

MIS09 Haleema
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INTERVIEWER: Can you tell me first of all about your family, where do they live?

INTERVIEWEE: They live in a small town in [COUNTY].

INTERVIEWER: So what do your parents do?

INTERVIEWEE: My Mum is a [CARING ROLE].

INTERVIEWER: And what about your Dad?

INTERVIEWEE: Not much actually, he owns [OWN BUSINESS].

INTERVIEWER: Very nice. So he's got the easy life then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes he has. He is not doing very well with it at all because he's not very good, he hasn't got a very good business head.

INTERVIEWER: Has he always done that?

INTERVIEWEE: No he was in [PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT].

INTERVIEWER: So if we can get back to what you were saying, is it your father that's from Pakistan, how important, I mean is he a Muslim?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And is he a practicing Muslim?

INTERVIEWEE: Well he would say he was.

INTERVIEWER: So how much influence has he had on you and the family?

INTERVIEWEE: It is quite strange I mean when I was younger he used to go on massively long, he was away for three years at a time and then he started coastal work in England so he was around much more often and my sister has had a lot more problems with him because she was the one who used to have screaming fits with him every Saturday because she couldn't actually go out sort of thing and I have managed to ease my way through that sort of thing.

INTERVIEWER: Is she older than you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. But it has always been 'Dad, can I go out with a bloke?', 'No.!', 'can we talk about it?', 'No.! Men are only after one thing.' I mean it has had quite a negative influence on me in terms of how I relate to men.

INTERVIEWER: I should think definitely. What is your mum's attitude, is there a clash between your parents then?

INTERVIEWEE: Oh all the time. There has been quite a problem with that. She is much more, I mean she is the sort of person I tell everything to, what is going on in my sex life and everything, the whole gammit. So there is quite a tension there and she is basically, we can do what we like as long as we are sensible. She says things like, 'well I don't think this is a good idea' and we actually listen to her.

INTERVIEWER: So you respect her advice. Does she actually argue with your Dad over your freedom?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So presumably with your Dad away a lot you grew up with your Mum's influence over those things, you haven't felt that it would be wrong to have sex before marriage and things like that?

INTERVIEWEE: I think I used to. I remember when I was about eleven telling Dad that I was only going to sleep with the man I was married to and he reminds me of it about ten years later. I remember thinking, I think I have changed my views since then. I have

always had a fairly, well not even conservative, quite like a sensible, like I have never been interested in sleeping around or anything like that. The person I actually slept with wasn't like that, it was about a year ago and it wasn't a big thing anymore but it had been for so long because in the back of my head was all these things like you shouldn't, you mustn't, blokes are only after one thing.

INTERVIEWER: So was that sort of thing from your father do you think, that type of influence?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think he expected?

INTERVIEWEE: I think he actually wanted me to marry my cousin back in Pakistan. He wanted one of us basically to marry a Muslim which like, the experience of the marriage here with my Mum and Dad, it just wouldn't be feasible. If I had met somebody here and fallen in love with him then fine but I have much more reservations about it. Just because I am not convinced it always works.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think about arranged marriages?

INTERVIEWEE: It's funny because all my cousins have had them and on the whole they are happy. It's a saying, 'English men marry the women they love and Asian men love the women they marry', and it like works the other way and it can work very well but I suppose it's being brought up here that I have a strange feeling about it.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think the expectations of this society are for women then, I think you can see them more clearly in comparison.

INTERVIEWEE: Well we are not allowed to go out alone, that sort of thing and there are a lot of restrictions on freedom and I think our family is very conservative. A lot of richer families have a lot more freedom and date each other and things like that and it's sort of like hush hush westernised ideas about things. But I don't know, what Mum was saying is true because women don't have much political power and it's very manipulative because that's the way they get their power and it becomes quite a negative thing.

INTERVIEWER: Within the home and things like that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Does any of this appeal to you?

INTERVIEWEE: It's strange because there are aspects of society which I think are wonderful just in terms of the family and the support that you get and even Islam I think if it's practiced with quite open eyes is as good a religion as any other, the basics are very good it's just the way it's being used as with the others as well. The Koran is really weird because it seems to have taken all the worst of the westernised ideas and all the worst of Iran and so it's like a fundamentalist western state, it's a weird clash there.

INTERVIEWER: That doesn't appeal?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think in the Muslim religion women have a chance to live with a religion they like and one that they understand themselves or is it imposed upon them?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it's a mixture of both. My family is quite strange because my brother's two sisters live together and they married two brothers. It's very strange set up and they have always lived together and one family is extremely conservative and they always used to say, 'well it's your grandmother, she says that', and now she's died is much more easier whereas the other family are much more liberal and they are quite religious figures almost because of their name and everythingaligned with spiritual

leaders and they much more enlightened. My idea of Islam is only from what my dad had told me and when I went other there I was actually quite surprised to see the way it can be practiced. And when I was talking to some of my cousins it is very real because they have worked through it and it's like these are the things you have to take on faith, these are the things we don't like about it and just balancing out what they want out of their religion, what they are allowed to have in terms of the culture.

INTERVIEWER: And they actually managed to do that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. The other family don't and are very dogmatic about a lot of things. So it's like I couldn't have a conversation with them because in the end we would have an argument because they will go so far and there is this block and they won't go any further and aren't prepared to talk about it. Like last time I went over I was actually talking about homosexuality with my Aunt. I don't know how I got onto the subject and it was definitely AIDS was the wrath of God and I said lesbians were a very low risk group, why do you think that is. Lesbians were acceptable if it was because they had been treated badly by men but if it was a choice they made then it wasn't good at all. Whereas one of my cousins was saying, 'well tell me about it, it's something you don't talk about or even acknowledge'.

INTERVIEWER: So it's not as simple as it appears then, like the purdah and things like that?

INTERVIEWEE: No not at all.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's not inherent in, apart from I have met Muslims who haven't got the sort of dogmatic it seems to be quite a sophisticated sort of civic rules basically, a way of leading a life, like an society, it's a sort of way of doing that. But I mean the strongest impressions you get about Islam is the suppression of women, the possession of their sexuality. Is that had much influence on how you feel about your sexuality?

INTERVIEWEE: In my decisions of life I never really consider my father because if he doesn't like something subconsciously yes he has had quite an influence, he has on the family generally in the way we work but in terms of what I want to do in life I don't actually consider him very much anymore because I am living in Manchester and there is actually very little he could do. If he decides to say anything that's fine, I will won't actually talk to him again. About two years ago I was working .. crisis... and I wasn't going out with anyone so I was just getting all the extremes of interactions between men and women and nothing to balance out at all. And I was very confused as well and I was actually thinking about my sexuality then and about how my family would react if I said it and it's really strange because I think they would be supportive in accepting, but I still don't know if they would actually judge me because of it.

INTERVIEWER: In what way were you actually thinking about your sexuality, whether you actually want to have relationships with men.

INTERVIEWEE: With men.

INTERVIEWER: Was that a reaction about you being attracted to women or was it a reaction against men.

INTERVIEWEE: I think it was a little bit of both. I think I have always found women attractive, I have never actually felt any sexual attraction towards them but I don't know why that is. I don't think that's a block that's in me or whether I just simply don't.

INTERVIEWER: Whether what you identify as sexual as(?) sexual?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I mean the way people talk about sexual I think is very different.....I don't know, I have never actually been put into a situation where another woman has had to make the first move and I don't know how I would have reacted to that at all. If I had been sexually attracted and whether I would actually have gone for it or not and that's a question that's been in my head because I have never been in a situation to actually try it out. And also I felt a bit tight because it would have been a bit like experimenting with my sexuality, almost using somebody else and that is why I was quite hesitant to do anything.

INTERVIEWER: I think that's quite good to recognise that if you have got a lot of. It must be difficult for, say, gay men always having heterosexuals just trying it out once on them. It can't be too much fun. So did you talk to your family about it at the time?

INTERVIEWEE: No I didn't. No I never have actually.

INTERVIEWER: You would have been hesitant about that then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think so. I don't think there would have been any problem it's just something, it's about the only thing I haven't been able to talk to them about. Probably because deep inside I am quite ambivalent about it as well and I don't actually like that in myself because as far as I am concerned you know, it's totally acceptable but when it comes to myself I still don't quite know how I would react and it scares me to think that I might actually have some in built prejudice and not actually realising it.

INTERVIEWER: It's alright for other people to be gay and you will support them and accept them but do you actually want to be gay yourself?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and even if I went for it and thought it was alright and I found somebody who was right for me, just all the things you have to take on board, whether I would actually be prepared to do that. And it's something that disturbs me quite a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Yes I can see it would. It's quite more difficult when you think you have to put yourself into a position of actually having to suffer homophobia from society in a massively generalised way. I think probably in a way you realised you understand homophobia better if you try and think of it in terms of yourself. Can we go back a little bit in terms of your life and the way you grew up. Firstly can you tell me what type of school you went to?

INTERVIEWEE: I went to an ordinary mixed middle school and then I eventually went onto a High School or grammar school which was single sex.

INTERVIEWER: So were you in a village in the countryside?

INTERVIEWEE: No. It is in the country but it is in sort of a town now, it's fairly big and it's quite close to a big town as well. It's about forty miles outside London.

INTERVIEWER: So it's a commuter belt. So the second school you went to, was that a comprehensive?

INTERVIEWEE: No it was like a grammar school.

INTERVIEWER: Did you get any sex education or health education at that school?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. It was really interesting filling out the form because it was something like put in my head exactly what you are taught about or told about and I think from the questionnaire it was actually very conservative. It was just like telling you what happened, telling you about pregnancy sort of, and talking about contraception, we had quite a long thing about contraception. I think it was very much in the sort of 'well we couldn't actually imagine any of our girls having sex at sixteen or fourteen or whatever'.

INTERVIEWER: Was that true? I mean you must have known when you were at school whether people were having sex?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think it was, but I don't know how many people were. Certainly none of my friends did. I think it was a bit of a shock when we found out that a girl in our last year in the sixth form was pregnant. It was a very weird situation because we were all wondering if she was, and she never actually said so by the time it came out it was just like a massive gossip anyway. And everyone was actually fine about that. It was perfectly acceptable.

INTERVIEWER: So often at school it's something that's quite public knowledge you had and who is a virgin and who is not a virgin, it's more like public knowledge because people actually talk about it in public and call people in public. Did that not really happen at your school then?

INTERVIEWEE: I wasn't aware of it to a very large extent. It was definitely who had gone the furthest and whatever, and probably because I hadn't and a lot of my friends actually hadn't gone particularly far with blokes, it was a mixture of interest and horror, that somebody could actually do that. Because all the way through my life at home and at school as well it was just like, it isn't done.

INTERVIEWER: So even though your mum is quite liberal the general impression from home about what you should do is that you shouldn't be having sex and you shouldn't be interested in boys?

INTERVIEWEE: Not even as much as that. I think it was more to do with the repercussions of my father anyway. My sister is still living with her boyfriend now and she is about six years older than me so I think she started having sex when she was about nineteen when she was living with her boyfriend. And mum was actually alright about that and there came a time when she actually said right you know, you are an established couple, you can actually bring home now and she wouldn't do that unless she thought they were a couple. So she is alright about it.

INTERVIEWER: So when you had the sex education at school was it done in biology lessons?

INTERVIEWEE: No biology was like diagrams and the very technical side of it. The actual lessons we had were much more to do with contraception and what happens. You were never told how to make love or whatever, it was very much how to stop getting pregnant and that sort of thing and about family planning clinics. Nothing about abortion. Masturbation was like a dirty word. It was for me until I came to university because it's a word I can use and I can relate to it now which I couldn't before.

INTERVIEWER: Were these sort of things like homosexuality and masturbation weren't talked about at school, were they talked about amongst the pupils at school?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: So there wasn't really much discussion about it? At the time that you had this sex education did it have any effect on the way you thought about sex, what you thought sex might be, because you weren't sexually experienced at that time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I had a very romantic notion about it, I think everyone does. And that it is going to be like the height of passion and ecstasy which it isn't. And it was going to be with somebody that I was very much in love with and that sort of thing and that person wasn't which was a bit of a shock. I just thought right, it's about time now. And it was the first time I had actually wanted to physically, nobody had actually

aroused me to have sex with them before and I suppose I was lucky in a way that nobody actually pushed me into having sex.

INTERVIEWER: At the time, at that age, were you about sixteen when you had the sex education?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you understand sex in terms of being a physical thing about arousal?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: So it was an image or something you aspired to about being a type of person?

INTERVIEWEE: That's right yes. I started going out with this bloke when I was about seventeen I think and we were going out for quite a long time and I don't know, I had very fixed ideas about what happens when you go out with people and it was very much the external things like holding hands and snogging and that sort of thing. And then when he was actually saying do you want to take it further I was actually frozen solid at the thought of it and then eventually I unwound a bit. And it was so different from what I had imagined. I was just so detached from it, I was just thinking well is this what happens then. He goes up and down and things like that and the actually physicality of it was quite a shock. When you see it on television and you read about it in romantic novels and that sort of thing, but it is something that is totally different.

INTERVIEWER: Did it have any relation to how you felt about your body at that age?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I have never sort of been happy with my body.

INTERVIEWER: Very few of us are allowed to be.

INTERVIEWEE: I had quite a few problems at one point. I think it was partly to do with the family as well and it was just my reaction against my dad. My dad came home for the first time when he came off the ship and it was just very difficult for a couple of years and I had a lot of problems. But even then I shrunk to about the size of seven and a half stone and I hated my body and I always have.

INTERVIEWER: Was the physical side of sex, presumably linked to that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes it was quite difficult and I never thought I was very good and couldn't imagine how anybody would actually be attracted to my body or would actually want to have sex with me, or to be attracted to me.

INTERVIEWER: Were you thinking always in terms of people being attracted to you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have any sense of your own sexuality, of having sexual desires. Did you ever think of it in those terms?

INTERVIEWEE: No I didn't, not until I was about eighteen. I started to do things with this bloke and then I actually met another bloke who was a lot older and I suddenly realised that it could actually be very ... it was just like a two-week fling or something. But it was so totally different because I could actually feel my body.. I didn't know, because I didn't know what an orgasm was. I had never masturbated or anything so I didn't know about coming at all. And it was just like something beginning to happen to my body and it was actually very nice and I was a bit surprised about it.

INTERVIEWER: So you had never been brought to expect any of these things?

INTERVIEWEE: It was just like the orgasm was something you heard about like ecstasy and passion but I didn't know how it happened or where it came from.

INTERVIEWER: There again the image of certain things. In terms of what your mum told you and the advice she gave you, from things like periods to about your eating disorders, what type of advice or how did she respond to that?

INTERVIEWEE: I think in terms of sex I actually talked to my sister more. When she sort of came home she said there's something I have got to tell you, and she told me all about it. And that's when I realised it wasn't like this wonderful thing that it was brought up to be.

INTERVIEWER: Did she tell you about it in detail then?

INTERVIEWEE: Not specific details but she would be very frank about it all. And when she told me I just sort of ran away from it quite a lot, and I sort resented it as well and I didn't really take in on board as my sister did much more.

INTERVIEWER: So you were able to talk to her about it?

INTERVIEWEE: I was talking to her about it but there's nothing like talking to your older sister. And I went away with her for about six weeks and we spent a lot of time just talking it through.

INTERVIEWER: Did that make it easier for you, did you begin to understand why you had been bingeing and starving yourself. Did you begin to understand it a bit better?

INTERVIEWEE: No I don't think I did until I actually stopped doing it. And I stopped for a while and I started again when I first came to university just because it was just a shock. I was having a lot of problems; the year before I took a year out and I never really got over that and I had expectations for university which were quite disappointing and it was only a little bit after that when I actually stopped that I began to work it through. And I read quite a lot around it to find out what it was and why it was happening. I just linked it totally to my family and really sort of admiring my elder sister, and that sort of thing, was I trying to be like her or was I trying to not be like my mother who was quite nice and I link it to a lot more things.

INTERVIEWER: Things actually about you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And things that are more difficult to come to terms with as well. Tell me the first sexual relationship you had was once you had come to university?

INTERVIEWEE: No it was the last year of school.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me about how that happened and you came to decide to have a sexual relationship with somebody?

INTERVIEWEE: Well I didn't actually have intercourse.

INTERVIEWER: No a sexual relationship can be many things other than intercourse. I mean the first sexual relationship when you became aroused or whatever, the first time you realised that?

INTERVIEWEE: It was basically that I had been going out with this bloke for quite a while, a number of months or whatever, and it was in a car park outside the cricket club. He was saying something about he couldn't handle it, that I wasn't doing anything, and then it was just like a few fumbblings downstairs when my parents were in bed or whatever. And I just thought well OK, fine, and it was always very nice but sort of quite cosy rather than particularly sexual but I never got aroused at all and I didn't know that he was going to and I never did anything to him to arouse him.

INTERVIEWER: So it was him touching you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and then I would touch him but I didn't know anything about him coming, me coming, or anything like that. And it was during my year out and I was working in EUROPEAN COUNTRY and that's when I actually became aware of my body responding to things.

INTERVIEWER: Before you went away did you feel any sort of peer pressure beginning to build on you a bit to become sexually active or to lose your virginity?

INTERVIEWEE: I didn't in terms of my friends because I don't think many of them thought about that. I know when it happened I was talking to my friend and we were having a really animated conversation and I just poured out what happened to me. I did and I didn't. I began to change my views quite radically about it and also physically I enjoyed it.

INTERVIEWER: How did you respond to physically enjoying it, was that not something that you had expected?

INTERVIEWEE: No I hadn't. Because it hadn't happened to me before at all. So it was just like something you did, it was like extended hugs really, it was that sort of cosiness rather than particularly arousing. So I was surprised by it so when I was still actually half going out with GRAHAM and when I came back there was absolutely nothing there and it was just really weird. I was totally detached from it. It was like OK you do something and right I will do something, and it just didn't work out with him at all.

INTERVIEWER: With this man in EUROPEAN COUNTRY did you actually have intercourse with him?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: At the time that there was something really important about intercourse?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I did. It was the big thing, it was like always the place where I would stop. I found that ever since then, I have always seem to have gone off blokes in bed or near bed and it's always I know how far I will go but I won't go any further. And I had always known that and I was never in the situation where I have been forced passed that.

INTERVIEWER: What was it that you thought was important about intercourse, did you think that was what sex was?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I did.

INTERVIEWER: So you thought the other things you were doing were?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes something different. And I suppose I think that is something that I have really realised with the bloke I am going out with now because it is just such a mixture of everything. We actually very rarely have penetration. I enjoy it and he is the first person that I have actually come with, which is sort of surprising. I didn't think it could happen. And then I was on the pill but I didn't like it and I just found that not particularly pleasant at all and I get quite a pain sometimes as well because I get very tight.

INTERVIEWER: When you don't really want penetration?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes when I am not relaxed and also it was after we saw the accuser thing, and I just actually couldn't bear him to touch me for about two weeks at all. And that was quite difficult and I think that was when I just started to think, well, it's actually not important, if you don't have to, and it doesn't happen very often. Which is nice, it's just part of everything else.

INTERVIEWER: The sexual relationships you have had in the past have you found that that's OK, people who you have had relationships with have accepted that perhaps you don't want to have penetration?

INTERVIEWEE: It is quite a long time, the first two and a half, three years at university I sort of having it ...and things but I never actually had a long-term relationship with anybody and yes it was fine. It was my decision when I first decided to do it, last year, and there was no sort of push at all. I mean the bloke was a bit of a shame, he had a few problems. He was actually really good at the time because we talked about and he talked about how..... reacted to it and that sort of thing, it was a very nice way that it happened just because I felt he was actually being very supportive and I was just talking it through and working it through and after it happened I just ran into my house saying I'm a woman now. And it doesn't make me a woman at all, it's just like another part.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel any guilt about not wanting to have penetration in terms of feeling that a man had to?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think I did.

INTERVIEWER: To be fulfilled, to have an orgasm or whatever?

INTERVIEWEE: I mean, he cares about me enough to know that if he pushed me any further then I would just finish with him. Yes there was always pressure there, and when I had this fling with the bloke in EUROPEAN COUNTRY it was like, 'we've got to go back and have sex with me', and I was thinking well, no I really don't want to. And it was just like an accepted thing, if you went so far you had to do the whole thing, and it was always the whole thing, that was like the thing that you aspired to and that was the end of it and that was the finish of it. With this bloke last year, you either did nothing or you actually built up to having penetrative sex. There was nothing in between.

INTERVIEWER: With the relationship when you had intercourse?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes the first time I had it, it was like..

INTERVIEWER: So was it penetration with nothing around it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. And most women I think, women take a lot longer to get aroused and the longer you actually have foreplay or whatever, the nicer it was. But he didn't seem to realise that. I think the nicest time was when we didn't think we were going to and we sort of decided and that was what was nice, it was a really long build up and I was actually very relaxed. I have learnt so much in the last year about what it actually means.

INTERVIEWER: I think it is a very good thing for you to have done, to say actually I don't want to have intercourse and you have actually found out about all the other things that can actually arouse you. For most women orgasm doesn't necessarily happen with intercourse. For men it often does but it doesn't have to, there are lots of other ways they can have orgasms. The fact that you actually learnt that by experience, for a lot of women they just have intercourse and that's it, they never get anything more. Do you feel that your sexual identity has changed in the sense that you have got a lot more confidence about saying I like this and I want this.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes definitely. The bloke I am actually going out with is about three years younger than I am and we can talk for hours and we get on really well, and he hadn't actually had a sexual experience before that, it was always likeand it was like such a reversal of positions, he had got all these ideals about having sex before marriage and it was only going to be someone he really cared about or had been

married or whatever, and it just sort of developed because we became very close and he changed his ideas about it. So I was like the experienced one although I had only done it about four or five times. So the way I always used to ask questions, I used to love talking about it now, and he was actually doing that and it was just working it out within ourselves. And because he had no sort of ideals about it, it was a lot moreand a lot more thoughtful of me as well which is why it is very different.

INTERVIEWER: When you were younger did you feel very vulnerable when it came to sex, being inexperienced or whatever?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes definitely.

INTERVIEWER: You say you asked lots of questions?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, sort of like joking about positions and things like that, but MARK is the first bloke that I have actually said this is what I like or do it there, that's the wrong place or whatever. And before I didn't really say nothing, please don't you know and now I have actually demanded things or asked things and said how I was feeling about things.

INTERVIEWER: Apart from actually talking to men when you are in a sexual situation, when you know you are going to be having sex, then you will have to actually talk specifically about, you know, I don't like to be touched there, or this is where I like to be touched, have you been able to talk to anyone else who isn't a sexual partner who you are not about to have sex with kind of thing?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel it would have been helpful to have that type of information when you were younger or talk about what sex actually is in practice?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes definitely. I had no idea, I mean it was literally the first man I am with now because it is much more flexible and much more experimental, I am in touch with my sexuality in a way I never was before. I wasn't having that kind of sex last year or even people I have been out with before in the same way, because I didn't know what to expect, I didn't know what to do. I felt very vulnerable because I thought I was rubbish, I wasn't doing anything, I wasn't doing it right and how they felt. And it was always how they felt, whereas this is the first relationship where it's important how I feel. Yes I think it would have been much more easier to have that. I mean the only sort of information you get is watching television or reading some sort of book like a Mills & Boons passion book or something which isn't at all real. So it's like when you are expecting him to do this or expecting him to do that and the woman is always very passive in it.

INTERVIEWER: When you were younger did you ever read pornography or anything like that to try and get information?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: I mean I know that's what I did, I was desperate to know what it actually was. I had a very weird idea of what it was. The other thing that was interesting from what you were saying, from the time that you let people touch you and let you touch your body and didn't think of touching them, has your feelings towards a man's body changed?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I used to hate them. Actually I do remember talking to my brothers and I had been out with this bloke who was trying to touch me all over and I was going, 'I really don't like it, and it seems like touching my breast, horrible I hate it'. And he was

going, 'yes well it will change probably' and I was thinking it couldn't possibly so for quite a long time I was desexualised.

INTERVIEWER: In the way that you had been treated like an object, something to touch?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And did that reflect in the way you felt about men's bodies?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes it did. I used to find men's bodies attractive when they were clothed and I didn't like naked bodies at all. I thought it was quite unattractive and I used to hate touching men's penises and things like that because I thought it was absolutely revolting.

INTERVIEWER: Presumably you did touch men's penises at this time, why were you doing that?

INTERVIEWEE: Because I thought I was under pressure to do that.

INTERVIEWER: Do you no longer feel that about men's bodies?

INTERVIEWEE: No I don't. But I don't know about that in general.

INTERVIEWER: Well you don't see everyone.

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INTERVIEWEE: I can talk about them now and with MARK I like it because it's part of him and I am not scared of it. He found it quite difficult because I would make jokes, or just try and do anything to get over that sort of big barrier of that something which can be really, really horrible just because you know what it can do. It's like because a man has a penis it means he's so and so, he's powerful and I now I have this relationship where I can virtually accept it.

INTERVIEWER: I completely understand what you mean.

INTERVIEWEE: So generally if I finished with him and was going out with someone else I would have to do that process all over again. Because I would have to make it very personal so if I just think about it generally then I can't cope with it.

INTERVIEWER: For instance when you were younger and you gave a boy or a man an erection was that the type of thing that scared you?

INTERVIEWEE: It was repellent. I remember when I was young we went to see some of my dad's cousins in ENGLISH CITY and my uncle was dangling me on his knee and I actually thought he had wet his knickers because he had come while I was sitting on his lap. And I think I told my sister and she said, 'I really don't think he has wet his knickers' and I didn't know what it was and she told my dad and we were never taken back there again. And that sort of experience has been quite elicited and horrible. Like standing really close to someone in a train, it's very uncomfortable.

INTERVIEWER: Did you ever feel if you gave a man an erection you had a responsibility to do something about it. Did you ever have that type of feeling, even though you might have thought it disgusting, now you have to do something with it?

INTERVIEWEE: It was like as soon as he got an erection that was alright no matter how I was feeling, whether I was aroused or not you had to do things because that was the point when things happened, when he was aroused, not when I was aroused.

INTERVIEWER: For instance what was your attitude towards oral sex in that respect, was that again something that scared you, oral sex to a man not to a woman.

INTERVIEWEE: To a man yes. I have never really thought about it. I always thought it was jokes like sixty nine and you just go ugh, disgusting. The bloke in EUROPEAN COUNTRY did it to me once and that's when I thought, 'oh, my body!' and then it never happened again. And the concept of doing it to a man made me feel physically ill. It took me a long time to do it to MARK and I can't do it very often at all.

INTERVIEWER: So there is still an element of that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes but also I feel quite a bit of pressure because if we don't actually have penetrative sex and he doesn't come, it's like I never used to .. because I thought it was horrible and I used to let him sit in the corner and do it himself. And it's quite recent even if he doesn't come to me and I am satisfied I will always ask him because he hates it because it's like if you want to do it, fine and if you don't then don't do it because it doesn't actually bother me, but I want it to be something spontaneous not well how are you feeling, do you actually want me to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Have I got to?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes and I have still got these pressure like if I come he's got to and it's actually more important that he does than I do.

INTERVIEWER: If we can move on from this great subject, can you remember when you were at school - presumably you didn't talk about AIDS?

INTERVIEWEE: No.

INTERVIEWER: If you can remember the first time you ever heard about it. Were you at school when it first came up?

INTERVIEWEE: No it was in my second year here. It was two years ago. I was aware of it. At the time I think someone had it that had quite a high profile, and I think the name had cropped up and nobody knew much about it and it was something that seemed to crop up more and more in the papers. But the reason I found out more about it was because they were doing a play in the drama department that I actually got involved in. Actually my knowledge is now quite out of date because it all came from that, from reading about it and around it and it was about a gay man dying of AIDS in hospital and the reactions of people around him. And it was like this extremely straight macho nurse and he had to gradually relax a bit so that he could actually touch him without screaming or whatever.

INTERVIEWER: Since that time, finding out at that time have you not found out anymore?

INTERVIEWEE: Now I don't think I have. That was really good for me because it made it really humanitarian and relating it to lepers and the way they were treated. Again they are not actually contagious if you touch them but people just spurned them and I actually became quite angry about the way people were reacting. And I have always been interested in doing something like AIDS counselling. That's something that can be extremely traumatic, but you just think somebody has got to touch these people to make them think they are human which a lot of people don't.

INTERVIEWER: So you were thinking in terms of helping people who had AIDS and trying to react against the moral panic. Did you ever think about it as something about you, something you might be at risk from, something you might have to do something about?

INTERVIEWEE: No I never did because I hadn't actually had sex at that point. It was not something I could imagine happening. I used a condom with GRAHAM last year and

MARK's a virgin so it's never really come out and if anybody had a worry he did, so it wasn't something I would ever relate to myself because I have never been in a situation of having sex with somebody unprotected as with a condom or unsafe sex who has actually had sexual partners before.

INTERVIEWER: So you hadn't thought about it because it didn't have immediate relevance to you but had you ever thought about it as something that in the future is going to be important?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I remember thinking you can use protective sex or something but say you were married and you wanted to have children then you can't actually have protective sex but at that point presumably you will have found out about somebody's past. I can't imagine sitting down and saying right, who have you had sex with. But it's something in the future I can appreciate might happen to me and you know even if I stay with MARK for the rest of my life which I am not anticipating.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that perhaps it hasn't had an effect on you yet because of the type of people you have been having relationships with. Can you see it in the future as starting to have quite a serious effect on the types of relationship you might want to have and start influencing that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me what type of relationships you see yourself as having in the future, how do you see your life progressing in terms of relationships? Or have you not thought about it in that way?

INTERVIEWEE: I haven't actually thought about it. I haven't actually thought beyond MARK. I haven't necessarily got a future with him but I haven't got a future without him either. He is someone I like a lot and might stay with him, whatever, if things worked still. It would be the same situation if I started to go out with someone, I can't imagine having sex with somebody I didn't love. Especially now it feels different now. It feels different with MARK just because I care about him so much and it's very much a part of that and I see it ideally as just a part of caring about somebody. So I wouldn't go off with somebody and go to bed with them. Because I would feel quite strange about that, someone different actually touching my body.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of safe sex, you wouldn't see yourself as a person who would have casual sex?

INTERVIEWEE: No

INTERVIEWER: But in terms of if you are having a relationship with somebody then even if you know them quite well you are going to have to deal with it. In what way would you expect to deal with it, would you ask them about their past and finding out what type of person they were, do you think that would be enough for you to feel secure?

INTERVIEWEE: Well now if I have sex it would be with using a condom. I have been on the pill for a while partly due to having problems with my periods and I hated it and had to come off it, it just did nothing for me at all. I have been thinking of other forms of contraception. I have problems inserting a tampon, I can't use Tampax at all so I don't know how I would get a diaphragm or a cap in. So it's partly practical as well, if I was going to have sex with someone I would use a condom.

INTERVIEWER: Obviously for you as you were saying before penetration isn't a very important part of sex to you, when you think of safe sex do you just think it's using a condom or have you thought it might mean non-penetrative sex.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes a bit of both.

INTERVIEWER: You have done it up to now but the reason being that I don't want to have to go all the way, I don't want to do that, in a way that's quite a negative view of non-penetrative sex, it's I can't do this because I am too nervous or I'm too small or I don't want to go that far, I have a problem about it. Could you think about it in a positive way?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think it's because that was what you aspire to and that was what sex was and I have a very different view of that now as well because intercourse has played so much part of having sex with MARK. So I have a very different idea to it now and because it doesn't matter. It's not that I don't want to, it's actually not an important part of it and it's a question of exploring other paths as well.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think you would be able to present non-penetrative sex to your next partner as a good thing, that's something you want to do?

INTERVIEWEE: I really don't know. I think it really depends on the person they are. If I felt confident enough in myself and relaxed enough that I would actually be able to talk about it otherwise I can see myself just doing what they wanted to because I tend to do that. With somebody else I probably wouldn't have much confidence initially.

INTERVIEWER: But ideally that's the type of sex you would want to have?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: If you could cut out penetration completely from your sex life would you be happier?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. Well not happier but as happy. It's nice sometimes but it doesn't bother me at all.

INTERVIEWER: You say that you have thought about this a lot and talked to your partner, do you still feel guilt around it even though you don't necessarily want to and understand that you shouldn't. Do you feel there is still a sense of guilt particularly if you were either another partner and not with the one at the moment, who might say for instance, 'that's the only way I get real pleasure', and also, for instance, 'I don't want to use a condom because I don't get pleasure from using condoms'.

END OF FIRST SIDE OF TAPE

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know if I could actually say that. I do feel guilty sometimes when I think about him and he hasn't come but he still has to tell me that. Because I know there has been times when we have had penetrative sex and I haven't come but I've got very close to it and I just feel really really ratty and pissed off and it caused a few arguments because that makes him feel inadequate. And it's partly that because I resent him because he does and I don't.

INTERVIEWER: And does he ask you whether you do?

INTERVIEWEE: He knows. Which is why it doesn't bother him at all. He says it doesn't bother him if he comes or not, that's actually not important to him. But it does with me partly because I give him such a hard time and because I am aware of that and how it feels to me. If I am nowhere near it doesn't bother me at all but if I am really close then

it's just massive frustration. And because of that I am projecting how I feel onto him and that's just him, I don't know how other men actually feel about it whether it's important to them or not?

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel the relationship you have got with this man at the moment is special and it's unusual to be able to choose the type ofsex...?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes when I was talking to my friends about it to begin with it was a total surprise. Because it's never happened to me before, I have never actually come with anybody before and it hasn't been a problem with them but it was important to him that I did.

INTERVIEWER: So you say you talked to your friends, are there any friends that you know about who have similar relationships in terms of sexual pleasure, they both have the same rights?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I know a number but not all of them. I remember talking to a friend, she had a number of sexual experiences and none of them had been particularly pleasant and the person she has started going out with now is the first person she has actually enjoyed it with.

INTERVIEWER: You realise that it's probably quite unusual to have that type of relationship?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that would play an important part in whether you stayed with this partner or not?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I know when I first started going out with him I was just getting pissed off with him and I talked to a friend about this and I was thinking about finishing with him but he was just one of the nicest people I know. It's not perfect at all but just in terms of the basics of a relationship it's the best I have had.

INTERVIEWER: If you could expect in men that you were likely to sleep with that they would have a similar approach to sex and to be as equally as giving and fair, that you would be more likely to think that this relationship is good and I have got a lot out of it but I can go on to may be bigger and better things out there?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes definitely.

INTERVIEWER: So in a way there is still a fear of sex in men because you are not necessarily going to get another one like him again?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I completely understand yet again.

INTERVIEWEE: If I that type of person then it would probably have happened a lot earlier as well. But I have always had a fear because I know so much about the negative side of it, I have always known about the negative and none about the positive and this is the first positive sexual relationship I have had.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel that it is easy to find out about the positive side especially for a woman?

INTERVIEWEE: No I don't think it is.

INTERVIEWER: You very rarely hear about it or are told about it. In terms of the way you feel do you think AIDS coming onto the scene has changed the way you feel about sex at all?

INTERVIEWEE: No I don't think so. It has in terms of thinking about the person you are about to have sex with in terms of that but my view of sex and where and when I would

have it ideally I don't think has changed because it's not part of that having non-penetrative sex and not being unprotected. I think I would very rarely have contraception myself if I was about to start having sex with somebody so it wouldn't necessarily be something obvious like a condom because I wouldn't have penetration with them, but I wouldn't have that immediately, ideally anyway I would be much more concerned about finding out how I felt about them generally and other things as well and that's something that would happen after that.

INTERVIEWER: Would you feel happy about talking to somebody about AIDS, if you were expecting to sleep with somebody, do you think it's something you would talk to them about?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know whether I would bring it up myself.

INTERVIEWER: Why is that, do you think it would be showing mistrust of a person for instance if you said right I want to talk about AIDS and I want to talk about what type of precautions to take, do you feel that in a way you are making an inference about them?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think it's the whole thing about not being able to ask things and in terms of me I want to know what your history has been and how you view sex or whatever, and that's ... and making that demand for yourself is quite difficult. MARK's already brought up AIDS this time and I know there was some programme on it last year and the bloke I was having sex with was panicking a bit about it and I thought, shit, but I didn't actually talk to him about it very much. I had a vague idea that I but I thought it didn't matter because we were using condoms and it wasn't happening very often.

INTERVIEWER: So in a way do you think that AIDS is being submerged into talking about sex rather than something that's outside of that and it's important to ... and so anyone can talk about it.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I do definitely.

INTERVIEWER: Which is very unfortunate.

INTERVIEWEE: I think men could ask and they would be alright about it because they have a right and you don't actually have a right to ask, would you mind, that sort of thing. I would probably feel quite vulnerable.

INTERVIEWER: Yes I agree. So tell me a bit about what you think you are going to be doing in the future apart from relationships and apart from your sex life, which is obviously quite an important part of things for your own happiness, but in terms of the other things, do you see yourself as an ambitious person?

INTERVIEWEE: I am in terms of achievement for myself but not necessarily in terms of ambition in the sense of aspiring to get a business for myself or anything like that.

INTERVIEWER: What do you mean in terms of achievement for yourself?

INTERVIEWEE: Just that I feel satisfied, like not in terms of being ambitious to get a first or anything like that but being ambitious enough to prove to myself that I knew I had gone as far or had done as much work or achieved the grades I thought I actually could achieve.

INTERVIEWER: So in a sense you are ambitious to fulfil yourself. In terms of what you are going to be doing from now onwards after you have finished your degree, what direction do you see yourself going in, do you have any ideas?

INTERVIEWEE: I have always been interested in therapies of some sort and I was toying with psycho drama at one point and then I as a dramatist. I met some

extremely good ones and I thought right, I will get involved in that. I think everything I have looked at doesn't give me the flexibility I want. I couldn't say right, I am going to use psycho drama for every single person because it's not appropriate, this is what frustrates me about all the therapies and all the psychological approaches to things. I had this dream of having a massive house with about twenty different types of therapies from music therapy, art therapy to whatever but not psychoanalysis. And actually have somebody advising people, saying this is the problem I've got or this is what I want to overcome and saying well these are the options you've got, how do you feel about this. So there is no competition for it you know like, 'I've got the right answer for it', because I don't think anyone has. And actually the flexibility of someone doing psycho drama and art therapy and something else because I think you need everything because no one thing is right for one person. So actually rather than going into any particular type of thing I will probably go into counselling in a more general way using therapy or into the social services. I can see myselfSW mainly because it's a very useful qualification to have.

INTERVIEWER: You can get a job as well.

INTERVIEWEE: But I don't know how I could stand social work. I have got reservations about the way I see it used at times and there are some very good social workers and some awful social workers But it leads to an end so I can actually go into the social service or counselling service which is more flexible.

INTERVIEWER: So in a sense they are all caring things, is that in a way one of your ambitions to do something useful?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Where do you think that comes from, the desire to do something useful or humanitarian?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it's from the family mainly. My mum has always been in [CARING ROLE] and my Grandfather as well and it's just the way they talk about things and I think generally in my family, my sister has been a [CARING ROLE] my other sister has been [IN AN EDUCATIONAL ROLE] and they have all been in medicine or caring in a way.

INTERVIEWER: Did your father ever have any ambitions or give you an idea of what he would like you to do?

INTERVIEWEE: I think he is very shrewd about these things, he knows my character and he knows enough about me in terms of what I do in my life to actually be able to do that. Basically he wants me to get married to my cousin in Pakistan. He wants to be able to be proud of me. He has this big thing about status and he had a problem with my brother who was out of work for a while and was working [IN PSYCHOLOGY FIELD]. And it wasn't a proper job and he wasn't a proper man because of it.

INTERVIEWER: Do these aspirations seem ludicrous to you or do they actually hit home to an extent with you?

INTERVIEWEE: I think on the whole they are quite ludicrous but it is the whole thing about I don't want just to get a job to get money, I want to do something and I might do that for a little while but I have got to do something because I have to fulfil myself in terms of that, and for me it will be something like counselling. In terms of status it doesn't actually bother me. He comes back to this little niggling thing like, 'how far can you go in the profession, how much money would you be earning', and at the moment

it's not a consideration because I can't actually imagine myself earning £10,000 a year or whatever. I think later if and when I was having a family or something.

INTERVIEWER: But the aspirations about marriage within the culture and those sorts of things. I mean they are completely alien to you?

INTERVIEWEE: I think the only reason... this is very sad as well is like my children not having any idea about Pakistan culture or whatever and because I have had so much problems actually in terms of the way I look, actually having a baby who looked Asian and that's really bad because I will be transferring all my ... onto them but that's probably the only reason.

INTERVIEWER: That's what you really like.

INTERVIEWEE: A bit of artificial insemination.

INTERVIEWER: You won't feel so guilty. Will you send them to a single-sex Muslim school as well? Just a few questions to finish, would you know for instance the difference between HIV and AIDS?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, HIV is when you have the virus but AIDS is when it's developed. You are a carrier when you are HIV positive but it might not necessarily develop into the disease.

INTERVIEWER: So for instance if someone was HIV positive would they be infectious, could you have unprotected sex?

INTERVIEWEE: No they can pass it on.

INTERVIEWER: Do you know anything about how long it takes from being positive to developing the AIDS?

INTERVIEWEE: It can either be never or something like seven years, it's a long time.

INTERVIEWER: From what you know, from what you have picked up who would you see at risk at the moment from HIV and getting the virus?

INTERVIEWEE: Everybody. I know there are high risk groups and low risk groups and it's people who use needles, drug users, because it's very easy access and obviously or supposedly the gay community. I find it very disturbing because it's like they are the ones that are actually at high risk and know they are going to die but it doesn't actually matter because everyone else is a victim and people who actually need blood transfusions.... Like in New York there is a massive percentage of heterosexual women who are HIV positive at the moment so I can't be complacent about it because you don't know where or when ...

INTERVIEWER: Do you think heterosexuals are at risk now, would you live your life according to that assumption?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Would you feel for instance that men are more likely to be positive or women, do you have any sense of like?

INTERVIEWEE: I haven't got any statistics or anything, it's just an impression.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of impression in your head who is at risk?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think men are at high risk, well not at high risk but there are more more men have died of AIDS than women.

INTERVIEWER: How serious a risk do you see that as, I don't mean in terms of giving me a statistic or whatever but is it something that worries you, it is something that you think is serious or may be sometimes you think it's serious, do you ever think about it?

INTERVIEWEE: I never think about it in terms of myself because I have never felt myself to be in a situation where I would have to worry about it. I think it is serious, it's something we can't dismiss I don't think, but I don't find it particularly relevant to myself at moment. But I would, I think it would depend on who I have sex with or who I had sex with and if it was someone I didn't know like rape or something then that is something I would take very seriously.

INTERVIEWER: Is it something that people you know talk about it, I mean during the AIDS campaign on television did people talk about it then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes they talked about it quite a lot.

INTERVIEWER: Ever since then has it ever been a topic of conversation like something that's important to discuss?

INTERVIEWEE: Occasionally..... we won't sit round and talk about AIDS like we would about....

INTERVIEWER: So it's not seen as an important issue. From your experience of talking about it, do you think women are more concerned about it than men or is it reasonably equal?

INTERVIEWEE: I do and I don't. I think I also think that they are the ones probably who are more at risk....

INTERVIEWER: Why is that?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know just because I think they do generally. Women have always had to take more precautions and think about sex more than men because it has far greater implications for them, not just in terms of pregnancy but in terms of how they are seen socially as well so they have to take a lot more on board as well. I can't believe that you have to ask questions like would you want to carry a condom as if it was like a woman would never do. Whereas a man would be much less likely to think about that than a woman would.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think it's fair that women take more responsibility?

INTERVIEWEE: I think they have to but it's not fair if it's not an equal thing. Women are meant to take equal responsibility, it's not fair if women have to say excuse me I need contraception or I have got to think about AIDS. Whether they would actually say it or not I think women have had that responsibility in the past.

INTERVIEWER: AIDS is one more on the shopping list?

INTERVIEWEE: That's right, yes.

INTERVIEWER: One last thing, would you ever think about having an AIDS test or would you think about asking somebody else to have one?

INTERVIEWEE: I think I might. Not at the moment because it's not something that's particularly relevant to me but in the future I think I might. Especially if it was at some stage we were thinking of having unprotected sex. It's not just penetration, can you get it through

INTERVIEWER: It's low risk. The virus is present in semen and it is present in vaginal fluid. It depends if you have sores in your mouth or you have bleeding gums then you can. If you haven't got sores in your mouth and you don't swallow gallons of semen then it's very unlikely. In the same way a woman's womb and the vaginal passage, it's very easy to catch it there because there are blood vessels very close to the surface, it's low risk in comparison with vaginal and anal intercourse are by far the highest risks.

INTERVIEWEE: In which case I think I only would if I wasn't sure about somebody or there was a risk of somebody else actually if there was a stage of having unprotected sex then I would probably ask for it then. Because ideally I wouldn't see that happening until I was actually..... in which case I could actually ask them for it and not actually feel as if I am doing something really horrible.

INTERVIEWER: So as it is now you feel quite happy that you could always have protected sex until you got to a point such as that?

INTERVIEWEE: It is always ... ideally I can see that happening.

INTERVIEWER: If you were in a situation where your partner refused to wear a condom and insisted on having penetrative sex, when you are weighing up the risks, obviously that would be a problem for you, but presuming you were really attracted to this person and felt a lot for them how would you cope with that?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think I would. I would say something, I would refuse to have penetrative sex I think partly because. Well again it depends on the sort of person they are but I have always been able to say no before and it's something that's not bothered me because it's not the be all and end all of anything. If it's like they are upset then tough, if they are extremely upset then I think well get lost really because if they don't respect me in that then..... and I think that's not on.

INTERVIEWER: And that's quite a lot in a way because you have had practice in saying that?

INTERVIEWEE: I have felt pressure occasionally but it's never actually been anything like nobody could actually it's always been my decision and I meant it and I knew how far I was going to go and if I was getting close then I would just switch off. It's an automatic switch off in my head.

END OF TAPE.