

**NUR19 SS** May 1989

Q: Perhaps we can start with the general stuff about the sort of relationships you had and I don't just mean the boys. What's important to you at the moment, is it the family the main relationship or is it a friend or what?

A: I suppose its my family at the minute, I have just split up with my fiancé.

Q: Yes I remember that in the questionnaire.

A: So I suppose it is my family because they are not very close here because I have only been here for six months.

Q: Right so you're just getting to know people.

A: I suppose at the moment it is my family and my old friends that I've grown up with.

Q: So where are you from?

A: I'm from Westhoughton, the other side of Bolton.

Q: Not that far.

A: No it's not.

Q: Because you said you went home on days off and things like that? Have you got sort of close friends from the past.

A: Yes there is a couple of old school friends and one girl that I grew up with from primary school and we are more like sisters than anything else you know, it's a case of 'oh I was just going to phone you'. Intuition, whatever you call it.

Q: Have you got any sisters or brother?

A: [COMPLEX FAMILY]. We are getting closer but still not...

Q: Are they still with your mum and stepfather?

A: No there's just me and mental handicapped stepsister ... but then again I wouldn't say I was particularly close to my mum.

Q: Are you close to your older sister?

A: My middle sister she is more like a friend as well as a sister.

Q: So she is someone you would go and talk things through with?

A: Her and a friend I used to work for.

Q: Where was that?

A: That was at the guide dogs, [TOWN]. It was on the same basis as this but it was communal resident so I lived in there for two years.

Q: So that's training to train guide dogs?

A: Yes. I worked in kennels for a year then I worked in the training for a year.

Q: So did you finish that?

A: I finished that to go to college to get my 'O' Levels and I didn't get my 'O' Levels in the end but I passed my entrance exam to get in here so I started here.

Q: And have you also got the qualifications to train guide dogs as well?

A: Yes.

Q: Its just I've got a friend who wants to do it. So you went straight from school to do that?

A: No I went from college and I did a social work course.

Q: A residential care course?

A: Yes a PCSE course. It was what my sister had done before so I knew quite a lot about it.

Q: So you didn't do 'O' Levels at school?

A: Yes I did I got my English 'O' Level and the rest were like we did the sixteen plus so it was all grade two CSE's and I just missed out. Then I got my sociology at college and I got my days mixed up for my maths so I went on the wrong day for maths and biology and I missed out on those and I knew that I was going to get my maths this time and even my teacher thought I would have sailed through.

Q: So what did you have to get to get in here, did you have to have five?

A: It was five 'O' levels but there is an entrance exam called the UK CEC and I took it once at [NORTHWEST TOWN]. You are allowed three times and failed and I took it a second time here and passed here.

Q: And that lets you off for the rest of your 'O' levels and you don't have to come back and do them?

A: And you would think it was all English and Maths but it wasn't, it was all IQ stuff, from Mensa so I don't know how I passed really.

Q: There's no telling with those things, you can either do them or you can't.

A: So that's how I got in here. But, I've got quite a few friends in here but they are quite a bit younger, I don't know whether they're quite a bit younger or I see them as quite young and a bit immature as well.

Q: They haven't done as much as you?

A: No they came straight from college.

Q: Most have done pre-nursing?

A: No just 'O' levels and 'A' levels.

Q: How are you finding the actual work on the course?

A: We have like end of block exams and I failed it the first time but I passed it the second time so it is just exam techniques, it is not as if I don't know the stuff.

Q: You can do it on the ward?

A: Yes I can do it.

Q: That's often the problem. Some people make good practical nurses but they can't pass the exams.

A: I am just doing my ..... at the moment and I am enjoying it.

Q: How long does it last?

A: It's a three years course, they don't do the two year SEN now.

Q: Do you feel you want to carry on?

A: Yes. I knew straight from school what I wanted to do. And when I did the social care course that was like a fill in before I did my actual nurse training.

Q: Because you were too young?

A: Yes because I was too young.

Q: Why did you go and do the guide dogs?

A: It was because we went out and did placements and I wanted to work with the blind and I ended up working with the dogs and I do have this love of dogs and animals so I don't regret doing it. I don't think many people can say they can train a guide dog so that's one for me.

Q: Absolutely, it's not that easy to get into doing it is it?

A: No it isn't really and it's getting more difficult actually. They usually come from kennels, the trainers, and then you get the kennel staff in, that's what's been happening. They do like direct trainers in and they usually come straight from the

kennels which is a good basis really, you know what kind of dog you're going to come up against.

Q: You have got to know that you can work with dogs.

A: It's very much similar with people. I wanted to work with mentally and physically handicapped children and I could relate to the dogs the work that I'd done with children, it's quite amazing.

Q: How was it you think you'd known you wanted to be a nurse?

A: Well my sister's a nurse, my dad was ill for four years with [TERMINAL ILLNESS] so all through my teens I was nursing my dad. I suppose I had a break and then continued with what I really enjoyed and felt that I could do best. I suppose that's where it stems from. It's ironic really, someone might say, 'Oh what did your mum used to do?' 'Well she used to work in the kitchens at school.' 'Oh that's funny, so did mine!' and there's quite a lot of the girls on the same course that have either got relations who have been nurses and their mums have worked in the kitchens so I don't know if that's got anything to do with it. My mum always wanted to be a nurse as well.

Q: My mum was a nurse and she wanted me to be a doctor but I wasn't too keen on physics and chemistry.

A: I started off wanting to be in microsurgery, I wanted to be a microsurgeon. My mum always wanted me to be a nurse, she's backed me, like I said, all the way.

Q: Do you know what you want to specialise in?

A: At first I wanted to be a midwife health visitor but after doing surgical, and I do prefer surgical, I like all blood and guts and colostomies and muck and bullets and all that stuff.

Q: Well somebody has to do it.

A: I really enjoyed that, it was supposed to be quite a tough ward and I really enjoyed it.

Q: You feel like you're really achieving something.

A: Yes, I felt I had a lot of responsibility for who I was, I really enjoyed that. I'm just doing the psychi at the minute and I think afterwards, after I've done all my training, I don't know whether I'd like to do a Post Reg course, it's another string to your bow, but I don't know. I have enjoyed it which I didn't think I would do.

Q: Do you see yourself staying in this area or do you want to travel?

A: I'd like to go to Canada actually.

Q: I'm going to Canada the week after next.

A: Oh are you? I'm going to Australia to visit my relatives and I think I'll go and see what it's like out there. I'm going in February actually but I think I would like to go to Canada.

Q: What is it about Canada?

A: I don't know. I see it as clean living, I don't know. Maybe it's an idealistic view but I like the sound of it.

Q: What do you mean by clean living?

A: I don't know. I haven't really had much to do with Canada, it just appeals to me. My friend lived over there for a few months and the things that she's come back with, I don't know. I think the way of life is totally different from the South, going into America and that, I don't know.

Q: It's the mountains that appeal to me.

A: Yes, all I see is Alpine, well Alpine in Canada!, but the pines and the mountains and the lakes.

Q: Yes, they have proper winters and proper summers, yes I know what you mean.

A: I suppose that's what I call clean living.

Q: So you weren't meaning some kind of moral element.

A: No, clean as in clean mountain air and the lumberjacks!

Q: I don't know about them. You said you'd been to a Roman Catholic school, would you say you were a Catholic?

A: Yes, I suppose I am still practising, I hope I am, although I do bend the rules.

Q: You can't always assume that just because of the sort of school someone will actually be that way.

A: No, I think it either turns you one way or the other a Catholic school, it either totally puts you off and makes you an atheist or you just go the other way and go with your religion and feelings.

Q: Do you see your religion as having an effect on how you make decisions about your relationships?

A: Relationships within work definitely, but physical and sexual relationships no.

Q: So you just sort of put that on one side.

A: Yes, I suppose I didn't when I was younger but I suppose now I've grown up a bit and matured and I decide for myself, my religion doesn't decide for me.

Q: It's none of anyone else's business is it?

A: It's me but then again, with respect to abortion and that I go with my religion but relationships within my work I would say yes. I think you can pick out who is a Christian amongst a group and who isn't, not so much Catholics but then again I think that red necks do stand out a bit.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: Catholics are called red necks to start off with and I think they do stand out.

Q: There's certainly a traditional association between Catholic girls and nursing.

A: Oh yes, I mean they have their own societies, I can't remember what it's called but I know they do because there's quite a few of my relations who are nurses who are Catholics and are in this.

Q: Tell me a bit more about sexual relationships and how you, well it's obvious from the questionnaire that you have had sexual relationships, are you involved with anybody now?

A: No not at the moment.

Q: When did you first start going out with anybody, not particularly in a major sense?

A: Well when I was fourteen I was five foot nothing and ten stone, I'm not much different now but I've grown up a little bit. So lads were like either picking on me or, I have been with older lads like any young girl does but not actually going out with lads. I suppose it was only like when I was fifteen, sixteen.

Q: Did you change quite a lot between being fourteen and fifteen?

A: Yes, because that was the period when my dad died so I had to grow up quite quick.

Q: When you were fourteen were girlfriends going out with lads and were you feeling left out?

A: Yes definitely. I had a friend who got a bit of a reputation for herself that she used to go out with anybody and all this and now she's totally the opposite but the group that we went around with there were certain girls who did go out with lads and I think yes I did feel left out. Then when I was fifteen I started going out with a lad and that went on for a couple of years and that turned into a sexual relationship as well.

Q: Did that happen gradually?

A: Oh yes, we just like fell into it I suppose.

Q: You did actually sleep with him so to speak, people use different expressions.

A: Yes we did sleep together.

Q: So how long had you been going out with him?

A: Let me see, I suppose it was about five months from when we first started going out when we first slept with each other.

Q: And how old was he?

A: I think he would have been nineteen, twenty at the time.

Q: Did you see that as something you wanted to do, were you party to the decision or did you get pushed a bit?

A: I suppose I did get pushed a bit but I was his first as well.

Q: So you didn't feel as though you'd been notched up?

A: No, it was nothing like that. I mean we did go out with each other for at least two and a half years and it was a case of we were going to get married and engaged and all that and then it turned out that his father, well his parents, were against Catholics so that like altered the relationship, and once it came forward, after two and a half years, it altered the relationship a lot.

Q: So had you known them over that period?

A: Yes, and we got really, really close.

Q: And then it came out and they decided it was getting too serious?

A: Yes, there's a big twist to this, there is in my whole life I think. For two and a half years and then he said, like, this is it. We'd had a break and we'd got back together and were all lovey dovey and he said, like, this was it.

Q: So did you have a break because of all this pressure?

A: He was under a lot of pressure and in the end it was a case of if you don't finish with her you get kicked out.

Q: He was still living at home?

A: Yes he was still living at home so he was under a lot of pressure and I wouldn't like to choose between anybody and the family so that was it.

Q: And you had a break?

A: We had a break and got back together, then this came up and it was like, you either finish with her or you go, that's it. Obviously he chose his family, I mean he was only young himself, which hurt. Then there would be a twist again as he's just recently got married, I've only seen him a couple of times since, and he's just recently got married to a nurse and she's also a Catholic and he actually told me this and you could see him going green at the gills when he told me.

Q: Has his family come round?

A: Yes.

Q: That must really sting?

A: I mean he was well liked by all the family as well, we just all got on well, I got on well with his brother and his mum and dad, I mean his mum thought I was like the daughter she'd never had, you know.

Q: Peoples prejudices are very strange aren't they?

A: It is when it was his dad who instigated most of it and his dad was a Jehovah's witness, a Methodist. Well, his dad's dad was a Jehovah's witness and his dad's mum was a Methodist so there was a big clash there. I mean they weren't anything really but it was the beliefs of his dad, he was very bigoted I suppose.

Q: Well, I suppose he's older now.

A: Yes, he's twenty-four. But that did sting, when he told me. I'd seen him on the off chance and he just told me, I mean he's still the same old, I get very sarcastic with close people, so when he told me I said, 'Oh, that's very nice for you, which church are you getting married in, I'll come and watch', you know, it wasn't, 'Oh no, don't do that', type of thing.

Q: You said you were perhaps pushed a bit, what do you mean by that?

A: I suppose the social group that we went out with were quite a bit older than myself and I suppose times and disruption at home and not actually having anybody of my own, that kind of made him mine, I mean he always will be, the first one you know.

Q: And was it something that you felt positive about after the event or did you feel guilty about it?

A: I did feel guilty afterwards, I suppose that was my religion again coming out in my feeling guilty.

Q: Did you think of it as a relationship that was going to last a long time?

A: At the time yes, definitely.

Q: Would you say that sex made it better, was it a positive part of the relationship or was it something that was there?

A: In the beginning I wouldn't have said it was positive.

Q: Did you not like it that much?

A: No, I suppose it hasn't been top priority with me anyway, my fiancé, well my ex fiancé, has made me enjoy it more than anybody, why that is I don't know, I suppose it was because I loved my fiancé and he was mine and that but he's the only one who's ever actually done anything for me.

Q: You mean in terms of you actually getting pleasure out of the situation?

A: Yes.

Q: So did you feel before that it was something you were doing for someone else?

A: I suppose in the beginning, when we were both so inexperienced, yes.

Q: Do you think you knew at fifteen, sixteen that there might be more to it, that perhaps it would get better?

A: I hoped there was.

Q: I suppose it's something in terms of, did you talk to girlfriends about what it should be like?

A: Not at that age, no.

Q: But later?

A: Yes, much later.

Q: I'm really interested in how women find out about those things.

A: Yes, I mean lads will go and talk amongst themselves in the toilets but your kind of feeling your way with girls – 'Is this right?'

Q: Because nobody ever tells you how to do it really, I mean you get diagrams in biology but that's about it.

A: Yes, and they're not really very explicit. It's quite funny that because I was reading in one of the women's columns about this young eighteen year old girl and her boyfriend, and they couldn't find where to have sex, not the actual place, but physically, they couldn't find where to have sex and she was getting rather distressed. You can imagine, your mind just runs away with you.

Q: Not being in that sort of extreme of making it up as you go along sort of thing.

A: Thinking is this right and then again what is right, what is the right way.

Q: Did you before you had sexual intercourse had there been a lot of sexual activity leading up to that?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you find that more enjoyable?

A: Yes.

Q: Was it a let down when you actually?

A: Yes.

Q: Sorry I am putting words in your mouth but that is what women often say.

A: Yes definitely.

Q: What about contraception?

A: Cross your fingers for the first time. No he used a condom, the very first time and then he said, 'what the hell do I do with this now?', and flung it over a hedge.

Q: Has nobody told you they flush down the loo?

A: I said stick a load of toilet paper down I am not touching it. I would say counting with MARK I have had three sexual relationships and the second time I thought he was the one, which you usually do, and I went on the pill for him. So stayed on it to be safe.

Q: So the first relationship you used a condom for the first time.

A: And cross your fingers.

Q: For what the next two years or what ever?

A: No we used a condom and crossed our fingers.

Q: On and off. And who decided what it was going to be was it a case of if you had a condom or he had one?

A: If he had one I would not touch them.

Q: Do you still feel like that?

A: No I am a lot much mature now working where I work, I mean you can't.

Q: Coping with major surgery.

A: What do you do with them.

Q: So that finished after about two and a half years and did you get involved with anybody else quickly?

A: Well no because there were a few lads in between but not a sexual relationship and then I went out with this other lad for a year and he proposed on

paper and then it came to a very abrupt end and I suppose I still feel pretty bitter about him. He brought it to an end. I still can't comprehend why, I suppose really I still love him deep down and that's one of the main reasons why me and my fiancé broke up. I still have very deep feelings for this other lad, he was five years older than me, he was totally mixed up as well, so it made two of us mixed up people.

Q: Do you still see him?

A: No I don't see him as such but he has just moved in down the street to my sister who I go and see a lot and I drive past and have a look to see if I can see him. I have seen him once and I suppose that is just for my own feelings, I went taking a 'welcome to your new home' card and I realised then that I still had deep feelings for him and it was not fair on my fiancé.

Q: So you went on the pill?

A: Yes I went on the pill for him.

Q: Quite quickly?

A: Two months after I started going out with him.

Q: So it was condoms and cross your fingers up to that time or had you not?

A: We hadn't.

Q: So you went on the pill.

A: I had once and that made my mind up that I wouldn't. He was really great actually. I told him my decision and he said, 'are you sure?'

Q: About going on the pill? So he wasn't pushing you?

A: No.

Q: Why did you decide to go on the pill?

A: I was just fed up worrying each month and I became a nervous wreck if I was two days late and I wasn't two days late it was just me getting the days mixed up and I still can't work it out now.

Q: Well it does sometime change doesn't it just to confound and confuse us.

A: I decided to go on the pill and I told him and he was really supportive and he came down to family planning clinic and held my hand, sat there very red, but he was great he would take me and come in or what ever and he was really good about it. He would never force me or never push me.

Q: Would you say sex was better in that relationship, sorry this might be a bit painful, I was just thinking in terms of worry, not having to worry?

A: No because like I say he was five years older than me and he had been out with a few other girls and had a steady relationship and there was this big thing about AIDS then. So I suppose I was secretly because I knew he had and I also knew that he abused drugs, but I didn't know to what extent or what he had used so I suppose then with him and the way it was. I suppose maybe now it would be but not then.

Q: It was something else for you to be worried about?

A: Yes I don't know if I was allergic to him as well because I was in a lot of discomfort afterwards so.

Q: That is something that doesn't get talked about very much. Sometimes we just are literally allergic to people.



A: Yes I think I was actually. So that was it really. If he went like that now I would go running. We always go for the bad ones really, if my mum knew she would kill me.

Q: Do you think he is bad?

A: She liked him when I was going out with him but I think it was just the way he finished it because he proposed to me and, oh, a eighteen year old girl had been proposed to and everything, and like his family again I got on with his mum and dad really well, it was unbelievable because I was going through another sticky patch with my mum and she was really good and I suppose I miss the family.

Q: In terms of you said AIDS had reared its ugly head, how much do you think you knew about it at that point and how did you find out about it and how worried were you about it?

A: I suppose I was one of the million ignorant ones. I was worried yes but I don't think he had actually used needle drugs, but then I wasn't 100% sure, every time we talked about it he would go 'come off it', because he didn't want to talk about it because that was his past. Plus I knew he had been out with a few other girls because he had been away to Art college, what we called the arty farties, being one of those he had a bit of a reputation for himself and he had also lived with somebody for a few months but that hadn't worked out, it was a total disaster and he came back all screwed up.

Q: And what did you think you could do about that, did you ever think of using condoms as well or did you just cross your fingers again?

A: No. After the first time that we actually did sleep together he came home and brought me a present and went like that and it was six packets of condoms so he was prepared. Thinking about it now I just love him even more.

Q: Sorry have I started you off now?

A: No it is alright, I get it every time I go home in case I bump into him.

Q: So it was you that didn't want to use condoms, is that what you are saying?

A: No I think I just wanted to go on the pill just to reassure myself as well.

Q: In terms of getting more information about it you said you were ignorant but obviously you have found out enough about AIDS to know that heterosexuals could get it to know what the sort of risks were in terms of multiple partners or intravenous drug use, where did you get the information from can you remember, television, posters and things?

A: Yes I suppose the real AIDS adverts really hit home, they were quite distressing at times. I think the bit that Mike Smith did on the tele really hit home, that was pretty good. I think they should do the re-runs on it because it has gone quiet again. It's all green environment now.

Q: Lets forget about AIDS, it's the climate now.

A: Never mind if there isn't enough people to live in it. It's a vicious circle, that's the way I see it, there is going to be nobody left.

Q: Tell me about the bloke you got engaged to?

A: He is the same age as me, that's twenty-one. He's just six months older, I suppose that doesn't really count. We lived together for six months because I was going through another bad patch with my mum and I had walked out and I was determined not to go back and live with her.

Q: How long had you been seeing him before you did that?

A: We were engaged for over a year so.

Q: Did he have his own place?

A: No we got a flat together, he left home. We got a flat which upset his mum as well which is funny because I'm not as close to his family as I was to MATT's family.

Q: And you were on the pill already so did you never discuss alternatives, he just assumed you would stay on the pill?

A: No I did pile a lot of weight on with the pill but I think that was because I got really depressed with the situation with my mum and I wanted to come off and he said it was like washing your feet with your socks on.

Q: Is that about condoms. I am collecting expressions I have never heard that one before that's a new one.

A: So if I read that one somewhere I will know where it come from, I will go bright red when I read it now.

Q: I can't guarantee not to quote that one, it's irresistible. So it wasn't on the agenda really?

A: Well it was for me, but he wouldn't which I suppose hurt me a little bit.

Q: Were you worried about him in terms of AIDS and the risk of ?

A: No because I was the bad lady and he was the good boy. He had only been with one other person which was a disaster, so I suppose with him and me I suppose he was immature for his age, he hasn't done anything, he left college and worked for his dad now he is working for [NAME OF SHOP] so I don't know. He was immature really.

Q: You actually said before that he did more for you than the other two, did you feel more in control of the situation? Why do you think that was?

A: I don't know I wouldn't say I was in control, more in control with my feelings towards him and I felt more secure with him but I wouldn't say I was in control, no.

Q: Why was that?

A: I don't know. It was very rarely me who instigated the passionate moments, it would be him, so that way I wasn't in control. I knew that I could say no and he would say oh alright and there was no backlash. Maybe that was the thing with MATT, I never thought of it that way because if I did say no there was a backlash with him.

Q: Did he get angry?

A: He just put a mood on, my ego was butted.

Q: Right so you would have to deal with his mood.

A: Yes. I suppose he was immature as well, he was screwed up. I say that GARY was immature, but he had his head screwed on and he was very supportive financially and emotionally in every way.

Q: So did you live together for six months and then split up?

A: No we lived together for six months and then I came here, we were supposed to be buying a house. I came here and he went back to his mums and I suppose it's been on the down since then, because we are so far apart and I was stuck here and waiting for him or it would take an hour or so to get home on the train,

and then when I wanted to go and I would either go back on the train or he would pick me up and usually I waited for him to pick me up.

Q: Because he had a car?

A: Yes so I felt stuck in that sense so that's why I relied on him a hell of a lot but now I have got my own car so I zip here and I zip there and I zip everywhere.

Q: So did it end quite recently?

A: The last month it has been on and off more off than on and I thought I can't cope with it anymore and I thought this is it .

Q: So you made the decision finally.

A: I felt my career was going to be at risk as well and I have worked so hard to get here any way I wasn't going to.

Q: In terms of your time and energy going to him then here.

A: Yes so I did not want to risk this with anything, I think I would be really scared, I don't know what I would do.

Q: So you don't see yourself as someone that would give up a career for a bloke, I mean you want your career so much?

A: I just want a career I mean eventually to have kids and that I would give up my career which I can't wait to, not because I want to get my career done with, I can't wait to have kids I really am looking forward to it.

Q: Have you felt like that for a long time?

A: Yes.

Q: And is that thinking with a particular partner is it something that you want.

A: At first I always wanted GARY's children and I have never felt like that with anybody, I always wanted his kids I don't know why but it was just I wanted his kids, but now I just want kids not running around but I suppose it's maternal instinct I want to feel part of somebody and somebody inside of me and having somebody to rely on me for everything. I suppose that's all it is, purely selfish reasons.

Q: It is interesting isn't it, most people say not having children is selfish but it is quite interesting to hear someone say that when they're wanting to have them, selfish isn't what that means really, it's doing what seems the best thing to do at the time.

A: I just really want kids.

Q: How do feel at the moment about being on your own doing your nursing and just getting on with, it does that feel good or difficult?

A: I suppose I'm still emotionally upset about GARY and it's not that I stopped loving him we were just growing apart, I think I was growing up and he was growing away, I am scared of being on my own. I'd stay in my room on my own for a lad I suppose having a male around, not for just sexual reasons just a fella around to take me out and pamper me, I could never say I was a feminist I'm afraid, I never have been, maybe it's the way I've been brought up.

Q: But at the same time you're saying your career is really important?

A: Oh yes because it's something I've wanted to do for a long time, since I was at school so nothing's going to come in the way of that.

Q: And now a real test question, you said would run if he snapped his fingers, would you give this up? You might not be able to answer that, it's not really fair.

A: Depending on the reasons, if I was pregnant and it was his and he said give I want you to give it up, yes I would. If we'd been seeing each other and he got a job abroad and he wanted me to go with him maybe.

Q: You'd have reservations. Obviously you can't say when you might get into another relationship, you're not totally in control of that, but if you had to say what you would like ideally, describe to me what you would like ideally and what sort of timescale, you know, whether you would like a few fairly short lived relationships?

A: Just a good laugh for a while.

Q: Would that not necessarily include sex?

A: I don't think so, no it wouldn't.

Q: To put it another way, on what basis would you decide if you were going to have a sexual relationship with someone?

A: I suppose length of time would come into it, you know, feelings towards each other.

Q: You don't see yourself ever doing that the first time or second time after seeing him.

A: No.

Q: Can you say why that is?

A: Well I mean I don't like my own body to start off with so I would have to be really sure that they actually saw me, the outer of me, that would have a big thing to do with it and emotions I suppose would play a big part in it. Those are the main things for me, length of time, yes.

Q: I seem to remember you said this afternoon that you thought you could ask a bloke to use a condom.

A: Yes.

Q: How easy do you think it would be, would you want to do that and how you think in terms of AIDS as a risk, say you had being going out with somebody for three months but you didn't know that much about their past, what do you think you'd do?

A: I would want to know about their past, I'm nosey. I'd want to know and if he wouldn't tell me then I'd think there was something behind it, a sexual relationship would never arise because I couldn't trust him, I have to really, really trust somebody.

Q: But you could still see someone who might potentially be a risk but trust them as well.

A: Yes, I suppose MATT was a potential risk.

Q: That's what I mean, you could be in that situation again couldn't you?

A: I would ask them to use one plus because I'm not on the pill anymore, I've come of it to lose weight to start of with, but because I don't see any reason to be on it, I think there's more risk of getting breast cancer so I think that's mainly bothering me at the moment.

Q: Rather than AIDS, that's the thing that's been talked about such a lot, so I mean would you think very hard before going back on it?

A: Yes, I would actually now.

Q: Have you thought about any other any alternatives that you might use instead?

A: I wanted a coil fitted but reading about it there is a risk of infertility and so risking to have kids I am not prepared to, I'm afraid that comes high up on my agenda.

Q: They go every which way don't they. If I said to you, what do people mean when they talk about safe sex, what do you think of in a relationship to AIDS?

A: To AIDS, I suppose it is a condom, but then safe sex also implies not crossing your fingers.

Q: Yes, it depends on the risk that you're focusing on. What about having sex that does not include penetration, what do you think about that, so doing everything but I suppose. Is there anything you would find difficult to negotiate with a bloke?

A: With GARY it wasn't difficult, it was pretty good that way. I suppose trust comes into it again and how long I'd been going out with them and what kind of future I could see ahead of us.

Q: In terms of whether you can say I don't want that.

A: I would ask him to use one, yes definitely.

Q: Can you see yourself carrying them around?

A: No.

Q: Why?

A: There was an Open Air thing on this morning, I've forgotten what side it was on, and a girl brought up that if a girl does carry a Durex around in her handbag then she is regarded as a slag, basically. I suppose that's one reason.

Q: Do you think that is fair?

A: No it isn't fair. I don't see myself that streetwise or that promiscuous, well, it's up to him, that's the way I see it. If I'm prepared to take the pill then he should be prepared to carry one around with him, which is ironic really because STEWART, the first lad I went out with, he carried one around in his wallet and he was getting some money out for his mum and it fell out and we were both stood there, she said, 'well its nice to see you're using precautions'. Oh no, I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me, it was so embarrassing.

Q: Yes, I remember a lad I used to go out with and he used to keep them behind the sun visor in his car, I don't know whether he ever got chance to use them, but that's where he kept a packet just in case and I remember him telling me that he was in the car once with his mum and he pulled the visor down because it was sunny.

A: I can feel myself going red just thinking about it.

Q: That moves on from that quite logically in a way in terms of, like that was an embarrassing situation in that was somebody's mother and you said you don't get on especially with your mum, sometimes you do and sometimes you don't. Where would you go now for more information, more advice, more support, is it still your sister?

A: No I would say I have got quite a good relationship with my family doctor. He's really good. I can go to him about anything even though he is male. He is one of those people I can talk to.

Q: So have you talked to him about contraception and things like that?

A: Yes. Because I put quite a lot of weight on and I went to him and talked to him about it and he put me on a lower dose. He's great, he's really good. He is pretty young as well. I would go to him I think.

Q: What do you actually think about the information that's actually around about AIDS?

A: I suppose doing what I am doing I pick up a lot on the grapevine.

Q: Yes that's what I was wondering. Have you actually had any teaching about it as such?

A: No. There is an infectious diseases course and there is an AIDS group.

Q: That's an option?

A: Yes it's just really when you have trained for that, but we will be going through it at school. It's a bit early stages really.

Q: So you don't get some kind of lecture to all of you about it?

A: No.

Q: Do you get anything like that, I don't mean as part of the training, as part of the course but is there anything in the Hall, does anyone give you a kind of pep talk about this and that or do you just get on with it?

A: They just let us get on with it really.

Q: You are seen as being adult?

A: Yes I suppose we are.

Q: Because that's changed, perhaps a few years back student nurses weren't really treated as being grown up?

A: A lot ..... but yes we are quite adultish.

Q: So when you say you pick things up on the grapevine?

A: I suppose its just the basic stuff, can be caught from homosexuals, through intercourse, drug addicts, people who have had blood transfusions, hemophiliacs. I suppose one of the big things is how they used to say swapping spit.

Q: That's a big question mark how risky that is.

A: Yes. How much saliva can you come into contact with before you are at risk.

Q: About a gallon and a half they say.

A: Nobody will like that.

Q: There are still a lot of unknowns I suppose. All the things you have said, it depends doesn't it on what sort of drugs people are injecting and in terms of the homosexual spread it depends on what people are doing. It's not being homosexual but not having penetrative sex and not being at any risk of having AIDS. There are all those different things.

A: Like on the ward at the moment we've got a gay man and he's great. You wouldn't think anything, ....somebody .....gay you might catch something off him. But he's just great you can go up and have a cuddle and give him a kiss any time. He's just brill. And he doesn't hide the fact but he doesn't broadcast it either.

Q: Do you think he is aware that people would be cautious because they think he's gay he is bound to have AIDS?

A: Yes I would think he is because he is a pretty sensitive bloke. I think he is sensitive in all the right ways. The kennel manager at guide dogs, he's gay and

one of the trainers. I seem to get on better with them I suppose because they don't...

Q: There is no pressure, you can get on with being friends?

A: Yes and I think you do make better friends.

Q: Do you think that's actually an issue, is that a problem that you have found with blokes that it's hard to be friends. Have you got many male friends?

A: I used to have quite a few at school, maybe that because I was more a boy in class. And recently I have just seen one of them, he's come out of the army and our relationship changed from one to the other. We are still good friends, I can phone him up and go out for a drink any time and I used to have quite a few like that. When I meet them they are still like that. But yes otherwise there is always that bit of pressure. You have to really get to know them before oh, he's just a mate, type of thing.

Q: Sometimes you can be really taken aback by someone that you known for years and thought was just a mate and they have actually had something else on their mind all along or suddenly they have.

A: One of my stepbrothers, he's five years older than me and he's is just a friend because he knew my dad quite well and like he was just a friend.

Q: But he is also your stepbrother now?

A: Now he is also my stepbrother. And I had decorated my room and I was sleeping in the big room which was next to his and he has to walk through the big room to get to his room and he was drunk and everything just came pouring out and he scared the living daylights out of me and it just totally revolted me. I can't stand being around him anymore.

Q: And he wanted a totally different relationship?

A: Yes.

Q: And was that your revulsion because he just..... or because you are just not interested in him?

A: He's a bit of a creep anyway and that make my skin crawl.

Q: Has that caused difficulties in terms of being at home?

A: Yes that was one of the main reasons I couldn't stand being around him and his dad didn't know what he was like to us but my mum did.

Q: So was he really putting you under pressure?

A: I was going my 'O' levels at the time. I was under a lot of pressure when I was doing my 'O' levels. If I had what is known as a normal family still at home then maybe I would have done better.

Q: Was this last year?

A: No when I was at school.

Q: Did you not tell anybody about him?

A: I told my mum and I was going out with STEWART at the time. STEWART was very protective and wanted to flatten him. It makes me heave just thinking about him.

Q: Did he stop hassling you or not until you left home?

A: Not until I left home. Well he left and I left. I would come in and he was creeping about the house. He would stand outside doors listening in. He was horrible.

Q: And presumably it was difficult for your mum with a new marriage and having to manage all that?

A: There is no other word to describe him, he is a creep. He is revolting.

Q: Is he still there?

A: No but he has wanted to come back up, but my mum had said before if he comes back, I'm going. A lot had happened at home so she turned round and said that. So hopefully he won't be coming back.

Q: Anything else you feel you want to say?

A: No.

Q: The other thing I can think of, talking about taking risks, is if you think of yourself as someone who does take risks? Do you see yourself as someone that can ..... Do you do anything else that's risky?

A: I would say going on this holiday is risky.

Q: What's risky about it?

A: Not having the money to go.

Q: You have booked the holiday and not got the money to go, yes I suppose that is a bit risky.

A: Well I suppose that's the only risk I am going to take.

Q: You don't smoke?

A: Only now and again.

Q: What do you mean by now and again?

A: I will have a craving like I have recently. I don't know whether it was the pressure I was under with GARY but I needed to smoke, I needed to do something and I didn't want to eat because I am trying to lose weight so I turned to cigarettes but now a few days and I am not craving for one.

Q: So it's just crises. Well that's quite interesting if it helps. Unfortunately some people get completely hooked on them. Do you drink?

A: No.

Q: Not at all or just occasionally?

A: Well sometimes I can have a drink, a glass of wine. I am not a heavy drinker. Even when I go out everyone can be drinking and I will be driving and it doesn't bother me.

END OF INTERVIEW