what they, you know, think and feel about them; really because there isn't that much information about what young women, you know, to what extent they feel they're having control in relationships or what they're actually doing etcetera, and the idea is to feed it into - totally anonymously, of course, there's no question of... - into sex education and health education for young women, so to try to get together programmes of education which will actually mean something to them rather than just, you know, telling them what to do, or - or leaving them like you with your sex education at school, with no information whatsoever. And hopefully to have some input into the health education authority, education on AIDS... I mean, they have been doing a little bit more in that direction recently, but at the beginning, as you say, it was very much not - it wasn't considered to be a heterosexual problem. I think they may have gone over the top... now they've kind of left young men out; but I think they found that young men weren't listening to them, and young women might listen. (Laugh). The other thing that we've been asking young women to do, but I don't know if you'd be interested in doing it, is

keeping a diary for us for a short while, just, you know, for maybe a period of a couple of months or something like that. Would you be interested?

A: Yeah, that's fine. What sort of thing?

Q: Well, really, it's about your sexual activities and how you think and feel about them, and your relationships, more or less the sort of things that I've been asking you. But being as it specifically has about what you actually do as well. I haven't... shall I post one to you, it's just -

A: Yeah.

Q: - if you could just keep it for maybe... now, middle of September - well maybe you could keep it till the end of October and see how it goes, and if you want to continue you can continue, but if you just send it back to me then and we'll re-negotiate at that point.

A: Yeah, that's fine.

Q: Ah good, that's really nice.

End of interview.