

LSFS34 9.2.1990**Jessica**

Q: ... start with kind of where you are at the moment, 'cos you're doing a course at [UNIVERSITY], and - and living in digs, is that?

A: It's actually a flat, it's - yeah, I suppose it's digs, yeah.

Q: With a ...

A: That's right, yeah.

Q: And how long have you been there?

A: About three months, since November.

Q: And how far are you through your course?

A: Halfway through the second year.

Q: Right, so you finish like after next year.

A: That's right, yeah.

Q: And that's - what subjects?

A: Latin with Greek.

Q: What are you gonna do with that?

A: I'm still not absolutely sure. I'm thinking of doing and MA in linguistics and perhaps teaching English as a foreign language. I'm tempted by archaeology, but I think it's very, very, hard to get into.

Q: What, in general or -

A: Yes, I think so. Yeah, I think you have to be very well-qualified and very enthusiastic, yeah. Otherwise I'm not quite sure at the moment.

Q: And where did you come from before that? Were you always in London?

A: Oh, no, no. I was in a school in [SOUTHERN ENGLAND], which was about ten miles from my home.

Q: What was that like, was that a - well, it's on here but...

A: It was - yes, it was an all-girls' school -

Q: - it was an all-girls' school -

A: Day school. Fairly religious, quite strict; they didn't let you get away with an awful lot. It was okay but - quite good.

Q: But you got a lot of qualifications.

A: Yeah, yeah... managed that, yeah.

Q: Was that because they worked you very hard or because kind of everyone worked for that sort of level?

A: Yeah, they expected everyone to - to get good O-levels and fairly good A-levels, it was a sort of standard thing, yeah.

Q: And on the questionnaire where - you probably saw, it asked about sex education -

A: Uh huh.

Q: What was -

A: ... It was really, really, bad. We got told about frogs and sticklebacks, and then we learnt about how the baby grows in the womb, and we never actually sort of got - got down to the bare facts at all.

Q: What, of how the baby got to the -

A: Yeah, right.

Q: And what did they do that in, was it a particular lesson?

A: Oh, that was biology, yeah.

Q: So you didn't have anything that...

A: At junior school we had a bit - the thing is, they - my junior school for the last three years was a boys' school -

Q: That's right, I was gonna ask you that.

A: Yeah, that was round the stage - my dad was a [EDUCATIONAL ROLE], so in the science lesson about - I suppose about a year before I left, we got told all about what happens to boys when they grow up and what to expect.

Q: What, so you knew all about boys?

A: Well, yeah, but - perhaps not so many other useful things.

Q: No, I notice you put down you'd learnt about wet dreams, which must have been -

A: Oh, I know! (laugh) It was really strange - "oh, don't worry if you have a wet dream, it's perfectly natural". A bit peculiar. This was talking to the class as a whole of course. But that's - that was about the only things they covered at school, I think. Yeah.

Q: So how did you learn?

A: Well, I've got another brother, and he tended to talk about that kind of thing quite a lot.

Q: To you, or just sort of -

A: To everybody. I suppose my dad told me a bit. My mum didn't talk about it very much really. And obviously, friends at school... talk about it.

Q: So did you find that that was sufficient? Did you feel that you learnt what you wanted to know?

A: Well, that and reading magazines. I got by. I think there were a few things I could have done with knowing earlier, but -

Q: What were they?

A: Well, basic things like periods. I hadn't the faintest idea how it worked. I suppose contraception - I hadn't much idea, I sort of - I let - I found out a fair amount talking to friends at school, but otherwise not very much.

Q: And at school they never showed you any alternative...

A: Oh, God, no. No. (laugh)

Q: Was it Catholic?

A: No, it wasn't, but it was very strict C of E..

Q: So presumably at that time they never talked about things like AIDS?

A: Well, no, but -

Q: Was that pre- ?

A: Really, yes. AIDS happened, I suppose, when I was about - well, I became aware of it when I was about fifteen or sixteen, so it was really pre-AIDS. I think in junior school we got a bit about sexually transmitted diseases and basically nasty symptoms, that was all.

Q: It's a bit early in junior school, isn't it?

A: Well, yes, I thought so; yeah, it was a bit.

Q: 'Cos had they taught you how - how you might get the sexual transmitted diseases in the first place?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah; oh, yeah, that was fairly well sorted out, yeah.

Q: So you had learnt about things like intercourse...

A: Yes, it's just it was never covered at - at senior school at all.

Q: And that's the time when you might sort of be thinking about it more -

A: Well, it does make sense -

Q: - in reality rather than -

A: - yeah, 'cos I'm sure a lot of the other girls weren't told anything in junior school at all.

Q: Then they'd have got nothing.

A: Yeah. Well, I mean they're bound to find out sooner or later but -

Q: Yes, but not always in the best way.

A: No, true.

Q: So did you find out about AIDS through -

A: I think the television or a newspaper or something like that.

Q: And what effect did it have on you?

A: Panic. To begin with, I was - well, obviously you take it really seriously, but you sort of wonder if you can catch AIDS, not just by having sex but all sorts of stupid things like - I don't know, people preparing food and they cut their finger, or things like that. Obviously, you don't - you can't take that seriously. I suppose you're just generally more careful. If you get involved with someone you take precautions and -

Q: So what - I mean do you know how AIDS is - what it is and how it's passed on?

A: A fair idea - it's a virus; and it's passed through blood or bodily fluids, but mostly blood, I think.

Q: How?

A: How?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, if you have sex, or things like needles or - I suppose that's the most... most of the ways really.

Q: And did it affect the way you saw things like sex or anything else?

A: Yeah, yeah. I was definitely quite a bit more careful. I obviously can't predict how I would have behaved otherwise, but it certainly made me think a lot harder about it, yeah.

Q: Were you actually having a sexual relationship at that time?

A: Yeah, yes, I was. Quite a long-term one in fact, so I didn't worry about it so much within that. But I think I may have stayed with that person a bit longer because I was worried about splitting up and finding someone new and the risk of AIDS, so -

Q: Do you think that the - like what you can remember of the media programmes, do you think it was okay or do you think it should have been differently handled?

A: Some were helpful, some of them just looked a bit stupid, but - yeah, it was okay, I think they had to cover it, and I think it's something you've got to take seriously, I don't think they tried to panic people too much. No, I thought they were quite helpful. The only thing is they never really give you a proper idea of what safe sex is and what it isn't and what the risks are. It seems to me there's practically nowhere you can find that out. No, they're - they're better than nothing anyway.

Q: And do you know what safe sex is?

A: Well, it seems there are various different levels: things that are totally non-risky, things that are a bit risky, and things that are really, really bad news.

Q: Which are they?

A: Well, having sex without a condom or anal sex - I suppose that's it really. Oral sex is a pretty bad idea, I think -

Q: What, because of passing -

A: Well, yeah, I know the government doesn't talk about it; I don't know why they don't talk about it, but it seems to me that it's a pretty risky thing to do. Yeah, I think that's...

Q: So what would you think would be constituting safe sex -

A: Safer?

Q: Yes.

A: Safe or safer? (laugh) Well, a condom I would put as safer but still risky, and then just sort of touching and stuff like that would be pretty damn safe, I would guess. Kissing and that kind of stuff...

Q: So sort of lots of things you can do that don't include intercourse -

A: Yeah, right. Yeah.

Q: And going back to like when you first had a - I know you talked in your questionnaire a bit about the various sort of short-term relationships and the longer-term things -

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: - when did all that start, how old were you then?

A: Oh, well, just - just turned seventeen really, just - just turning seventeen. I - sorry - no, I first slept with a man and it was just for one night, but it wasn't anything - anything really serious, or nothing very much happened. And then I got involved -

Q: What, you didn't have intercourse.

A: No. Right (laugh). Sorry.

Q: But did anything sort of interesting happen in the sense that, you know, it was quite a nice or not so nice sexual experience?

A: It wasn't very pleasant, to be honest.

Q: It wasn't?

A: No.

Q: Did he want more?

A: Yeah, he wanted to have intercourse and he was pretty disappointed, it was New Year's Eve, and he was obviously out for a good time and I was not really interested. I was too young, and I wasn't gonna get into that kind of thing. And then I started going out seriously with a boyfriend and about three months later we had intercourse.

Q: Was that something that you planned?

A: Planned.. I suppose so kind of, yeah. Yeah, I suppose so. We'd certainly thought about it beforehand, yeah.

Q: Had you talked about it?

A: Oh, yeah, rather a lot (laugh), yeah.

Q: And then - was it something that you enjoyed?

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, it was good.

Q: 'Cos was that losing your virginity or -

A: Well, yes, I suppose it was, yes.

Q: 'Cos people often describe the first time as being sort of not so nice in the sense that it's - you know, a disappointment or too painful or something like that.

A: No. I mean, it wasn't sort of earth-shattering or anything like that, but it was really nice 'cos we were really close and, you know, it was good.

Q: And how old were you?

A: I was nineteen.

Q: Was it his first relationship?

A: No, he'd had one before that - not a very long one, I think.

Q: So was he quite kind of - I mean, who actually negotiated how you went about the first time?

A: Ah, both of us really, it was a sort of joint effort. We both wanted to - yeah. I can't really say - I don't think either of us really...

Q: And it was - I mean, you could find somewhere to do it quite easily, 'cos that can be a problem, finding -

A: He had a room in London -

Q: Ah.

A: - so that was quite straightforward, yeah.

Q: And did you take precautions?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it?

A: A condom.

Q: And that's - that - kind of alright with both of you?

A: Yeah, fine.

Q: 'Cos sometimes people have problems -

A: - I know, particularly men tend to get a bit difficult about it, yeah. No, he was perfectly happy, I don't think he'd ever known anything else, so it didn't really matter.

Q: Have you found other men who have been difficult about it?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me about that?

A: Yeah, I suppose I'd better really (laugh). I was working in [EUROPEAN COUNTRY] for a while. I got involved with a man, and it sort of - I bought - I bought a whole load... tried and said, "oh I don't like that very much" - got pretty - pretty fed up about it.

Q: Did he actually refuse to use them?

A: Yes. A couple of times, yeah.

Q: And what did you do?

A: I got very angry. And eventually gave in, I'm afraid.

Q: But did you feel - you know, you were taking a risk?

A: Yeah. Yeah, I did really.

Q: 'Cos were you protected any other...?

A: No, I wasn't.

Q: So you could have got pregnant.

A: Yeah. I mean, half the problem then was he was going on about how he wanted to get married anyway, so he thought - well, I don't quite know what he thought, but - I don't know, there may have been something in it.

Q: What, he thought you were the one and therefore it didn't...

A: I think possibly, yes.

Q: He wasn't just putting a line and -

A: I really can't tell now (laugh). Both are quite possible.

Q: Was he [EUROPEAN]?

A: No, he was Algerian.

Q: And was that - how old were you then?

A: Nineteen.

Q: So had you had other relationships between that and your previous -

A: No, no, it was a really messy breakup. I went straight from one to the next and - no, that was - that was it.

Q: And so what happened after him?

A: Well, we split up. I came back to England and didn't see anyone for quite - well, about four months, I suppose it's not a very long time really but it seemed it then; and then I had a terrible string of boyfriends when I came up to [UNIVERSITY]. I - I suppose it's the shock of - of being at university and - I don't know, there seemed to be hundreds of really rather nice men around. It was dreadful.

Q: Why was it dreadful?

A: I don't know, really, it just seems rather shocking looking back on it. 'Cos it was rather - rather a lot in a short space of time, that's all.

Q: Well, how many were there?

A: Four last year.

Q: What, and were they sort of fairly serious or were you -

A: Some was - well, to begin with they were all fairly serious (laugh), yeah. The first one I took very seriously and he couldn't handle that; the second one was a sort of a thing at a party and it dragged on a bit because he wanted it to and I - I wasn't sure

about it; and the third one suddenly decided he wanted to marry me. I was quite flattered and thought, "oh, yeah, why not?", and then suddenly realised why not (laugh). The last one was just like a really good friend that - it went that way.

Q: Mm. But you're not with anyone at the moment?

A: No. No (laugh).

Q: You don't sound very sure. Is there somebody you might -

A: Well, kind of. I've got my eye on one of my brother's friends and he's got his eye on me, but there's nothing actually happening at the moment.

Q: But there's a potential?

A: Oh, yeah, I think so.

Q: And were all those relationships last year - I mean, they were all sexual relationships?

A: Yeah.

Q: And how did you sort of negotiate things about -

A: Oh, oh, I insisted.

Q: You insisted?

A: Yeah.

Q: Was that alright?

A: Yeah, that was perfectly okay.

Q: That's insisting they used condoms -

A: - used condoms, yeah.

Q: Did you use anything else as well or just -

A: I used the pill for a short time, and it disagreed with me badly and I decided I couldn't put up with it. I started feeling really sick and... No, that was it.

Q: I'm quite interested in just how - in terms of your sexual relationships and negotiation, kind of how it is that it's - at the point at which it's assumed that a relationship is going to become sexual, or is there a point when -

A: Right.

Q: - you know, there's no - not exactly no excuse, but the point has come where either you sort of do it or you don't do it, do you know what I mean? - whether you've found that in any of these, or whether the assumption is there maybe from the start, that - that it would be -

A: It - it varies quite a lot. I mean, so normally the assumption isn't there from the start, you know; I suppose it has been. I don't know - that's a really difficult one.

Q: I mean, if you think back to the first one, did you sort of assume that you would end up having sex or -

A: No, definitely not. What I really liked about him was that he was - well, that he actually claimed not to like sex, which I suppose you can't really take that seriously, but he was not at all pushy and obviously wasn't really expecting it. I suppose after that I sort of wondered and - but - yeah, I suppose there is a certain stage where you either carry on or you - you know, cut your losses, I think. Or I suppose you can keep it at a certain level, but it causes problems. Yeah.

Q: And did you know where you wanted to keep it?

A: Yes, normally, yeah.

Q: Was that with a sexual relationship or -

A: I - not all the time, but mostly, I guess - perhaps all but one, something like that.

Q: And was it something that was talked about again, so that you, kind of...

A: Sorry?

Q: Was it something that you and your boyfriend, whichever one it was, talked about like beforehand, or did it -

A: Oh, I see.

Q: - just sort of one night it happened and -

A: No, generally we talked about it beforehand, and the only one we didn't was the one I didn't want it and regretted it. Yeah.

Q: And was that - I mean in each case, was that something that you wanted, or you enjoyed or was it something that...

A: Yes. I think perhaps a couple of times I went into it too quickly.

Q: How quickly is too quickly?

A: Gosh, this is getting personal! (laugh)

Q: Is that alright, I mean...

A: Oh, yeah, yeah. I suppose sometimes a couple of weeks. Yeah. That was with the one who said he wanted to marry me (laugh)... taking it a bit too seriously.

Q: So was he the one you got engaged to?

A: Oh. Well, actually, no, that was - that was slightly peculiar. The person I was in theory engaged to, I'd at that stage never even kissed him, it was (laugh) - I just - well, he decided that he really liked me and I really liked him and... really good match.

Q: Is that when you were at college or...

A: Yes, this was last summer, about July. But he's very religious and he can't accept the fact that I don't really believe, and so that's that, finished. It's a shame.

Q: So -

A: Sorry?

Q: So have you felt seriously - I mean, have you had regrets about any of them? You said you felt seriously about them at the beginnings, but it sounded like they all sort of came to an end.

A: Regrets. Yes, a bit. The Algerian in [EUROPEAN CITY] I was very fond of, and now, looking back on it, he would have been a pretty bad prospect long-term, but he was great fun. Otherwise I suppose not too many regrets, except this guy that I told you about, last - last summer, which never became anything sexual, but it's a shame.

Q: Yeah, it sounds like you liked him.

A: Yeah.

Q: And in terms of the actual - like, sexuality, was that something that was important to you within the relationships?

A: Not particularly. If it was good then that was great, but if that was good and the rest wasn't so good, then that was - that was too bad really. No, it wasn't so important.

Q: So what was - what would be most important?

A: I suppose the comfort of knowing you could rely on somebody, the closeness - and being able to communicate with the person so that - not -... reasonably bright and it's possible to talk to them.

Q: Did - I mean, the men that you were with, was it important to them, do you think, more than it was for you?

A: One very definitely. I - I suppose a fair amount, yeah. The first one not so much, he just wanted - he just wanted a girlfriend. Some of the others, probably more, yeah.

Q: Was he the first one - the one who said he didn't like sex?

A: That's right, yeah. (laugh)

Q: And did they sort of define when you had sex?

A: I think not very much. ... I really don't think so.

Q: No, I was just wondering, thinking of sort of who - who decides really, do you know what I mean?

A: Oh, I see. What, you mean to begin with or -

Q: No, I suppose generally -

A: - generally?

Q: - as it goes -

A: Oh, I see.

Q: - along, 'cos - unless it just happens every time you see somebody sort of thing, but there might be a point at which someone has to decide whether they wanted to do it on a particular night.

A: Yeah. No, not really. If I didn't want to then I'd say so and if - if they didn't want to, they'd say so. No... just happened.

Q: And - if it's not too personal, when you said sort of "if the sex was good then that was fine", what did you mean by kind of good sex for you?

A: Well, obviously, if it feels good and if they actually make some kind of effort to make it decent, 'cos you get some men that just sort of think "oh, right, got a girl here, let's - let's have a quick orgasm", that's that. And that's completely foul.

Q: Orgasm for you or for them?

A: For them (laugh). Of course. But normally, yeah, it's the ones that actually make the effort, and also if they're fairly passionate and actually seem fairly keen about it. I mean, you get some men that just sort of lie there and - although they're making the effort, you think they're really bored with it or something, that's the worst.

Q: What, thinking they're bored?

A: Yeah.

Q: Is that bored with kind of making the effort to please you, sort of thing?

A: Yeah. And the way they show it, and it takes all the fun out of everything, so you might as well not bother.

Q: What ... do?

A: I don't know, they keep sort of asking, "are you okay?"... (laugh)... don't need that kind of thing.

Q: So they say afterwards, "was it alright?..."

A: It has happened, yes (laugh). I don't think I've ever answered that one though.

Q: And has it been alright for you?

A: Normally, yes. Yeah. It's only, as I said, the ones that are too eager - and often the more experienced ones - everyone seems to think that experienced men know it all and they're really great for girls, but often it's the more inexperienced ones that make the effort and are really - I suppose really keen and really - I don't know (laugh); well, I don't know, they're more interested in - in - in finding things out, whereas experienced men seem to think they know it all and they'll just sort of say, "oh, yeah, this is what a woman likes" and go for it. You think, oh no! It's really bad.

Q: ...

A: Yeah, quite. Yeah.

Q: And then is it possible to - to talk about it with them or is it hard?

A: Sometimes both. Yes, normally, but you have to be slightly careful how you do it, I think.

Q: So who's been the person you've been able to kind of talk to - kind of have the best kind of relationship - though that may not go together actually, being able to talk -

A: No, it definitely doesn't (laugh).

Q: ... have a much better time with someone else.

A: Yes. The first one I found by far the easiest to talk to. I suppose I had the best time with the one in [EUROPEAN CITY], because he was great fun; and also, the last one, I think, last year, he was really good fun. Yeah, he was nice.

Q: You mentioned a couple of times - I think you suggested you'd had sexual intercourse unwillingly.

A: Oh, God, yeah, that was - that was - well, it wasn't - it wasn't exactly sexual intercourse, which made it even worse because you couldn't sort of say "ugh", you know, "he's gone too far", but it was still really frightening so -

Q: What happened?

A: - it was worse in some ways. Well, the first one - and it was difficult because I'd been going out with him and then I went to see him after we'd split up, and he - well, we were just sat there talking and then suddenly he grabbed me and pulled me over, and came as close as he could possibly come to raping me without actually getting it. I don't think I want to go into too many details.

Q: Were you frightened?

A: Yes, but I felt fairly sure he wasn't going to get really, really bad. I didn't think he was going to kill me or anything like that, but on the other hand I was very frightened and really annoyed that someone would do something like that.

Q: So did you have to sort of fight him off or something...?

A: Well, I tried, but I didn't get very far, I'm afraid. And in the end, I just - I persuaded him to go away (laugh).

Q: So that's why he stopped -

A: Yeah.

Q: - otherwise he would have just gone ahead.

A: Well, I think so, yeah. And the other one?

Q: The other one?

A: This is really silly. I was sharing a flat with somebody earlier this year, and he had been living with his girlfriend for four years, so that was quite good, but it just was a nice situation, and of course, it wasn't; and one night he came in drunk and, you know, I thought he was okay - he had always seemed a fairly sort of nice person. And we were just watching telly, and he just grabbed me, and he said he didn't want to have sex with me, he just wanted - just basically just a grope and stuff like that, and I said well that sounded pretty revolting, particularly as I was really rather attached to somebody else - well, this - this religious person I was supposed to be engaged to. And I got frightened - I - I went and locked myself in the loo, and he knocked the door down and -

Q: God, that's quite frightening, isn't it?

A: It scared me to death. And then he came into my room stark naked, took me like to my room, came into my room stark naked and then changed - changed me into my nightdress, ... oh, God, I was really terrified; and then I started screaming and screaming and telling him to go away and leave me alone, 'cos I was really fed up, and I - I don't know what was wrong with him, but he kept saying all sorts of really funny things. He was Irish and I think he had some kind of chip about being Irish, 'cos he kept going on about how the English aren't really better and all this kind of thing, which really - really bothered me in that situation 'cos he was obviously pretty upset.

Q: He wasn't drunk -

A: Yeah, he was a bit drunk. He'd had some Guinness... And then when I started screaming a lot, he started putting a pillow over my face, and that really freaked me out, I was terrified. And so - so eventually he went away, and I got dressed and ran out into the road. I didn't know what to do, it was about four in the morning, I was so frightened.

Q: Did you call the police or -

A: No. When I ran out into the road, he came after me and there was a police car -

Q: What, still stark naked?

A: Oh, God, no, he was dressed -

Q: Yeah.

A: - various threats, he threatened to throw out all my stuff, which could have been a good deal worse. And I got to the police car and I just chickened out - because, oh, I didn't know what they'd say, I -

Q: Did they stop?

A: No, they were just driving past, they didn't take any notice. And also, he'd said if - it sounds like a harmless threat now, but he said at the time that he had friends who would kill me if I said anything to anybody. I know that's - that's the sort of thing little kids believe, but in that situation -

Q: Oh, it's frightening -

A: - having been that close, and he scared me to death, and - and I sort of saw that he was perhaps a bit rough, he might have those kind of friends. He was obviously fairly hard-hearted and he even said he'd - he'd wanted to take advantage of the situation, which -

Q: No, that's awful. So did you... shock?

A: Very quickly, yes (laugh). He said - the next morning he was all terribly sorry, "oh, God, I can't believe I did that, it's like - it's like molesting a child or something" - "yeah, it was a really foul thing to do". And he said he'd move out, and I moved out straight away anyway, I was so scared.

Q: Did you have somewhere to move to?

A: Well, I live about thirty-five miles outside town, so I just moved back home... probably about three days, a week later, so I was quite lucky with that, a very good lot.

Q: Yeah. And did that affect the way you felt about men?

A: Yes. Yes, definitely. Yeah.

Q: In what way?

A: Well, I'm a good deal more careful now, and nervous of all sorts of people, which is a bit...

Q: Well, it's quite understandable -

A: - it's a fairly natural reaction, yeah.

Q: And did you talk about it to other people?

A: Nobody yet, no. I haven't dared. I know it's stupid, I suppose I ought to.

Q: No, because it's such a horrible thing to happen.

A: Yeah, it's just a really difficult thing to talk about, and a lot of people say, oh, if you're sharing a flat with a man then you're asking for trouble, but - he'd had a girlfriend for four years, I'd met his brother, I'd met loads of his friends, I'd assumed he was okay.

Q: Yeah. Well also, I mean people - perhaps the assumption there is that - that men do that - men are sort of animal-like...

A: Well, yeah, yeah.

Q: I suppose if you make that assumption then it's logical, but I would like to think that men don't do that -

A: Well, I would like to think that. My mum says they all do, but -

Q: What, leap on you?

A: Well, this is her - her idea, yes: men have some uncontrollable urge, it's not their fault, you know.

Q: What, when it happens, they can't control it?

A: Yeah. So, whatever they do, that - that's only natural so that's okay.

Q: What do you think of that?

A: It makes me feel very sick, it's... do, it's ingrained -

Q: What, so you agree with it?

A: No, no, I can't, but I have to accept it because I don't think she's going to change it now.

Q: ... oh, I thought you meant it was ingrained in men.

A: Oh, no. I don't think it need be, I think they can overcome it. I suppose they do have fairly strong urges, but they have got brains as well.

Q: Is this true? (laugh) No, 'cos some people have suggested almost as though, say, if they knew a man and because of being with him or whatever, he's become aroused, then somehow they've got to follow it through because they were responsible for arousing him, do you know what I mean?

A: Yeah. Yes, I understand that, and I think it's wrong.

Q: Yes.

A: I just - if you make the effort and you're really trying to seduce him, then that may be different; and even so, I think - I think it's a difficult question.

Q: Yeah.

A: Just being with a man and he - he thinks that way, it's not your fault.

Q: No... have the same expectations. And do you - I know you said a couple of times you haven't used - like with the Algerian... when you didn't use condoms, have there been other times when you haven't used - ?

A: Haven't used anything at all - I don't think so. No.

Q: 'Cos you mentioned you used a sponge -

A: Oh, yeah, that's right. Quite funny. It was - it worked okay, but that was only at times when it was really safe anyway, sort of like right near the end of the month and things like that. Yeah, it's fairly practical. That - that was just with WILLIAM, my first boyfriend, so I wasn't too worried about diseases or anything like that.

Q: That was the very first one?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. How long were you with him?

A: Ages. Gosh - about a year and a half I think, maybe even two years - yeah, two years and a bit. Oh, well.

Q: So was that until you came to college or -

A: No, that was until I went to [EUROPEAN COUNTRY], my year out.

Q: So it was during your first year at college -

A: Sorry? - oh, no, sorry -

Q: ... dates...

A: - started the beginning of sixth form and carried on 'til the beginning of my year out -

Q: - right, between -

A: - before college.

Q: Right. Yeah. And who finished it, who - ?

A: I did eventually; we had a sort of a break about halfway through where we both got a bit fed up with it, and then decided it was okay anyway. But yes, eventually I finished it.

Q: Were you very close to him?

A: Yes, I was at one stage. I think he was slightly looking for a mother figure, but he was - he was very kind.

Q: And did he make sure - like, being your first sexual relationship, was it something that kind of grew - like you explored and -

A: Oh, yeah, loads, yeah. He was - he was terribly keen on that, and - he actually bought me The Joy of Sex too, to help things along a bit.

Q: And did you find sort of things that you liked more than others?

A: I suppose so, but it varied quite a lot. (laugh) (pause) I suppose I wasn't so wild about just straightforward intercourse. I mean, it was okay in it's place, but not the whole time.

Q: What, so you preferred other sorts of things?

A: Yeah, I suppose so, yeah.

Q: What did you like?

A: Well, I suppose oral sex quite a lot -

Q: That's presumably oral sex where you kind of have it rather than giving him...

A: Well, yes, either/or, or both, or whatever. Yeah. Just generally touching, stuff like that. Or - or just talking about things you'd like to do. Yeah, that's about it.

Q: No, because a lot of people say that they really like kind of other things apart from intercourse -

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: - you know, men who just want - who think that that's the way women -

A: Oh, that's terribly boring, yeah.

Q: - or that they have to give a woman an orgasm during intercourse for it to be sort of proper sex.

A: Yeah (laugh).

Q: Have you met people like that?

A: Yeah, definitely. Luckily not too many.

Q: And things like oral sex, which is often - I mean, as you say, the government doesn't talk about it much, and -

A: No, I think they really ought to because quite a lot of people are doing it, I think.

Q: Yes. Do you think they're doing it more now, because of -

A: I don't know. I hope not, for their sake. I shouldn't think so very much.

Q: But do you think oral sex is dangerous?

A: I just think it's a bit risky, yeah.

Q: But you'd risk it.

A: Only if I were very, very, serious about somebody now, ... normally probably not.

Q: What, either way?

A: I don't know. I've always wondered about the idea of putting a condom on and then - and having oral sex with him, that might be okay, but it still seems a bit revolting with all that rubber.

Q: Yeah.

A: (laugh). But on the other hand, I - I really don't think it would be worth the risk.

Q: And what about him doing it to you?

A: I don't know. That sounds okay.

Q: I mean, do you do that, or is that not something you've done?

A: Oh, yeah, I've done it, but not - not for a little while.

(Tape change)

Q: 'Cos I mean I was talk- -

A: ...

Q: Yeah. 'Cos I mean, it becomes hard saying - some people can easily talk about things like oral sex... things like masturbation, I mean I was talking to -

A: Oh, God, yeah.

Q: - like some girls who talk totally openly and then say "oh, that's something I never talked about with my friends", you know.

A: That's absolutely true, yeah, all my friends maintain they never ever did it or - or anything like that, it's just something -

Q: I'm sure somebody must...

A: Well, I suppose so, yeah.

Q: 'Cos did you sort of learn or do masturbation?

A: Yeah.

Q: 'Cos girls often do, although it's often thought to be something that - that's more concerned with boys.

A: Well, I suppose so, yeah, yeah. My brother's always talked about it when he was very young (laugh)-

Q: ... probably do...

A: Well, quite likely, yes.

Q: I don't know, why do you think it's so taboo with girls talking about it - or maybe doing it, I don't know.

A: I suppose there's the idea of the single girl who shouldn't be thinking about that kind of thing. I don't know really. It could be - this is - this is a very vague idea, but it could be the idea that men don't like the idea of women having that control over themselves and they think it should be centred on them. That's - well, that's a thought. Otherwise I don't know really...

Q: But I think, you know, that you've got something there as well, 'cos like some men put it as a - like something they'd quite like to see a woman doing or something, that's their kind of fantasy.

A: Oh, yeah, definitely, yeah. I saw a - I saw a letter in the paper the other day, though - perhaps it was something like Cosmopolitan, going on about some woman that had been caught masturbating by her husband and he'd virtually treated it as infidelity. It's weird, it really is.

Q: 'Cos that implies that her body is his, doesn't it, rather than hers.

A: Yes, I suppose it does. Yeah, I hadn't thought of that.

Q: And do you sort of feel that you're a person who takes risks at all?

A: I think I have done. Yes, definitely. I'm hoping I'm becoming more sensible (laugh). That remains to be seen.

Q: What sort of risks do you take, do you think?

A: Well, I thought - I - I had oral sex with someone I didn't know very well, which was a bad idea. And not using condoms a few times was also a bad idea. Are you talking sexually or generally?

Q: Well, sexually to begin with.

A: (laugh) That's probably more or less it, really.

Q: And did you get worried after occasions like that, did you...?

A: I used to get worried the whole time anyway -

Q: What, even if you were using them?

A: Oh, yeah, particularly while I was at school, I used to be scared to death half - half the time. Yes, I did worry, yeah.

Q: And what would you have done if you had got pregnant?

A: I don't know really.

Q: Would you just see what you felt like...

A: I suppose so. Mm. It's very difficult, isn't it?

Q: So what other risks might you take?

A: What, you mean generally?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, I mean - when I left school I - I was very fed up with things, and I wanted to travel a lot, and I tended to sort of be out late at night. I didn't do anything really

dangerous, but I had some kind of faith in my good luck, I thought everything was going to be okay all the time, and normally it was. I was quite lucky. Mm.

Q: But it could have been risky.

A: Well, yes, I suppose it could, yeah.

Q: And things like sort of smoking and drinking, things like that...

A: Not really. I don't think so very much, no.

Q: Do you smoke?

A: No.

Q: Or smoke - or take drugs, anything like that?

A: No.

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

A: I - I - I'm very traditional. But I tend to sometimes feel I'm stuck and want to - want to break out and - and do something different. I really - I'm finding it quite hard being at university at the moment and staying in one place. I suppose I'm reserved, normally a fairly staid sort of a person. I'm quite emotional but it doesn't often come out.

Q: What, you keep it inside?

A: Yeah, normally. (laugh) I don't know what else to say.

Q: What do you think will happen to you in the future, do you see yourself as marrying and having children?

A: I hope so. I - yes, I'd like - I'd like to have a decent husband and children; but if I don't find a decent husband then I don't think I'll bother. They're quite hard to come by nowadays, I think.

Q: What do you call a decent husband?

A: Someone who's got a brain, is very open-minded, isn't too stupid and is reliable. I suppose that's about it really.

Q: And do you see yourself doing other things, like in terms of your career or...

A: I hope so. Yeah. I still don't know what. I've got a bit sidetracked really, because I love modern languages, particularly French, and I'm doing a Classics degree. But eventually I - I'd like to work, perhaps in France, perhaps in Switzerland, and if I could get into something like banking or finance, I suppose, at least the money will be good.

Q: 'Cos is your - do you know French?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: ... A-level.

A: Only O-level, but while I was in [EUROPEAN COUNTRY] I learnt to speak it.

Q: Best way to learn a language. And what do you normally spend time doing?

A: Oh, God. I read a lot, I watch a lot of telly. Obviously, I go to college a fair amount. The weekends I just sort of - I quite often go home and - I don't do an awful lot really (laugh).

Q: Does your brother stay at home?

A: Yeah, he's [MID-THIRTIES], so it's a bit late really. And we've got a foster sister who lives at home, so she's quite fun.

Q: How old's she?

A: She's fifteen, but she seems a lot younger. I fairly often go to an opera or a film or something like that, and every chance I get I go and travel.

Q: And does that change if you've got a boyfriend?

A: What?

Q: What you actually spend time doing.

A: Well, I suppose I spend a fair amount of time with him, if I've got a boyfriend. Sometimes I suppose it would. I might go out - I don't know, go out to dinner or things like that more often, or - I don't know, it seems like a long time ago (laugh).

Q: ...it wasn't all that long ago, how long ago - ?

A: No, it just feels like it - nine months.

Q: Oh, was it as long as that? I was thinking it was sort of the end of last year.

A: No, sort of April. Not so much.

Q: Like the times - just going back very briefly to the times when the two men who kind of were trying to have a sexual relationship -

A: Oh, them -

Q: - how old were you on those occasions?

A: What, you mean the nasty ones?

Q: Yeah.

A: Twenty and twenty. Both last year. About six months apart.

Q: And before that, had your sort of attitude to men been kind of more trusting or -

A: Oh, yeah, definitely more trusting. I was still fairly careful, but - yeah, I mean that - obviously that - that threatened it, and made me realise that there are some - some pretty bad people around. And certainly - particularly after the first one, that really hit me badly, 'cos for a long time when I went home my brother would sort of say "do you want to come down the pub?", and I'd say "oh, no, I'm going -" - I - I told him a bit about the first one because I was really shaken up by it, and I said, "oh, no, I can't go down there 'cos I might - I might meet a man who's - " - I don't know, might be interested or something like that, and it really - it really scared me at that stage.

Q: Did he realise that you'd been quite scared?

A: Oh, yes, I think so, but then - I mean - I don't know, I mean he wasn't very helpful about it. He was okay, but not much good.

Q: So he's not somebody you could actually talk to -

A: I can talk to him -

Q: - or sensitive.

A: I can talk to him about very personal things, but I've found he's not very good at keeping his mouth shut and occasionally he'll throw it back in your face and that would really, really, hurt, so I'm a lot more careful about what I tell him now.

Q: Are there sort of girlfriends, woman friends that you can talk to about things like that?

A: No, not really...

Q: There is no one at college that you...

A: Not really, no.

Q: That's a shame, 'cos it might be quite nice to share those sort of things.

A: Yeah.

Q: I suppose it's harder living on your own with a couple...

A: Yeah, I suppose so.

Q: Going back to - sort of going back round in circles to -

A: Okay.

Q: - things about condoms and -

A: (laugh)

Q: ... condoms and things like that -

A: Yeah.

Q: - I mean, is it something that you would sort of take around with you or feel able to ask someone to put on and things like that?

A: This is difficult. If I - if I were contemplating actually having sex with someone, then I would carry a packet round with me even if he hadn't mentioned it; but on the other hand, I wouldn't just walk round with a packet on me on the off-chance that I might meet someone, because I like to think I wouldn't go into anything that quickly. I think I probably wouldn't.

Q: When you were in something, did you have like the confidence to actually...

A: Oh, yeah. Yeah, definitely.

Q: And then - I mean, say if you were in another - got into another relationship now sort of thing, and somebody didn't want to use one -

A: Oh, I think I'd tell him to get lost. Yeah, I think so.

Q: What, even if you were quite keen on them?

A: Yeah, because if they can't be bothered to do that, then they can't be much good really.

Q: And do you feel - which is the more that you think about, say, in having a sexual relationship, as kind of - not exactly a fear, but in terms of pregnancy or - or AIDS as a protection, which is the thing that - that most worries you?

A: It depends how much protection I've been using. I suppose now really, AIDS. Yeah. Because it's - it's so much more final, isn't it? I mean, pregnancy, you can have the baby and life carries on, but AIDS you...

Q: Have you used - I know you've used the sponge and the condom; there's nothing else that you would use in terms of contraception?

A: I don't know. If I were married it might be different, I might use - I don't quite know what I would use; perhaps something like - is it the coil? or - I don't know, something

Q: There's the coil, yes, it gets inserted inside you -

A: Oh.

Q: - for three years or so.

A: Oh, I don't know. There's one that's inside the uterus, which sounds really bad, and there's the other one that you just put inside every time you're going to have sex.

Q: That's the cap.

A: Ah, the cap, yeah. That - that seems quite a good idea if you're really going long-term with someone and if you get pregnant, then that's okay, then that seems a fairly sensible thing to use, but otherwise everything else seems pretty lousy. My mum's got a coil and she's certainly not very happy with it.

Q: She's not?

A: No. Well, she had it fitted and didn't realise that after that she couldn't have any more babies, and she wanted some more, so she felt fairly well cheated on that one.

Q: Well, she could have it taken out.

A: But normally - well, I think normally once it's been in, even if you have it taken out, you're more or less sterilised.

Q: No.

A: No? No? That's interesting. I think that they'd know anyway. But she was told that once the doctor had put it in, okay, that's your lot.

Q: No, that's not true.

A: Ah. Wow. Oh, good.

Q: No, it's a form of contraception, which means that - it basically kind of doesn't like foreign bodies, the uterus -

A: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Q: - so it means that every time an egg comes down, the foreign body, which is the foreign body in the uterus, sort of expels everything, so that if an egg was about to be fertilised or whatever, the action of the coil in there sort of expels it out. But -

A: Oh, yeah, I understood that. I got the impression that the uterus did damage - sorry, not the uterus, the coil did damage to the uterus.

Q: No. No. People have it - just have it taken out, and then in theory you should be as - as fertile as you would have been anyway. I mean, the only thing that sometimes happens is that for some people, the coil is - doesn't actually cause, but it makes you more susceptible to some infections -

A: Yeah.

Q: - and there is like a certain infection that's quite serious...

A: Right, yeah.

Q: Which can sort of mean that it may affect one or both of your tubes or something, which if it's really serious - do you know what I mean, it's all these "ifs" -

A: Yeah. Oh, I see. Right.

Q: - could mean that - that the coil has made you more susceptible to this infection and that infection can mean that you are less fertile or maybe infertile.

A: Oh, I see.

Q: But...

A: Okay, alright. That's good.

Q: So she should have it out if she wants -

A: Yes, she certainly should. I've been telling her that for years.

Q: Do you get on well with your mother?

A: Normally, yes. Not so well recently. I found when I'm in trouble she - she just pretends it's not happening. Shuts herself off and pretends everything's okay. So -

Q: So she's not very supportive...

A: No, not really.

Q: How about your dad?

A: He - he's a good sort, he's not very sensitive, but if you sort of bash him over the head and say "dad, something's wrong", then he'll be really kind and really helpful. But if you're upset then he'll never ever notice. He's quite thick-skinned but he's very kind-hearted.

Q: And what sort of things have you sort of been in trouble with that your mum didn't take any notice of?

A: Well, particularly - I told her when the - the first unpleasant experience, yeah - I didn't tell her exactly what happened, but I told her that things weren't so good, and she just got terribly upset and sort of angry, and started telling everyone what a hard time I'd been having, which - I mean, people that I didn't know so well, family friends and people like that. It was really the last thing I needed at that stage sort of thing. "JESSICA's got real problems", you know. It's - it's not the way to deal with it.

Q: No, not at all.

A: And yet she went and talked about things...

Q: So you haven't really had many people to confide in, have you?

A: No, not really at all.

Q: What do you sort of look for in a long-term relationship?

A: Ah, interest - I suppose both wanting the same thing, otherwise you can get in trouble; obviously some kind of emotion - I don't know, love? Could be. And some kind of a future - well, I suppose that's obvious, isn't it? And also, just someone close to - to share things with.

Q: When you say like "love" -

A: Yeah.

Q: - do you think love and sex go together?

A: Well, they have done, but I mean maybe by chance, I don't know. You can love people you don't have sex with, and you can certainly have sex with people that you don't love, so - yeah.

Q: And have you done both?

A: Oh. Yes. Yeah. I mean, it depends what you call love, but, yeah, by my definition, definitely.

Q: And do you think, like, for women sex is different than for men?

A: I think it must be, yeah.

Q: In what way?

A: Oh, God. Well, men - most men I've spoken to claim not to be terribly keen on foreplay and all that kind of thing. I'm not sure if I really believe that, but anyway that's what they say. I think women are, and I suppose women tend to take it more seriously, unless they've had an awful lot of men and then it's - it's probably not - not so important. I suppose women are generally more careful because they're traditionally the ones who are meant to be more careful, and who get pregnant, so I suppose there's more responsibility there. And also I think men, if they haven't had sex for a little while, start thinking "oh, God, I've got to have sex, I haven't had it for -" - however long they haven't had it for, and then they get quite bothered about how often they have it, and I don't think women get so - so caught up in that kind of thing.

Q: What, as though it's part of their -

A: Well, it's got to happen, otherwise something is seriously wrong.

Q: What, they're not a proper man?

A: I don't know what it is exactly, they just seem to feel it's just part of everyday life like having haircuts once every - every two or three months or something like that. You've got to have sex every so often otherwise something's the matter. I think that's about all.

Q: Do you think women get more emotionally involved?

A: Not necessarily; probably on average, yes, but it's too big a generalisation.

Q: In your relationships like that you've had, have you felt that you were in control?

A: I think sometimes yes and sometimes no. About - half and half maybe is a bit optimistic. Yeah, that's probably about right actually.

Q: Which were the ones where you didn't feel so in control?

A: I suppose a couple of the shorter ones and when I was in [EUROPEAN CITY]. It wasn't that he had control either, but it was at least evenly balanced, I think he may well have had the upper hand on that one.

Q: When you say the upper hand, what do you actually mean?

A: I was very likely to do what he asked because I was very keen on him. I think he was also very keen on me, at least for a while, but - yeah, he was a really strong personality as well, so he would... do his best to get his own way.

Q: So which have you liked better - kind of being out of control or in control?

A: Oh, right. I don't like the sound of out of control (laugh). I don't think it really matters. I - I mean, it's best if it's absolutely equal, and the idea of control is a pretty unpleasant one, though it does often come in. But the ideal is - is just to have, you know, the right balance. Because if you're in control it gets really boring.

Q: Have you found that?

A: Yeah.

Q: Which was that then?

A: Particularly the first one really -

Q: - the one that was - lasted for two years.

A: Yes. He was very nice, but he was too easily influenced. If I wanted to, I could get him to do all sorts of things and I got really bored with it.

Q: And did that - kind of, was that the same with like your sexual relationship with him as well, that you kind of defined that too?

A: I don't know really. We both had quite an effect on that really, so I would - I would sort of suggest the way things should go or whatever, but then he would as well. That - it wasn't really unbalanced like that.

Q: And did you ever sort of do it against - not against your will, but sort of with him when you didn't particularly feel like it?

A: Not really. I mean, very different levels of that, aren't there? But never really, no, not really. I mean there were times when I wouldn't have asked if he hadn't but - not really, not really when I didn't want to.

Q: And what was that like with the others?

A: ...?

Q: What was that like with the others, did they kind of take control of... take the initiative, I suppose.

A: Ah, take the initiative. Often, yes. Particularly to begin with I haven't got the nerve to take the first initiative and actually make the first advance; once I'm involved in relationships I'm different, but to begin with it's really difficult. I suppose I still think it's not really expected of girls. I think a lot of men would be fairly shocked.

Q: What, the men would be shocked?

A: Yeah, if - you can never - well, I suppose you can tell if a man's interested or not, but it always seems like you're taking a risk - and also if you make the first move, then you don't know what you're making the first move for. 'Cos - just - maybe it's a result of bad experience, I don't know, but it seems to me that if you make an advance to a man, he may think, "okay, she wants to go to bed with me" when really you're just like - I don't know, not quite like to go that far.

Q: So he'd misunderstand it or -

A: Yeah.

Q: But then once you're within the relationship you can...

A: Well, you know roughly where you are, yeah.

Q: So - and were you happy with the way that worked out in your relationships?

A: Sorry?

Q: Were you happy with the way that worked out within your -

A: - sorry, what worked out...

Q: About - I suppose about - well...

A: Oh, I see, taking initiatives?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, yeah, that was fine. Yeah. Because we both felt we could say what we wanted when we wanted, and that's definitely the... I think.

Q: And who was that most successful with?

A: Oh, the first one, definitely.

Q: Would you say he was the most successful, apart from being a bit -

A: Yeah.

Q: - boring at times... the most successful -

A: Yes, I suppose so. I - the only trouble was I couldn't have lived with him for - I probably couldn't have even lived with him actually. But yes, I suppose he was, on the whole.

Q: What, and the others since haven't been...?

A: I suppose on the whole not. The first one... was very good, I could really communicate with him, but he had much too liberal ideas that I just couldn't cope with. He used to have really bizarre kind of views about all sorts of funny things.

Q: What, sexual fantasies?

A: Yeah. He was - he was really nice, he was really easy to talk to, really open-minded, but - I think he was faithful, but at the same time he - I don't know, I think he was - I think he was probably naturally bisexual. He'd never slept with a man, but I think he was naturally bisexual, he was really unusual (laugh). So in some ways that was a very good relationship but in other ways - because I felt he could never really be faithful and I - couldn't - I don't think he could have been monogamous long-term, it never really got anywhere.

Q: What about the second one?

A: I didn't actually like him very much. It's a terrible thing to say. I found him very attractive to begin with, and I went to a party at his house; and - I'd known him a little while then, I'd seen him a few times, and then I went to bed with him and I - I was pretty - pretty horrified really, 'cos sort of - he was really - he was really lousy and selfish. I know it's a horrible thing to say. And he thought he was fantastic as well.

Q: What do you mean by selfish?

A: Well, he thought it was all about penetration and nothing else and he was, you know, he wouldn't make any effort at all, and yet he thought he was a wonderful lover and he thought he'd got it all together.

Q: And could you actually let him know that it wasn't quite like that for you?

A: I - I used to sort of go into negotiation and not get very far so I'd give up. "Could you do this, could you do that?", "This is really - really boring" (laugh). He wouldn't listen but he sort of, definitely...

Q: How old...?

A: He was quite old, he must have been ... something like that.

Q: How old was the one before?

A: I can't remember - ah, no, he must have been (?)²⁴. He kept telling people different ages so I'm never quite sure (laugh).

Q: And was the third one different again?

A: Yep. He was - sexually he was very, very, good, very - really made an effort, and he obviously was experienced and really knew what he was doing; but he seemed really - he was one of these people that seems really nice to begin with and then - I think he was another person who really needed propping up, really needed someone to look after him; he wasn't reliable himself, so I didn't put up with him for very long, I'm afraid.

Q: How old was he?

A: He was about twenty - I don't know, twenty-five, twenty-seven, something like that.

Q: Were they all students...?

A: No. [VARIETY OF JOB ROLES].

Q: Then the last one -

A: Oh, the last one, he was a student. He was - well, I mean - I thought he was wonderful. He was a very striking-looking sort of person and unbelievably intelligent, and he was very helpful because I was very upset at that stage, because... I'd been sexually assaulted or whatever you can call it, by the other one, and he - he wasn't terribly into sex really. And he was just really kind and he'd let me talk about it a lot and things like that, he was really nice.

Q: And was he good in bed?

A: Yeah, amazingly he was. He was a virgin and he was really - really thoughtful and really good. He was fantastic.

Q: So he was the one you were thinking of when you said that some people who are inexperienced actually -

A: Yes, definitely, yeah.

Q: - take more trouble.

A: Yeah. Right. And he kept making excuses - "oh, I'm sorry if it hurt...", he was really sweet.

Q: And did you feel that you were - you could sort of show him anything... he was a virgin?

A: Well, yes, I suppose so, he certainly did (laugh). Almost approaching it like some kind of study, it was really funny...

Q: And is there anything that you can think of about kind of sexual relationships and negotiations that you've sort of experienced or thought about that is important...

A: Well, it would be nice if it was easier for girls to actually initiate things with men without feeling difficult about it. But I don't really know how that happens. That's probably about it really. Oh, yeah - some men seem to assume that if you - if you stay - I don't know, one of them actually said to me - one of them I liked (laugh), that - I stayed up late one night talking to him and he'd thought that I had - I had wanted to go to bed with him because of that. And in fact, it wasn't so at all, I just - I just wanted to be there talking.

Q: He assumed you were staying there - you wanted to stay the night?

A: I suppose so. Yeah. Yeah, I think men tend to assume too much without often knowing what's going on really.

Q: Mm. Yeah... agree. And - anything else?

A: I don't think so particularly. No, I haven't.

Q: Is there anything that you can think of that would help in terms of, say, a health education, sex education programme?

A: Oh, right. I suppose perhaps having things more freely available round college; I don't know how freely available they are, but - I suppose... more information perhaps.

Q: What on?

A: AIDS. They don't - they don't seem -

Q: What, nothing around college about it?

A: I suppose there are things, I just get the feeling that we don't know all there is to know. I suppose it would have been helpful at school if they'd just given us some fairly basic stuff. Or even at home or anywhere. Yeah.

Q: Do you know anyone who you think might be at risk?

A: From AIDS?

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, God. Yeah. My brother's got a gay friend who might be, though we're not quite sure about him; I have wondered about my brother but I think he's okay. He slept with a French prostitute, which is not really a very clever thing to do, but I'm fairly sure he's okay. And also, my dad's best friend who's now nearly sixty, is gay, and he's not... and... I suppose quite a lot of people really (laugh). Another friend of my brother's, he keeps having one-night stands with girls, he'd sleep with everybody.

Q: What sort of people do you think are most kind of susceptible?

A: I suppose the standard - standard things we're told: gay people, African people, prostitute, people - people that inject; and then I suppose it - it comes down to bad luck really, the more people you sleep with or the less careful you are, the higher

the chances are of getting it. But I think at that stage it's fairly random - well, not - not random exactly, but much less predictable.

Q: Yeah. Yes, 'cos, as you say, it can just be bad luck; sort of one thing in a chain...

A: Yeah, that's true.

Q: I think we've more or less -

A: Okay. Gosh, that's -

End of interview