

**LJH26 22.6.1989**

**Nicola**

Q: ...as I said yesterday when I came to see you, is in young women's relationships, what they think about them, how they feel about them, what they are really. So the first question I'd like to ask you is, what's the most important relationship for you?

A: The most important?

Q: Yeah. Out of any of the relationships that you have, I mean not necessarily with young men or -

A: I think it's the first one you've ever had, but with sex as well, that's most important.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: In what sort of way?

A: Well, just, losing your virginity (?) for them - it's just, I don't know, it just seems important to me, personally.

Q: It felt very important at the time, did it?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was it like, the relationship?

A: Well at first it was a bit... afterwards it was fine.

Q: How long did it last?

A: About a year and a half.

Q: Quite a long time, isn't it...

A: ...

Q: Yeah? And when you say, I mean it was - it was fine at first, what happened - I mean, how did it end?

A: Stormy arguments. He'd gone off on holiday... (?) Europe over the holiday, and I just didn't like it. Because he sort of ... different countries.

Q: And he didn't?

A: No.

Q: And you broke up over that?

A: Mm.

Q: Were you unhappy at the time?

A: Well, I was when I found out, I was really hurt and upset. Afterwards - it wasn't even him who told me, I had to hear it from his friends... a nice way. It was quite -

Q: Yeah. When you first started the relationship, what made you decide - or did you decide, that you would make it into a sexual relationship?

A: I don't know. Just that - it just sort of happened -

Q: Yeah?

A: - I didn't really think about anything... I was talking to a friend of mine, she was saying to me you'll have to go on the pill sooner or later, so I went down to the doctor's, and I didn't say anything to him, and a few weeks later and it just sort of happened.

Q: Did you go on the pill first?

A: I went on the pill first.

Q: Yeah. So it must have been in your -

A: I didn't wanna get caught out.

Q: Yeah, right, absolutely. But it must have been in your head as well...

A: He was... I just wouldn't listen to him, you know, just don't worry about it, not yet.

Q: Yeah.

A: But - that's it.

Q: How was it, I mean was it enjoyable or -

A: I was really scared at first, really scared, but it was enjoyable afterwards.

Q: Yeah. What were you scared of, just what was gonna happen or -

A: Yeah, 'cos I didn't really go and chat to anybody about it or -

Q: Yeah. Hard to know what is going to -

A: Yeah.

Q: What about the other relationships after that one?

A: No, not all of them -

Q: - had sex with -

A: - hardly any of them.

Q: Yeah. How did - how did you decide which ones would and which ones wouldn't?

A: It was the way they treated me.

Q: Yeah?

A: If they didn't treat me like I thought I should be treated - I like to be treated nicely, like most people do. But if they, you know, I just - I don't know, get out of this.

Q: Mm. And that's what you did?

A: Yeah, just got out.

Q: What about now, are you in a relationship now?

A: Sort of.

Q: Yeah?

A: ...

Q: And is there sex in that one?

A: Yeah.

Q: How do you feel about that?

A: Well, I feel like I'm sort of playing second best, 'cos like he's got a... he's being a bit... he's got a girlfriend at work, and I've got a bloke after me, keeps asking me questions, and saying I'll let you know, I'll let you know. But the bloke I'm with, that I'm going with has got a girlfriend; he says to me, look, you should go out 'cos then both of us - it won't seem... on you or me 'cos you'll be going out with somebody as well.

Q: Yeah. How do you feel about that?

A: I don't - well I've never had a relationship like this before -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and at first - at first it was sort of like, oh, you know, it was just sort of - oh, this has happened to me, you know, it was great, but afterwards it just got so - well, because I'm only playing second best and I don't like it.

Q: Mm. How do you feel about the other - the other girl, the other woman? - his other girlfriend.

A: We nearly got caught out, like we were up at the flat and the doorbell kept ringing and he said the only person that would ring like that is my girlfriend... so he just rushed me out... Being all secretive I don't like.

Q: Yeah. So what made you decide - did you know he had a girlfriend at first, or did you just discover after you became involved?

A: No, I didn't. Yeah, it was like - afterwards, he showed me photos of her. I said, oh, nice, aren't they lovely.

Q: ... when he said he had another girlfriend?

A: Well, the way he made it sound was that he doesn't - he didn't really bother, he didn't care if he had one or not.

Q: Mm, what, her or you sort of thing?

A: No, it's sort of like when I'm with him he doesn't really mention her, but I ask him about her, and he says, oh, she's alright, I suppose...

Q: Yeah... with you 'cos... with her and sort of...

A: That's it, yeah.

Q: Yeah. But you find it a bit - you (?) don't fancy it?

A: Mm.

Q: What do you think you'll do? Have you decided yet?

A: The elbow.

Q: Yeah, yeah. How long ago - how long has it been going on?

A: It hasn't been going on long, about six weeks or such.

Q: ... feel that you're not that involved.

A: No.

Q: Yeah. So why are you in it at all, is it - is it...?

A: It's just a laugh, I suppose.

Q: Yeah.

A: I didn't really - I wasn't looking for anything to happen, like just, he was just sort of... and that was it. I just sort of said to him, what are you doing tonight, and he said oh, nothing. I was a bit shocked but - I don't normally get involved with people that... like close that I talk to every day, it's - I was just shocked at first, but it was a bit of fun. It's not fun anymore.

Q: Yeah. Well is it gonna be difficult, then, if you see him every day, or do you - or do you sort of still...

A: I haven't seen him... every day.

Q: I mean as - as, you know, a kind of friendship or - rather -

A: Yeah, I - I know...

Q: ...

A: - about two years ago... (interruption)... about two years ago I went out with my next door neighbour, I'd grown up with him, and it totally ruined our friendship altogether.

Q: Yeah.

A: It took us quite a while to get back to normal, and then a few weeks ago he had a party, sort of like, he was like pushing himself onto me there. I said no,... the same way it did last time. 'Cos we were just - we wouldn't speak, we wouldn't go near each other, if we ever bumped into each other it was just hell.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was terrible.

Q: So is that what made you feel that you shouldn't have a relationship with somebody who you would be spending a lot of time with anyway, under the circumstances?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, it's different if you don't know the boy very long because then you think... but when you know... gets - just get boring.

Q: Yeah. Is that - was that... break up or –

A: Yes and no. It was sort of - just couldn't handle it seeing him every day, and my parents putting their little bit in and, you know, you should go to this together and you should go there together - 'cos like the families go out together, so, you know,... pushing us together and - we didn't want that because we saw too much of each other anyway, so like we were constantly together twenty-four hours a day, it was too much.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It's like clapping my hands when he went on holiday - oh, a break!

Q: So it was - I mean it sort of... boredom set in. Well I can see how difficult it would have been to sort of pull yourself out of it, given you were seeing -

A: It was a mutual decision anyway.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... sort of just parted.

Q: Yeah. Is that how has it been - I mean is it usually a mutual decision or is it variable, just depends?

A: Depends on the person. Depends whether they're possessive or not. See, I can be very possessive when I want to be, but then other times I couldn't give a damn.

Q: Yeah.

A: It just depends on the person.

Q: Yeah. Does that - I mean sometimes that kind of feeling coincides with whether or not there's a sexual relationship... and sometimes you feel more possessive and that you want to know what they're doing at the moment.

A: Yeah.

Q: So do you feel that it goes like that, or that (?) someone you're not sleeping with -

A: Now and again. I went out with someone, like, at Christmas and, like, I wasn't sleeping with him and it's - I just wanted to know where he was all the time. Like, he'd ring me - if I was at home, he'd ring me at home from work and I'd, you know, like find out what he's doing and ask my mate - my mate... I'd ask, you know, her where he is.

Q: Yeah.

A: But it ended up that he was... lies anyway. I couldn't believe it.

Q: But I suppose then you feel that you wanted to be very involved with him and that was why. What do you think... kind of urge to be possessive?

A: I don't know.

Q: Don't know where it comes from? It could just be... I mean sometimes you feel that really, it's nice to spend time with a person who doesn't hook you in somehow and other times it definitely does. So what's the situation now, you think you'll probably pull out of this relationship?

A: Yeah...

Q: Yeah.

A: I'm supposed to be going out with... this weekend, I'm going out with him and see what happens.

Q: Yeah.

A: He's been asking me for weeks... He's really nice.

Q: He is?... How do you feel about all this sort of, I mean do you feel comfortable in that part of your life, with relationships, or do you feel it's problematic?

A: Fairly, fairly comfortable, but I don't really let other people know what I'm doing. Like my mum and dad, they haven't got a clue, if you know what I mean,...

Q: Yeah.

A: But the only person in the family that I would tell is my brother in law. He's -... years. So he's... sister, he'll never..., I'm really close to him, and it gets on my sister's nerves that I go - that I prefer to go to him than to go to her...

Q: Yeah. Is she a lot older than you?

A: She's twenty-nine, she's twelve years older.

Q: And it's - you don't - you don't feel you can talk to her so much?

A: Well, she's funny with, like my little sister sort of thing.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Do you feel that, you know, does he help you, give you advice or -

A: Yeah. Like if he - if he doesn't like, ...like one of my boyfriends, he'll sit me down and say, "this is...."

Q: Yeah.

A: Unfortunately, I listen to him and give him the elbow!

Q: Yeah. But you feel very close to him?

A: Yeah. Like some people can't understand it. I mean my mum can't understand it and my other sister, DEBBIE, she hates him for some reason or another. She can't understand why I'm especially close to him but not to my sister.

Q: Do you? I mean, do you understand why, do you think there's a kind of sexual component in that... that sort of way?

A: I think it's - my brother's a lot, lot older than me and when I was born, they were sort of moving away and getting married -

Q: Yeah.

A: I never really had a brother, ...like one lives in Wales, the other in WEST MIDLANDS, and it's - I never see them, they don't even come back at Christmas or Easter or things like that, it's just like phone calls occasionally, and I think that's...

Q: ... Yeah. Quite a large family. How many are still living - are you living at home still?

A: It's only me.

Q: Just you. How many of the others have gone now, it's about...

A: ...

Q: ... Quite a lot older.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So were you - your mum and dad decided to have an extra one to add on the end after a gap -

A: It was an accident, so I'm told. (laugh)

Q: I've got a sister who's twenty years younger than me, she was a bit of an afterthought on my mum and dad's part. Yeah. Do you get on - I mean, apart from not being able to talk to your parents about that, do you get on well with your parents?

A: Yeah, sometimes.

Q: Yeah?

A: With me and my dad, we've both got the same personality so we clash, but I'm quite close with my mum, but I can't talk to her about a lot of things 'cos she's so much older,

so she's not... (?) in another world, and she doesn't understand anything. So she doesn't really ask me. She just leaves me to it.

Q: Right. But do you feel that she might disapprove if she knew what you were doing, or she wouldn't mind, or she just feels that she doesn't understand?

A: Because I know I'm her little baby.

Q: Yeah.

A: I'm still working on her now to sort of like give me my freedom. I mean even when I started work, 'cos I started here... job... and, I don't know, she's just so possessive. She had a phase - a stage of not letting me out because, like, my dad was at work and she wanted me to herself. It can't be -

Q: Yeah.

A: I've got to get out and about, I just fuck up.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then the rest of the time it's like, you know,... gotta let her out. She's so crazy. I threatened her three months ago with moving out, she went "well, go if you want to", and then... "please don't, please don't go, I don't want you to leave me 'cos you're the only one left". And when she said that I knew that... she just wants me to stay at home.

Q: Yeah... you are the last one.

A: ...

Q: Yeah. So was that - feeling that you had to get out made you look for this job? How did you find this -

A: My sister. She sort of...

Q: Yeah.

A: ... doing pretty well. You know, the main office downstairs, I'm going for the admin assistant officer, a job down there.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... next Friday, I'm going for that. If I get it, I think she'll realise then I'm not a little baby anymore, I'm grown up.

Q: Yeah. That's - that's like you were saying that this is not a real job that you're doing, would you say that?

A: No, no I don't - I don't really class it as a real job. 'Cos downstairs like they even keep telling me, you know, you shouldn't be in this place, it's doing nothing for you. There's a few of us down there who've got a lot of... at the minute.

Q: Mm. But do you - do you feel it's not giving you really sufficient training - what, they're training you in office techniques and things like that?

A: Yeah, I've got - but I've - when I didn't have a supervisor I was downstairs... three months and I ended up going into the manager's office,... officer, she took me... and like, now going back into that office, it just seems so boring.

Q: Yeah.

A: I'm not doing anything. Just sitting around doing typing classes all day.

Q: With a bit of luck you'll get this other job.

A: Yeah.

Q: Would you like to work here, sort of, or would you like to look for a job elsewhere maybe?

A: Yeah, I like that office, the work they do.

Q: ... Did you - are you - you said you had the qualifications before, I mean the skills necessary for doing the job, you got those at school -

A: No. I was up in catering first of all.

Q: Yeah?

A: And then when I moved downstairs... supervisor, and I done the invoices up there and their typing. I don't know why, I'd never done typing at school, I'd never been interested in typing, and they just said, you know, can you do this for me - "no, I can't do it"; ... sat there one afternoon... and then when I went downstairs, just sort of picked it all up... books by myself, and then that's when I went to the office.

Q: Mm. So it's - you learned it all here, so you got quite a lot out of being here in that way.

A: Yeah. I have - for the first six months I got quite a lot out of it, but now it's...

Q: Not stretching you really. Ah, well, it'll be good if you get the other one, the other job. The other thing that we're interested in, as we had on the questionnaire, we're asking what kind of sex education you had in school. How...

A: It was about two lessons in biology in the first year, nothing else.

Q: So how did you find out about the things you know about?

A: My sister.

Q: Yeah?

A: She's the next one up, she told me all about it. She sort of - sitting on the stairs one day, she went into the bathroom - "what you doing?" - I was about eleven, when she started (?) to explain to me. And then like many, many years later my mum said to me, "I think we'd better have a talk", and I said, "don't worry, mum, I know it all". And she went, "you could", like, "teach me a few things", I - "yeah".

Q: What?

A: I'm not really sure.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the teachers were absolutely hopeless at school,...

Q: Yeah.

A: Very unhelpful.

Q: Yeah, a lot of young women that I've spoken to have, you know, felt that... it was very technical. So you didn't hear about AIDS, for example, there at all? It was quite a long time ago, maybe it wasn't around when you were in the first year.

A: They say - they said about like diseases, but that was it.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... diseases, give us a list of them, and that was it, they didn't go into -

Q: How.

A: ...

Q: Yeah.

A: But you just - you know about it, reading through the leaflets and everything, and the papers.

Q: So how - can you remember when you first heard about AIDS, for example?

A: ...

Q: Or from what source or -

A: Telly.

Q: Yeah, there was quite a lot of stuff on the telly... What about the - the sort of government campaign, the ads on telly that they used to have, the big slabs...

A: ...

Q: Yeah? What did you think of it? Did it have much effect?

A: I think it did. People started listening, whereas beforehand sort of like, you know, sleep around with anybody, it doesn't make no difference. But I think people are starting to realise now that they - they can catch it... cautious.

Q: Yeah. I forgot to ask you about - you said you're on the pill, but what about as far as AIDS is concerned,... on the pill, do you feel that you've -

A: I (?) check with their history (?).

Q: Well, you know,... use a condom or something like that?

A: I have once, and I can't stand it.

Q: Yeah?

A: ... Yuck.

Q: Do you feel - I mean do you feel worried about AIDS?

A: Yes and - sort of... I do sometimes when, like, they do give it across a lot more...

Q: Yeah.

A: But other times I don't really think about it, but I do...

Q: ...

A: Yeah...

Q: Yeah. It's complicated really. I mean a lot of - a lot of stuff they're suggesting, I mean talking about contraception... about how to protect yourself from AIDS, they're talking about safe sex. What do you think of safe sex as being?

A: Using a condom.

Q: Yeah, right, yeah.

A: ... that's it.

Q: ... But when - what your concern really - it hasn't - although you worry about AIDS, it doesn't - I mean it doesn't affect you personally - yeah, it's more pregnancy that you're -

A: Yeah.

Q: - you're bothered about.

A: - trying to put my career first.

Q: What about - I've been asking people what other things they think of as safe sex, I mean are there - well, what - let's put it the other way round. What do you think of as sex, when you think of sex what do you think of?

A: ... I don't really -

Q: Well, what I was wondering was - I mean safe sex, it could be the kind of sex which didn't include penetration, for example. Do you think of that as being sex or sex as sexual intercourse?

A: Variety.

Q: Yeah.

A: The spice of life, as they say. I don't think just sex is just sexual - sexual intercourse and that's it, there's a lot more to it.

Q: Well some of the others could be... things which wouldn't include -

A: Yeah.

Q: What do you - what do you feel that you know about AIDS? I mean... say AIDS, what does that mean? What is it?

A: It's a disease that can be caught by having sex with a person because they've slept around, or they've been injecting themselves...

Q: Mm. Do you see any difference between HIV, the virus, and AIDS?

A: No, I can't really understand... the difference.

Q: Yeah. Well, the virus is what you - what you can catch, ... sexual intercourse or blood, whatever, and you can have that for years, it can lie dormant and not really affect you terribly much at all, but after a time it may - it may develop, not everybody who has the virus necessarily develops AIDS, but after - I mean, the amount of time it takes varies, up to about seven years, it could be before it develops, and then you get - what AIDS is, is - it's a weakened immune system, so that you can catch any sort of diseases really, so things that normally wouldn't bother you, you'd be able to throw off, could - could kill you, and that's what usually kills people, pneumonia or something like that, some forms of cancer... So it's - it's like two separate things, you may not, if you got infected, you may not develop AIDS in any case. But what about - what about a cure or a vaccine or things like that, have you heard of any... that about it? Do you feel - I mean, do you feel that other people you know worry about it at all, I mean what about the guys that you have relationships with, do they ever mention it or are they concerned about it?

A: ... bother guys. Like they... macho... things like that don't bother them, they don't show anybody they're worried. They just don't... They don't show it anyway, if they're worried about it, they don't show it.

Q: Do you think they worry about the pregnancy thing or do you think that's like, you know, it's "your business" to worry about that?

A: I think if you was to tell them you were pregnant, it depends on what they're like, whether they're jack-the-lad or they are a settling-down person -

Q: Yeah.

A: If they're jack-the-lad they'll just sort of run, that's it, you won't hear from them again.

Q: So you think - I mean in connection with that, do you think there's kind of like a double standard of rules in terms of having relationships... that it's looked at differently if it's a boy or a girl, if it's a man or -

A: ...

Q: Yeah.

A: ... parents would say... In some cases, it's - what you're worried about mostly - mostly is getting pregnant.

Q: Yeah, yeah. I know that's what I used to worry about most of the time, the only thing in my life at times sort of thing... And what about sort of reactions to - I mean if young men are sleeping with a fair number of people, like jack-the-lad as you said, and - and a young woman is, do you -

A: ... because obviously if they're like that, they couldn't really care.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I'd prefer to have somebody who does care.

Q: Yeah. Well as you say with that question... jack-the-lad or something... yeah. Anyway, the other thing that I was thinking - it sounds like, as far as your sex life is concerned, apart from the AIDS situation, as far as pregnancy's concerned, you don't take any risks... that it's not, you know... Do you think you take any risks in other parts of your life, doing things a bit risky?

A: Not... risks anyway...

Q: Yeah.

A: Find out everything first and if it's all okay then I go ahead and do...

Q: Right.

A: ... I don't make many hasty decisions or spur of the moment decisions.

Q: Yeah.

A: Sort of like I... on it for a while, think about it.

Q: What about your friends, I mean one - I mean the kinds of things that I was thinking about as being a bit risky, I mean some people think smoking and drinking's risky, for example. Do you smoke and drink?

A: I smoke and drink (?)... my parents.

Q: Mm.

A: ... tried to get me sloshed. Sort of had a load of drinks in front of me, but because I'd been - see, our family - not my family but my mum and dad, but aunts and uncles, they've all got pubs and it's sort of like going to work in the pubs when you're down there and you just hang around people and, like, people would offer you a drink and you take it. I've just sort of grown up with drink, so I don't really go out to get drunk, I like to have a nice quiet drink to be sociable. So my mum knows she hasn't got to worry about me getting drunk 'cos... She trusts me in that way. I've been smoking - she knows - she caught me smoking when I was thirteen, and then when I was fifteen, she said to me... She says, I don't wanna see you smoking.

Q: Does she smoke herself?

A: No. My dad used to and... my brother... except... She stopped.

Q: ... I was thinking maybe drugs or something like that. Do you or they?

A: There's a few like... who do (?) take coke, just keep well away when they are on it. It does happen.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... get hold of it. 'Cos I've seen how it can change someone and I didn't like it.

Q: Mm. Which particular drug are you...?

A: Just drugs - drugs in general...

Q: Well, there are lots of them, aren't there, I mean they're illegal, quite a lot of them.

A: Generally.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... try and do away with them altogether. The world would be a better place without... hassles.

Q: ...

A: It does change people.

Q: Yeah. I suppose if you drink... as well, in moderation. Another form of drugs. So what - what kind of things do you do when you're with your friends or with your boyfriend, what kind of activities?

A: During the day it's... just have a chat. And at night we sit in the pub... go out to... drunk or do anything stupid. It's really good. We just go out to, like, enjoy yourself, but also calm yourself down, if you're getting a bit too - a bit too much.

Q: Yeah?

A: To calm your friends down as well if they're getting...

Q: (?) How do you know?

A: If they're, you know, really pissed off and they just wanna go out and get drunk and try and... solve their problems, but what's the point?

Q: ...

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Like I've done it - I've done it once or twice, but then you still feel the same when it's bad. There's no point, it just wastes money.

Q: Mm, yeah. What - how - how do you see the future, I mean apart from the immediate future hoping you get this job shortly, how do you sort of see the longer term future, what do you see yourself as doing?

A: I just...

Q: Yeah? Do you think you'll probably marry? Or have children?

A: I might like a child a lot later on in life, I don't wanna have one too early. But I don't wanna have one when I'm too old! Have one in between, so that you're - you're young enough to watch them grow up and then when they're old, still go out and enjoy yourself.

Q: Mm. But not too young.

A: No.

Q: ... too young or too old.

A: In between the age.

Q: Yeah. I have a question that I've been asking people, some people found it a little bit difficult, which is: what is your image of yourself?

A: Image of myself?

Q: Mm.

A: ... (?) happy at the moment. I get on well with nearly everybody that I'm being introduced to at (?) work... got to know, but...

Q: I don't know whether I should say that... now 'cos it makes the... difficult, 'cos so many people say to me, you know, I can't do this, you know.

A: I've been told by a lot of people that I'm fairly well liked, personality, and people say to me, you know, "don't things ever bother you?" I say, yeah, they do sometimes, but I don't want to drag them into anybody else, keep them in myself, discuss them in my family if I should be - if they should be discussed. If it's a family problem, then I keep it at home. If it's a work problem, you go to the boss. You know, it's no good moaning about it to everybody else.

Q: Mm, yeah.

A: If I - if I got an off day in the office, everybody knows, you know, "what's the matter with you, why are you so miserable?" I had to be miserable...

Q: Yeah.

A: They don't allow it. Whereas a person who's miserable anyway, they're just sort of there... not interested, they're not sort of likely to be noticed.

Q: So - I was gonna ask you how you - do they coincide, you know, your image of yourself and other people's image of you, I mean it sounds as if they - they do or... other people's... Yeah, yeah. Is there - if I can just slip back to this question about AIDS again, I mean you kind of feel that people haven't been taking much notice of... Are you okay?

A: Somebody's burning toast.

Q: Are they?... Oh, now I can... hit you before it hit me. As long as they're not burning us. It could go up quite rapidly in here.

A: Yeah.

Q: No, what I was gonna say - you feel that - that it hasn't affected you much, the idea of AIDS, you know, the kind of publicity about AIDS, and - did you feel that it hasn't affected, well it hasn't affected young men...

A: ...

Q: And what about in general, do you think it's not affecting young people much at all?

A: I think it is... Some people are really concerned about it, it's sort of like, you know, casual sex is out altogether -

Q: Mm.

A: - and they're really careful.

Q: Yeah. So you think it has been effective. 'Cos I was gonna ask you what kind of thing could be done to try to get it across to young people more... on their mind.

A: Most of them are.

Q: You think they are, that it's been quite useful... What did you think of the ones where they had... they had a kind of scene with a young couple, and they're saying one thing, like, you know, "would you like to stay?" or something like that, and then underneath it's got what they're thinking -

A: Yeah - "I've missed my train" - "My train's not due for another fifteen minutes" -

Q: Yeah. What did you think of those?

A: I thought it was stupid. I don't think anybody took any notice of them ones.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the ones where like - with the gravestones, I think a lot...

Q: That it frightened people.

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm. In the beginning there was a kind of general idea being put around that it was like a gay plague or something like that. Did you feel -

A: That was the - that was the impression that everybody got first of all, but then when you started to read about it and you heard a lot more about it you realised that... anyone can get it. The babies now are getting it, I mean...

Q: ... the bloodstream... Tragic really. They don't stand much chance if they're a tiny baby born with it, it's a bit like being born with a drug addiction as well, isn't it.

A: Yeah.

Q: One other thing which I actually forgot to ask you about was religion...

A: (?) Catholic.

Q: Yeah. Do you think that that affects your - do you go to church still?

A: No.

Q: What about your parents, do they?

A: My parents do. But I was forced to 'til being confirmed. My mum said to me, "do you wanna be confirmed?", I said "no", she said, "well, you're going to anyway, 'cos the rest of the family have so, you know, you're not gonna be any different". I used to go there every Sunday to please her and then on the day like, they wanted us to read out these prayers, it was like rehearsal, and I just stood there and thought, I'm not gonna do this, it's not what I want.

Q: Mm.

A: And the priest said to me, if you don't wanna do it then walk out now. And I wanted to walk out, and he sort of pulled me back and - "you stand there, you've got to keep your parents happy". And I thought, well I - it's supposed to be for me, I'm supposed to be making the decision, not them.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean nearly everyone there had been forced into it, their parents had pushed them and pushed them and said, "you've got to..." Sort of like, they're making the decision again, like baptism.

Q: But you've rejected - what did you do, you went through, you were confirmed?

A: I was confirmed.

Q: Yeah.

A: Then they said that was the end of it.

Q: And then you stopped going to church and -

A: My mum said to me, "you don't have to go if you don't want to".

Q: Yeah. And you don't feel that - I mean has that affected - has the kind of teachings of your religion, has that affected your life, made you think differently, behave differently?

A: ... same before I was confirmed as I am now.

Q: Yeah, yeah. No, I didn't mean necessarily the confirmation. I mean for example your use of contraception and the Roman Catholic church is hostile towards that. So it's - like you haven't taken that one on.

A: I don't...

Q: Yeah.

A: It's nonsense. Most of it is anyway.

Q: What about your brothers and sisters, did they go through the same process as yours and withdraw from the church or -

A: Yeah. I have to go at Christmas, I'm dragged at Christmas. Easter, I didn't go. You have to go to church at least once in your life, one day in every year -

Q: Yeah.

A: ... to go... Christmas... dragged there... I find it so boring. I just sit there, and they have a long sermon...

Q: Also, I mean, if you don't believe, I mean - if you don't believe it anymore, or if you ever did -

A: ...

Q: ... accept it, yeah.

A: My aunt used to come round to me, 'cos she's very, very religious, and say, "oh, you must go to church, and you must do this, and you must go to confession". She used to say - I used to go to confession and I used to walk out... And she'd say..., oh yeah, things can't be that bad. Well not that bad, but they'd just make her hair curl. And she said - "what? what are you talking about?" And I'd think, "go back to sleep".

Q: Strange that... One of the things that we were asking young - young women if they would be interested in doing, is being interviewed again next year to see how things have changed or how they're thinking or feeling.

A: ... around next year.

Q: You might not be around?

A: I think once is enough.

Q: Yeah. Okay. And the other thing we're doing is asking young women to keep a diary for us, just for a short period, say a couple of months.

A: I keep a diary anyway.

Q: You do? Would you be interested in writing one for us?

A: What, like an everyday diary?

Q: Yeah. Again, about your relationships and your feelings about them and what you're doing and stuff like that.

A: I mean my diary, it's just like I jot down what I've done... apart from that, I just - if nothing's happened to me, I just skip them...

Q: Yes.

A: You're supposed to do - like one sheet's enough?

Q: Yeah.

A: Alright, then.

Q: Yeah?

A: ...

Q: ... generalising, I mean... information - I mean, entirely separated from the individuals who gave it to us, but to feed it into the various sex and health education programmes, so that they can make it a bit more meaningful, for schools and stuff like that where... your experience of it is that it's very inadequate. So, we hope to kind of sort of say, well, look, vast numbers of young people are saying this, and this is what they would like done about it. And hopefully it will have some sort of effect. I hope it will have some effect. So, well, thank you very much, I very much appreciate it. You're entirely anonymous, even though...

End of interview.