

**Louise (USD06) (RT) 11.11.89**

Q: The best thing to start, tell me about your work, what you are doing now from leaving school really up to now, just what you have done?

A: Not much really. I left school when I was sixteen because my mum and dad couldn't afford to send me to further education.

Q: But did you want to go there?

A: I did and I didn't. I would have liked to have gone but I know I wanted some money so that's the difference and I knew it would be unfair on them to expect them. I could have gone to college but I couldn't have gone home as well, they would have subsidised me living but they wouldn't have subsidised me lifestyle, do you know what I mean. So I couldn't afford to do that so I went looking on a YTS for two weeks and a day.

Q: What was that for?

A: Hairdressing. It was terrible.

Q: Hairdressing?

A: They didn't pay me or anything like, I mean in the end mum went up and she threatened him with the courts how these ex shop stewards do.

Q: Is your mum..?

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah well I think she was a shop steward then actually and I finished. Then I went working at a [COMPANY] and I've been there ever since. I've worked there for nearly four and a half year.

Q: What's it like there? You said it was boring before.

A: It's boring. It's like monkeys would do it for peanuts. There's no job satisfaction. The only thing I like about it is my pay packet. The only thing that keeps me going is my union activities and welfare, I man the welfare department once a week, well for a week on a rota system so if it weren't for things like that and joining in on quizzes and games and raffles and that, I just would go completely daft.

Q: Yeah. So do you get, I mean is it, do you have a good relationship with people at work, people you work with and stuff?

A: Yeah. I've heard a lot of things said about me you know, how you do like?

Q: Yeah?

A: E.g. Oh she's time for everybody and all that. They've never said that to my face, but one woman stopped me and said, 'I were talking to a woman and she said oh LOUISE she's got time for everybody, always a smile for everybody you know', so I get on with all. I think I do anyway.

Q: You say about being involved in the union and I mean, are you were shop steward?

A: Yeah.

Q: You were shop steward. Was that because you knew about it from your mum and stuff or was it something you'd always grown up knowing about or, was it, or did you come to it whilst you were at work or something like that?

A: I'd grown up with the unions in a way, but I never had unions thrown down my throat but, um, I think my mum's attitudes have rubbed off on me, like I do things what she does and we don't even know, I never seen her, never heard her talk about such, the such and such a thing but I do it and then she'll say, 'Oh God, I used to do that, I did that when I was your age', or whatever. When I worked on the YTS I really messed about like, I were really one scared sixteen year old and at the end of it I was

telling him what to do like and I just, I don't know, I just realised that I could open my mouth and nobody could say anything, if I was right.

Q: It was like probably realising that you were probably cleverer than he was?

A: I now I deal, dealt with bigger bosses than he'll ever be now, but at the time he was the be all and end all.

Q: Yeah. Tell me about your relationship with your mum, I mean it sounds like your quite close. Or is that not true?

A: It's, no, uh close, as in going for a drink and have a laugh and she'll just nip into my room and say I'll wear her clothes and she wears my clothes and, you know what I mean, but not close as in I couldn't turn round and say, mum, you know I think I'm pregnant or something. I would never ever talk about anything like that.

Q: Why do you think that is, I mean, why is there a cut off point in what you can talk about?

A: I don't know. I always think about it because I could turn round to anybody and say I've done this, I've done that but I would never say it to mum. I think it would upset her and I've always been like that, I mean it's not just like I suddenly hit adolescence and now I don't tell her things, I've always been one of these kids that you don't pick up and kiss and because I hate it. You know when you go to family do's and they grab hold of you and kiss you and that. Let me get out of here. So I'm not close like that but, I wondered if I said to her, oh I'm pregnant, she'd just go oh right, fine.

Q: You think she'd be able to cope with it?

A: She would be able to cope with it, yeah.

Q: How about, in sort of like, does she ever have a sort of moral view, that she brought you up with or anything like that?

A: She's, there's some things she's hammered in. I mean my mum was seventeen when she got pregnant and she never told her .... she got somebody else to tell her for her, you see, and she's always been upset over that, so I suppose they were the same, they must have been really because she couldn't turn to her mother and say, 'I were pregnant'. She was uh..

Q: Yeah, I was just saying whether she had any like, do you think she's got any opinions of what's right and what's wrong about what she expects you to be doing?

A: Yeah well I said I wanted to go and live with my boyfriend, well not live with him as I was saving up for a house and just left it at that, saving up, in three years we're thinking of living together. And like, we'd gone out for a night out and we'd had a drink like, and we're sat there and she said, 'LOUISE, don't, don't, don't get, don't just get a house. Save up, get your house, get married, get engaged, get married then have your kids'. And that's the things that she says to me without realising that I'm going gulp.

Q: Right, so this is what she'd like for you?

A: Yeah, and this big white wedding. She always says, 'don't run away, don't run away from home, don't rob me of my big day'. Because she never had a big day you see.

Q: Because she got pregnant?

A: Because she got pregnant. She had the wedding and that but she didn't have the veil and wreath and all this, you know.

Q: And that meant, means a lot to her?

A: Yeah, she wants this big wedding and I'm her only daughter.

Q: Oh right, so the pressure's on isn't it?

A: Yeah, that's how I feel.

Q: When she talks about wanting a big white wedding and everything, is it linked, do you think she thinks you should be a virgin before you get married or does she want, is the white wedding?

A: It's just the white wedding, it's just like this is the day that you show your daughter off, I suppose, but it's like a standing joke, it's something that she always says, and it makes me feel, I mean I probably would have left home a few year ago, but I feel, it's the guilt, it's the guilt and nobody else can understand that, you know, I mean how do your parents stop you from leaving home, but it does. When they go on like that all the time but without being nasty. I wouldn't mind if she was being nasty.

Q: Do you ever get angry about it?

A: No. No. I mean at the end of the day if I wanted to go, if I really wanted to go they couldn't stop me, but it does hold me back. The only thing that I used to get angry about, was she got an endowment policy for my wedding and it's always been, 'when this matures we can afford your wedding'.

Q: So you've also got to wait until...

A: I've got to wait til this policy comes, and every time I talk to her it's another two years. She keeps putting years on this endowment policy. When I was sixteen, you see it was like, 'when you're eighteen it matures', then it was 'when you're twenty it matures', and now like I'm twenty-one in a bit, 'when you're twenty-two it matures'.

Q: Right, well she's obviously got a scheme going here.

A: Yeah, obviously.

Q: So who lives at home now?

A: Me, my brothers, ANDY and MIKE, and my mum and dad.

Q: How do you get on with your dad, I mean you're talking a lot about your relationship with your mum, is it as close with your dad?

A: No. Not as, I mean me and my dad don't go out for a drink and I cringe if I see him in the pub because I don't like him knowing that I go to the pub, I know it sounds daft but I don't, I mean I bang into him in pubs but we always laugh. You know what I mean? He's dead like, dead calm, 'would you like a drink?', 'Yes.' 'LOUISE, what are you drinking?' 'I'll have an orange juice please dad.' You know, stoned out my head, I'll have an orange juice, no what I mean?

Q: Yeah. What sort of person is he, I mean is he very different from your mum?

A: My dad is very, very different, he's em, he was brought up in a home when he was, well his mum and dad were er, his dad were a drunk, and his mum were like, she were alright but she were like had a nervous breakdown and they put them all in ... orphanage. So like he's dead hard and he'll say, ..... 'Oh, well done love, well done,' and behind my back he'll say, 'Oh I'm right proud of her'. But he's never said it to my face and he'll like, if he thinks I look nice, 'Well, thou looks alright,' and behind my back he'll say 'Eeh, she's a bonny girl', you know.

Q: Well at least you know what he says behind your back.

A: I find out, it embarrasses me when he says it though because he's never like that and he's got a very violent temper. Um, he hasn't now but he used to have, so.

Q: Has it calmed down as you got older?

A: Yeah.

Q: Has he ever taken that out on you and your mum?

A: He's taken it out on all of us.

Q: I mean were you ever scared of him?

A: Yeah. Still am. Not scared, I'm not scared of him knocking me around, God.

Q: But he's got authority?

A: He's, yeah. You've got to see him to believe him. He's got an Irish temper. They scream in Irish, I don't know, he talks like a .... talking and as soon as he gets annoyed they talk in Gaelic. If I hear his Irish, Irish accent come out I back off.

Q: Does he care about things like whether you might be sleeping with anybody or about your wedding or about anything like that about you or does he not take part in it?

A: I don't know, he sits back, my dad. When they talk about the wedding he'll say, 'Get her a ladder and they can elope', he said, he keeps telling me how nice it is in Gretna Green that I wouldn't want to come back to put, there's a little post box and they could send my letters for me, these couples go and they don't want to come back from Gretna Green for some reason.

Q: Do you think that's a joke?

A: It's a joke. He's also like, 'I can't wait to have grandkids', yet then he'll turn and say like yesterday I said oh, my cousin's pregnant, something about a christening and he goes, 'Oh I'd never go to a christening that were outside marriage'. And I'm saying well what if it were me? 'I don't care, if it's outside marriage I'm not going to no christening'. So he's got them kind of..

Q: Are they religious your parents, I mean are they practising religious?

A: No. My mum's atheist, oh I think it's agnostic, well my mum believes there's something but it's not a God.

Q: Right, probably agnostic, depends what it is she thinks there is.

A: .... and my dad's an unpracticing Catholic, he doesn't go to church or anything but he's, but a lot of his views are still very Catholic, but not enough to get him to church.

Q: Right, so probably about stuff like contraception and abortion and things like that he would be Catholic, strong Catholic but not practicing?

A: He's not a practicing Catholic at all no.

Q: You said on the questionnaire that you went to a Baptist church, how did you get, if you didn't follow your parents into that?

A: No, I mean I don't go that often, I go every blue moon. My friend is a born again Christian, um it's a Gospel Church, I think Evangelism, and she drags me down. I enjoy it, I like the singing and all everybody holding hands and that, but I don't go every week because I've not made my mind up yet.

Q: Right, but I mean how, about the idea, I mean do you see yourself as a Christian, and living by those rules or anything?

A: Oh yeah, I don't think, I mean they say that, it says in the Bible that you don't have to go pray to God, God is everywhere, I believe in that. .... sit in bed like, and, I don't have to go to church, God, because you're there, I mean that's what it says in the Bible, you can read the Bible whichever way you want, you can always pick something out that'll suit you.

Q: So how about things like sin, I mean how far do you go with the Bible on those things?

A: I think that, I don't think, sin as in evil, I think, I don't think it's something somebody does on purpose it's just the way that they are. I don't think that they're evil people, I think that there are sick people.

Q: Right, so about things like things that are traditional things, sinful by the church, things like sex before marriage?

A: First time .....

Q: Sex before marriage or sex outside marriage?

A: No, no doesn't affect me, doesn't bother me.

Q: So, it's not that strict?

A: No. No.

Q: Good, or life could be a bit boring otherwise.

A: No. I'm not that bad.

Q: Could you think back to what you said on the questionnaire that you didn't get any sex education in school, no sex education class specifically, can you remember what they did tell you?

A: Um, just pregnancy, and miscarriage, I think we might have done abortion as well. Sexual reproduction as in what happens, how this baby grows, not anything about cells, just like this goes here, and this happens, that's all.

Q: When you say not anything about sex, what do you mean by that?

A: I mean, they never said like you know, I know they couldn't go into details I mean that's something I suppose, like you'll learn, the ins and outs of sex that nobody, they just said it's like an act, this is an act. Not this, this feels..

Q: Right. This might be something that you might do when you.....

A: Yeah, this is, this is how it happens.

Q: Would you have liked to have something that was more about sex?

A: No, I don't, maybe now but at sixteen, fifteen, sixteen when you're all sat in a class and all ....

Q: Why, why's that?

A: Because I'm a very shy person, I get very easily, not offended, but it would have worked me up and it would probably have frightened me.

Q: Yeah, I mean at the time were you not really thinking about those sort of things?

A: Yeah.

Q: You were?

A: I think you learn things, and you choose, you choose to learn, I mean if I want to know the ins and outs of, I don't know periods or anything, if I think my period's funny then I'll go and get a book and read about it, what should be happening. I choose to do that, but I wouldn't want to sit there and have it rammed down my throat, I think when you're old enough to be having sex you're old enough to be reading about it and learning about it yourself.

Q: Right, so were you having sex at sixteen whilst you were watching?

A: Yeah.

Q: You'd gone and looked at a book about it?

A: Right.

Q: That's the thing isn't it, I mean it's probably because you probably start doing that before you're able to go and find a book and think about motivating yourself to do that. Where did you, where did you, you say you didn't learn, did your mum tell you about periods and things like that?

A: She tried to. It's alright, I know, know, do you want a brew?

Q: Oh right, you wouldn't let her tell you?

A: No, no.

Q: Did you feel that she was invading your privacy there?

A: It just embarrasses me.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It sounds daft because I'm talking into a tape recorder now but it just embarrasses me.

Q: Oh no, but I mean it's your mum isn't it I mean there's something, there's something different there with your mum.

A: No, I wouldn't let her tell me anything.

Q: But you could talk to your friends and stuff about it?

A: Yeah, but I wouldn't, I never took for granted what they were saying were right.

Q: It probably wasn't.

A: All these whispers like surely that can't get out of there.

Q: Were there things that people told you that you can remember that really weren't right? You know things that were..

A: No. I mean, oh aye periods, no. Things like contraception I've heard allsorts.

Q: Like what?

A: Jumping up and down on floor.

Q: To stop you getting pregnant, what before or after?

A: After.

Q: After?

A: Um, if you miss three pills then take them all at once, I think we've all heard that one haven't we.

Q: Yeah, it's not(?) going to do your body much good I don't think.

A: No, come out in big blotches, I don't think it worked.

Q: But those are the type of, that people would tell you sort of the ways..

A: Oh yeah, just take em all, that should be alright.

Q: Did you ever do that?

A: No.

Q: And people did?

A: They must have done, they told me, they must have done to tell me about it.

Q: So would this be going on in schools, like in the toilets and things, people chatting about it?

A: I wasn't one of the gang, I just had one friend but my friend got pregnant.

Q: How old was she then?

A: Fifteen.

Q: Was that quite common at school, at your school?

A: Might have been but nobody knew about it. There was only me that knew she was pregnant and it was our secret. Nobody else knows.

Q: So what happened, did she have to leave?

A: She had an abortion.

Q: Right, was that, what did you feel about that?

A: I was disgusted really I think, because we'd shared it for so long, I know it sounds daft, sounds like a film doesn't it. We'd shared it for so long, this secret, and then her parents found out and they said like, they forced her into having an abortion. Which now she thinks, brilliant, I've got my own house, I've got a new boyfriend because it broke her other boyfriend up, but she was, as she was like in the later weeks for an abortion she, I think six months I think she'd gone something like that.

Q: So it was quite a long way.

A: She'd gone a fair while yeah, so it disgusted me.

Q: So were you, between the two of you you'd decided that she was going to have it then?

A: Between us both yeah, I think we had. I mean it was like we had jokes about it you know.

Q: Did you feel to a certain extent it was like, it was like your baby as well then?

A: I felt like it was ours, it was like, you know it was weird I suppose, I haven't really thought about it. But like I used to say, 'Heh, do you feel sick? Are you ....'. 'I've had sausage and chips for my dinner. I'm into sausages you know'. She used to really have these cravings. She used to eat some horrible stuff.

Q: So you were upset when that happened. I mean did you break up friends with her or anything?

A: No, I wouldn't do that. We're still best friends now, we still go out together. I know it was for the best but it was like a let down.

Q: You were just excited about having the baby, it was your baby wasn't it? So, I mean, she got pregnant, she got pregnant, was this from not using any birth control? Failing birth control?

A: I think it was failing birth control, because she wasn't a stupid girl and then I think after that we both went on the pill because we wasn't old enough, she wasn't old enough to be on the pill obviously, I think it was the same time that Victoria Gillick was stopping the pill for under sixteens.

Q: So did you remember, did you think of that and realise then that or were you worried about that when you saw it on T.V. and stuff?

A: I thought she was stupid and I mean I wouldn't have remembered her name otherwise.

Q: Yeah. Well the fact that you do shows that it must have hit home at the time.

A: Yeah, oh it did. She was like, I kept thinking it's me you're talking about, it's me you're talking about you know, you're stopping these things for me but I was sixteen then anyway. By the time, wait a minute, she was fifteen, I think she was sixteen when she had the abortion. By that time, we was both sixteen so we were thinking well we're alright but..

Q: Yeah, what about, yeah, people under us. So when did you first become sexually active or first started thinking about sex or about boys? About that whole type of thing?

A: I started, well I was still playing marbles at twelve and thirteen but at fourteen I started going to a disco and met a young lad and, well, I was at this disco when I was fifteen I wanted to go out with a lad called STEVE and he was my first love.

Q: Was it a big, big love?

A: This is the big thing. And we went out with each other for about seven months.

Q: That's quite long for fourteen isn't it?

A: Well yeah, I think I was fourteen, fifteen and then I knew we was going to split up but, we hadn't done anything, we hadn't done anything by that ....

Q: When you say you hadn't done anything, what do you mean by that?

A: We hadn't had sex.

Q: Right, but had you had some sort of physical relationship?

A: Yeah, kissing and that and like kissing ....

Q: Well that's the things, I mean I'm not being just nosey, that's the sort of things we're interested in, is what other things people do apart from having, apart from having sex like as intercourse, because these things are safe, in terms of AIDS, you see.

A: I suppose so, so, wouldn't even say we had done much.

Q: Just groping around in the back of the car?

A: Yeah, cos at fifteen, fourteen or fifteen like I didn't know what I was supposed to be groping at to be honest, I hadn't had a Biology class by then. I hadn't had a Biology lesson. It was .... when we split up and then eventually I decided, I know it sounds stupid now, alright we was going to split up but I wanted to be, it was right, ..

Q: The right time for you to split up..?

A: No it was right to have sex, even though we were splitting up. I mean he was older than me but like we'd been together for like seven months and we hadn't done anything in seven months and I just thought, this is what I want.

Q: Did you know, I mean did you have it in the back of your mind that this was a way of maybe of making it carry on, the relationship carrying on?

A: No, because I could have kept that relationship, I could go tomorrow, um, there's not many people in your life that you know are besotted with you, that's, there'll always be somebody for somebody that is totally besotted with them and he was totally besotted by me and that's not me being big headed, that's everybody the same, and he'd jump through hoops for me. And I think that's what..

Q: And it was that, that finished it?

A: Yeah, I split up with him, but I think it was my way of trying to apologise.

Q: So you were doing it out of guilt, really?

A: Yeah, I suppose so, it was, I don't know. I knew it wouldn't last, but, I mean we've been back together since and then we split up then I'll give him a ring and we'll go out and he's like you know, like a lap dog. Seriously. But, I don't like that.

Q: Who does. So, I mean at the time was it a big thing for you losing your virginity, I mean did it mean lots of things to you?

A: No. It just meant that um, I'd give him anything, oh it sounds sick this, I'd give him something I could never give anybody else, something special, and that's why I did it.

Q: What did you feel about it afterwards? Was it what you expected it to be?

A: Um, no. No. I was very happy that we had, and that it had been him and not any, because we'd been for seven months it was like the final thing and then we never saw each other for a while um, but I never, I wasn't like on cloud nine ..... you know what I mean.

Q: Oh well, I mean did you, did you get any pleasure out of it at the time?

A: No.

Q: I don't think many people do.

A: It's a bit, but what makes me laugh is I made him, he didn't want to. I was a Lolita.

Q: I mean did you feel like you wanted to lose your virginity, did you feel like you wanted to get it over and done with?

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No.

Q: Right, so it was sort of thing just between the two of you, it was about what, your relationship. In terms of like, everybody else and people who were at school and your friends and stuff like that, was it seen as being, cos I know at different times it was different, I mean when I was at school it was seen as being, you know, if you were a virgin you said you weren't and if you weren't a virgin you tried to not become one and it was very uncool to not have sex. Most people hadn't but they at least pretended they had and then I mean I've talked to other people who said that when they were at school if you, you know, it was good to be a virgin, it was good not to be sexually active, it was seen as being right. I mean was there any sense of that amongst your friends, what was normal and what was the best way to be?

A: Well, obviously I was very slow compared to some of my friends.

Q: Yeah, so they at fifteen that was..

A: Yeah, just when I was sixteen and like I was like slow compared to all of them. Plus, I mean either that, or they were saying they had and they hadn't, do you know what I mean. I sometimes got that feeling that they can't possible be, you know there's no way they've done that. Um, but I don't listen to gossip.

Q: Not much anyway. Honestly I don't know that.

A: No, I don't. If you told me something and somebody asked me and said like, oh did she say she did that, I'd say well yeah, but I'm not saying it's true, that's the kind of



person I am, I wouldn't, cos sometimes you could be spreading malicious, and if I'm going to repeat something it's going to be – 'This is what they said but I'm not taking it a hundred per cent'. So I never really believed all that was said.

Q: But a lot was said, and it was like public knowledge what other people had done and stuff like that?

A: Well, I wasn't in with the in crowd but like the in crowd used to have parties and you know, there was on a big estate, posh houses and they all used to go back to one of those and Daddy's little girl, you know, used to raid the cupboard for drinks and everyone used to get drunk and used to end up upstairs and that. Yeah and I thought, oh..

Q: No, it's not you.

A: Certainly isn't me, I can remember going to the youth club once a week, that's all. I was like, very inactive compared to my friends, plus I never did it for a kick, it was never for a kick, you know I was with the same lad for seven months whereas they were going out and going with lads from school and..

Q: Do you think that makes a difference I mean did you at the time think it was wrong to do it, to be that, you know, have sex when you're not really in a relationship with somebody?

A: Yeah, I do.

Q: What, I mean you felt that then?

A: I felt that then yeah, more so, um, I mean I always thought me and my friend were alright because, I know she got pregnant and that, but she was using contraception, she was using condoms. They weren't called that then though.

Q: Did you use contraception when you first slept with..

A: No, because it wasn't planned.

Q: Right.

A: It was just my heat of the moment.

Q: It was, you say the heat of the moment, you decided there and then that that was what you wanted to?

A: Yeah, but he didn't. I .... dragging him, you will. Can you imagine that?

Q: Right, so I mean, at the time did you think it mattered that you didn't use any; were you scared or worried about that?

A: No, no. I think, you see, I was saying this to my friend the other day, I always think that there are some people, and I think I'm one of them, that would never get any enjoyment if there wasn't that kind of risk.

Q: Right.

A: Or that some people can't experience an orgasm if there isn't a chance of being pregnant at the end of that. I think there are people like that, and I think in some ways I am.

Q: That's interesting.

A: But, I mean I'm on the pill now, I wasn't on the pill when I .... that, but I'm on the pill now, and I don't like being on the pill but the safe side of me says don't be stupid you've entered into this relationship, you're going to use something, but if I could get away with not doing it, I would because I don't like the fact that; I don't want children, don't get me wrong, but it takes away something, it sounds daft but..

Q: No, it's really interesting, I mean, that's part of what makes it exciting, is the danger. I think that's what probably is involved, I think that's probably true in some sense with a lot of people but maybe not that so clear, do you know what I mean, the idea of taking risks. Do you like, do you get a kick out of taking other sorts of risks?

A: Do you mean like in general, life in general.

Q: Yeah, I mean whether that type of risk, you know that type of feeling, whether you find that appealing, does that happen in any other part of your life?

A: I don't think so, no. No, I wouldn't have said I take risks. I don't like go horse jumping or anything like that, you know, or ride a motorbike for thrills.

Q: You never do anything that's a bit dangerous?

A: I never do anything daring.

Q: So your risks are around sex then?

A: I suppose so, yeah.

Q: But you were saying then about that you actually get more sexual enjoyment out of it that you would be able to have an orgasm if you didn't have..

A: Oh I would, I mean, I would but, I know there are some people who can't.

Q: Can't if they're using contraception?

A: Yeah, yeah. Takes all the fun out. I mean to a certain extent it does with me, because, I mean like the other day I was having sex with this lad and I had a condom in my handbag, right, I wasn't on the pill then, I'd just been on it for two days. I was having sex and um, he said, 'have you got it on you?'. I went 'yeah, yeah, yeah, it's in my bag, but leave it'.

Q: Right, so you didn't want to use it?

A: It was in my bag right to the side of me, yeah but leave it, and I don't know why. I just, I couldn't have borne down the fact that like you're getting this box out and put this thing on.

Q: That's right, do you think it's about you wanting to have sex without it because it's dangerous and it's risky or do you think it's about not wanting to have to go through using it, using the condom?

A: Uh, it's both, certainly don't want to be going right, won't be a minute and nipping out of the room, or something, um I don't like, I don't like taking the pill full stop.

Q: I mean, the thing about using contraceptives, do you think that you could never look on them as sexy things, I mean something that is fun and part of, part of the, you know, the whole?

A: No, I can't understand why they flavour them. I mean, who wants, who wants, I mean come on let's be serious, who's really bothered if they're blackcurrant flavoured or not, who's going to find out.

Q: I know. Well you know, I mean, the thing is they're trying to push them as being things that could be erotic or, no?

A: No way, no way.

Q: Do you think it is embarrassing to have to bring the subject of contraception up?

A: I think it would be for some people, I wouldn't be embarrassed. I mean, I've just started another relationship, um, and I've got a question to ask you, have you? No I'm not, and he went in..

(interruption)

Q: Right, I want to know what, about condoms, that you're using. Do you think it's more difficult to use them, or to ask to have them used or to bring up the subject of them if it's for AIDS or protection against disease than it is about, if it's pregnancy.

A: Oh yeah, um, I should imagine so, I mean, I never would. I've never, I mean I wouldn't go out, if I didn't think I was like in a safe situation, I would never have sex with anybody without a condom. It isn't like I'm going around just having sex, but I mean if I said, if somebody said to me you know, let's have sex now, and knew I was on, knew I was on the pill and I'd think that was a bit dubious, and probably wouldn't have sex anyway, but if I'm certain about somebody I suppose, if I'm certain about somebody I just don't suppose it would even enter my head.

Q: That to bring it up about AIDS?

A: To bring it up. I mean, you pay your money you take a chance. If I said, I mean, you've got to, sometime in the day, right, say you meet somebody, I mean my ex-boyfriend, who's on ..... [SERVICES], my ex-boyfriend both know or knew at the time that we weren't, we'd no HIV positive or anything, no AIDS or anything because we're both blood donors. We don't give blood because for the free test or anything like that, but we both donate blood, and we've never had any check up, never had any come back or anything from that and I knew when what we had was safe sex and I turned round to him when he went in the army and I said, listen, if you're going away, right, I don't mind you having a relationship but tell me. Don't mess around behind my back because you're playing with my life. This is the actual conversation we had before he went in. You know, cos like they were going to one of these countries in South Africa, um Central America you know, .... and places like Germany ... and they have brothels which nobody knows about but which they actually have. They have brothels, they have prostitutes that are checked by the doctors you know, especially for the boys. Right, and I said, I said, don't muck about. I said if you muck about right, don't come back, which is what he's done. Very nice. So, I mean I don't feel embarrassed saying that to him because, I thought I love him and he's not messing with my life, but you've got to trust somebody at some time, you can't meet somebody and start, first time say I know let's use condoms, I'm not on the pill even if you are, and then a week later still be saying let's use condoms, and the week after that still be saying let's use condoms, because..

Q: You don't think you could do that long term?

A: You couldn't do that, no.

Q: Right, so what point do you think you have to make a decision about, I mean do you think you just have to say well what the hell and take the chance or do you think you'd have to say let's have a test, I mean?

A: Um, yes I suppose I'd sit back and think just where has this guy been.

Q: Right.

A: Yeah, you know, is he on drugs, I mean I've been with somebody and I've thought that. Has he just come out of a long relationship because if he has the chances are he's not been knocking about.

Q: Right, so you generally do this in your own head?

A: Yeah, and I'll think well he's not been off, he's not been around and he's not, I mean if it was like, I've got some friends and one of the lads always says, ..... now he has like been with twelve in twelve weeks, twelve girls in twelve weeks. As far as I'm concerned he's out.

Q: No way, right, he's no way.

A: He is one that I would certainly say well me and you, you're going for a test, I'll go for one as well, I'd do it like I'm going for one and you can come with me, but there is no way on this living earth that somebody who has a track record is coming anywhere near me.

Q: So you'd want to know about them first?

A: You, you, you, you ask subtle questions don't you, but I wouldn't, you can turn round and always say, 'use a condom because of AIDS', because where's your trust where's your, you know, you've got to trust somebody sometime.

Q: And that's, and in a way, I suppose, I mean if you're going to have sex with somebody, that's about trust isn't it, it's about giving..

A: You can't always turn round, I mean, otherwise why are you bothering?

Q: Right, so do you think it's, I mean, it's impossible really, that situation or what?

A: I think if you were somebody into one night stands then yeah, I wouldn't have unprotected sex but when you're talking about relationships, either weeks, months, years, you can't always, you can't turn round and do it.

Q: Right. When you were talking before about risks and the risk of pregnancy as something that's exciting, as part of the whole excitement of sex for you, would the risk of AIDS and HIV be in the same boat?

A: No, nowhere near.

Q: Right, so you wouldn't find it sort of a thrill, a risk?

A: No, fear. Very, very strong fear, but um, it's like at the time, I mean at the time sometimes you think, Oh God, you know, get on with it, sometimes and not saying all the time, you know, something just snaps and you're away, but, um, afterwards you sit there and think, oh bloody hell.

Q: Do you think you've taken any risks, over AIDS?

A: No.

Q: Right.

A: I'm, I'm, um, you see like in a relationship with a lad, I can be like, you know what I mean, I tell a lie, but not intentionally because I used to go out with a lad who used to take me into a gay bar and he was always very, he was always very, um, not effeminate, but it was always jokes like we all, we all, we had gay friends, we went out as a couple for two, for nearly two years we went out together, the gays never knew that we went out with each other because that's the way we were, and like, we was having a very sexual, very, very sexual relationship and, um, I never thought about it because you don't see it but when you sit back, I mean we split up because I'd had enough and he was a total git, um, I thought bloody hell, you know, you could've been, I mean he's married now..

Q: Or he could have been bisexual..

A: He could have been bisexual, and um, I did actually go to the doctors worrying myself sick, um, I know I haven't got it, I mean I gave blood, I didn't go for an AIDS test, he said you can go, but you're probably wrong, you know, but if you want to go you go to the special clinic and that's just a sickener, why should I go to a special clinic.

Q: Did that put you off having the test?

A: Yeah, it would, yeah..

Q: That you couldn't have it at your doctors?

A: Yeah well I assumed that, I mean, the special clinic in Bolton has got VD sprayed over the top in an aerosol, I mean who wants to walk round that when you don't, when there's, when you don't have anything.

Q: Right so you think that put you off?

A: Yeah. I think it's something that your doctor should be able to give you without you going on your records, why should you have to, and it's only for your own peace of mind, you know what I mean, in fact, if you thought you actually had something like, VD and that they're the only people who are going to sort you out then you're going to go in, when it's only your peace of mind, you'd walk away and you'd think, 'oh never mind, I'm not going through that humiliation'.

Q: Right, so in the present relationship you're having what have you done about, how's this thing been, how've you dealt with AIDS and, you're on the pill, right?

A: I'm on the pill yeah because I don't want any babies, although at the time I think I do, but my body says no, no, but I know I don't, um, I've just sat back and thought, I mean we used condoms..

Q: What the first time?

A: The first few times, also because I wasn't on the pill, but um,...

Q: Who brought, who brought that up?

A: He did.

Q: He did?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you, I mean, is that something that, that's common, or that you found common with the, with the men that you've been with, that they suggest it, is it unusual?

A: No, no I think it's unusual because, I mean, if you was just going for sex with someone, right, they aren't going to bother, right because the brain cells fall to their dicks as far as I'm concerned, right, in all honesty, um, but if it's somebody that actually thinks something of you, and you can, actually taking your body into consideration, then I think that's very unusual, very nice actually, as well..

Q: So were you impressed when he suggested it..

A: Very impressed, yeah, this is nice this, yeah, I mean it does really when you think about it because it's obviously not somebody who just wanted to bonk you, I mean, you know what I mean, I've not had, I've never had a one night stand and I've done a lot of things but not one night stands and um, I mean I've had one night, I mean one lad walked me home and said like, 'Do you want to come our house for a coffee?' and tried to pounce on me, and I thought, you know, you're bloody joking, I'm off home, but there's people like that, that just want, you know, a bag of chips and they'll go back and there's people that turn round and say, 'Well, listen'. For a fact, for one he's older than me, not by much but, I mean, the older people there, from what I've noticed aren't a virgin or anything, you know, generally watched, the more concerned and they're not stupid and they don't take risks.

Q: Right, so he suggested to using a condom, did he say why, did he say for pregnancy or for other reasons?

A: I think it was for pregnancy..

Q: But it wasn't said?

A: It was never said no, no..

Q: Did he ask you if you were on the pill?

A: Are you on the pill, no, as I was saying earlier on, 'um, eh, I've got a question to ask you?' 'Yeah?' 'Are you..' 'No, I'm not.' 'Oh right, I'm just going to toilet.'

Q: Right, so that's, that's how the conversation went?

A: Yeah, cos I'm just thinking no, no I'm not.

Q: Right, did you find that embarrassing even that amount of talking about it?

A: No, no,...

Q: That was okay?

A: No, because it was showing a grown-up attitude.

Q: Right, okay, so for the first few times you used a condom?

A: Yeah.

Q: Then?

A: I decided to go on the pill.

Q: Right, did you have a discussion about that, did you talk to him about that?

A: No.

Q: So you just, you went off to get yourself on the pill, did you tell him the next time that you were..

A: I've not seen him since, I've only been on it two days.

Q: Oh right, so you're about to proudly announce to him?

A: Yeah, guess what I've done.

(end of side one)

Q: Right, what do you, I mean when you next see him do you think you'll mention AIDS now or do you think you've decided in your mind that he's safe.

A: I've decided that he's safe, um, well, I know cos he's had an AIDS test..

Q: He's had an AIDS test?

A: Yeah, um, he went out, he had a relationship with a girl and found out she was a local bike and he lived with her for another three years and eh, she wasn't being choosy whatsoever, you know what I mean, it wasn't so much the quantity it was the quality of what she was going with so he got an AIDS test cos he ended up, he got genital warts off her as well.

Q: Right, so he got worried?

A: So he had a test, he was telling this the other day actually and um, he went into another relationship and that's how long, you know, two years, so it's not..

Q: He hasn't been going with lots of people within that, have you two talked about AIDS between you, I mean has he checked you out?

A: I don't, I don't think he's asked, I mean you can always say oh well, he says that, um, but I don't think he has thought, but then he's known me for a while, I mean, like, I've got a flighty reputation right, cos I'm, I'm the one that wears like mini skirt up their bum, blond hair to here, massive gold earrings like, fake tan, and I strut down the road, strutting my stuff, or I used to do about a year ago, and I used to go out with this lad and he said like, you know, 'we've got to split up cos I can't cope with the jealousy, you know, people were saying this that and the other, and didn't matter whether it was true or not', so I got really annoyed about it cos over the last two years I've only had three boyfriends, yet he was turning round and saying you know, 'I've heard this, I've heard that', but the facts people themselves.

Q: Yeah, and he didn't believe what you were saying..

A: He wouldn't but, say it but, this lad the one I'm seeing now, he knows, he's seen it, the amount I've heard, but he's also seen it so he knows that I'm not, you know, trousers off and get on with it..

Q: Right, would you be, would you be insulted if he actually brought it up and said to you look I'm a bit worried that um, I might be at risk from you, or that there might be a risk of AIDS and we ought to check this out, I mean, what do you think your reaction would be?

A: Um, I'd be shocked that anybody could possibly think that, I mean, cos AIDS, sleeping around.

Q: Is that what it means to you in your mind?

A: That's what a big part of it yeah, I mean, if anybody said to me you know, I mean, 'I think you might have AIDS', I'd say 'Oh, you cheeky git', you know, I know it only takes the once, I could be very unlucky, or he could be unlucky, could one lad give them AIDS, but um, that's the kind of thing that's thrown around isn't it, um, and I think that he was calling my morals rather than my look, on a judgement, to call my morals, but that'd be me, that'd be my, my .... I'd say, 'How can you think that of me', you know, but I suppose if you sit there and think about it, it makes sense, I mean I've turned round to the [EX IN THE SERVICES] and said, 'D'you know, I think about you're going to give it to me and I'm going to give it to you.'

Q: Right, so it wasn't something you were scared to say to him?

A: No, it's, it's just, I would be, I'd be shocked if somebody thought it of me, and he probably, probably when I said it to him, probably went like, 'yeah, thanks, the bitch',

do you know what I mean, who does she think I am? It's alright saying it but when someone says it to you it's a completely different story..

Q: Do you think it's changed, I mean, since, because you were sexually active then before AIDS was an issue, does it, has it changed you, or your behaviour or the way you think about things at all?

A: Um, I don't know, eh, I mean I .... more than it is really ..... do you know what I mean, um, it's something that's never going to happen to you for starters, you know, all these poor people, it'll never happen to me, and I've never seen AIDS, which makes a difference..

Q: Like you don't know anybody?

A: I don't know anybody that's got, have got AIDS, it's just, it's just these poor unfortunate people that have been unlucky or um, or some people say, 'I don't ...' or 'They've asked for that', that is stupid but there is that kind of ignorance, I ..... overcome that .... at work with people, you know, 'They ask for it' and 'It's unnatural, it's, I mean, AIDS is gay'.

Q: Right, do you, does it, does that still how you how you feel about it in your mind?

A: I wouldn't be doing what I do if I thought AIDS was gay, cos I used to be on the gay scene, not as a gay, but I used to hang around with the gay scene, so I've never thought that AIDS was a gay disease, but, cos I'm a shop steward and a first aider and I'm health and safety, I get a lot of, I do a lot of counselling myself at work, and there's a young lad and we know he's gay and, and he's lost loads of weight and he looks ill and he's got AIDS, they're saying..

Q: Right, people at work are saying it?

A: And it's like ignorance.

Q: Right, so you have to deal with that attitude?

A: We have to try and calm people down.

Q: But in your own mind, as, I mean, you know that as something you talk about at work and almost like political thing really, but in your own mind in terms of thinking who's at risk and who's not at risk do you think that there's any sort of significant risk that somebody who's not gay is likely to have it?

A: Um, I think AIDS is something that, it's like Russian roulette, you can mess around a lot, the more times you mess around the more chance you have of actually contracting AIDS, eh, I think it's something that's going to be a break through on.

Q: What, in terms of the cure.

A: In terms of medically, yeah, ..... cos I think that part of our ... cos it's, you know, watch Tomorrow's World, and you know, we've found this new superdrug you know, I think there's going to be a break through on it, I think it's calmed down a lot, but then the media, it's not a media subject at the moment is it?

Q: Right, it's not fashionable.

A: It's not fashionable nowadays, or not fashionable.

Q: Do you think it's a serious enough risk for you to think about seriously changing your behaviour or do you think it's like short term, you're gonna be careful?

A: I think it's quietened everybody down, I mean, I know I had sex when I was sixteen, but I wasn't sexually active until I was like seventeen or eighteen.

Q: Right, what does that mean to you, sexually active?

A: Well, the first time that I had sex was like a one-off, and it wasn't going to happen again with that lad, um, and then, I got, I had another relationship and nothing happened from that, and another relationship and nothing happened from that, another relationship and that was .... and for two years I was with this person and,

then we split up then I started going out with the girls and you meet a lad and first three weeks you're thinking oh right, ... it's just fashionable, ..

Q: But you, but you would sleep with him during the three weeks that you were going out with him, that was sort of normal?

A: Possibly, not um, thinking about it twelve people in six, how old am I, twenty-one, about twelve people in five years, so I wouldn't say that you know, I've been ....

Q: Is that sort of normal in terms of your friends and people you know, is that sort of the average level?

A: No, no, no, I would say a lot more than, a lot more than some people I know I would say because what I would say is, in all honesty, and I'll say it to anybody is that my friend was seventeen when she got married right, she was pregnant and she's only been with one person, she's very proud of herself only going with one person, right, but why?

Q: Because she got married.

A: Because she got married, right, and she might not have even met the right person but she's stuck with that person, now, I didn't have sex, I had sex when I was sixteen and I never, the relationship never came anything out of it, not because he didn't, I didn't, he didn't want to, I didn't want to, um, if that were me, she had sex more often than I did, she got a husband, so seven nights a week, seven days a week, seven afternoons a week, she could get sex, she could be hanging from the chandeliers, right, I don't because I have not that kind of a relationship, yet I am worse because I have been with more people, why am I worse, when I don't, how can I, how can she call me that having sex with an individual, with different individuals when she has sex more often than I do, that is my attitude, I mean I could be fifty and have slept with fifty people and never had sex as much as somebody who's only slept with the one person.

Q: Right, yeah, it's about whether, I mean, that's the thing it's about whether you make commitments to things like marriage, but if, which you don't want to, then you haven't got the, that situation, I mean, have you ever been tempted to get involved in a long term relationship because of AIDS, because of thinking well, it's easier than having to, I may prefer to have a series of short term relationships but that's going to be problem about, about this sort of thing, it would be easier to be in a long term relationship?

A: Um, no, I don't think ..... everybody wants to be happy, right, everyone wants to have, like, somebody and, I have, I've always got somebody but, you know, like, the ...., like, I was with him for thirteen months, and then he ..... he's really gone totally over the top, he's not been in touch with me and told me he's met somebody else, and he's .... I mean, who wants to settle down and things like that.

Q: Yeah, and you, that's the thing, I mean, you're more experienced now, and you wouldn't, now you don't want to make that decision you could have made when you were younger?

A: When I was younger I was lot, I was um, you know, I was going out with him I met for two years, and I was buying things for a house, now I look at him and I think, aaargh, Christ, I could have been married to you, oh my God, and all my friends have got babies except me, every single one has got children except me, all are married, and um, I just don't want it.

Q: Do you feel like you're the lucky one then?

A: Yeah, on a Saturday I can feel like the lucky one, and on a Sunday I don't feel like the lucky one, it depends, I mean, if I'm going to the christenings or the baby's first birthday party or to the weddings or engagements then I feel very cheesed off, you



know, I think, oh my God, I'll never be happy, but then when I go round to their house and they're going, 'Oh God, wait a minute', and they've got nappies in the sink and they've got, kettle's going and baby's crying and I think, by Christ, and I go like, 'Anyway, I'm going out now, I've got to meet such and suchabody eight o' clock in pub', you know..

Q: And then they're thinking you're the lucky one, yeah, yeah?

A: It's swings and roundabouts, I mean, my time will come when I'm old enough, I don't think I'm old enough for a .....

Q: Right, that's fair, that's completely fair enough, I mean, do you, do you find it a problem do, are people being, you, calling you a slag or whatever it, people, you having a bad reputation, do you find that's a difficult thing to have to, to um, you know, do what you want to do but being careful that you're not called names for it?

A: Well I can, see I look at it like this, I mean, if I slept with anybody that I'd been out with but they've actually taken out for a drink right, I would have been dead and buried a long time ago, cos I used to go out with five lads a week. You're looking at me now, and you're thinking she's lying but with make up on I'm a different person, and..

Q: No, I believe you, I believe you, I'm sure..

A: It suits me going out with five lads a week, you know, it's Monday it's Dave, it's Tuesday it's Frank and it's Wednesday, it's John um, so I never used to go with them, there were people watching me, 'Oh, God, a Capri, I thought he had a Cortina', well it's a different lad, you know and they think oh aye, yeah, ... but it's jealousy. It's only people that are stuck that have got somebody that ain't always happy that'll say something..

Q: Cos they're, they're pissed off about themselves rather than about you.

A: I mean why call me because I'm having a drink and I've not put my hand in my pocket for three weeks, and I've been out for eighteen nights, you know, why call me um, I'm never, I mean I know I keep saying it, I'm trying to .... I've never been with anybody, I've never met somebody in a pub and thought I'm gonna have him and like, had a bit, I've never been able to live for two weeks and you know, had a bit, but like, I mean PAUL, .... I went with for about thirteen months and like, it was about nearly two months before we got down to anything.

Q: Do you, do you, in your own head is there a sort of amount of time that you should wait, you know, is there, do you have a fixed sort of idea of a time..

A: With certain people you would um, like with PAUL it would have been wrong to push it, and I think it's, it's, it's sweeter, it's not it's a disgusting term, it's a lot nicer if you wait for the right time but, I could meet somebody tomorrow, and I could be really, like, overcome with emotions like, and drag him off to my abode, you know like, it's different people, people gel different..

Q: Yeah, yeah, some people it's nice to wait, some people you can't. Right, I mean, your idea of what sex is and sexual enjoyment and sexual pleasure, has that changed a lot from the first time you had sex to what you feel now about it?

A: I don't know.

Q: Do you think you've learned a lot?

A: Oh God, a hell of a lot, um, but I've never regretted anything I did, I wouldn't sit here and say, 'Oh I wish I hadn't.... I wish I'd not done this, I wish I'd not done that', because, I wouldn't have done it if I didn't want to do anything, you, you should never regret, you should never live in the past, but um, I mean, there's sex and there's sex with sex as well um, the kind of relationship when it's purely sexual, and like, I used

to go out with a lad and like, we were the hottest things since sliced bread, right together, we wouldn't talk, but I used to hate him..

Q: But when you were in bed together..

A: It was totally different, and yet PAUL like, he wasn't interested but, ..... and um, sex was alright, and I couldn't believe I'd gone from this really hot, sizzling relationship, to you know like, I mean, if I ever played about in stockings or anything he just went 'tut', you know like, ...passion, you know I can't believe it, and I'm like awake all night thinking any minute now, you know, it's just the difference but it's .... I mean, I know it sounds daft saying well how you can have a purely sexual relationship which is like lust with potential and I prefer to go out with PAUL and be able to talk to him and like, just have a normal sex life, which you ..

Q: But not that quick to have sex and that, and not that enjoyable..

A: To be able to go to sleep, I think it's brilliant to be able to go to sleep.

Q: Yeah right, I mean do you think you get a lot of enjoyment out of sex, or has sex, or as much as your partner is getting out of it, as a woman, I mean do you think that, you know the difference?

A: I know what you're saying, um , well I think that I don't enjoy sex for what it is right, when a fella is like going away, I'm not enjoying that, the actual intercourse you know, um, I like enjoyment from, I know it like sounds like a typical woman statement, but them actually doing it and them enjoying themselves, and..

Q: What, you, you enjoy him enjoying himself, right, you get pleasure from his pleasure..

A: And also, like eh, oral sex, right.

Q: Right, so things that, that usually that are sort of called foreplay that's what you get your pleasure out of?

A: Yeah, the actual, I mean not a lot of women, I don't think, I mean they've got to be very lucky to give you an orgasm, cos they've got to hit something quite a few times.

Q: Do you I mean, um, for, for you personally would you ever get an orgasm from actual intercourse, or would you get it from oral sex or from their touch?

A: I might do eventually, you know, I mean, just from being touched and like even if like, it was just like a sort of get on, get off I mean, I wouldn't enjoy that at all, but, um, if it was like say, you end up with a lad on the bed and we had sex, and he was sort of overcome with emotions, I would enjoy it, even if he hadn't thought about me because he was like clamouring for me..

Q: It was the idea of what he felt for you that you were enjoying rather than the physicalness of it, right, yeah it's interesting that really. I mean different, sort of, how it's different for different, for different people, I mean, like, yeah everybody's like, I think most men think that what they do, is what women are into. Have you ever had the sort of relationship where you can talk your partner about that, when you can actually say, no, no, no, I like it right a bit, left a bit, I mean, so you can actually say what you like. Have you been able to say that in a relationship?

A: No, I wouldn't even, like a say, I wouldn't, I don't sleep with anybody and I wouldn't sleep with anybody, any you know, sleep with people you can talk to, you know, I'd never make a good prostitute when you talk like that, because I just couldn't, and .....

Q: I mean, the one, one of the things we've talked about in terms of safe sex is sex, is non-penetrative sex which is basically sex that doesn't include intercourse cos intercourse is the bit that's risky, rather than other things, I mean, do you think for you personally, let's talk about you rather than talking about the boyfriend or about your

partner, for you would that be, would you, do you think you could have an enjoyable sex life having sex that didn't include intercourse?

A: Um, physically yes, mentally no.

Q: Right okay, tell me what, what does that mean?

A: I think, I mean everybody obviously, anybody who's got like nerve endings, could not turn round and say, I would not enjoy that, because, they're talking through their arse, they're lying, but mentally, after that and the likes of .... and like, personally, like, just gets up and you know walks out .... I mean, that would be so unfulfilling.

Q: Do you think you'd feel, do you think, would you feel guilty towards them that they hadn't been fulfilled or would it be..

A: I'd think like, I'd just used them. You would wouldn't you,.....and like, it's like it's worth it, like sharing something, how can you share..

Q: When one person, when only one person's getting it. Um do you think um, right, okay bring your boyfriend in, he's allowed to come in now, I mean, do you think that a man can enjoy sex if it didn't include intercourse?

A: I don't know because, it's um, I mean obviously they'd get enjoyment out of it physically, but then I think mentally they wouldn't.

Q: Right, he would think, yeah but we hadn't done the proper bit yet.

A: Yeah, this isn't what, I mean sex isn't about um, desires, it's I mean, at the end of the day it's nature and the reason that we have sex is to have babies, whether you believe it or not, whether you want babies or not, there must be something in your mind that says I should be doing it this way, not, you don't, I don't suppose you'd say I must do it this way because I, you know, want to get someone pregnant or I want to be pregnant, but there's something that tells you, without even knowing; an instinct, that that's what you do. I'm sure there is, otherwise, I mean, I don't get any fun, actual physical fun out of having sex with a man but it is some instinct in me that says yes.

Q: It feels like it's right. Yeah, well that's good .... There's a few things that, I hadn't managed to ask you cos I probably haven't so I'll just go back and think of them and one thing is about, going back to condoms again, about carrying them and buying them. Do you think you could go into a shop and buy them?

A: No, I'll tell you um, I .... I'll say well, I'll go to the family planning, I'll get them over the counter at the family planning.

Q: Right, do you find that's fine, that's not a problem?

A: It's not a problem with me, although sometimes I find it a bit embarrassing going to the family planning clinic, but then everybody .....

Q: Right, they're all in the same boat. And also that is what the place is there for, fine..

A: Um, I mean, went out to Blackpool the other week for a dirty weekend, right, and I said, 'I haven't got any pills with me', and he said 'We'll get some condoms', and I said 'In fact, I'll get 'em', I knew there was a machine in the toilets, right so, I went in and it was like the working man club, there was like twelve old women, and I'm in the toilet thinking, oh no, I was really drunk as well you know, and I'm there washing my hands and drying them about nine times and they weren't moving, so I just went over put my .... in the ...., ribbed and coloured or something, and normal and I thought which one shall I have, whoosh and I just bought the first one and ran out giggling.

Q: Right, were they looking at you?

A: I don't know, they probably weren't, it's only the same as getting, I mean I probably had planned on getting some Tampax ..... it's just that we don't, I mean it's a private thing isn't it, .....I wouldn't want to get that .... with a box of Tampax .... in the

shop or anything like that, just like I wouldn't ....., but I don't think I could have gone in until I'd had a drink.

Q: Yeah. So how about carrying them, about, about having them on your person, and then, you know, so that you can..

A: I carry condoms in my purse, I have done, I don't do now, but I have done.

Q: Did you find that a difficult thing to do?

A: Yeah, because we have a security search at work.

Q: They go through your bag?

A: Yeah, I mean I used to .... my pills really, so I don't forget to take them, I don't mind people seeing my pills, I was on the pill for medical reasons anyway, um, ..... and I carry, I used to carry round a condom for a while, it was never used, but um, I went on holiday with a few of the girls and I got a box, here, like you know, it was having a laugh like, it was a bit of a joke, ... but ..... I would never sleep with anybody abroad because they are all dead crazy.

Q: So you would see that as a serious risk then?

A: Yeah.

Q: Right. Did you see any of the, I'm sure you did, the adverts about AIDS on TV and billboards, did you ever come into contact with all of that?

A: Yeah.

Q: What did you think of it, what was your reaction to it at the time?

A: .....(344)

Q: Yes that was the first one wasn't it?

A: Yeah, and then there was the drugs one too.

Q: Well tell me about the first, AIDS - don't die of ignorance?

A: I thought it was um, I think like everybody did, it was a good thing but the media all played ...(348).... and I think it actually, people were hearing so much that they just shut off, because you shouldn't frighten people. You make them aware but you don't frighten them.

Q: And you think that is what that did?

A: Yeah, I think the media did it, it was all - Man dies of AIDS, three women die of AIDS - ...(354).. and I mean, people always would rather be ignorant than ...(356) full force of the facts on something so scary. And...(358). I think there was some good, but it was like drug addicts....(362).. or condoms and that, ....(363).. some were quite comical. ....(364).

Q: Did you feel that the stuff about the drugs, did you feel that made it more something that wasn't going to happen to you, seeing it presented as something to do with drug addicts and things?

A: Yes because I don't take drugs or ...(372)...

Q: Right, so it was another of these images that were nasty and.. In your ideas about what type of education would you want to see, what type of message, you were saying before there was a message of fear trying to make people scared and the message of showing it as a sordid thing doesn't work?

A: I don't know whether you can hit people with something that is so dangerous, it is dangerous and it is a killer but if you ...(383) .. people are going to turn off and I am not too sure you can overcome that. But I think there are a lot of attitudes that should be put into girl's heads. Girls in particular, I'm not saying I'm bothered about lads but some girls are messing around ...(389).. you know, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen year olds and somebody tells you they love you they don't always mean it. Don't always fall for it, don't think just because somebody has said they have feelings for you, that

you should return that feeling. And I think that is something I would like to give out to them.

Q: Right, so basically the confidence to say no when you want to?

A: Yeah, I mean I wasn't sexually active when I was sixteen...(399) and I wasn't what I would call, sexually active.....(401)... but I went through a phase where I was ...(404) like it was a case of when I was miserable I would have sex, you know, and it was somebody for a month or two months and it went on and ...(409)... not shocked as some people but to me it was shock because I had gone two years with the same person so.

Q: So it must have felt quite different?

A: Yeah, a lot and I would have liked to have thought then, you think you are attractive, it's like...(415) I thought you had to, to attract him but you don't actually because somebody fancies you it doesn't mean...(418).

Q: Or someone finds you attractive doesn't mean you have to sleep with them as well.

A: You don't have to be what you dress like.

Q: Right. Well I think there is a certain time isn't there in your life as a young woman when you get all those things are right there, you have to make decisions about this and that, and you don't get very much support and information and anyone to give you the confidence to know what you really think about things.

A: On holiday, I've been on holiday twice with girls right. And the first time I met a lad and it was ...(430) for full two weeks and the second week I went out with him we had sex but if we had been in Bolton we wouldn't have done but because we were on holiday, the sun, sand and sangria, why not! And the second year I went away my attitudes had changed a lot and a lad wanted to go out with me and ...(438)... and in fact went to bed and I fell asleep and he fell asleep, he didn't want to fall asleep but I said just sleep.... otherwise I'm going home, and he couldn't believe it. He said - I've never been to bed with somebody and just slept with them.

Q: He's learning.

A: Well better get on with it, like. And we never did anything. He had so much respect for me it was unreal. Right, and in fact he was chasing me all over the place but I know that I can change...(446)... yeah stop at our house but there are house rules and don't try anything.

Q: Could you have said that when you were seventeen, eighteen?

A: No because I would have thought that that was the thing to do. Because I think you watch what's going on and everybody else seems to be doing the same thing. Two years ago I would have sat here shivering in a mini skirt, ...(454).. a year ago I would have probably just had the ...(455) and then...(456).. but my attitudes have changed where I don't feel that I need to dress up because I have always had a boyfriend and I have always been taken out for drinks and I still get taken out for drinks whether I'm wearing jeans and trainers or - I think that's how my attitudes have changed.

Q: Well you have started realising that you are an appealing person with a personality and that's what people want, a body.

A: A dizzy blonde, we are dumb blondes you know.

Q: You are obviously not dumb, that's for sure. I'm sure they found out straight away that you weren't dumb, when they started talking to you. Do you think people that you know are as sensible as you are around AIDS and things or do you think other people take risks? Friends and people your age?

A: I think probably, I mean ...(011)..... and I work with older women and I'm glad I'm not a teenager now. I have seen a few people and I've thought - my god, you know it's just unreal. One girl away last year, not with us, not with me, and she went with five lads in a fortnight.

Q: And didn't use anything?

A: And didn't use anything, and I thought that was unreal.

Q: Dangerous?

A: It is, I mean those five people she wouldn't know, I mean maybe you could say how can she be so stupid but I mean, ...(027) but it's somebody I've known for two years.

Q: It's a calculated risk rather than a blind one isn't it?

A: Yeah, I mean five shots in the dark! So to speak.

Q: Well yes in your Russian roulette. I have asked you everything I want to ask, is there anything you want to ask me?

A: No, I can't really think there is anything, no.

(end of tape)