

BT08 RT 8.2.90

Q: Can you just start by telling me what your job is at the moment?

A: At the moment. Well I work for [COMPANY NAME] and it's updating customer records and just cleaning up exercise on the computer.

Q: Is this your first job since you've finished school?

A: No actually from leaving school I started a college course, from there I've had various jobs but this is like a settled thing now.

Q: Were you not sure what you wanted to do when you left school?

A: Well no, not really. You just sort of fall into things when I left school and then I fell into a few divy jobs really.

Q: What sort of things?

A: Well just office junior jobs which were really awful. And then I went to be a nanny because I love kids and then I went to be a nanny which was a terrible time.

Q: What was terrible about it?

A: Well it was living in. It was in Glossop which is...

Q: At someone's house?

A: Yes, living in someone's house was, that was just the worst, and the money was really bad and I was just too young to leave home really. I mean not age wise but within me I was just too young to leave and there was no spare time either.

Q: Was it a rich family or something?

A: Well they weren't actually that rich, well on the money they paid me. On the money they paid me they didn't have to be rich. So that was terrible but then from there I went back, because I'd worked for [COMPANY NAME] previously and then from there I went back into [COMPANY NAME]. They actually, because when you work for [COMPANY NAME] they keep your name on file, you know, obviously if they don't want you to be kept on file they don't, but then they got in touch with me and said - we've got a job, will you come back - so I did.

Q: Right so was it one of those kind of things that once you'd worked for them once you probably spend the rest of your life working for them doing different jobs and working up?

A: Yes. It's such a big company, there's so many things you can do within it so yes. On the whole nobody leaves.

Q: Is it good career opportunities for you in that?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Are you looking to be going up the ladder or something whilst you're there?

A: Yes, obviously. In Manchester it's quite slow at the moment, well it has been for a long time, but obviously it's just so big you can move around. If there's no way up in the job that you're doing you just move around and you get up in another way. And at the moment they are really striving for young people, young people are the bees knees at the moment where it used to be if you'd been there fifty years then you've earned the respect, but you know now it's like..

Q: But that's people have been for fifty years isn't it. It's all the same.

A: Yes. But I mean those people who have been there for fifty years they're all pre-privatization and they get in at say seven o'clock, read the paper for an hour, do absolutely nothing, do things the way they were done years ago.

(interruption)

Q: We were just talking about [COMPANY] I was wondering whether you think you will end up doing a managerial type job then?

A: Yes. In Manchester it would have been quite difficult but moving down to London everyone is a grade below really because it's so quicker.

Q: So are you nervous about moving down to London?

A: Extremely!

Q: When are you going?

A: The end of March hopefully. And so it's going to be... I don't know really because I don't know anybody other than SIMON and his sister so and like I've had friends that have gone down there or people who have come back as well and they all say - oh it's such an awful place, nobody speaks to you - and I thought oh no.

Q: Yes it's not like Manchester.

A: It's murder. So I am frightened. The thing that frightens me most is because here I've got a network of friends and there is a sort of like... you can just phone them up and say I'm really down can I come round and we'll have a bottle of wine or something and that's what we do but there..

Q: There might not be anybody. I was going to say if it's just your boyfriend and you have an argument with your boyfriend you've had it haven't you!

A: That's right.

Q: You'll be on your own with a box of Kleenex.

A: That's right. I'm quite frightened. I'm leaving the family as well and so I'll miss... That girl that came in, she's my sister and we are extremely close so I will really miss her.

Q: So why is it you're going down then?

A: Well I've been seeing SIMON for three years now and it's just such a terrible feeling to part you know.

Q: Did he always live in London?

A: No he comes from Ashton which is about two minutes down the road. His parents still live there actually but he went to Manchester Poly and then got a job down there.

Q: What does he do?

A: He works in a [SKILLED ROLE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES].

Q: It must be a good job?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: So have you had to buy a house and things like that down there?

A: Well he's got a flat at the moment but hopefully we are not going to stay there very long because we are just doing it up to sell it but... It was just this weekend we were looking around and sorting out how much we could afford jointly and so things have changed.

(interruption)

A: So we think we're staying in the flat a bit longer now because we won't get as much as thought we would for the flat so we think we're going to stay there and do it up and see how things go from there.

Q: You said on the questionnaire that you were going to get married?

A: Oh in the future.

Q: Is this a sort of big do of yours?

A: No it's quite low down. You see I don't really think anything of it. The wedding day is like dead glamorous but nothing else, you know what I mean, it doesn't hold any resemblance to me. At the moment we've just got too many other things to do, but in the future, yes, we will get married.

Q: Right so it's not a big deal to you?

A: No.

Q: How about children? The look on your face - what does that mean?

A: Well it means I like my nephew, I could be with him like twelve hours a day. And I'm a Cub mistress so I'm always with kids and I love them. But I just cannot

imagine myself being responsible for someone else's life, wholly responsible and it just frightens me to death but I think that might be just, I don't know really, it might be just my feelings at the moment. I think things may change.

Q: Do you feel any sort of strain from the things that you want to do at work and positions you work and having kids?

A: Oh absolutely yes. I mean [COMPANY NAME] are quite good, they give good maternity leave and pay and all that but at the end of the day I've got too much to do before children enter into the world - far too much to do.

Q: So that's put off for a rainy day is it. When you're really bored and you can't think of anything else to do, you want to do that.

A: Yes.

Q: Can we go back a bit to when you were at school, which school did you go to?

A: [SCHOOL NAME], well [SCHOOL NAME].

Q: Right, so is that a mixed?

A: No single sex.

Q: What sort of sex education did you get when you were at school, was it anything you really remember?

A: This is what I was thinking when I was filling in the questionnaire in, I think I put at one point it was difficult to fill in because I think you just pick things up rather than get taught things. We did have sex education, I think it was about three lessons in a biology, you know what I mean.. and it was just like the basics, very biological rather than sort of sex education. But it's difficult to remember what exactly we were taught.

Q: So at the time you don't remember being like shocked - like my God, is that what happens or anything?

A: Oh no. I think by the time you do learn it at school you know all about it anyway through your peers or whatever.

Q: So how about your parents, did they ever give you advice on that sort of thing?

A: Never have we sat down and had a mother to daughter talk, I think I'd die at the prospect, but they are really open, extremely open and no subject is taboo and never has been, even when we were younger. But it never happened, we never sat down and said this is what happens and if you ever get into trouble do this, you know what I mean, that never happened.

Q: But were you able to come back and ask your parents questions?

A: Oh yes, absolutely.

Q: That you'd heard from school and what did that mean?

A: Yes and did really. In fact yes.

Q: Do you think they gave you good answers now thinking back on it?

A: Yes, she didn't.. you know some people say, oh well you know, try and shun it because their embarrassment, I mean that never happened. It was always my mum, never my dad. No, no, no. But she always tried to speak in a mature way really. If ever you came back with slang words she'd say this is what it means but And then even older it was like more emotional, she never tried to shun it.

Q: Do you think you knew more than your friends at the time, the friends you were with at school, because usually you can judge yourself in comparison with them?

A: No I don't think I did. I think I was probably the least informed of anyone. I remember hearing things, you know, but I think we were usually on an even keel.

Q: I don't know what it was like at your school, all the people we've been interviewing, we've been asking about at school what was it like amongst the girls because a lot of people have said there were different groups of people, those who weren't sexually active and those who had boyfriends and then those who?

A: Oh I thought you meant informed, knew about things?

Q: Yes knew about and do it, that's what we want to know the difference about. Were the people who were actually doing things, did they know more about it than the people who weren't. Was there any sense of that or what is just.....

A: When we were at school we formed ourselves into sort of gang friends and I remember that there was a part of them who were like sleeping around, well not sleeping around but sleeping with the blokes they were seeing, and some of us who kissing was quite sufficient, you know what I mean, and yes, definitely.

Q: Did that ever scare you at the time, the idea that girls of your age were doing those sort of things?

A: I was always moralistic really thinking - shouldn't be doing things like. I don't know, I think that was probably because I hadn't done it, I don't know. I do remember thinking that they shouldn't have been doing it.

Q: Right, were they called names for it and things like that at school, were people called slags?

A: There were always people called slags yes, but not particularly my friends because they didn't really fall into the category of slags. There were people who would sleep around and people who would sleep with the lads they were seeing. I think there is a difference really.

Q: It seems so at the time doesn't it. Did your parents ever give you any sort of guidance about what they thought about sex before marriage or whether it would be alright to sleep with your boyfriend or whether it wasn't or what age it was OK to do it at and things like that?

A: Well no it was never what age it was OK. But I don't know really.

Q: Do you know what their attitudes towards that is?

A: Yes.

Q: What is it?

A: Well you see my dad is a church goer and very Christian in his thoughts and how he can, because he doesn't approve of me going to London to live with SIMON. I mean SIMON and he get on extremely well and he loves SIMON and he knows that it's going to be OK but he just doesn't like the thought of living together. And it's exactly the same with my sister DENISE, she lived with her husband before they got married and he said to her, I don't approve of it and I don't want you to do it, but he never sort of said, if you do it, I don't want anything to do with you. It was never that, but he doesn't approve of it at all. My mum doesn't mind in the least.

Q: So do you feel a bit guilty about it?

A: I don't know really, I think it took me longer to make the decision to go down because of it although it would never have changed the decision, it just made it harder to say yes.

Q: Harder to tell your dad as well?

A: Well yes. That was a bit of a problem because I didn't tell anyone at the time, and then I told DENISE and it came out ... but DENISE told her husband and then it all sort of seeped through the back door which was worse than coming out with it and saying this is what we are going to do. So he was a bit more annoyed that it had happened that way, rather than me telling him.

Q: Had you been sleeping with your boyfriend before that?

A: Yes.

Q: Presumably your parents weren't aware of that or do you think they knew?

A: Before yes, they were aware actually.

Q: But living together is different?

A: Yes. This is what I mean, it's so hypocritical. I mean we actually, we sleep together here so I just can't comprehend why he thinks it's any different doing it here than in London, but he does.

Q: Well may be it's because..

A: I think it's because it's a lot more open if we do it, yes other people know it.

Q: It's always the way with parents. Just going back to school again, were you told anything about AIDS when you were at school?

A: No. No.

Q: Did they talk about any other sexually transmitted diseases?

A: Yes. I do remember learning about in the biology lessons but obviously AIDS never came into it because I don't think I'd heard of AIDS before it was a media centre point. And I definitely heard about it through the media.

Q: And when was that, when there was the sort of big TV campaign.

A: Yes, the Rock Hudson time.

Q: So what was your reaction to that when you first heard about it?

A: I don't know really. SIMON's the first person I've slept with so it didn't affect me in anyway because I wasn't... and I never really thought of it personally. I think it was a bit sad really that you had to take that into consideration.

Q: Did you think it was something that would ever affect heterosexuals or did you think it was did you think it was a gay disease?

A: Yes because as I say I heard of it through the media and that's how it was portrayed, that it was a gay disease.

Q: Has your idea of what it is changed now, what you know about it now is that different from what you knew about it when it first came out?

A: Yes.

Q: In what way?

A: Well when it first came out I just remember it being all it was a gay disease and it was spreading a lot faster and I think people, it's more realistic now and I think that's good that people are aware that it's not a gay disease and that they are aware that it is not as fast spreading as everyone thinks, although I don't think you should be complacent about it.

Q: Do you think it is less of a risk now than it seemed to be initially then. What sort of risk do you think it is?

A: I am still sort of thinking that it doesn't matter, it will never affect me.

Q: It will never affect you personally?

A: Yes. And perhaps that's a bit naive really but I just think it's something that will happen to other people.

Q: Is that because you're not planning to sleep with anybody other than your boyfriend?

A: Yes.

Q: So more than anything else, it's not that a person like you, say for instance you weren't with him and you were single?

A: Well at the moment, yes it's just because I will only sleep with SIMON and that's the end of it. But I think if SIMON wasn't around then I think perhaps I would still think I wouldn't be.

Q: It wasn't for you.

A: Yes, I think I would, to be honest.

Q: Have you got girlfriends who are a similar age to you and whatever but are single and maybe have occasional boyfriends rather than a serious long term boyfriend?

A: No I haven't really.

Q: They are all set up?

A: They're all in couples - how boring, yes. Actually one of my friends has just finished a four year long relationship but we were all in exactly the same situation, we were all not slept with anyone until we met our boyfriends.

Q: Is that how you planned it?

A: I never really thought about it but I think it's nice that it did happen that way.

Q: It's one of those things sometimes people have got an idea about what they want to happen?

A: No, I must admit I have never thought it.

Q: So it doesn't seem to be a risk to you or your friends in any way?

A: No.

Q: Do you know people who you would think were at risk from it, I mean people you work with and things like that? Is it something that you don't think about, you'd better be careful or things like that?

A: I can't think of anyone who is within my close friends that sleeps around. I honestly can't think of anyone.

Q: So all your friends are planning on getting married and things like that?

A: I don't know about that. One of them is, one of them is actually getting married this year but the rest of them are just in long term relationships. I don't know what will happen but even at work or anywhere. I'm just trying to think of someone but I can't.

Q: I think people who are in couples stick around with other people who are in couples and people who are single tend to go out to meet people and perhaps they stick around with other people in the same sort of situation.

A: Actually I've just thought of someone. Yes. She was a friend from when I was at school although she didn't go to my school, I knew her at that age, and yes she sleeps around. I think I'm more concerned about her reputation more than anything else.

Q: Right so that would be your prime concern,

A: And her emotional feelings, how she can cope with it, because she just doesn't get any respect from anyone.

Q: Do you disapprove of that in any way, what you say, sleeping around. I mean what do you mean by sleeping around to start with?

A: Sleeping around, just casual sleeping with people and the number of people and short term.

Q: So if a relationship was a few months or something then..

A: Well not even that. It's shorter than that. Well I don't shun it whatsoever, I think if you're the sort of person that can handle one-night stands or whatever, and you know exactly what you're doing, well then that's fine for you. I couldn't do it because I couldn't handle it but I would never shun anyone else for it. Why I am more worried about my friend DEBORAH is because I think she's only doing it because she's looking for something more stable really. And that's why I'm worried about her, but no I wouldn't shun anyone because of it, if that's...

Q: Do you think it's any different for men and women, it's generally sort of taken that if a woman sleeps around it's much worse than if a guy sleeps around, it's like, well done son.

A: Yes I personally, no. I don't think there's any distinction but I realise that yes, there is. And I think that's terrible but yes, I realise that there is.

Q: So any of the men that you know that you would call sleeping around do that, or are they all with the girls you know?

A: No. Yes they do and I don't know, I just think that it's OK for them because they're handling it OK and that's alright.

Q: A bit more about AIDS. How much do you think you know about it, from what you've seen in the media, for instance would you know what the difference is, would you know what HIV meant?

A: No actually I don't. I think I'm very misinformed about it all.

Q: Tell me what you do know?

A: Well, I think I know that HIV is sort of, is that just the virus rather than the full blown disease, and that you can live with it without knowing you've got it and all things like that and there are people who can carry it without getting AIDS and then it just breaks down your immune system. I don't really know much more than that.

Q: Do you understand what those sort of things mean about, or do you find it confusing, the language that is used? Or is it something you haven't really thought about enough to really be clear?

A: To be honest I don't really think about it a lot. You hear these things and you read it and I just take them at face value to be honest.

Q: How about the ways you can catch it, can you think of what ways that you know that you can get AIDS?

A: You want me to tell you how I know. Well sleeping with someone that's got AIDS or HIV and.

Q: Do you know how that happens?

A: No I don't know how it happens.

Q: So you are not quite sure what it is about sleeping with somebody that gives you it.

A: No, I realise it's carried through, no I don't realise it's carried through anything, I don't know really.

Q: So that's a cloudy area?

A: I suppose it is really yes. And through blood transfusions. I know very little really when I speak about it.

Q: How about ways to stop it being sexually transmitted? Do you know how you can not catch it, I mean what safe sex is?

A: Oh yes, using a condom.

Q: Is there anything else that would count as safe sex other than using a condom?

A: No.

Q: Right, I'm not testing you. I'm generally trying to find out what type of things people know.

A: I think this is terrible actually, I really haven't thought about it and I'm realising that I know so little about it.

Q: For instance would something like oral sex, would you know if it had any risk attached to it or not?

A: Well no I wouldn't, but I would imagine that I would say it has.

Q: Right. So you've got a general idea of how it's ...

A: I'm assuming it has, is that right?

Q: It's much less risky than intercourse. There is a sort of grade of them, anal intercourse is the most risky, and then unprotected vaginal intercourse is the most risky and things like oral sex are risky if you've got cuts and things like that. It's actually got to get into your blood stream so there are different levels, but it's much less. So on the grade it's a better thing to do than unprotected anal sex or something....The other thing we were doing about condoms, have you ever used condoms?

A: No.

Q: We were asking people what they thought of them, what sort of image they had of them in their minds. You haven't actually used them?

A: No.

Q: What do you think about them from the point of view of someone who hasn't used them, what sort of image do they have to you?

A: Well I must admit I have got a very narrow-minded image of them. And I couldn't think of anything worse and I think that's probably through what I've heard but I really couldn't.

Q: From stories from friends and things like that?

A: Yes and what people say about it.

Q: What type of things do people say about them?

A: Well it's like having sex with your wellies on and things like that and I really couldn't think of anything worse.

Q: Would you think that they were reliable?

A: For protection you mean, well I know that they have only a percentage reliability. And with regards to using them for contraception, they just would not enter my mind! No, not in the least.

Q: What form of contraception did you say you use, the pill?

A: Yes.

Q: When did you decide to go on.. you said that you had unprotected sex for quite a while when you first started.. why was that, well why, tell me about that?

A: Well because we didn't sort of say we will do it with each other tonight, it just happened so I suppose that that was excusable, but I just let it happen for eight months after.

Q: Eight months?

A: Having said eight months, we didn't see each other that often. When I say we didn't see each other that often, it was sort of once a month or something.

Q: So it wasn't as bad as eight months sounds serious.

A: Yes. No it wasn't as bad as it seems although I realise how silly it was.

Q: Had you discussed it with each other, contraception at that time?

A: No.

Q: Was this right at the beginning of the relationship?

A: Well it wasn't right at the beginning but it wasn't far into it.

Q: Did your boyfriend assume that you might be on the pill?

A: Yes. Well we've talked about it since and yes, he did.

Q: He thought that you were?

A: That's terrible. But yes. We just never discussed it and he says now that we must have discussed it, but.

Q: You remember?

A: I said SIMON, no way!

Q: Had you expected him to bring it up, to ask you?

A: In hindsight yes, definitely.

Q: But at the time, because you must have been quite worried at the time?

A: Yes. I wasn't so much worried about getting pregnant as sort of sleeping with him.

Q: So that was such a major thing that anything else...

A: Because it was so unexpected.

Q: What sleeping with him or being together with him?

A: No sleeping with him. I mean getting together, because we were friends or DENISE's friend from college and that's how I knew him and it sort of developed from there and we'd go out, like my sister's friend sort of thing.

Q: In a gang?

A: Yes and then he just said do you want to go out for a drink just together and then we went, but even then nothing came of it for a long time afterwards and then obviously then it started to develop and then we just started sleeping together. And yes, it was so unexpected that no it was never discussed and yes, I was extremely worried. More so the fact that I had slept with him rather than I might be pregnant.

Q: It happens in that sort of way. Was it something that you were very frightened of doing in terms of whether you were nervous about.. I mean how old were you?

A: Nineteen.

Q: Were you really nervous about the actual physical part of it?

A: Yes, extremely. I mean as I say, I wasn't nervous about sleeping with him prior to it, it was just at the immediate time, I was devastated. It was horrible.

Q: You didn't enjoy it then?

A: Not in the slightest. I was far too worried.

Q: Yes uptight....

A: I mean it was absolutely terrible but we have talked about it a lot afterwards and we are on a much more even keel now. But yes at the time it was dreadful.

Q: Were you disappointed that this is what it is type of thing, or did you feel that you had just failed between the two of you?

A: There was absolutely nothing between us at all. I mean obviously we thought a lot of each other, but I don't think that we should have slept with each other when we did. We didn't love each other in the slightest, and whether you've got to love each other to sleep with but you know, I don't know but I don't think... And perhaps I should have, that we should have waited.

Q: So what is it that's made it get better, obviously it's a lot better now?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it something that you enjoy, an important part of your relationship?

A: Oh yes.

Q: And you get something out of it?

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: Had you expected that, what were your expectations beforehand, the reason I'm asking is because this is all part of the research as well, it's not just about AIDS, it's about young women's sexuality and what they expect from it and stuff, so I'm not just being nosy, although I probably am as well! But what had you expected beforehand, that it would actually be like, had you any expectations?

A: Yes just like sort of school girl dreams really, how it will happen, it will be all romantic and it will be all wonderful and it wasn't a little bit like that, not in the slightest.

Q: Had any of your friends, that had slept with anybody, told you in detail what actually happened and what it was like before?

A: Not obviously, thinking about it not in as much detail as I needed because I was.... But yes we talked about it with DENISE and friends, and they said - this happened and it was awful and you know - things like that. But no obviously not in sort of as much detail as I would have liked.

Q: Right, so how was it that it got better?

A: I think we just learned together. I got more relaxed because we got closer sort of emotionally and then that was a lot more relaxed because SIMON had slept with someone before.

Q: Did that worry you that he was more experienced?

A: No. I was glad. I think it would have been even more of a disaster. But it just got better because I felt closer to him and we just got better and we saw a lot more of each other because at the time we just weren't seeing each other.

Q: I was going to say you need actually to spend time with somebody. Do you think there was anything that you could have had in your sex education at school or whatever that could have helped prepare you for actually what sexual relations are really like, rather than the ovaries, and this type of thing?

A: Yes that is what I mean. I think honestly you need that, well not need it but it's useful to know, but I think what's far more needed is the emotional side and how you feel and what exactly is going to happen practically rather than..

Q: So the physical side but not biological, but actual physical?

A: Yes and I think what is as important as that is sort of how to cope with your emotions that you're going to expect and that is very hard to teach fourteen year olds, but I do think that that should be included, definitely. Because I never got taught that at school, I picked all that up from friends and from my own experience.

Q: In terms of things like sexual pleasure as opposed to sex and reproduction and how to have babies, I mean do you feel that anybody, that you'd heard from parents, as to actually how you can achieve sexual pleasure or how a woman can, apart from what sex is. Or did you have a clear idea that you could actually get pleasure from it?

A: Well yes. I knew that you could but I can't remember anybody telling me that. I mean you read about it in books and things.

Q: In Cosmopolitan.

A: Well I do actually read Cosmo. Yes and that's how you pick that type of thing up. And SIMON's been really great. I mean at first it was terrible, not just initially but for a long time afterwards and I think that had part of not going on the pill really. I think that played a large part.

Q: You must have been so worried.

A: That's right.

Q: You were so lucky you didn't get pregnant.

A: Oh I know.

Q: Did you ever have any pregnancy tests or go for the morning after pill or anything?

A: Never. And I never missed a period. Never even late.

Q: So what made you decide now is the time to get some contraception?

A: Well it was Christmas, he came home for Christmas and I realised that this was going to carry on and we were getting a lot closer and I thought I've got to do something about this so I did. But that was the most harrowing experience of my life because I went to the family planning clinic and never, ever, ever again will I go to such a place.

Q: Well tell me what happened?

A: I thought it was the most harrowing experience of my whole life. I made an appointment and it's just down the road here. And I made this appointment for seven o'clock or something and I got there and there was everybody there that I knew and I was sat there with my head in my hands, it was horrible. And people were there who I knew and I had to sit and wait and it was about quarter past nine before I got in and did anything and I had made an appointment for seven o'clock and I was absolutely furious because I don't suffer fools very easily and I hate situations like that. And I hated just sort of everybody knowing. It was awful. And so I went in to see the nurse and it was just like being on a production line and I thought this, I just can't stand this and then I went in to see the doctor who was a

foreign doctor and he was just awful. He was just so clinical and in fact I was near to tears and he said, you don't look very happy and that was the first face to face thing he said and that was as I was walking out the door. And I said, no I'm not, and I walked out and in fact I was in tears, I was so upset, it was awful. And so I went on this pill which was absolutely dreadful, it made me so poorly, I was in a right state. I can't remember what it was called now but it was three different stages.

Q: It was a low dosage pill?

A: Yes. And then it got higher at the end of the month and at the end of the month it was just too strong for me to cope with and I was coming on, I was going off, I was being sick, I had headaches, oh it was dreadful. So I went to the doctors.

Q: Your GP?

A: I hate going to the doctors anyway and I went to see him one Saturday morning because I was feeling so ill Friday before and I phoned and he said come down, and bring your pills with you and I'll sort it out. And he was really, really nice about it. He was dead friendly and explained everything and he was really, really nice.

Q: That made up a bit for your awful time at the Family Planning Clinic?

A: Yes.

Q: Terrible isn't it. I mean the other thing is you get the opposite situation as well sometimes, you get great family planning clinics and awful doctors.

A: Oh well I can imagine, but in my experience I will never ever go to a family planning clinic again. Because I think it's so production line.

Q: I think in the way they gave you your contraception generally it's very production line.

A: Exactly. There was no discussion whatsoever. Like I say, the first sort of thing he said to me that was on a face to face value was that you don't look very happy. And I was literally had my pill and walking out the door.

Q: And you'd been there two or three hours. No it's terrible, I mean I've had that sort of very similar type of thing with doctors, doctors surgeries I've been to. I think they are just not very sensitive to our needs.

A: And I think another thing was that it was a male doctor. And perhaps this is just me being a bit naïve, but I think that it would have been a far easier situation had it been a female.

Q: Was it when you went to your GP?

A: That was a male as well. But he was a lot nicer, he was really. Another thing is that when I went to family planning I was still by myself and SIMON didn't even know by this time because he was oblivious to everything.

Q: He thought you were on the pill anyway so.

A: And I never told anyone. I didn't even tell my sister.

Q: So you were completely secretive, why was that, were you feeling guilty about it?

A: I felt that I shouldn't have been sleeping with him.

Q: Right, to start with?

A: Yes, and I also felt after that, that I should have gone on the pill a long time ago and I couldn't.. I realised how stupid it was and I know what my reaction would have been had someone told me the same instance, and so I just thought, I'll go on the pill and get it all sorted out. And I think a lot of it was because I was frightened initially. But then when I'd gone to the doctors I had spoken to people about it by then.

Q: Right, so you didn't feel so bad.

A: And a friend actually came to the doctors with me.

Q: That makes it a lot better. Were you happy then, have you been happy on the pill since then?

A: Yes. I'm a bit scatterbrained with it and I'm not exactly...

Q: I had to stop taking it because I just kept forgetting.

A: I'm terrible with it, absolutely.

Q: It was quite a big risk getting pregnant at the time, although it didn't seem like a risk, you were saying at the time, but in retrospect it was scary, which is quite interesting, I think that happens quite a lot, it's quite true for AIDS as well as it is for pregnancy. What would you have done if you had been pregnant, do you know?

A: Well I know exactly what I think I'd do, which is I'd have had an abortion. But having said that, I don't know if I would have been so determined.

(end of side one of tape)

A: I mean it's absolutely disgraceful because they wouldn't allow that to happen in politics. They wouldn't allow someone to come in with one set view in politics and I think it's disgraceful that that's allowed to be shown. Not that it's allowed to be shown, but that they don't give an equal view.

Q: But also the films they show, they are full term babies and they show things like that and they are much too big to be.... They are pretty disgusting and also they are very offensive in themselves and they show it to fourteen year old kids and they are going to be seriously affected by it.

A: I think it's disgraceful, I really do.

Q: When you were at school was there generally sort of anti-abortion feeling amongst your friends?

A: Yes I think it was really. And I think perhaps I was at the time.

Q: Because it's not nice.

A: That's right. A lot of my friends are Catholics and one in particular is a devout Catholic and she well, actually we were at her house playing a game, scruples, and one of the cards is what would you do if you were pregnant and didn't want it. Oh I tell you that was like one of the first questions in the game and the game stopped from there on because her parents were there and all her family and there was me and one of the lads that was there and we were the only people who were saying, well, just hang on a minute, you know. Oh it was murder, but I think to myself, I think because she's Catholic, because they're all exactly the same. They all went to the same school, the Catholic school and they were all exactly the same thinking, even the more liberal of them. They must absolutely drum it into them. I think it's disgraceful. I mean we had it drummed into us.

Q: When you were at school were there girls that got pregnant and things like that?

A: Not at school, I think there was just one or two and not people I knew, or people I knew but didn't. But after school in the summer holidays type, there was loads.

Q: They were the ones that it's drummed into most probably. You said that you learnt quite a lot of stuff from friends or whatever but you also said you read magazines, what sort of magazines did you used to read?

A: Cosmo.

Q: Before Cosmo?

A: Oh before Cosmo, I think I was referring to Cosmo when I wrote that but yes I used to read the girly magazines, you know Patches and things like that.

Q: Do you think they are good for young women, do you think they give you good advice?

A: I can't remember to be honest.

Q: Things like, I remember when I was younger the problem pages .. Everyone would read the problem pages.

A: I was just thinking of that yes. They are just amazing.

Q: Did you learn things from them?

A: I think you did, yes you always sort of learn things from magazines but I don't know whether they're the right things. Because they are all biased aren't they, especially the problem pages.

Q: How about the romantic stuff, were you into that?

A: Never.

Q: You weren't waiting for your prince on a white horse?

A: No, certainly not. I think I would just die if my children ever started reading them, they are pathetic aren't they. I suppose Cosmo is just the same really. Just another version of it.

Q: How to keep your man!

(end of interview)