

LSFS32 29.12.1989

Danielle

Q: ...So, just - you said you were at [NAME OF COLLEGE] -

A: ... doing my A-levels and a social workers' foundation course, 'cos I wanna work with emotionally damaged children... teenage, which is very, very, hard... temperament for it or tolerance.

Q: Will you do that - three A-levels?

A: Yeah, three A-levels, that's English, Sociology, Politics, 'cos they're all combined - do that and the course as well. The course is quite interesting. You know, 'cos next year - I mean, yeah, next year, we have placements; you go and work in hospitals with the children that are in there, you know, just centres and things like that.

Q: And that's quite a lot of work, isn't it, doing three A-levels and a foundation course?

A: It is, I suppose it is, I just don't do very much. You're supposed to do lots of work, I just don't do - enough to get by on and that. But Politics is my favourite one... interesting. Especially the debates, everyone gets really excited, it's like... they won't say anything, so I go well why, and the teacher like he puts something on the board, if he says something, like looks to me as if to say do I approve, 'cos we normally argue about things, I say no, no, it's alright,... oh my God, right... pupils... So it's difficult 'cos I'm one of the oldest in the classes really. I think they're all ages, it's not like a school where everyone's the same age sort of thing, it's all different backgrounds, all over the place, and that. So when I - the thing when you go to college is that you don't know anybody, you go oh my God, I've got no one to talk to me, I feel really weird and that, but it's alright really. I quite enjoy it. 'Cos I haven't been for a few weeks 'cos I've had flu really badly.

Q: Oh, God, yes.

A: Couldn't breathe, couldn't talk. I couldn't go in so like up until like December I didn't go - I went about twice or something. Really bad. But often I enjoy it.

Q: Is that this year you started or -

A: Oh, yeah, I started this... I've got two years. And after that I have to... levels...CQSW...

Q: What does that stand for?

A: That's the Certified Qualification for Social Work, I think. 'Cos I'm - I wanted to do it beforehand but 'cos - your age is - they won't take you unless you're under 21. And if you're over 21 I think... two A-levels and you can do a two-year course at a university or a poly or something. But if you're under eighteen - eighteen? - I think you have to do four years or something, so it's better to go in at 21.

Q: Right. So you'll be 21 by the time -

A: Yeah, 21, so I'll - I should be okay...A-level results... No, it's something I really wanted to do, 'cos I wasn't sure for a couple of years, say, oh doing this, do that. But I don't know - I think there's a lot of good things that they do do that they don't get reported on, the media always covers everything that's - all the bad things about it. But I think they're crying out for it, I really want to do it.

Q: 'Cos what did make you decide on emotionally damaged children?

A: I don't know, it's just like - especially reading those stories about those kids who've been like abused, used to really upset me and I thought oh - used - I just wanted to

understand why people did it, like the lecturer's explained to me "you're gonna have to get families back together and you'll have to deal with the people who've actually done it", and I thought "no! I've got no interest in them at all, I've got - I see no time, that they can do this to somebody and expect me to turn round and help them" - you know, you've got to have sympathy for them. I was thinking, oh my God, can I actually sympathise with somebody who's beaten a child, molested - oh, God, you know, what do you say to them, you just wanna beat them up, say "look, what I think you've done is despicable", but - I don't know. I supposed you've got to see it from both sides, actually find out why - there's always a little tiny - there's always a small reason why they've done it which nobody's ever found out so - just - something really interesting. There's nothing else I can do. I can't type. The idea of sitting in an office from nine to five just like doesn't interest me at all. I don't wanna work in a shop 'cos the general public can be so ignorant - I don't know, they say "oh, you're paid to do this", it's like well, you're trying to say, well it's not in my contract, I only signed saying this but - you can't say that and - I just don't wanna do that... something challenging and interesting, something that will get me around a bit. It was either that or the Civil Service... Civil Service.

Q: What do your parents think?

A: Well, my mother doesn't think I've got the stamina to do it, 'cos like every time I watch a film and it's got something in it I start crying. She says, well what's the point, you know, people come to you, give you a hard luck stories and you'll be, oh God, crying with them or if they say... you know, you'll give them money, "here, take this", and - sort of thing, but, you know, she said you can't do that, you've got to be strong for them as well, there's no point you being weak or else you can't help them. So I don't know. She says, oh, if you wanna do it, then that's fine. My dad just goes "tut - social worker, you a social worker, that'll be the day". ... couple of years' time after you've done all this you'll change your mind, you'll wanna be something else but - it's something I want to do, I really want to do it.

Q: So you think you will?

A: Oh, yeah, I definitely will, just depending on the results and getting the courses sorted out and everything, but - if that goes okay, then I shall do it. I've got... with it, like nineteen now, not long to go. I enjoy college. I always say to people who've left school and started jobs, say "your life's over". I say the thing is you have to get up at nine o'clock in the morning to five, work Monday to Friday, I said alright. They said well, the money, I said yeah, okay, one thing's the money, these people earning eight hundred pounds a month - oh my God, I'm really broke, but I said just think how some of the best years of your life are at school and college really. I said just think if you go out to a party or something - you think, oh, college tomorrow, I'll go a little bit late, it doesn't matter. You'd have to worry about oh, God, work. And there's holidays, long holidays. And you learn so much, so much to be discovered, and going to work you just - I don't know, it just stifles everything.

Q: Did many of your friends go?

A: Some of them - some of them did, but the majority of them went out and got jobs. They're working in banks, or wanting to be clerks or secretaries or sort - no way did I want... money's, it's alright the money's important, but it's not something I want to do and I know I'd be bored. That's no good... I don't believe you should work just for the money, I think you should do it 'cos you enjoy it. The majority of people do it for the

money, 'cos obviously these days, you know, job satisfaction, but - I'm not ready to get into a permanent job now...

Q: Were most of your friends in Croydon where your family is?

A: Most of them, yeah. I think most of them now - those who did stay on to do their A-levels have taken a year out. One of them's gone to [PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY] to do History. And the others are like taking a year out, getting jobs in order to get some money. Or like my best friend is doing a foundation course, he wants to do Art and apparently you can't do A-level Art and go to university or something, you have to have something else, so he's got - he has to do a foundation course, a course he wanted to do. So, most of them are doing that or else they're just at work. Most of them work in insurance, banks or they're clerks or something. And so, I said to them - why, you know - these people have got like eight O-levels and they say - they're working as secretaries; I go, why did you do that! I say there's people would kill for those qualifications, who are desperate to get them, they're like really working hard and you've got it and you're just like being a secretary and going brain dead, it's like - I just can't understand it, 'cos there's no way...want to go out and do something different. I don't wanna be a clerk and file bits of paper. I want something challenging, something interesting. A psychologist might be nice.

Q: And what was it like at school? Did you like the school?

A: Well, the only reason why I went to school was to get away from home really, to be out of the house, and my mum would just moan at me otherwise. She goes - she believes in education, "you must - you should go to school. What are you gonna do if you don't go to school? Look at those people who haven't got -" - "Yeah, alright", so I'd just so. I enjoyed it, had fun, I used to go just for a laugh really. Didn't really take it seriously. It was just something to do, better than staying at home, watching television or have your mum moaning all day. ... I hate - I really hated it there 'cos the headmaster was - he didn't understand young people at all, and I turned round and said - he was a chauvinist, he was a chauvinist, I told him, I called him a chauvinist, I said, "you're a chauvinist; you believe that when women have children they should give up work to look after them". I said oh, I said, why can't the man do that? I said, why can't you have an equal partnership where you both go out to work and... he didn't - he didn't seem to understand that so I just thought, that's it. But I wanna be independent. I think you ought to be independent, you have to get a career behind yourself. So I want nobody telling me how to spend money. 'Cos I like to spend money like (?)watershot. I go crazy, as soon as I get money it's like, well it's mine, I'm gonna spend it, I don't care what anybody else says. Like you buy something - "oh, I shouldn't have bought that, I couldn't really afford this, oh I don't like it". But I say it's my money, I've bought it, so... I would hate anyone to dictate to me. That's the reason why I want to do it... my own satisfaction. You see that so many people sit round saying, oh I wish I'd have done this, and I don't wanna look back and say God, I wish I'd done that. There's people who have left school and got kids, you think - you can't just sit there... ANGELA, she was - left school at sixteen, she had a child and like she's married now. It's like - I said - I said to her, well how did you do it, when you know everybody else is out there enjoying - even though they're working, enjoying themselves and you're - I just - I said your life's over before it's began,... you should have a really good time. She's - being a housewife, it's like - I just can't understand it. No way... me.

Q: What do you think you'll do?

A: ... it's like... I don't know. It's really hard to say. I change my mind so regular, it's like oh, I'll do this, no I won't, I'll do that now.

Q: But will you get married...

A: I don't - I don't see why you should get married to have children anyway. Marriage is a piece of paper. I don't wanna have kids 'til I'm about thirty-five. When you're mature you can actually enjoy them a lot better rather than having them young. Once you've settled down, you've got everything sorted out financially, I suppose you're equipped to deal with it. I don't know really. I haven't really thought about children as such. I like them, but it's like everyone goes "oh, you like them when they're not your own, when they're not your own they're wonderful". When they're yours they can be absolute pains - see people going, "you're trying my patience" sort of thing, "get away from me" sort of thing.

Q: Have you got any brothers and sisters?

A: I've got one sister. That's enough!

Q: What, younger or older?

A: She's younger, she's seventeen, but she's like... she's at college at the moment doing a [SKILLED QUALIFICATION]. She wants to do that so - like, she's the one, she can drive, she's got a job, and like - she's in the [PROLIFIC SPORTS TEAM], she goes all round the place with it, meeting with famous stars and that. She goes away training and everything. So she's the one that everyone likes, she's the one who's the athlete, you know, I'm just like the dropout basically, "oh this is the one that's mucking around at college".

Q: What does she do -... [REDACTED]?

A: She does [SPORT] and that. She used to do [SPORT 2] as well but I think she goes round [SPORT] 'cos she prefers it a lot more. I think she's England's number two now or something or other. She's enjoying that. I said to her, "as long as you don't turn out (?)Judy Oaks, you know, it's alright" - you know, really big, muscular.

Q: I was gonna say, you have to be quite big for that, don't you?

A: Well, she's smaller than me actually, in size. Well, in height she's smaller than me but otherwise she's got the muscles, it's like you don't mess with this - "whatever you say I agree with you!". I don't know, we do get on - we fight a lot. I fight with everybody. I don't know.

Q: Do you get on well with your parents?

A: Well, they threw me out in October '88, so - well, I think - we didn't get on, we can't live under the same roof but now we - I've moved away from that, we sit down and have a good conversation and everything's really fine. Go back for a couple of days, everything's alright, but it's just that - I always make jokes, I'll come back and... say "you're not setting foot in here to live permanently again. Come back and visit, fine, but not living here" - it's just I'm a Sagittarian, my mother's a Scorpio, we just can't get on. She goes to me, "by rights you should have been a Scorpio", but - I don't know, we just clash. She says no to something, I say yes. She's not changing her mind, I'll not change my mind. My dad's like in the middle going "oh, God, I'll leave you to it", and he goes out, any sign of a punch-up, "I'll leave you to it" sort of thing. But we get on fine now, we can actually - I can go and talk but -

Q: Why did they throw you out?

A: Oh, they didn't like my lifestyle, 'cos I used to like go away for - 'cos I follow bands around, you see, all around the country, and I used to just go away for a couple of days and say "oh, I'm in Manchester, see you later" and like I used to come home, get some money, have something to eat, have a bath, and then go out; and say "well, this is not some bed and breakfast you just come in and go" they said, "drop your dirty washing and then take some more, then go"... so - I had to go eventually anyway. I was not willing to stay at home until I was about twenty-five or something. 'Cos I had to share a room with my sister as well, and like we both were going our separate ways, it just wasn't - I mean "that's my bit" - "oh, no, do you have to put your stuff here?" - always fighting and everything. So - when I went back there, when I went to London - 'cos I used to live in Croydon before 'cos I went to college in Croydon, I moved back to London and it was just like - everything that was mine is completely gone, it's like I didn't recognise the place. My sister's got her own carpet, you know, she had the place redecorated, it's like - it's like "absolutely nothing here belongs to me"; she says, "no, that's the way I want it, that's what it's gonna stay". It's like, fine. But we get on - we fight; I suppose sisters fight anyway, so we get on alright.

Q: Where did you live, like when you got thrown out?

A: Well, usually - I had to live - I stayed in London for a little while until I could sort myself out in Croydon, and I moved to West Croydon...

Q: What, with friends?

A: No, it was like a shared house sort of thing. And then I lived there for about six months. Then I moved to Wood Green for three weeks. Then I moved to Hackney - I've been there now for about four months. My dad's going... "God you've moved more times in my lifetime - in like a space of a year than I have in my lifetime! What's going on?", and I say, "well, I don't like staying anywhere too long, I get itchy feet, it's like - it feels like... going sort of like... blessing in disguise... somewhere else". I just can't stay anywhere too long. I wanna go to Sheffield next. 'Cos I - no one's got a bad word to say about the place, it's just that it's really cheap and it's really nice. Apparently, the only thing about it is it's really cold. It's not far from London, you know - what, two hours on the train, an hour and a half?

Q: But what about your course... go and live there?

A: Oh, no, well, finish my two years here, then probably go and do my degree course up there. It depends if they've got it and if I get in, all the rest of it.

Q: Right, yeah.

A: Or stay in London; I like London quite a bit actually. It's like my friends that I moved up - most of them have gone to Manchester. I really hate that place, it's like - mind you, going there for a couple of days is fine but I couldn't live there permanently. It's not a place I'd wanna live. I like Nottingham as well, Nottingham's quite nice. Leicester's okay. 'Cos Leicester's like in between all of them - Leicester is like - it's like a central route, you can get to everywhere from Leicester, it doesn't take long, it doesn't cost much.

Q: Yeah, I went to university there.

A: Birmingham's okay. It's alright. I spend so much time there, so I don't think I'd actually like to live there.

Q: And what's at the moment the most important relationship, do you think, for you?

A: Well, I suppose RICHARD is in a way, 'cos like we're together all the time, so - I could - I don't know, I depend on him to do so many things, like to do this, like to do the

washing - "will you do this for me?". I depend on him a lot. And then there's my parents and all the rest of it, we were just... I will always be - we will always fight...

Q: So how long have you known RICHARD?

A: Well, years ago about three months, and then about four and a half, something like that. We started off as friends and - 'cos when I moved in the house it was like "I'm gonna be celibate, keep away from me" sort of thing, and like "there'll be none of that". It was really weird, 'cos - he's twenty-seven. It's really strange. We was actually talking about this yesterday, sort of going how long's it gonna last? - and I'm saying give it two days, two days.

Q: What, the relationship?

A: Yeah. Two days and I've had enough of you, sort of thing. I don't know, it's really weird to imagine life without him sort of thing, I've got so used to having him around. Like sometimes I moan at him, I say well, God, well, when I wake up you're here, when I go to bed you're here, when I come in from college you're here, when I go out you're here! It's like, Oh God! - go away, for goodness' sake! You know, sort of thing. So, I think it's like a good idea if I move somewhere else and he stays there, then it's like space. I think we need our own space, otherwise things can get really hectic in the flat and stuff.

Q: But will he stay around? You said he's sort of a traveler...

A: Well, he was supposed to be going in November. Then he was gonna go in December, so it's like - it's like, yeah. When he goes I'll believe it, but, like, my friend goes to me, "look. If he had any intention of going, he'd have gone by now". I said, "oh, he's going next week". She goes, "look, don't tell me. When he's gone, when he's on the plane, you tell me then". 'Cos there's no point, I mean people say, "he's going, he's going soon, he's going soon". I don't know. I don't know how long he's gonna stay around for, it's really hard to tell. I've got so used to him - like if he does go, it's not gonna be a shock, I won't be sort of like "oh, my God", devastated, 'cos I've always known from the start that he's gonna go. It's better that way.

Q: So you haven't thought of him as someone you'd stay with for a long, long time?

A: Not really, because he's like a traveler, he's, like, all over the place. He's in and out of jobs all the time, he just, like, he'll work for a little while, get some money, then he'll go away again. So, it's like - I don't know. I don't know if it could ever be permanent sort of thing. He goes, "oh, you could come with me"; I say, "I'm not going anywhere with you" sort of thing. I don't know. I suppose I just don't wanna think like that because I want some like really permanent thing, and then have to like fall to pieces after he's gone and think "oh my God, I've fooled myself all along", so I wanna keep my eyes wide open. So, I say, "right, I know you're going, that's fine. I'm prepared for this", rather than like, you know, feel like it's a great shock or something... I don't know, I like to be realistic about things like, when we're talking about it, say "well, the world's never gonna change"; I said, like, we can believe that women are gonna be equal to men, I said, but it's gonna take a long time, and I said it - I said I even think, after about fifty years, even a revolution - I don't think things will ever - we'll ever be equal to men, it's like living in like a male-dominant society, and things - I don't think things will ever change. It would be nice to think they will, and that we'll live under a communist system, but I just don't think so. People's too greedy, everyone wants everything for themselves and they're not worried about who else gets trampled on, as long as "I'm alright", you know, forget

about them. I think there might be room for change. I don't know. Well, it seems like all the history books have written it down like that, but... think people will stick to that, always keeping the status quo so to speak, so -

Q: Have you had a lot of other boyfriends before?

A: Nothing really, like - this is the most serious I've ever had, I think. Nothing really sort of, like, heavy, sort of like. I always thought, well, I'm not in for commitment and I'm really unreliable and I'm undependable, so I thought right, I'm not in for commitment. So that, you know, as it goes on, see how things go and that. But I think I'm too young to, like, settle down, and like these people who've been... years. I just think I'm too young to get into that sort of thing. It's not - once you get into that sort of thing, it's really hard to get out of. I don't know - I don't know if you lose your identity or anything like that; I don't know, you just feel that - you feel left out. 'Cos you see people get together and it's like they don't see anybody anymore, then when all of a sudden it breaks up, they wanna come round. Say, "well where were you a couple of years ago, you didn't wanna know us now", and it's like, you know, I mean 'cos my friends are really important to me, I always say "boyfriends are ten a penny, but good friends are hard to find", and that. So, my friends are really important to me.

Q: Have you got a special girlfriend? I noticed there was something you put in the questionnaire that there was somebody.

A: Well, yeah, TINA I suppose. She's from YORKSHIRE but she's like in university in London, she's at (?) [NAME OF UNIVERSITY] doing [DEGREE]. We're really close, really get on well. So she lives - I can get the train to hers like, it's only about nine stops. And then JACKIE lives in NORTHWEST LONDON DISTRICT. She moved down from WEST MIDLANDS to London. So, we all get on really well like - sort of like - I don't know, I suppose we like confide in each other really. We all get on really well, so it's really good, you know. I think you need somebody around like so -

Q: So how much do you see other people apart from RICHARD? - you were just saying -

A: Quite a bit actually, 'cos I follow bands round, so when like a band's on tour, we all get together. It's like really good - like let your hair down and really have a good time without - 'cos like he came... in Birmingham, and he came up - he came up for one night to see the band. It's like really weird, 'cos I wasn't used to him being there, so I kept getting at him; sort of "go away!", 'cos - like - he didn't know anybody, so I had to keep on running round thinking, "oh, God, are you alright?", you know: "this is so and so, like sit and talk to him for a little while". But I see him quite regularly, I sort of like - I don't know really. TINA lives in London so it's not far, JACKIE comes over, she lives - she works in [INNER LONDON], so she comes and stays over at my house for like a couple of nights a week, so I see her quite regular. I see them all, like, every six weeks sort of thing. 'Cos they all live like in Manchester or Leighton Buzzard, everyone lives all over the place.

Q: Yes, it's not like round the corner.

A: No, it's not like round the corner. It's not in London so you get a bus there, it's like - they all live in Manchester, Birmingham, so it's, like, really difficult, so we all get together when the bands are on tour, have a really good time.

Q: How did you meet them?

A: Well, one - I lived in Croydon, and one of the girls who I used to know lived in Croydon. She married the bass player out of a band. And it was, like - just... go and see him. And I went out - went out with the, like, [MUSICIAN], so we like - everyone got together really, we started carrying on following the band, and so it was like we made really good friends. And like if any - any band plays in London, they come and stay at my house, if there's someone else plays, you know, we go and stay with each other... quite well actually.

Q: Which bands do you follow?

A: ... (laughter). It's like everybody says - everybody goes "who? - never heard of them before". "Are they in the charts?" Well, no - once they were in the charts a couple of times, a couple of singles. ... were... the Angel. You'll take my word for it! Oh, dear. No, 'cos I follow them around. It's - it's got - I don't know, you don't actually go for the music anymore. Like JACK was saying to us, like he was in a band, he was going, "well, why do you not come? Why do you..." We don't actually come for the music, 'cos I think we all think it's shit, you know, we just come - it's free to get in, we just have a really good time and it's - there's so many people that you wouldn't see otherwise.

Q: Where do they play?

A: They play like Town and Country, Astoria, the Marquee, Birmingham Humming Bird, all round - sometimes they play Liverpool university. I suppose they're really like university bands, and that. So, I just go and see them. 'Cos like so many people like ROBBIE - he's from... He's really - he's really - he's really close and that, and like he only follows... and the only time I ever get to see him is..., I always make an effort of going to see him 'cos like - there's some people who only follow one band, you don't see them otherwise, so it's really nice to go out and see them. But otherwise everyone gets on really well. It's something to do rather than stay in London all the time. It gets you out of the house, you go round seeing different places and that.

Q: Yeah, it's a great way of actually getting round the country, like having a reason to go somewhere else.

A: And like mainly we all hitch round together, like we all pair up or something, hitch round. It's cheaper that way. Nobody actually works, they all get income support, so it's like, really difficult, and train fares are so expensive.

Q: Yeah.

A: And everyone says, well, think of - instead of train fares, think of drink money, so it's like, right, we'll hitch round. It's really nice hitching round in, like, July - last year, July '88, such good weather, it's like, "this is the life", sort of thing. I enjoy it, it's really good. You meet so many different people.

Q: Does RICHARD go round with...

A: No, he doesn't. He doesn't. It's like - he goes, "oh, I'm too old for that sort of thing". He has his mates in London. Most of his friends live in London anyway. A couple live in Palmers Green, one lives in Cheltenham, and the other one - MALCOLM lives in Euston, I think, so they're all round London. 'Cos they all know each other 'cos they lived in a kibbutz for a couple of years together, so they all came back to London and sort of like - so he stays with them mainly. And I don't really want him coming round with me sort of thing, cramping my style.

Q: Right.

A: "You stay here, I'm going"! sort of thing, so -

Q: And he doesn't mind you going...

A: Oh, too bad if he does, it's like I'm going, it's what I've always done, and if you don't like it, tough.... fine, he says, "I'm not gonna stop you", I say no, don't even try. It's not like - it's not that sort of relationship where it's like - you know, some people, you have to ask them if you can go somewhere, and I said no, I'm not putting up with that, I've got a mind of my own. If I wanna go somewhere I'll go, I say, "if you wanna go somewhere, you don't have to ask me", I say, "you can go". I'm not gonna - it's nothing to do with me. Go and have a good time. I mean, I'm not against that, you know, go and enjoy yourself. I said I'm not gonna think twice about it, if I wanna go somewhere without asking you, I'm just gonna go - probably leave you a note or something, come in, "I will have gone here, see you later" sort of thing. So, it's not like that. And it's - he doesn't depend on me to do anything for him, which is a really odd thing, 'cos I depend - 'cos I can't cook. If I do try, if I make an effort to try, it's always "I can't eat this", he moans. So, I say "alright", I say, "you do it". So, he cooks, and he does the cleaning... Well, I don't mind doing it - it's like - 'cos he just like drops his stuff all over the place, it's like "oh, do you have to do that?", to be like in its place and that. So, he'll like do the cleaning. He refuses to go out shopping with me anymore, 'cos I start moaning and start screaming and shouting, 'cos I - you walk along, he keeps putting things in the trolley, it's like - "for goodness' sake, I haven't got a lot of money, just watch it..."; "oh, just this, it doesn't cost this - just that", and it's like really aggravating. Apart from that - it's like a really good friend as well. We can actually - we can talk to each other as well, which is really good and that.

Q: Yeah, it must be. And how long had you known him before you started having a sexual relationship?

A: About two months. It was like we were really good friends, and something just happened, it was like "ah!" sort of thing. I don't know, when you feel really close with somebody, you're really worried - "my God, should this really happen? - oh God, this might be a mistake, will it happen again? It's like, oh God, supposing we break up, will we still be good friends?". It's really difficult that way, it's like so many people say, "we've been really good friends, we've got together, and it's all gone wrong". It's like really uneasy, you walk into a room it's like "oh, God, which one do you speak to?". Do you go and speak to him, do you speak to her - what will he say? And it's like - it's sort of like, you know, I always try and keep out of it, say "look, right, I like you both, it's a mutual thing here" - you know what I mean? - "leave me out of it". 'Cos I stay with my mate's boyfriend, he lives in Stourbridge, the middle of nowhere. We get on really good friends and that. First of all, it was like really difficult, but we got on really, really well. Like RICHARD stayed with us as well, he goes, he felt really uneasy being there. I said "why?". 'Cos he goes, "it's like - 'cos it's like, all the looks around, it's like everyone's sitting there going um, right, let's -", you know, sort of like trying to talk. But we get on really well and that, which is - so I'm really worried sitting there thinking, "oh, God, what do I say now?", 'cos I knew his brother really well so - his parents were there so - oh, God, like - so I was there, it's like - well, you know, I says, I said we shouldn't have been here, 'cos - well, I said, I don't know, I just feel really uneasy with you being here. I don't know why for some reason, but then he went, and everything was fine. So, everything's sort of sorted out now, so it's okay.

Q: So how did it happen?

A: What was it - I was asleep and he came in from work drunk or something, which is not unusual for him, and he just kept... I was sort of going "just leave me alone", it was like "go away", I said "get out, get out". He says "no, I'm not leaving". And then the next thing you know it was just like - oh, it was like... sort of thing. I don't know, it's - I don't know, in a way I suppose it's - I'm - I'm glad it happened, 'cos in August - I had an abortion in August, which - I sort of like "that's it". I said, "never again, I don't wanna know anything about it"... and I could actually talk to him about it, and he goes, "well, it's one of those things", he said, you know, "nobody asked for it to happen but it did". He said - and like, my mum goes to me, 'cos I can really talk to her about these sort of things, I was saying, she goes "well, some women find it really difficult to sexually relate to people after that, they feel really -", she said, "well probably, it's probably a good thing that you did, and that you're so close to him, 'cos otherwise, you know, you could have like got really destroyed over it". I mean 'cos... it's not gonna go away, and it's gonna take a long time to get over obviously, like the mental scars will always be there, but I suppose you've got to make the best of everything.

Q: Was that with somebody you were very close to?

A: I wasn't - I suppose, he was somebody I used to have a really good time with, and like - well, maybe because he tried to make me feel guilty.

Q: What, for having an abortion?

A: Yeah, and he said, "you can't do this, you're supposed to ask me". I said, look, no, it's my body, and I tried to explain it to him. Well, he was really young, he was only eighteen, so I suppose, what more can you say? He said, "oh, I'll look after it". I said, "well, no, you can't look after yourself, how are you gonna -"; and he really hit - he said, "well I'll get a job". I said well - I just tried to explain to him no, it's not gonna work. And he - he just couldn't understand that. I haven't seen him since that. He said, "oh, if you're in need of things"; I said, no, I don't want anything, sort of thing. He kept on ringing up, and that's why I moved out of Wood Green, 'cos of my phone number - I don't wanna see him anymore, 'cos... come round, see there's a note, "I don't wanna see you". So, I moved out. He doesn't know where I've gone to now. Apparently, he works in Croydon. He works at [REDACTED] my sister's at, and she said every time she sees him, like every day, he's like this sort of (sniff)... anyway sort of thing. So, I don't know.

Q: How long had you been with him?

A: From about January till about June, and it's like - when I found out, it's like - I just, it was like "stay away", and he just couldn't understand. I don't know, I felt, I just felt really weird, 'cos I kept saying it wouldn't happen to me, it could happen to anybody else but not me, and it's like - such a shock, it was like "oh, my God!", so - it was really... I think it was about nine weeks or something, because I just sort of said no, no... my mum kept saying "are you sure?". I said no, no, I said... she goes "I don't think so", she says to me, "look, go and have a pregnancy test", I said "no" -

Q: Had you stopped a period?

A: Yeah, I had, and I just thought - 'cos at the moment I'm really irregular, I've got a hormone imbalance, and... come here, I have two one month and I don't have any for another month. I just got used to it, being up and down. And she goes to me, "I think you should go to the..."... "she looks like it to me", and I was still going "no, no". And then she made me - I had a chest infection, I think, yeah, and I went to the doctor's and

he gave me a pregnancy test. I was supposed to go back next week and I didn't go back 'cos I knew it was going to be negative, and I went away for a week. My mum goes, "I'll ring up and find out". I said "no". She goes, "ah, but if you don't go, I'll ring up." And so, I thought, oh God, I'd better go, rather than her ring up. And he just said it was positive, it was like - I don't know, it was just like everything just stood still, it was like - just couldn't believe it, it was like oh my God! It was really strange, 'cos I was at college at the time, it was like we'd all been making jokes about people sitting their exams being pregnant, not realising I was at the time. It was like - it was just - I don't know -

Q: Had you finished your exams at the time?

A: No, I was in the middle of doing them when I found out. It was like, oh God! - it was like - 'cos I kept on - I had my Politics exam and I kept on being sick. It was like, the next morning I rung up and said, "look, I'm really ill", and he goes to me, "look, if you don't come in, you won't...". I thought, I don't know, get a taxi, sort of like stumbled in, sort of sitting in there. I just, like, really couldn't concentrate at all. I don't know, it just seemed to take me over completely. My mum was really sort of like a tower of strength, she was - like she's a [CARING PROFESSION], and she was really good about it. My dad, I don't know, he was - he wouldn't - he won't actually talk about it now, he won't call it by its... that's it. I don't know, he's - he was - apparently, he really cried about it, he was like really upset, saying, you know, "what's going on?" sort of thing. My sister was like - my sister was alright, she was - she just kept saying "you deny me the right to be an auntie, I'll never forgive you for that", that sort of thing (laugh). But apart from that, she was alright about it. I felt really guilty for a long time, I just thought that was it.

Q: Was there any question of not having an abortion or were you adamant from the start?

A: No, I was in two minds, it was like - when I into hospital, I went to shock. And I said, "look, I can't go through this, I can't do it", and I sort of started getting hysterical, and then - I thought about it, I thought, well - you're eighteen. I mean - what am I gonna - I'd have to live off the state, and I don't - I don't wanna bring any child into poverty, it's not fair. It's a poverty trap. Once you start off in it, you get used to it and you just go round in circles. And I just think it wasn't fair to do that to another human being, it wasn't - I just - it wasn't fair on the child, it wasn't fair on myself, I don't know. But that's probably selfish, I don't - it probably sounds selfish, I don't know.

Q: I don't think it's selfish.

A: I don't - 'cos I mean -

Q: It would make - in a sense, it would make both of you have a real struggle.

A: 'Cos I'd be going to... that year as well, so it was just like - everything was like - '89 was like the worst year of my life, it was like - it was like everything's gone wrong, this is it now. I thought - I was thinking, yeah, maybe things might be... I wonder what would have happened if I'd had it, 'cos I would have - you know, it was due around about January now anyway, sort of - think, well, if I'd had it would this happen, maybe this. It was like, well, my mum goes to me, "well, there's no point in you sitting living your life on ifs and buts, you've just got to go out and do it. You've done it for the best and that", she said, "well, how were you gonna cope, how were you gonna support it?" She said, "well, I can't support you and -" - you know what I mean? She said, "where would you have lived? - probably got yourself a one-bedroomed flat somewhere, probably cold, no heating, no light". She says, "that's no life really and -"

Q: ... trying to exist on sort of forty pounds a week -

A: It's less, thirty-three. It's like twenty-seven pound forty's enough. Imagine thirty-three pound for two people, it's just like, it's really ridiculous. She says to me, you know, she says "what about getting a job and all the rest? How can you get a job with a child? You have to pay child-minders", she said, "not a lot of like free nurseries around anymore. There are very few" - you know, few and far between. She said, "it's not fair to lumber that on a child, is it, really?". If I think - if I think about it honestly, I think I've done it for the best, but it still hurts a little bit. It came as a shock, 'cos I always thought, "oh, not me", you know, it was all the silly people down there.

Q: Were you using contraception?

A: I used to use - 'cos I'm - I get out - I get - if I take the pill I get fat and depressed, so it's like all the hassle, so I used those contraceptive sponges. And apparently, they're for matured women or something, not - young people aren't supposed to use them. She goes to me "well, you're too a bit too young for these;... found out it doesn't work as - "; I said, yes, I think I've found that out, yes, it doesn't work.

Q: What, so you were using them on their own?

A: Yeah. 'Cos they've got a special spermicide thing on them. You just... water and...

Q: Yes. But you weren't using condoms and things -

A: No. It was like... said, it's like picking your nose with rubber gloves, he goes... picking your nose with rubber gloves. It's not the same. It may feel the same, but it just isn't the same. It's not the same, so now they give me - they've... like a new pill apparently, this combined one, where the dosage goes down, and it doesn't make you retain fluids, so - I seem to be alright with that one.

Q: How long have you been on it?

A: Three months now, yeah. 'Cos I didn't wanna take it first of all and that, but - 'cos I was gonna get a coil fitted. But it's having to go round, get it all sorted out... take the pill, it's really dangerous in its side effects and - I don't know, it's just so much hassle really.

Q: Oh, I know.

A: I say, oh you men - say, you lot got it easy, we're the ones that've got to sit here and... "can't use this, oh, no", running around sort of thing, it's like - it's convenient. At least if you take it you know you're alright; it's not... condoms, oh, God, running round, "oh, Jesus, where are they?" sort of thing. I don't know, it's just - it's convenient, I suppose, but it's just - it regulates everything, but I still feel... if I didn't take it...

Q: It's not the sort you've got, like the mini-pill, that you've got to take at a specific time of day?

A: You're supposed to, but I always - I never remember, so it's like, "oh, my God!... oh, no, supposed to take it, where are they?" sort of thing. There's different colours so there's a dosage - I think it's to do - 'cos like your hormones, as - as the days go by the dosage gets lower or it gets higher. Apparently, they're quite safe, it's just like remembering to take them and that. That counts as like... really worried... dying of cervical cancer. So, it's like when you... oh, God! - cervical - oh, no, this - panic. I think it's best to give up sex altogether, you don't have to worry about anything at all.

Q: That's right.

A: Give it up!

Q: But is it important to you, sex?

A: No, I - I can survive without it, which - trying to explain that to RICHARD is really difficult 'cos he doesn't... understand. I don't know, it's - you say love is - love isn't conditional on sex. I don't think - sex isn't that great. Well, it - it's not that brilliant as everyone makes it out to be, but - it is a risk... oh God... There's nothing that like special about it. But...

Q: What, you'd be quite happy without it in a relationship?

A: I... relationship, a strong relationship, where no sex has been involved, and it's - alright, you're not as close as - as... somebody, but it's fine, but it doesn't suit everybody. I suppose you ought to learn to enjoy your body... then I suppose you're okay.

Q: 'Cos what was your first sexual experience like?

A: I don't know, it wasn't like - I had all these like things in my head and that, and you think "it's gonna be like this", and when it actually... is that it? It's like, "oh, God! That's it, is it?". It's just like - I don't know - people - you always build up this like this dream in your head, "oh, it's gonna be like this, gonna be really... gonna sweep me off my feet". And when it actually happens you think "oh. It's all over.". And it's just like - I don't know, it's just this great big - people make such a big deal out of it; when you think about it, there's nothing that important, there's nothing so - it's just like, "oh, well, got it over and done with. Might as well watch television now or something."(laugh).

Q: How old were you then?

A: This is the embarrassing part. It was - I don't know, this is really weird admitting this to people. I was only ten at the time, and he was fourteen. Like I was completely misled. It wasn't till afterwards, a long time after I'd actually realised what was going on. Oh, God. I was probably - I don't know, I suppose I was too young to really enjoy or understand what was going on, so I suppose I - it was a little bit misleading. I don't know. I was misled completely. No one would listen - I was misled completely, I didn't know what was going on.

Q: What, by him?

A: Yeah, it was - it is little thing, like this was all planned and afterwards I realised, oh my goodness, you were exploited there. But it's just one of those things. It would have been nice to wait till somebody - I don't know - I suppose it's one of those things. There's nothing I can do about it now, I can't bring him back so -

Q: But did that sort of mean that you had sex after that or was there then a long gap before you actually -

A: Well, there was a long gap, and then about fourteen. I just went out with this absolute dickhead, he was - when I look round I think oh, fool, he was such a fool, but it was nothing sort of like - I just... people say, just like, you know, a couple of boyfriends and that was probably about it. It was nothing major. Like people oh, you're really lucky, and I say no, not really, it's nothing, there's no big deal about it. I don't know how some people make such a thing out of it. I've never - I could never understand that, so... It depends on if you're - I don't think age has got - I think if you're maturely ready for it, if you can cope with it emotionally, then it's okay. Some people do, some don't.

Q: So when you next were having a sexual relationship, at fourteen, were you ready for it then?

A: Well, I knew a lot more was going on, 'cos I used to talk to my mum about these sort of things, and I knew a lot more was going on... it was alright then. I just thought this man was God anyway, so - look back and...

Q: How old was he?

A: He was about - he was eighteen, I think... fool. I was like... said, "what did you see in this man? Why did you go out with him? He was such a jerk - oh God!". I don't know, you sit round - like when you've got these records - I was under mental stress when I bought that - I honestly don't play it any more, I only played it once sort of thing, it was like one of those. But I don't know - I'm not one for like permanent relationships lasting too long anyway, 'cos I don't - I don't know, I just get really bored. It sounds really horrible, but I just get... bored... So I'll have to see how it goes with RICHARD really, I don't know.

Q: Can you actually tell me a bit more, 'cos we're interested in how kind of - how girls negotiate like sexual relationships in the sense of, you know, whether it's boys that do the kind of come-on and persuade girls, or whether it's kind of mutual or - can you remember?

A: I think when you're younger it's always - 'cos you always think you're really shy, you don't... just 'cos you get thrown off, you think, oh my God, she's really easy... thinks so... sitting there. But I think as you get older you feel more comfortable, you think, well, I can make the first move. And some men enjoy it that way, I think it all depends. Like RICHARD will always say, well, you know, "don't sit there" sort of thing... you know, he said, "look", he said, "it shouldn't be me all the time", he said, "'cos I never know if you want to" he says, you know. So, I suppose it's like - it goes both ways. As you get older you feel more relaxed. It depends who the person is. You feel more relaxed about, you know, like making the first move or that. I suppose so, yeah. I think it depends on individuals, like some women feel like coy about, "God, I can't do that, it's always the men who should make the move", but I disagree with that, I think if you both wanna do it, well then -... everyone sitting there going - watch the television pretending I have no interest in this programme whatsoever.

Q: But was that what it was like when you were fourteen? Or did you... then?

A: Oh, no, no, it was - I did it so - used to just sort of like sit there, and he used to say... things like, I was like - I was really sort of like - I wasn't really bothered. If it happened it happened, if it didn't, oh well, no big deal. You know, when you're fourteen you don't think of - I don't know, some women do, it depends on the individual, but to me, I just didn't think of it. But as you get older you think - you feel more relaxed. It depends - depends - like some men feel really intimidated if you do. I don't know - I don't know why.

Q: And have you found that?

A: Oh, yeah, some men feel really intimidated, they think oh God, you know, what's wrong with her? sort of thing. You're sex-mad or something. No, it's - it's just like it's... makes a change. I said, well, why should it always be the man that wants to do it? You know, it should be an equal thing, it's between two people, you don't make love to yourself. So - I don't know, some men can be really funny about it. So, it depends. But RICHARD, he's not bothered sort of thing, he's okay about it. I don't know, it's the first time I feel really relaxed in front of him. I can say anything and he - he doesn't bother,

you know, he doesn't get upset or anything like. He's really, sort of like, get up and go sort of thing, which is good.

Q: So with RICHARD can you kind of suggest things or -

A: Oh, yeah, he's open to all suggestions, you see. Fire away, fire away at me, sort of thing. I've never used, like, those sexual aids, it's like, you know, you'd (?) die to or something - oh, I don't know. Like there's, you know, these vibrators, you see them, you think "oh, God, what a joke they are!". Sort of "Oh, God, I'd never use that". I don't know, women - most of my friends are men anyway, 'cos I feel you can relax in front of men a lot more 'cos women sort of - you don't talk about that sort of thing, I don't know. Things you can say to a man you can't - you just can't - even as how close you are to a female, you can't say it to them, I don't know why, they just - some of them you can, like I could say anything to JACKIE or I could say anything to TINA, but some people you think you can't... you think, "what's wrong with her?". There's one of my best friends - like, he's a man and that, but we get on really well, really close and that. I mean I just feel I can talk to him a lot more than you can women, I don't know why. I think women are so bitchy, sort of "oh, did you hear? She told me this, oh did you hear that? Oh God!" sort of thing. ... with men like they won't say anything... "oh, God, I'm not gonna say that". The things they'll come out with, you'll just be sitting in the room, it's like completely flabbergasted... That's why I also prefer male doctors and that, 'cos I mean, when I've been to women doctors, things - they can be so - really sharp and really abrupt about things, whereas men'll - go round the gentle way and - I don't know, like especially when you have something like a smear test done, they try and tell you - women are always like - they sort of try and tell you - "look, it really hurts", and they say "oh no it doesn't, you're just being stupid", whereas men say "Oh God, I'm really sorry", and - I don't know. I always feel more relaxed around men, I don't know why.

Q: Do you have a male -

A: I have a male doctor, yeah. I don't know - things that - I don't know - 'cos a woman, if you go to a woman doctor and say "I've got bad period pains", 'cos I suffer from dysmenorrhea really badly and I have to get all these tablets for it, and they'll say, "oh, no, you just - we all get them, you know, you making a big thing out of it", whereas men'll say "try this new tablet, try that". And that, I don't know. "We all get them, you know, what's so special about you?" sort of thing. I don't know - it's probably just me, but I just find women really bitchy. I suppose it's -

Q: Some of them are alright, it's -

A: Some of them -

Q: - a bit of both, I mean you can get very nice women doctors as well as men.

A: Some men just can be really nasty and... "well, it's your own fault", you know, "what do you want me to do about it?". I think it goes both ways really.

Q: Were you using contraception in the days when you were fourteen?

A: Well, I suffer from dysmenorrhea, and apparently my doctor put me on the pill when I was about fourteen because he said it regulates your periods and it doesn't - it stops the cramp and that, and my mum said it would be the best thing to go on it. And I came off that when I was sixteen 'cos it made me really fat and depressed and I got really bloated. So, I suppose - but that was a good excuse really... "it's alright to do it now, 'cos I'm covered, I'm safe, it's alright". And then I went back on it again when I was about eighteen.

Q: So how long were you off it?

A: I was off it for about two years 'cos I - (tape change)

Q: So have you actually had sex when you haven't been covered by anything at all?

A: Say, like, when you go somewhere and you - I mean - I don't know. Say like, especially when you get drinking and everything, and you're all out having a good time and it's something that's happened, you think oh, you think oh my God; but I try not to, I think it's only happened like once or twice. I try not to, 'cos I just worry about these things and, obviously after what's happened, you think, you think my God,... sort of thing, you know. And that. So - I don't know.

Q: Were you conscious of actually taking a risk when -

A: I honestly - I don't know, I don't honestly don't think - you don't really think about that, you just think you're having a good time and you worry about that later on, whereas some people think about it beforehand - "oh, my God, no, it's not worth the risk". I suppose if you think about it realistically, it isn't really, especially if you're not ready for it and that, but - ... some people who... you try and explain to them, "look, I think for your own peace of mind and for your - not..." - I think, you know, if you're being mature about it, you should use some sort of form of contraception. Some people don't believe in that, so - that's their business, they don't ... I can't really lecture them on it, a grown person, say. My friend LIZZIE, she doesn't - it doesn't - it doesn't occur to her; I said, well you should - I said it - I said at least if you've got it in the back of your mind, at least you know that you're okay and you don't have to worry about anything later on and everything, but trying to explain it to her - she doesn't understand, so I just thought, why bother? Why waste your breath sort of thing? She's not gonna bother so why should I worry about it? So, I don't know. I think contraception - I don't know - since AIDS come out, contraception's come a really big thing. Everyone's like getting really worried. And I just - especially when you're young I just don't -

Q: What do you think of the AIDS campaign?

A: I don't know. When - obviously we're all - everyone's really conscious of it, but I think they've put it out of proportion slightly. Everyone's - then there was all this hype about it, everyone was getting really worried, and then people just say, look, they've made so much of it, I just can't be bothered any more. Which is the really tragic thing. But I don't know, I think it was - they wanted a scapegoat and the gays were a scapegoat, basically. ..."they're gay" - the way they're persecuted is all wrong, but it's like - I think it's the male ego really. "Oh, God, gay, oh dear!" I've got quite a few gay friends. I don't know why but you feel really relaxed with them, you feel safe, you know that they're not gonna try and jump on you or molest you, you're gonna feel okay. Nothing wrong with them. I don't know, lesbians seem to be accepted as women, that's alright, but men, I don't know why. It shouldn't be any different for them as it is for women.

Q: Do you have many gay friends?

A: Just a couple - KEVIN, ah, he's - like when you're really down, you really... 'cos: "ah, I slept with..." - "KEVIN, shut up, these people..." sort of thing. I don't know. I remember we went out one night, we were in Manchester, and... he was like slagging off all these gay men, and KEVIN suddenly, "oh, yes, really". So, he goes "I..." - "I don't care, get away", it's like - he said all these things, he's going, oh yeah, they should be shot, and he just went... It was - everyone was going, "oh my God!"... "look, I don't care, keep your hands to yourself, don't touch me", so I think - I think gay men - I think some of them

can be a bit funny, but I think if they know somebody's not gay, they're not gonna really try and jump on them 'cos they don't wanna get beaten up, obviously. So, I think it's alright. I don't think there's anything wrong with it. Some people act like it's the anti-Christ, it's unnatural, but it's not something they go out to do, I said it's something that's inbred, I mean they can't help it, it's not their fault. I'm not saying - there's nothing wrong with it, I mean if they're having a good time... I don't know.

Q: Who do you think is at risk from AIDS?

A: I think heterosexuals mainly, 'cos I think some people just really don't care. You can see all the time, people just go round sleeping with anybody. And they just - they don't worry about it... Obviously you don't ask someone before you go to bed, "excuse me,... AIDS test before you..."; but some people just really don't care, I mean you just think - well, if they're prepared to gamble it, why should you worry? You should worry, but - if they're not worried about it, then you can't worry for them, otherwise you'd be worrying for absolutely everybody.

Q: I mean, is it something that worries you?

A: I've never really thought about it - that's probably, it's another thing that's not gonna happen to you sort of, again... I'm conscious of it, but it's just not something that I've ever really thought, oh my God, I should do this about it. I suppose I really should for my own safety and for everybody else, but it's never something - I don't think you should go round sleeping with a load of people just so - I don't really - I'm not one of these people who goes through from one night stands sort of - sometimes you do. It really depends on where you are, what's going on, and what's happening. But otherwise I really don't go for sort of - they don't do anything for me anyway. You always think, oh you're never gonna see him again, it's like - I don't know. Or if you do, there's like, "oh, I'll ring you". It's like, you're sitting there, you build yourself up, and then - so I - I don't - I'm not sure, I suppose if you're gonna get it, you're gonna get it really. I don't think there's anything anyone else can do about it. You could always - people say you can't give blood 'cos you'll get it from this, and you'll get it from that. People say you get it from toilet seats, you know, or saliva, or drinking from the same cup as somebody... I'd like to do AIDS counselling actually, 'cos - part of my work experience. Apparently, you have to be a certain age. I'm not sure - I think - I think I'm too young. I said well, I'd like to do that 'cos I - I'd just really like to talk to them like, it's not like patronising them but I just - it's something I'm really interested in, something that's really - I don't know. I think I'd find it really challenging, so I'd like to do some AIDS counselling if I can, but I'm not sure I'm old enough. I don't know, probably that and social work.

Q: How did you first hear about AIDS?

A: I think - the campaign on the television, and then my mum was like saying - she works in a [MEDICAL PROFESSION], so she was... like AIDS patients, the nurses didn't wanna go near them and that. But she was - she was just saying, well obviously you have to wear the protective mask, you can't catch it from talking to them, so - I think she... she's not really bothered about it. 'Cos most of my sex education came from her anyway, 'cos I started my periods when I was ten, and I was like - "oh, God, what's going on, I'm gonna die" - she said, "right, sit down", and she explained it all to me. And my dad's like really open to talk about these sort of things as well, so - it's like... like most people you go to, oh, sex isn't mentioned -... "oh, my God, you don't say things like that!", it's like - I don't know, it's really weird. I always find it really strange to understand

why - like people say "oh God" when you mention it, like... everything drops, everyone goes silent and looks round... But it wasn't like that in our house, it was like - it's your body, you know, if you feel comfortable about your body, sort of thing, go ahead. You know, there are some people that walk around... all covered up like this. It wasn't like that in our house; if you walk around like that, that's your business sort of thing... I was quite lucky. I feel comfortable about talking about it, so that's alright.

Q: So what do you - what is the AIDS virus, do you know?

A: It's acquired immune deficiency syndrome or something, it's like - I don't know, I can't remember actually. Is it when - is it when the antibodies just completely break down and you can't fight anything, and you - your body just really goes to waste? There's no cure for it, I mean, it would be nice if there could be a cure, but I'm not sure... It's like cancer, once you've got it, I don't know if you can actually cure it. Alright, people say look, I'm over it, but if you have a relapse it comes back apparently, so -

Q: Do you know how you get it?

A: AIDS?

Q: Yeah.

A: It's probably - I think people having anal sex... isn't it blood or something, gets through the blood, I don't know. ...I used to read up on it a lot, it's like - I've just forgotten all about it, I suppose it'll come back to me. I've got all these leaflets at home, like college give you all these things. I should start reading up on it. Especially if I wanna counsel these people, I've got to know what they're talking about obviously, it's like going in, "oh, God, what - you know, what you saying? I don't -"

Q: Yes. 'Cos do you know the difference between AIDS and HIV?

A: I think anyone can get HIV. HIV's when you actually - you carry it, but you don't actually have it yourself; you can pass it on to somebody else, but you don't actually suffer from it. I think you - I think it takes a long - you could be HIV-positive and live for a long time. And - I think that's... But you can't tell whether somebody's HIV-positive, because they show all these adverts - "she's HIV-positive; do you know that?". I could be HIV-positive, I don't know.

Q: So it's not anything that's ever bothered you with, say, RICHARD or something like that?

A: No, I - I think if he had it, I think he'd tell me... I don't know.

Q: But would he know?

A: I don't know if he'd know. I think he's quite careful about these things, he really worries about those sort of things. He's like really conscious of it, so he's - he tries to be careful if he can, sort of thing. Which is another really good point... sort of thing, so - I trust him. I suppose you should really, there should be trust in a relationship. It's interesting...

Q: You put in the questionnaire, if I remember rightly, that you were using the pill and the condom.

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that with RICHARD?

A: Yeah. Sometimes I - 'cos I've - for two or three months I've come off it now. I just take a break from it now - you're not supposed to, but I take a break, and then he goes, right, I'm using a condom now, so we use both of them. I was - I just really worry, and like he's really conscious of it, he goes "I don't wanna be a father yet, I'm too young", so -

'cos like he like really panics about it. I think he panics about it more than I do. He does actually, yeah... "oh, my God", and he worries, he goes, "I don't want you to go through all that again", so he's really good like that, which is really good.

Q: So do you use a condom all the time?

A: No, not all the time. If I take the pill, then it doesn't matter. Obviously, it's better without... pick your nose with rubber gloves...

Q: ... difficult.

A: He said "you women don't understand, but for us it's like picking your nose with a rubber glove, or going to bed with your wellingtons on, it's like", you know, it's like - you know, it's that - but apart - I don't know - alright, it doesn't feel the same, but some people don't - I don't know - you don't ... get that much enjoyment out of it, 'cos you've got to worry about putting the next one on, it's like all the hassle of all running around, "oh, my God!", it's like, "oh, my God, where's the box?".

Q: Yeah.

A: Going like this sort of thing. But apart from that it's alright. But he worries about these sort of things a lot and he's really careful, so it's okay. So, I can really - I mean, I feel really safe, you can... "oh my God" - he's... I suppose, being twenty-seven you expect him to be responsible. Well, I expect him to be responsible.

Q: Has he had a lot of relationships?

A: No. Well, he said this is the most like - this is - like to him, he said, this is like being married; this is like probably the nearest to marriage I shall ever get sort of thing, but - he's just - I don't know why, he just said he doesn't - his... don't last very long. 'Cos he's - he can be really demanding sometimes, which is really annoying, 'cos... he likes sex all the time, it's like "for goodness' sake, you don't really - " - just trying to explain to him, you know, that I just don't see the necessity for it, but we come to a compromise, so - I think he's had a few, but nothing really sort of that spectacular, sort of thing.

Q: So do you get cross if he wants sex all the time?

A: Well in the beginning he used to really get on my nerves, but I think he knows now when and where to draw the line, when to, like, stop, and I give him that look, sort of - he just goes, right, stay away. I don't know, it's just sometimes I just really don't feel in the mood for it, so - but other - there's nothing he can do that's gonna generate me, because if I don't feel like it, just leave me alone sort of thing. And he's like really understanding, he goes "okay, fine". Or if I've - if something's really worrying me I - he'll sit there and like - I don't know, if he does something and I'll say I didn't like it, he'll just say, "well, explain to me" sort of thing. So, we can really talk about things, which is really good. It's like some people just won't talk, but it's really good... It makes it a lot easier.

Q: Can you actually talk about sex itself and what you kind of - you enjoy or he enjoys or don't enjoy or -

A: Yeah, we can actually. I don't know, like sometimes we'll be sitting down, watch something, and he'll just come out with it, it's like...

Q: What would he say?

A: He'll say - he just - "do you fancy having anal sex?" like, you know... and that, but - 'cos he really wants to. I said, well, I tried it once and it really hurt, and I said never again that. "'Cos, but, why? ". I said, look, right, I just can't. I don't know - I don't know, it was something like - it's like, it's really dangerous. You want it - makes it more

intriguing, the more dangerous it becomes, the more sort of thing - oh, God - illegal it is, the more you wanna do it, and it's just like - I said, well it's alright - I said it's alright for you, but you're not gonna have to walk around with the actual pain and, I said, you know, I mean - I said, never again. Once was enough. I think - I don't know if - I mean he still - he still hasn't gone off the idea ... do it ... but not me sort of thing. So that's really good...

Q: What other sorts of things ...?

A: Well, I'll sit on him or something. Or ... doggy-style... anything really, it depends on what mood we're in. Or I'll put my legs over his shoulders. It really depends. 'Cos I hate doing it missionary-style, just - I don't know, it's just really sort of like - just going - I don't know, just really going through the motions. I don't know, I just - I just don't - some people do, but I just don't like it, I just think... (laugh). Carry on. If you don't think this is right, leave it sort of thing. I don't know, I just find it really boring. I suppose when you're really young you don't really - I don't know, if you're really young - I don't think you experiment that much 'til you get older. It depends - it depends on the male as well actually. Some - some men just... "oh, God... pervert", really strange. But RICHARD - RICHARD will try anything, he's... try anything you want, he said I'll try - I suppose it's..., I'll try anything once. If you don't like it, forget it.

Q: And do you have things that you find much more stimulating than other things?

A: Well, I suppose so, yeah, it's like - I had my nipples pierced, you see. Well, it's supposed to increase sensitivity, but it doesn't do anything with me, I just like - I don't know why. 'Cos it's like - there's no point in trying to be... 'cos you're wasting your time, just don't bother. I suppose if someone whispers in my ears I have a weird sensation, it's like "oh my God, don't", no one's able to whisper in my ear, because I really cannot handle it. Some people, you know, some people like being tickled behind their ears. Some people have got some really weird fetishes, I don't know.

Q: What about things like oral sex?

A: Well, I enjoy it. Sometimes I... prefer oral sex to actual sexual intercourse. I don't know, just - it's not - you can go on for a lot longer, it's much more enjoyable. I don't know, some people really hate it. 'Cos I was talking to my cousin, and she's gone "oh, God, no". 'Cos her husband's black, you see, so - I don't know - it depends - it depends on your colour sometimes. Like she says, oh no, you know, black people don't do that sort of thing. I thought - I thought - I thought - I thought it was something that everybody else - I thought it was something, everybody done it.

Q: I thought everyone did it.

A: Yeah, I thought - oh, sorry: it was like really weird... I thought somebody - it was something everybody did. "Sorry, I won't say any more then". I don't know, it just made me feel really weird, I thought "oh, God" -

Q: Well, that's - that's not true, is it?

A: Well, that's what she said. I thought... no, everybody does it, obviously, but - I think it's alright for women to do it to the man, but I don't think a lot of women enjoy it being done to themselves. It's like a - it's like a taboo thing, that women say, "I don't want anyone going that close to me", but I think when you actually sleep with them, you know

-

Q: Quite close, isn't it.

A: Well, I mean, what difference does it make? You know you're both clean. I mean RICHARD and I have a bath together, so I mean - there's no difference for me.

Q: As you say, it can be very -

A: I don't know, I find it a lot more stimulating actually than sex itself. I suppose it - some people who you go to bed with, they just wanna get on top of you and do it and it's like - I just find that really boring, well you know - I like to be stimulated first and then get into the mood of it, then I just enjoy it a lot better. But some people just get "wham, bam, thankyou ma'am" and get on with it, it's like... me. It depends really, everyone's different.

Q: Do you find it easy to have orgasms or is that -

A: No, it isn't easy, no. RICHARD was saying about it, 'cos he's - he's really worried about it. I say, well, some women, some women, see - I think it's a lot easier for the men to have orgasms, obviously - but it's - it takes a long time, it takes a lot, and I have to be really in the mood for it. If you're not in the mood for it, it doesn't matter what anyone does to you, you're just not gonna - but I don't know. Not very easy ... have an orgasm easily, I don't know why... I worry about things, think "oh my God"... oh my God, everyone's different.

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cos I mean some people - some people, you know, don't have one for years. It's - it depends on the individual. Oh, God... oh, God. Every time he stops... with me, you know -

Q: Yes, and it's not - I mean it doesn't happen in about ten seconds or something like it appears on the films sometimes. It doesn't happen like that.

A: Yeah, oh it was - I've got something to tell you, just... oh, God, how unreal, but questions like - 'cos we were in a van one night and this guy bought a like German porno movie back, which is like - we're sitting there like with these men like squirting it up, sort of... I said well, nobody goes that way! I mean it was obviously all squirting bottles going like that underneath it, it's just like - like... Some people get turned on watching porno movies. But I - I just think they're really unreal, so I just - they don't do anything for me at all. Watching, reading magazines or something - I don't know. I think you just have to be in the mood for it, I don't know.

Q: And when you say how - like when you're younger, you don't experiment so much, do you find like with your first boyfriends you had a sexual relationship but that it was quite - kind of less imaginative, or interesting because of that?

A: Yes and no. I don't know. I suppose you talk about things, but nobody'd actually do it. It's like, oh God. Like if they'd heard it from somebody else or they'd seen somewhere - "oh, let's try this", you think, oh well. I don't know, I suppose if you're both virgins, I think you're more experimenting than if you're not, 'cos if you've slept with somebody else you expect them to do that, and if you - if you haven't it's like, you know, you'll just get on and do anything just for the sake of it. Well, not for the sake of it, you know - try something else new. I - I suppose so. I think it depends on you, mentally, if you can handle it. Some - some people just really can't handle it, and to them it's like, "oh, God, no, I don't wanna do that". "That sounds painful, that's disgusting that's... not natural". I don't mind. Whatever you feel comfortable with, really.

Q: Were they the ones you mentioned on the questionnaire? There was - I think there were a couple of short relationships -

A: Yeah, they were short.

Q: - and one one-night stand.

A: Yeah, there was a one-night stand which - and I had one relationship where - a really good relationship with no sex involved in it, which - I don't know, I think which was really good actually. It was really good in a sense, I don't know. I wondered, "oh, God, is there something wrong with me?", I felt inadequate, thought there was something going wrong; but we got on really fine. We just broke off in the end, we'd just had a massive argument sort of like, right, that's it, I can't handle any more of you, but we get on really fine now. Like, when I tried to explain to RICHARD that I had a relationship with someone without sex, he couldn't understand it. He goes, "well, how can you have a relationship-?". I said, well - he was going, "what's wrong with you?" or something; "nothing", I said, "nothing". But I said you can have really good relationship with someone - I said you can have oral sex with somebody but not actually have sex with them and get on really fine. And he just couldn't - he just couldn't understand it. And you try and explain it to him, he just doesn't understand it. Now he goes, "look. Don't try and explain 'cos I can't understand how somebody can have a relationship with someone and not have sex with them", so - I said - I said "alright, say you were going out with somebody and you really liked them and they wouldn't sleep with you, what would you do?". And he just goes - and he went really quiet, 'cos "oh, I don't know what I'd do, actually". He goes - I say - I say to him, well, say you try everything to stimulate her and she just would not budge. And he says, "oh, I don't know". I suppose he thought that was a really weird question. I said, you know, you never know, you might meet somebody like that. He just - he just goes, "I hope not"... praying "please, no"!

Q: But would you - I mean does he or you classify sex as - as sex with penetration, or could you have a relationship that had oral sex, for instance -

A: I could. But I don't think he could. Well, he enjoys oral sex a lot but - but I don't think he'd be really content with that. I think he'd be content but not actually satisfied. Whereas - I don't know, it would be alright for me to have -... shed a tear about - I don't know, it depends. Sometimes you obviously... "oh, my God, yeah", and - this is not for me. I don't think sex is that important in a relationship, but if you're close enough, I... it depends on who you're with as well, if you - some men really bring out the animal in you, you just think "right", and then some people it just doesn't matter, it just like - if you do it you do it, if you don't then you're not gonna argue about it. Sex can sometimes cause arguments - one expects something, the other one says no, and it's like "why don't you feel in the mood for it?", and trying to explain to them - oh, God! It can be like that sometimes.

Q: Have you ever found men who...?

A: Oh, yeah, it's like if you try - if you give them the come-on and they say look, I'm not in the mood, just - God, that slaps you in the face. I don't know, you just feel really sort of -

Q: Has that happened to you?

A: Yeah, a couple of times, and just... making the first move, unless you know somebody, it's really difficult. But... oh, God... Some people, to them, if a man says no, it's no, but I don't know. I try not to - I don't think about it, just think "oh, my God, I did something wrong. What should I have said? - oh, dear!"... oh my God, because of that, but - I suppose it's the same feeling that they get when they're trying, with you to say you don't wanna know. I suppose it goes both ways really. But it depends who it is - if

it's someone who can really - if you look at them, you think "that man is sex", then you... last time, 'cos there's this guy..., I would have killed for this man, but he's not the sort of person you see because it's like you've got this fantasy of him. It's like every - if he does - if you sleep with somebody you really want to sleep with, it's sort of like not the same anymore, sort of like - like the dream's completely shattered -

Q: Yeah. You've done it.

A: Yeah, you think oh well - he's no different from anybody else. Why did you have that mental picture of him being so wonderful than - I don't know - being so different - and you think, I don't know. This is it, and it's like the delusion's completely gone and it's just like everything's all over, it's like -

Q: So do you feel when you sort of negotiate whether or not to have sex with somebody, say for the first time, has it been sort of more one-sided than the other or -

A: I suppose it has to be. Say like you really want to do it and you think, ah well, alright then, and it's like when it does happen you think, oh dear!, I wonder if that's such a good idea. But I think you've just got to get - say like some people go into a relationship straight with sex, I just think it's like - it sounds really boring, 'cos there's nothing to look forward to, there's nothing - there's nothing, 'cos it's like you don't expect anything anymore, it's like well, we've done it all. I don't know, I think those sort of relationships burn out a lot quicker. 'Cos I've tried a couple of those, and just really burn out, 'cos it's like just sex here, it's like, you know, can't carry on like this, you know, you need something more. It depends, some people are different. But I don't like - I just like - leave a little space first of all to get to know each other better and then - and anything seems like - I don't think you should plan it, I think it should be something that just happens. If it's gonna happen it's gonna happen, it's no point saying, "let's do it now", you know, let's talk about it, that's just how it is. It's something that'll happen naturally. If it's gonna happen, it will.

Q: And would you be prepared - I mean when it happened in the past for the first time, had you got - were you on the pill then...? Would you insist they used a condom or anything like that?

A: It's really weird, people say to you ...do you have that...look, put these on. I don't know, it's something really weird. I don't know, condoms are sort of, oh dear! It's like you can see their faces, "God, do I have to use this? Oh no, I hate these things". Like RICHARD - "I really hate these things"... I said, look, right... "oh, God!", it's like you can see like - like stress on his face. I think he's got used to it now. I think -

Q: Did he - would he have done it anyway...?

A: I don't - he really hates using them, so I used to say to him, look, right, look, I have no intention of getting pregnant again, and you have no intention to become a father, so you put one of these on. And he starts whingeing, he goes "oh, no, but do I have to?". I say, look, RICHARD, do it, or, you know - he's alright, he knows how to do it now, 'cos like when I'd... it was like "thank God for that!" sort of thing, so yeah, anyway he starts cheering, but, you know - some men, I don't know, you can get some men which refuse to use them, which makes it really difficult. You think "oh, God!", say you really like them a lot, and it just - you sort of like -

Q: Have you had that?

A: I have, it's like really weird, 'cos I don't wanna go on the pill at all. It's like, oh God, what do I do now? So, I used the sponges and it went horribly wrong. And then after I

got pregnant, RICHARD said "I bought some condoms". "Well, I think you're a little bit late, aren't you?, I think -"

Q: ... stable door...

A: It's like... it's already done now, there's no point, sort of thing. I - I suppose I'm really unfair to him in a way, I just completely shut him out completely. I think it came as a shock. And it's made me - it's made me a lot wiser now, a lot more careful, my eyes wide open. Because before I slept with RICHARD I slept with somebody else, and like first I said "condom", - "get it out" sort of thing, it's like - it's the first - I don't know, it's never really occurred to me, I don't know why, it just suddenly fell out, like "use that, otherwise-" - I don't know, it just felt really strange to come out and say it, and I thought, well you've got to say it, for your own peace of mind. I don't wanna - I have no intention of having children, neither do you, so - and he was okay about it, so... that's fine really....

Q: So what - do you think you're a person who takes risks?

A: I think - I think we all take risks really. Hitching around, you never know if you're gonna get... if he's gonna take you to where he's going. I think we all take risks. I think you live on risks. I enjoy risks, I think it's something exciting, so I think once - I think, like I say, once you've been burned, then it's like you never take that risk again sort of thing. I'll try anything once, I mean - if you don't risk anything in your life, you haven't lived really, so - but some - but in actual reality, some risks are not worth taking. It's not worth taking -

Q: But risks like contraception and AIDS and things like that, would you take?

A: I don't think it's worth the risk really, 'cos I think - it's like you have the last laugh, you have to pay for it in the end. I don't know, 'cos I remember I kept... I kept joking about it, and then actually joked about it and then found out it was true, and it was like "this is not a joke anymore". So, you know, you're sort of mucking - "hey, I'm pregnant" sort of - "oh, yeah", it's like - I didn't realise I was at the time, it was like "oh, my God!", it was like the joke was all over. It just wasn't funny anymore, it was like you have to come to terms with this, it was like - I don't know, it was really, really hard to come to terms with really. So I was - I worry about contraception a lot. When I go into a new relationship, I think - I don't know, I discuss it first and say, well look - well, such and such happened, so, you know, what shall we do about it?

Q: And what about things like drinking and smoking? Do you think they're a risk?

A: I think drinking is probably like a nasty habit that you've got to really get yourself out of. But I don't - I don't drink as such. If I go - if I go out to the pub, RICHARD likes to have a drink, but I'll probably have an orange juice or a diet coke or something. Alright, sometimes you go to a party and you start drinking and that, but otherwise I'm not really an excessive drinker. I don't know, there's not a lot of things I like to drink. The only things I like is vodka; I like Becks beer. What else? - oh, cider and black, that's about it. I'm not a one for whisky or gin or anything like that.

Q: Do you smoke a lot?

A: Oh, God - I'd say only about - about twenty a day really. It's - it depends. Sometimes you're not in the mood for one or that; but only about twenty a day, so it's nothing really so bad, it's not puffing away. Some - some people like sixty a day, you think, oh my God, how do they get through sixty cigarettes a day? But - about twenty, probably less than that. RICHARD does - well, RICHARD will have a cigarette occasionally, but he

doesn't actually smoke, but - I don't know... he'd rather drink than smoke. Whereas I would rather smoke than drink, so - it's both ways really.

Q: What about any other sorts of drugs?

A: Well, I mean, people moan about hash but I mean it's a lot safer than drink - and smoking and alcohol; I don't do that excessive, it's not like you have to have it all the time. Just like if someone's got some you have a bit, like no big deal.

Q: ...

A: Hash or something. I've tried acid a couple of times, it's just - it's okay, but after it's all gone it's like, oh well. I've got some friends of mine who live in Croydon and they have - they're on ecstasy all the time, they keep having - it's like she's in debt up to her eyeballs, she just keeps buying it; she doesn't pay rent, phone. And there's no talking to her, you can't tell her. And she goes - she knows what she's doing to herself but - I'm not sure she's actually addicted to it, but they have it about three times a week. And it's like without fail, the weekends, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday without fail they have to drop a couple of tabs of ecstasy. And you think it's really tragic. I used to know AMY when, you know, I mean - but I wouldn't... all of a sudden this really wild person that she is; what's going on here? But apart from that, nothing really heavy like heroin or coke, nothing like really heavy like crack... I'd try it once - ...I don't know if I'd try it once, just for the sake of saying hey, I've tried it. But if I think about it it's not really worth it. It's an expensive habit and it's dangerous. I don't think it's worth it. I suppose if you've got really bad problems, nothing else seems that, that - ... seems important to you. I think it depends on your willpower. Some people are strong enough to say "no" and stick to "no". Or some people do it because everyone else is taking it - "I feel really inadequate, I think I'll have some". But it doesn't - it doesn't bother me. I don't do things 'cos everybody else is doing it. I don't know, you get some people and I'll just say well. Say like people say, "I wanna go here", I'll say well "look, I'm going here; if you're not coming then I'll go here" sort of thing. But it's not, sort of "oh, I think I better do that 'cos everybody else is doing it".

Q: When you said a little while ago that you - like you've had anal intercourse once and never again, was that with one of your boyfriends before?

A: That was with - it was really weird 'cos I was really - had a lot to drink, 'cos we went to [TOWN], it was [ROCK MUSIC FESTIVAL], we'd been there for the weekend, and we'd been up nine o'clock in the morning drinking for about - going down Gateways, getting all these bottles, and it's like two o'clock in the morning. By this time I'd had about... lot to drink, it was like I was actually comatose, and so it was - I don't know if - I don't know if I'd have actually done it if I was sober. But RICHARD goes, "would you?", I said "I don't actually think so". And I - I don't know - it was just like - I didn't expect it, it was something that happened, it was like "oh my God!", it was like "never again", it was like really painful.

Q: But you - you sort of - you weren't forced into it?

A: I wasn't forced into it. I thought... "yeah, yeah, go for it, yeah, go for it" - sounds really, really, really "get up and go", everyone was really like "get up and go". And then afterwards it was like I couldn't - I remember walking round the next morning, and everyone says, "what's the matter?" - I couldn't sit down, so - no way, says like - we didn't - only - I was really drunk, I didn't feel anything at the time; afterwards - "oh, my God!", it was absolute agony but... I don't - I don't think I'd actually consent to it sober.

Q: But that was with your boyfriend?

A: Oh, no, it was - just with - just somebody. I think I know him, 'cos he plays with a band, and I'd just been seeing him a couple of times, and we just got chatting away, and it was just like - by this time I was drunk, really out of my (?)phase, and I was not saying anything, and it was like something that just happened. I suppose in a way I could see it coming, but it just didn't register 'til afterwards, like "oh my God!, you should have seen this coming", you know. I was just... I'm not - I don't feel guilty about what happened, it's just that I just think it's one of those things where - it's like the fascination anyway, you try it, you think you did not like it and you're not gonna try it again.

Q: Yeah, so you won't do it again.

A: ... RICHARD... "look, you can do it if you want to, but not with me 'cos it's too painful". I said, "it's alright for you, I mean we're the ones that have to suffer for it. It's damn painful.". But apart from that - I think it's the only thing I wouldn't do again actually. I just pray when you get drunk, it's like "no", remember to say "no". Apart from that -

Q: And has anyone actually tried to force you to have any sort of sex of any kind?

A: No, I've been - I suppose lucky... lucky... - I've been really okay, like no one's ever like forced me down into doing anything. It's always been - I suppose - 'cos I don't - I don't know. No, I've never been forced into doing it. I don't know, I don't know why. I don't suppose I should really wish it on myself, but - I never have been. I suppose it ... really lucky; someone would really have a hard time like that. I've been okay.

Q: Although it sounds a bit like you're the sort of person who wouldn't - like you know what you want and what you don't want... do you think, or -

A: I suppose so, I mean if I - if there's something I don't wanna do, if I've said no, then nothing's gonna change my mind. I'm not gonna say "okay, I give in", I'll say, look, no. But, you know, I think there's no point in saying no, then saying - then doing - then saying yes, 'cos then you're indecisive and people just take advantage. So, I say, look if I'm not doing it, then no, and that's it; if I've made up my mind, no. And that's no. Sometimes you think "oh well, I wonder" - and you think, well, no, that's it, no.

Q: I noticed, going back to the bit in the questionnaire which talks about sex education, that you didn't seem to have learnt an awful lot about sex education at school. You seem to have learnt most of it before or -

A: Yeah, well, beforehand with friends, 'cos a lot of friends I had were a lot older than I was, so they used to talk about it. Or my mum, like if I'd ask her something, she'd just come out and say, "well, it's that", and she was like really open about it and she made it a lot easier and that. It made it a lot easier to understand. 'Cos it's really weird, 'cos like some parents just will not say anything. You're like in the dark, 'cos like people say something, you say "oh, what's that?" and - obviously... - 'cos I used to say, "oh, my mum just told me this", everyone'd sort of look at me and go "no". I don't know if it's because she's a nurse or not, so she's like had to come - she's up to date with this sort of thing, or she deals with it all the time, it's nothing sort of like "oh, God" really strange. I don't know. But it was like - everything... after I used to go home with all these questions, like "Mum, what's this?" and get her to explain; says "oh, so and so asked me to ask you this" and like she'd like say it. It's like - she said, well, it's a natural thing, everybody does it, there's no point in pretending it's swept under the carpet, you know, stick it in a dishwasher and hope it's gonna go away. It something that - you know, she said you have to reproduce that way, so what's the point?

Q: So did she make it so you could understand?

A: Oh, yeah, she did... 'cos like she has all - she has all like the medical terms for it or something. "What?" - it was like, "oh, anyway, it means - oh, I suppose I'll have to explain to you like this". So that was fine about it. I could ask her anything now and she'd be okay about it. She's really good. My dad, he's not bothered, he'll talk about it as well. I suppose - in a way I suppose it's easier to talk to him than it was to her. I don't know. He'll - he'll - I used to ask her questions, or - and then my dad like - we were just sitting down chatting away and he'll just like say about it, he'll say "well, have you got anything to tell me?", or, you know, "do you want to talk about it?", and I said okay, fine, and we'd just sit and chat away...

Q: No, 'cos that's - I mean I've talked to quite a few girls who've actually said specifically that they thought that black parents were worse than a lot of white parents in saying don't get pregnant, for instance, but not actually ever saying a word about how you don't get pregnant.

A: I think - I agree with that, I think so. I don't know. The thing is... my cousin and that, it was like - I was just chatting away, talking away about this, and I was saying "well obviously your mum's explained", and she said "no, she didn't, 'cos she got pregnant when she was fifteen". She said no, these sort of things weren't explained to her. I said, well, about periods and that - obviously your mother's explained to you; I said, 'cos when you first come on it's really frightening, I remember I was scared - "oh, my God, what's going on?" - I said "I'm gonna die, I'm bleeding - ... - oh, God, no!". She sat and explained it all to me, like the - the egg and all this, and how it releases itself, and that. And she said no, they had to learn these things at school, they had to read up on it. Nobody ever discussed it with them. I thought - I just found that really strange 'cos - I suppose black parents are like that, they're more sort of like - I don't know if it's protective or just - just the sort of thing that nobody wants to talk about, it's like "oh, dear". I suppose so, yeah. I suppose in that sense white people can be more... "oh, well, what the heck, we might as well go and tell them. I'd rather they found out from me than somebody else". I think they look at it like that. I'm not sure.

Q: Yeah. No, I couldn't really understand why it should be so if it were true.

A: I suppose it might be easier to explain it to a boy, a male, than it is to a female. It's like when you were - like when you go out late and my dad goes, "oh, well". I used to, like, just go out late with my - you know... worry about getting home... "Look, I'm going out" - "when will you be back?" - "I don't know where I'm gonna get to". And he used to say, "well", you know he said, "there's a lot more dangers to you". I said well, what? Tell me why. I said, if I was a boy would you bother? He said, "well men can't get raped, can they, you can't get pregnant by somebody, you can't be attacked. It's a lot easier, you know.". He said, "there's so many things that women can't do that men can do". He said "it's not fair, but that's life" sort of thing. So, it was like that. My cousin was just like... when I was saying to her like, "do you have oral sex with your husband?", she said, "oh, no, black men don't do that sort of thing". I just thought that was really weird. I said, "what do you mean?", I said - she said, "no. I don't know", she said - she said, "I think black men see that as - as unclean". I thought, oh God...

Q: But does she mean oral sex both ways or just - or oral sex with the man going down on the woman?

A: I think - no, RICHARD - ... he said "well, what do you mean? She won't do it to him, or he won't -". I said, well, I think it's alright to do it to him, but it's not alright for them to do it to her. He goes, "oh, that's really weird". He said, "well, obviously, if you're doing it to him then it's only fair that -". And I said, well I don't know. Maybe it's just her opinion. I'm not sure if it's everybody, but I just think it's really strange. I... God, I thought everyone did this. There must be something wrong with me then - I'm living in the dark ages or something. Oh dear!

Q: Where did your family come from originally?

A: Well, my mum comes from [COUNTRY IN THE CARIBBEAN] and my dad comes from [CARIBBEAN ISLAND]. And he actually grew up with his - he didn't really know his parents, he grew up with his nan or something, great aunt or something like that, so he just grew up with lots of like - most of his like uncles and aunts around him. 'Cos my mum was an only child. It shows, 'cos she's a spoilt brat, and she got on really well with her dad apparently, so they were like that. But she said that her mother never talked to her about it either, 'cos she went - she went to a convent school, she said, where sex wasn't encouraged at all. Like boys were like - "keep away from them".

Q: Absolutely.

A: You didn't talk about boys at all sort of thing. She said it was only until she came over to England that she said, where people were so liberated that they'd just come up and talk about it, that she thought, oh, there's something wrong with it. And so, she - when she went to like medical... to be a [CARING PROFESSION] and that... she said you have to do about the reproductive system anyway. So just you naturally, you know, deal with it all the time, so she said there's nothing sort of like unusual about it. She said, but some people still won't talk about it now. Like she'll just come up, talk about it; people like - like all my cousins and that, all my aunts, all sort of like "oh dear". And she'll say, "oh, well, you know what I mean, it happens. You've got kids, for goodness' sake, you know how they got here, so what's the point of being like keeping it under the carpet sort of thing?". But most people won't talk about it. It's really strange.

Q: I was quite intrigued that you put, I think, as well, that you learnt about masturbation at school. 'Cos often schools don't usually talk about things like masturbation at all.

A: Some schoolfriends of mine -

Q: Ah. What, rather than say in the -

A: All the teacher will show you, videos of - they'll just tell you that - how men become erect, put it into the vagina, the sperm's released and you get pregnant. That was basically about it and I just thought, oh well - so my mum said to me - I said, "right, masturbation", and she goes, "well, it's a way of self-stimulation really". It's like women won't talk about masturbation, it's really weird. It's like "oh, oh, I don't do that". I said, "well it's natural, everybody does". "Oh, no, oh, no". It's like it's really weird. Men'll just say, yeah, in the toilet -

Q: ...

A: - oh, sure, anything, you know, it depends, he said if you're in a really like horny mood, masturbate. Women just won't - it's like funny... women won't talk about it. "Oh, no, I don't do that. Oh, God, no. There's something wrong with you." I said, well it's natural, everybody does it, but - just won't talk about it, it's really strange. That's why - if you go out with men, things'll come out; you'll be sitting there going...

Q: ... want to know.

A: It's like "I don't really want to hear this!".... Sure, you know, it's a natural thing, and I - JOEL was saying to me, he said "why won't women talk about it?", he said, "I don't know why". He said, "you mention it and everyone just goes completely silent", he said "that would be a conversation where everyone goes completely silent, it's like looking round sort of like - ". It's really weird, I don't know.

Q: I don't know why it's so taboo for women to talk about it. It's like some other girls who I've talked about, have said, oh, you know, they talk about - with their mates, about boyfriends and sex and that -

A: Yeah.

Q: But masturbation's...

A: I can talk about - I can talk about masturbation with RICHARD, he's alright about it. I don't know, women just - if you're all having a girlie get-together and a girlie chat, they'll discuss their boyfriends, what they do but they won't say: "oh, don't mas-", "oh, no, oh I don't do that sort of thing", and it's like - there's nothing wrong with it, you're not abnormal, you're not gonna get put in prison. It's "oh, no", it's like... I've never really understood why...

Q: So was it your mum or your schoolfriends who talked about it?

A: Well, with schoolfriends we were all about the same age. Everyone didn't know that much about it. So I just asked her, and she said "well, it's mainly men who do it. Women", she said, "women do - women do it, it doesn't matter what anyone tells you, they will do it, but they just won't talk about it", she said, "but it's mainly like a male thing really. It's obviously easier for them to stimulate themselves than it is women, so -", you know, she said "it's a natural thing, everyone -" - you know, and she gave me books on it and said, well, read up about it, you know, find out more about it. She was really good about it.

Q: So had you tried it then or was that something you then went on to do?

A: No, you tried it, but you didn't understand the reason why you'd done it; she says well no, you're not subnormal, it's something natural, everybody does it. She said you have to discover, you have to find out about your own body, and what -

Q: ...

A: ... what better way to find out than from yourself? So that was alright. So, I just learned to talk about it and people just weren't talking about it - "on your way", just like ... done it, it was like oh, God, it was really strange.

Q: ... as though it's either something that's not quite done or dirty or something, or else that you shouldn't need to do it or something, you should be satisfied with your -

A: I think it - I think it - masturbation's like a dirty word, it's like - it's like - it's like AIDS, like AIDS - "oh, God, no, oh, no, you don't do that sort of thing", it's like - I think people think it's subnormal. ... it's like... do it yourself, "oh, dear!". I said, well - I've never understood that. Men'll just come up and say it and you'll be sitting there, they'll be telling you different techniques, you go "look, please, I don't wanna hear this" (laugh) - ah, well... But luckily you see I can't go red, so I just, you know - (tape change)

Q: ... batteries...

A: ... flicking on and off so it's going a bit low. I don't know, I find sex really easy to talk about.

Q: ...

A: It's always - RICHARD... 'cos he just talks about it all the time, he... come up, "oh, for goodness' sake, man, I'm sure... keep on about it". I'd say well, for goodness' sakes,... what's your problem? - "Nothing". But he's really relaxed about it, so it's good, it makes it a lot easier.

Q: Oh, yeah. Yeah. 'Cos then you haven't got that hurdle to get over when people sort of put up this...

A: ... "she's strange, be careful of her..."... I don't know. It makes it a lot easier. There's so many things I've discovered since I've been with him that you think about, you read about, you think "oh, well", and it's just like he goes "oh", you know, he says "you're only young once", you know, what the heck, sort of, you know, and that.

Q: Do you think that's partly because of him being twenty-seven and that? I mean, if you were sort of twenty or twenty-one -

A: I don't know. I sometimes think, oh probably it's your age that you find him easier to deal with than someone who's like... 'cos I always said, go out with people the same age and you really sort of like - it's like a giggle really, whereas the thing is really serious, he takes sex really seriously... It's like a laugh, it's like something to do when you got - so - like say you're - you're round somebody's house and there's nobody else in, you... the opportunity to do it then.

Q: ...

A: He said if you really enjoy it, then it's not a problem. He'll talk about it - he'll talk about it any time. Like he said - he always comes in, he'll be babbling away, you'll be sitting there, "oh, no, shut up".

Q: Does he talk about it with other people...?

A: Oh, God, yeah. Friends'll come round, because like - and that. More than likely we'll be having a game of strip poker. And... says, and she goes "I'm really baffled" - I say, "well, what's the matter? ...I've seen a naked body before, you know" - said I'm not bothered about it. And she - and he couldn't understand - "oh, no", and she went to bed. Oh, God, no, she goes, "oh, God, he's really strange". I said no, it's... basically. And he's okay, he'll strip naked in the street and walk down, it won't bother him...

Q: Strip poker can be a bit chilly.

A: It was like - well, like, they all had (?)whisky around, so it was like everyone was... Apart from that it doesn't really bother him. But he was just saying that he was talking to his mother, 'cos he comes from Ireland, and that he one day mentioned to her the clitoris, and she said "oh, what do you use that for?" - she thought it was a cooking... I said, "oh, God, no!", and he said she didn't understand what it was, and like he said - she was chatting away to her, he said to her or something "oh, what's your first time?"; she goes, "oh", she said, "the first time it hurt and after that it was just like -". And to her, like, sex was just something - she said, "oh, the first time it hurt with your father and after that it was alright". But he said, he said he thought that was really, like, really sad, that she, you know, didn't understand what was going on, she said to her it was like... thing. She said it was like a male thing, you know, you just do it for the sake of it. And he said that's all wrong, you shouldn't do it for the sake, you should do it 'cos you want to do it and you enjoy it. There's no point in doing it to satisfy anybody, he said - if you don't think that somebody's enjoying it, then you enjoy it a lot more than somebody who's just going through the motions, who's say lying there going "ten, nine" sort of thing.

Q: Yeah. So it's really important to him that you enjoy it.

A: Yeah, he said - he said there's no - he said there's nothing - no point sleeping with somebody, he said you might as well be sleeping with a rubber doll, 'cos you'll get the same response, even - he said "I want you to enjoy it", you know, "it's important to me", he said, "'cos then I feel satisfied". He said, "if I am and you're not, then there's no point". So, I suppose - I suppose in a way I learnt to enjoy it, because beforehand it was like (tut) "okay". I mean he used to - and he kept showing, he said "there's no point in doing it for me 'cos", he said, "I'm not benefitting from it. We've both got to enjoy it together". So, I suppose - it does help really, it's like - really weird; ... really imagine really sleeping with anybody else now, 'cos it's like - I've just got so used to him, and... somebody else. Will they be different?, you know - what - what would - what would they want you to do to them say - oh, God, but whereas he's open and liberal, ...which makes it a lot easier.

Q: And when you were at school, did they - was it, kind of pre the AIDS thing, I mean sex education and that -

A: It was like when we were at senior school, yeah, which is... It's like in the fifth year, then we had like these classes and they were showing like women giving birth to babies, and this girl passed out - I'm thinking, "God! she just -" - she completely keeled over, and I'm sort of looking round thinking, you know; and she just really couldn't handle it. I find that really strange, that this girl - she passed out and she was like really hysterical 'cos someone was giving birth. I thought, well, you've got to go through that at some stage, you know. Sex education at school was like really basic. I think they've changed it now.

Q: Who did it - what lesson?

A: I think we just done like - like a year class, and they sectioned everyone, like class 5.1 to 5.4 had it then, and they all sitting us in the hall and like - was it - the head of year explained it to us, or one of the biology teachers used to come in. 'Cos it was like - my sister was saying that - she was about two years younger than me - she was saying oh, you know, when they did it, it was like a class thing and they all discussed it. So, it's obviously changed.

Q: Yeah.

A: But they showed you videos. She said, "we didn't have the cruddy videos that you had, we had some decent ones. They actually showed you something". The other ones were just like really sort of like - you don't actually see anybody making love, they just tell you about it, she said "we actually saw people doing it", she said, you know, beforehand, it was like - then she showed you like a manual of cartoons, and they just show you how the penis gets erect and - that was basically about it. Sex is like - I don't know, I suppose in a more liberal society things have changed, people can talk about it a lot more openly than before, 'cos like - like 'cos we watched that film, what was it last night, (?) "Peggy Sue Got Married". It was like - ... wasn't it awful growing up in them times, like sex like that wasn't talked about at all. Like the mother goes to her "you're not having problems with (?) Charles", she says "no, what do you mean?", she goes "well, you know what the penis is?", she says "yes", she says "keep away from it", and that's all she said... oh, come on sort of thing, you've got a penis, keep away from it. It's like, you know, sex such... thing. I think it's got better, I think things've got better so people

understand what's going on so there's not so much - people who actually think, "oh, my God, what's happening to me?".

Q: Although they don't talk much about actual relationships, do they? - I mean they might do, maybe in your sister's... but they didn't used to, they used to just tell you the sort of mechanics of doing it but not actually kind of how you're gonna feel emotionally or...

A: - or if they did tell you emotionally it was like married couples. It was like married couples - it was like if you weren't married, you weren't supposed to do this sort of thing. So - I just think like it'd be a disappointment to wait till you're married, like be a virgin on your wedding night, and then say things go wrong - say it doesn't work out and it's a case of "oh, my God", you know, "what's going on?".

Q: Yeah. It happens now.

A: I just think it would be really weird to wait 'til your wedding night, it's like all the years, all the things build up, and then it completely goes horribly wrong and you're left thinking... Like many people that say they've broken up 'cos they've waited and then things just - just couldn't get it together and just like it was quite strange. If he's a virgin I suppose that makes it a lot easier, 'cos then you both feel - you won't feel sort of "oh, God, I don't know what the hell I'm doing; what am I supposed to do? Oh, God!" and that. But I suppose, you know - I think sex is more important to men than it is to women. I'm not sure. I suppose... fair to generalise and say it's more - I think men generally feel it's more important to them than it is to women.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: I don't know, I just think - I mean to see it as a man, it's like he's got the penis, it's his job, it's his thing, you know. I don't know, perhaps it's not fair to say that. I think - I think times are changing and women are feeling it's important to them as well, for their own satisfaction and enjoyment, but - I don't know, it's like before you used to think that love was conditional on sex. If you loved somebody you slept with them, if you didn't, you know, you don't do it. But I think there's a change now. People do it 'cos they want to... I'm not one of these people who have to be madly in love with someone to have sex with them; it's like, if you like them, you feel as if it's going okay and, you know,... Like one night stands sometimes, you think "oh my God". But - you know, my friend LIZZIE again, like she thinks love's conditional on sex, and I tried to explain to her, she said well - I remember one time I'm talking and her mum was there, and I said something; she goes "oh God, no, you don't say that". I said "what d'you mean?", she said "sex isn't discussed in the house". It's like - oh, where do you talk about it?, and she... Like I said to her about periods, and all she had to find out about it from school. I don't think - her mother knew that she'd had a period now, but beforehand she didn't explain anything to her, and I think she kept it from her - kept it from her for a long time, and then - I think how her mother - she - her mother found out, I don't know. How her mother found out, I think she had a Saturday job(?) - "oh, gosh," you know, "how long's this been going on?". I thought that was really strange, 'cos my mum was the first person - "oh, my God, I'm gonna die", and like she used to say, "right, well, you have it every twenty-eight - she said it depends, you know, everyone's different, but it should be every twenty-eight to thirty days". Like she used to buy sanitary towels and everything, it was fine. Like she hates tampons anyway, so I - I preferred those to sanitary towels; it's like walking round with a nappy on, it's just so uncomfortable. So, you know, she said, well do you wanna

try tampons? Like, she'd get Lillies or she'd get the ones... insert these, she said oh, these ones you have to use your finger which might be difficult, 'cos you've got fingernails and that, so it was like okay.

Q: Yeah, it sounds like you've been really lucky with your mother.

A: Well, she was saying - I said, what do you use for contra - she said "oh I had a coil", she said, "after I had TAMMY I had a coil put in". I said "oh". She said - I said ... - she said "it's like an internal thing that -" - I just really - sort of really weird shape, like a hook and it's like a piece of string, it's like... I can't remember how she said it worked, but... don't have to worry about putting it in, taking it out, she said, you have to go and have it checked every six months. Is it every year? - you have to have it checked every so often, but apart from that you don't have to worry about anything else.

Q: That's right.

A: 'Cos she can't take the pill 'cos I think she suffers from - is it thrombosis or something?...

Q: ...

A: ... discuss all the different contraceptives and all the rest of it, 'cos I suffer from dysmenorrhea; if you suffer from dysmenorrhea, even the coil can - 'cos it apparently presses - it presses on the cervix or something so it could make it quite painful. But they don't normally give the coil to people unless they've had children or something, it's apparently (?)less risky.

Q: No, that's - that's... Well, they do actually.

A: 'Cos there was somebody who's had one, but she said... they might do it nowadays, before they wouldn't give it to you unless you'd actually had children.

Q: No, they do do now.

A: I think you have to have the (?)copper one or something, it's a smaller one than the actual other one.

Q: Yeah.

A: I said, what about the one they - they inject... only in desperate cases where people can't use anything else, they inject it. But it's got apparently side effects, it affects the child or something.

Q: I don't know about that, I think it... 'cos it's stronger, 'cos -

A: Yeah, you have it about every three months or something. She said, you know, she said it's not that - it's safe but it's not that good really, 'cos it affects you other ways... Like just - like with the pill, there's a different combination mini-pill, this one, she was explaining the different combination ones where they're all different colours and different dosage, whereas mini-pills like the ordinary one which everybody takes, which is like the same dosage all the time -

Q: So how do you think life will carry on ...

A: I don't know. I don't know really, I don't know, I may change, I don't know. Well I hope next year's a lot better than the one - this year, I really do; it's like this year, everything that possibly could go wrong's gone wrong,...

Q: Do you think RICHARD would say that?

A: Well he's not on about - he's on about - 'cos he's getting a job now 'cos he got sacked from his last one. So he might get the job and sorting himself out - but I don't know if he's gonna stay around or not, I don't - but I don't know if I'll stay around long enough. It's like sometimes... he goes to me... "well, look, right, I'm gonna be really ratty

with you, so I think like we need to have a break from each other, so I'll go away for a couple of days if you'll go away". He said, "well, we need our own space and we're round each other too much of the time"... So I don't know. I don't know if it'll last any longer, it... the same now.

Q: 'Cos how would you normally meet...?

A: It's mainly people that - if you've got a party, someone introduces you to somebody or if you go to a gig, you see somebody you like, you think "oh, yeah", and that's how it - that's how it - that's how it starts, and normally it's just like really weird. Although when you're at school, obviously, you know, somebody in your class and year above you - it's like really hip to go for someone like two years above you - "hey, he's a fifth year" sort of thing. But apart from that, I don't know.

Q: If you had to describe yourself, what sort of person would you say you were?

A: God! - arrogant, argumentative, bossy. I don't know what to say. I suppose I can be really like dominant sometimes, like - I suppose everyone can be selfish, everyone's got a selfish streak in them. I don't know. Talkative - I don't stop talking; like, RICHARD just says, "for goodness' sake, can you shut up for five minutes". What else? - outgoing, extrovert, very extrovert. Forthcoming, I suppose, I'll say anything, it's like... bad points, being bossy I suppose is one. I like to take over and I like to organise everything. I like things to go my own way, it's like... go my own way... the reason why me and my mother couldn't get on - like she wanted her own way, I wanted my own way, so it was like - it was like no compromise, no breakdown like "look, you do your thing, I'll do my thing". And it depends on - if I don't like somebody, it doesn't matter - it's like some people can be really two-faced and if they don't like someone they'd be slamming off behind their back and then they go round "oh, yeah", they'll start talking to them. It's like if I don't like somebody - "I'm not gonna talk to you". There's no point talking to somebody you can't stand. It doesn't benefit anybody, I just - I just don't see the point of it. I'd rather someone didn't speak to me rather than pretend to speak. I don't know. That's what (?)NICK was saying to me. I said to him, it's not fair for me to pretend to like you 'cos it doesn't - it doesn't do you any good, does it, 'cos I'm not a real friend. But he doesn't - he couldn't understand that. I said, do you think you could honestly live together? He said yes; I said no, I can't live with you, NICK. I said I just - I said, look, I can't pretend to like somebody, I'm sorry, I'm not one of these people who go "oh, hi, how are you?". That really infuriates me. I can't do it, so I just... Some people find it really hard to relate to other people, I don't know. Like some - some women just find it really hard to relate to men, talk to them, they don't feel comfortable; and I say, well, I feel more comfortable talking to a man - I said I talk - basically I'll talk to anybody, I don't care, if it's not (?)nails on the floor... or plants, you know.

Q: ...just a thought, going back to when - like when you were ten, and lost your virginity, did it - did that make an impact on you when you were ten?

A: No, it was - I was misled, I really didn't know what was going on. It never occurred to me 'til afterwards, you know, what was really going on, it's like - it was like a joke really, it was like "oh, I've done it, you haven't", it was like a really big thing, and then afterwards when I got older I actually realised about it, sort of - you know what I mean? I think it was sad 'cos I was at the age where I couldn't really understand or enjoy what was going on.

Q: But you knew - had you already been explained -

A: Oh, yeah, I - I had started my periods. I basic - really basically I did, what was going on, but not a lot about it, it was afterwards - as you go along, obviously you learn. It would have been nice if it was at a later age but ...there's nothing I can do about it now, sort of.

Q: So you could have got pregnant then really.

A: I could have done, yeah, but it - I suppose it was - should I say it was luck? ... luck. Oh, no, that was really - that would be really hard to imagine then. That would have been just - I think that would be soul-destroying. That would have been, "oh, my God!".

Q: Did you tell anyone then?

A: Yeah, 'cos like - yeah, it was like a big thing, it was like "oh, yeah", it was like a big thing, and then - not a lot of people but I think everyone just found out about it anyway, 'cos like JAMIE was going round - "hey, look" sort of like... like... 'cos he was seeing it as something really great, and it's just like - it's something really weird. I don't know, I don't know if it happened for the best really.

Q: What, to get it over with?

A: I suppose... you know, next hurdle, you cross that hurdle, you can keep on going. I don't know. I mean you've got these people who are like in their twenties and still virgins and you just think to yourself, "Christ! I wonder what it must be like for them, do they feel funny?".

Q: You haven't found boyfriends who were concerned about wanting you to be a virgin?

A: Oh, no, no. No, I haven't actually. I suppose you (? can) always pretend you are.

Q: ... you pretend...?

A: I think once or twice you pretend, it's like they think really great, yeah, and you're sort of thinking to yourself, "fool, fool! How blind you are!".

Q: How do you pretend - I mean, by telling them? - that you are, or just by -

A: No, you say you are, then also you have to - at the right moment, say "ah!", you know, it really, really hurts, then it's like... faking the orgasm, and they say... keep on going, sort of -you've come this far, you might as well keep going on. Like RICHARD goes, don't ever fake it, he said, because - he said, well, I'll never know, but he said I'd hate to think you did. I said, right, fine, I won't.

Q: But did you fake them with the others?

A: Sometimes if people kept on and on, I just - to make... just keep on going. And if - I suppose you have to - you have to learn to really do it well, and some - I think men... men always said they don't know if somebody really is, they have to take your word for it. So it's really easy really. They just took your word for it, so - you could be thinking about going on your holidays to Marbella, thinking oh well, I'm having a really great time, you know I mean think about anything else. Some women - for some women to climax it's - it's not that important for them. I don't know, I think it depends on the individual. I think it is important, obviously, but - I just think it's something, oh well, if you do - if you don't then - some people have been faking it for years. ... well, can you tell the difference between a real one and what you fake? - say "well, not really". 'Cos when you see like these marriage guidance things, say "oh, yeah, I've been faking it for years", like he looks round and says well, you know, how did you - says, well it's very easy; if you wanna believe that somebody is, then they will. Men say it's really hard 'cos they just don't know. Whereas men, they know and you know, but to us -

Q: ...

A: Yeah, they really don't know, so they have to take your word for it, which is really - 'cos - yes, the ball's in our court, I do believe. So that's unfair in a way.

Q: Yes. Except I suppose if you do enjoy an orgasm, then a faked orgasm isn't quite as good as -

A: You think, oh well, he's got a smile on his face. I suppose that's one consolation really.

Q: Well, I think I've just about finished-