

LSFS11 Second interview 27.6.1990**Cathy**

Q. So quite a lot's happened to you since I last spoke to you.

A. Yeah, loads.

Q. Do you want to tell me, starting from the beginning, how - what happened? I mean, when I last spoke to you, which was about a year ago or so -

A. Yeah, it was, wasn't it.

Q. - and you were with FRASER and - for six months...

A. Yeah.

Q. And things like that.

A. Yeah. Well, things were already actually beginning to tarnish between FRASER... and I. We actually had a massive argument about me coming here and -

Q. Really?

A. Yeah, we had a big argument. He never forgave me for coming here and confiding in - his - his personal secrets with a complete stranger. Which was macho kind of bullshit really. Which is what I got a lot of after my mum kicked me out. Which she did because of FRASER, because I was going to - after I had spoken to you - I don't know if I told you, I was planning at the time then to move in with FRASER -

Q. Yes. His mother was gonna buy a flat or something to live in when she...

A. Yeah, yeah. Oh, great, great, oh, great, this is a brilliant story. She came over to - to see the flat which FRASER had chosen, which was a small, decorated, centrally heated little pad basically, a little - a little plot. And she came over to see it and my mum was supposed to be doing the conveyancing; and while - while FRASER's mother was in this country - 'cos she lived in EUROPEAN COUNTRY - my mum was away with her boyfriend who I wasn't getting on with at the time.

Q. That's right, I remember bits about that.

A. She was away with her - with him, and so behind mother's back as it were, FRASER's mum became very pally with the mad estate agent, who was a very very very odd woman. And decided to buy the house which the estate agent was planning to buy. And the estate agent had taken her round this house obviously because she wanted - she thought this is a rich, very rich, silly woman who I can sell a house to, let alone a flat, who kind of wasn't - was right in fact. And so when mother returned, FRASER was ecstatic that he was going to be living in this very nice house - because it was very - at first glance it was a very pretty house, it had a nice - well, anyway, it was a good house. And there - and there were various plans, convert the basement, rent it out, have lodgers in - two kitchens, two bathrooms it had, so FRASER have the downstairs and FRASER collect rent from the lodgers upstairs rather than paying any rent himself, which was not what the deal was in the first place, because what the deal was in the first place was for FRASER to have a pad which needed no work... and where he would be able to hide away and get his degree, which was the main aim of the whole exercise. And so this - this began with the help of the strange estate agent who didn't get on with my mother, because she - this woman, DEBORAH her name was, phoned up and said "I'd like to speak to the solicitor please", and

my mum was a conveyancing manager and she said "I'm the conveyancing manager" and DEBORAH said "well, that's not good enough, I want to speak to one of the solicitors" - which was really the wrong thing to say to my mum who's a very good conveyancer and was not very happy in her job at the time, because she was working in an office which didn't have any windows, which was actually underground and so she couldn't have a plant in her office and so on and so forth, and was the only woman apart from the receptionist in the office and was being treated very very badly. Didn't get on with the estate agent, had an argument with the estate agent, had an argument with me when I was showing her round the house. So on and so forth, argument, argument, argument and more arguments. FRASER was living with us at this time, because he'd moved out - they'd finally sold the NAME OF ROAD house, the South London house, which was an absolute bugger to sell, and this - I think, was FRASER living with me?

Q. No, but he was going to be living with you.

A. Yeah. So he - he had moved in by this time and it was - tempers were getting a little bit frayed. And I had my first year exams for my A-levels at the same time and - and mum, estate agent didn't work, therefore mum - my mother and FRASER's mother - were arguing about getting a... estate agent and having a ... conveyancer: "this wasn't a really good idea in the first place, was it?" - "no, and how are we gonna get round it, how are we gonna get through it?". FRASER's mother had planned to go to COUNTRY 2 to visit FRASER's sister who's living - who's getting married, no, had been married actually, but was planning to go and visit her in COUNTRY 2. Before that could happen, the move was supposed to be done and all finished and completed and tied in a nice bow and everything finished up. Unfortunately, the surveyor said that there'd been some past movement in the house, there'd been some shifting; and it had been a very hot summer. The mortgage company, on the surveyor's advice, refused - no, the insurance company refused the insurance for the mortgage because they thought that the trees around the house would sap the moisture away from the foundations and the house could possibly fall down -

Q. Subside, yes.

A. And so this - this continued for ages because it was such a complete balls-up, the whole thing with the mortgage and the insurance. It was at [BUILDING SOCIETY] because [BUILDING SOCIETY] were doing this special offer, a fixed interest rate mortgage. As interest rates were beginning to go up rather rapidly -

Q. So had -

A. - this was a good idea.

Q. Had the contracts been signed at this point or not?

A. No, no. And the - there was - the kind of really big problem was that the estate agent had told a massively big whopping lie by saying that the woman who was living in the house, or the man and the woman, they were sharing the house, had places to go and could move out. Because FRASER - FRASER and I - FRASER and my mother were really kind of nearly at each other's throats. I was - I was arguing regularly with my mum about this house moving business and doing my work and trying to do my coursework for my A-levels, my history project, my English project which I was supposed to have had - at least have in the first draft by that time and I didn't. And the estate agent had said that these

people had places to go. They didn't have anywhere to go, they were still looking for a place to move into. So it all took an incredibly long time and unfortunately it took so long that FRASER's mother was forced to go to COUNTRY 2 in the middle of it, which meant that she wasn't around. She had to give FRASER Power of Attorney but unfortunately she had failed to sign things and send them back, so there were still things sitting on her desk in COUNTRY while she was in COUNTRY 2. So things - FRASER had got himself a job by this time which was very - was quite good because he'd been actually sitting around and fretting for a month or so because he'd been - had his massive long college holidays. He got himself a job working at a [HOSPITALITY], which meant doing very odd strange hours which meant I would stay up and wait for him and... and not getting enough sleep, and me not having a job and sitting in the house for days and days waiting for phone calls and so on and so forth, and then - and then - and then FRASER's sister - because the house, the selling of [NAME OF ROAD] house and the buying of the new house were always an awful lot to do with FRASER's sister who had moved out of [NAME OF ROAD], had moved back into [NAME OF ROAD], had said "let's not sell [NAME OF ROAD]", had said "I'll buy half the house with you", had said "are we - are you going to move in with my friend who lives in [CITY]?", had said "I'm going to buy a house in SOUTH LONDON on my own", had said "I'm going to move in with my boyfriend into the new house with FRASER", had said various things -

Q. ...

A. - and had eventually moved up to [WEST MIDLANDS], to where FRASER's [RELATIVE] lived, his mother's sister, and taken this good-for-nothing twenty-year-old bloke with her, who refused to work and refused to claim because he thought it was beneath him. So he was just living off FRASER's sister and driving her car around and crashing it at regular intervals -

Q. Did FRASER get on with her? - the sister.

A. Well, yeah, in a kind of manic way. They enjoyed getting very drunk together occasionally, and other times got very annoyed with each other about using - finishing the tomato ketchup and so on and so forth. So we - we get a phone call from COUNTRY 2 saying - FRASER's mother's been away for ten days and PHILIPPA has phoned from [WEST MIDLANDS], saying "if you don't come back from COUNTRY 2 I'm gonna kill myself because I'm having a nervous breakdown". So we have to organise shifting FRASER's big mother with all her big bags away from the airport onto the train to get to [WEST MIDLANDS] and then sort out having Power of Attorney and sorting out how to finish off the house and everything, and so -

Q. So is this still negotiating to buy this house that might fall down?

A. This is - this is - the house is being bought but the people haven't moved out yet because they didn't have anywhere to go. This is kind of wresting of garments and gnashing of teeth. And we - I went - my friend knew of a friend of hers who'd gone to COUNTRY 3 and left an empty cottage in COUNTY, so we - we took off down there, me and my girlfriend ELEANOR, for two days, three days, four days or something, which was the nearest... thing I had to a holiday. And FRASER came down there and that was all lovey-dovey for a couple of days. But while I was away, mum was really victimising FRASER and bitching about him with her friends while he was getting ready to go to work and he could

hear - really nasty, nasty; and FRASER's mother had told us and - being as she was a very chatty woman - told us these horror stories about these builders she'd had who'd completely messed up her whole house. And come the time when FRASER was actually in the house and getting ready to rent out the rooms, the upstairs rooms and that was gonna pay the mortgage and therefore FRASER wouldn't have to pay any rent, she sends over these builders from COUNTRY. "The best builders, you can get them, send them all the way, specially import your builders from COUNTRY because they're so fucking wonderful and marvelous and great guys and really nice and polite!" - and these guys spent all the money they had, the materials money and the extra money which they'd been given, on duty-frees and going to the pub, and being generally frivolous, and got very upset because London wasn't as it was the last time they came, which was 1963 or something; and decided they were gonna take this all out on FRASER. FRASER was working from eight until eight to get the rooms ready, these guys were doing nothing. They'd been sent specifically to look at the roof, which was what the surveyor had said was possibly - could have a little problem with at some point. They went up, checked the roof, said "no, don't worry about the roof, just get the rooms ready to rent out, start getting some money in FRASER's mum's pocket because we like FRASER's mum. FRASER's mum's really nice and we really love FRASER's mum" and this sort of very strange... another story which really is a bit superfluous but the whole - well, I suppose it's not really, but I shan't tell you. Anyway -

Q. But FRASER had moved out of your -

A. FRASER finally moved out with big sighs of relief all round, because I was freaking, my mum was freaking; I was freaking about my mum having this awful boyfriend and so on and so forth.

Q. Was that the TRANSPORT ROLE or was that the one -

A. No, no, the TRANSPORT ROLE was alright; the one that was the -

Q. - the one after -

A. - the one who EDUCATIONAL ROLE. God, I must have a cigarette actually. It's all getting a little bit muddled here, because meanwhile back at the ranch, mum has said - this is in October - to her employers, "I'll be leaving at Christmas", and they have turned round and said to her, "no, you'll leave in two weeks, because you haven't been working for us for two years". So this completely freaks her out. And luckily FRASER's gone by this time, but not for long, and these builders have come and said, "no, no, the roof is fine". Winter starts to draw in, FRASER thinks, "better go up to the roof and check the central heating tank" and goes up to the roof, and one of the beams is splitting, and the roof is literally about to collapse. And so I mean repercussions - whoosh! Obviously, why did his mother send these builders, why did they say the roof was alright, why - what were they really doing there anyway, were they real builders or were they demons in disguise.

Q. Had the lodgers moved in by that time?

A. Yeah. And FRASER had obviously - because FRASER's mother was busy looking after FRASER's sister and...

Q. So she's still in the country -

A. - and catering to her every whim - well, in and out of the country, backwards and - really no use at all and still not signing things that had to be signed and

countersigned and signed again. Was not doing her bit at all. And my mum still obviously is going really... about losing the job and so on and so forth. And this - this awful boyfriend whose behaviour... he only ever sat at the head of the table, and came home - when he came home from work he would come and have a whiskey and then fall asleep on the sofa, and generally be a complete arsehole. And so this - FRASER's supposed to be back at college and obviously isn't because of roof, lodgers, decorating ad infinitum, and he - oh, God, I've just got a blank here - he sorts about having this roof done. It's gonna be four thousand pounds to have it done at that time. One night, after I've just been out trying to score for some friends of mine and having a completely awful bad time and actually managing it and coming home having been - come back from college and gone straight out again, not got back in till 7.30 and not had a cup of tea, and feeling rather pissed off and very very cold and tired out; get back home, phone FRASER - FRASER says the whole roof has to be replaced and part of the back wall as well. This is the place where I'm supposed to be moving into. But by this time I made the decision, I'm not going to move into this house, I'm - mum has moved out of the big bedroom to let me live in the big bedroom and keep out of her way basically, and keep out of the way of this awful boyfriend, and this has entailed FRASER and I moving her wardrobe, her chest of drawers, moving all her stuff, and her saying, yes, we'll do the rest, meaning her and ANDY, and what she actually meant was "I'll move the rest of my stuff out of the bedroom and you can move the rest of the stuff"; so that I actually had to move all my furniture on my own from my small bedroom into the big bedroom. This is - ... bit pissed off with my mum by this time. So she comes in and says "I've-" - she said "do you want a cup of tea? Do you want some soup?" and I... "yeah, yeah, tea, yeah, need, need, look after me", and she says, "So what did FRASER say then?". I say "oh, FRASER said roof and..." and she said, "oh, I'm getting a little bit tired of hearing about FRASER's problems". So I said, "okay, forget the tea, I'm going to my room". I was taking advantage of my space, that I'd been granted, I was going into my room to get away from this situation which was obviously brewing into a very nasty scene. She brings the cup of tea in, says "if you don't want it, you can pour it away yourself!". So being as I was a little bit pissed off by this time, I threw the tea over my mum. and then she - she started hitting me and pushing me and slapping me and we got into this big fight, and she said, "right", you know, "you get out and don't come back". So I leave, go to FRASER's because my dad is working in COUNTY 2 during the week, coming back at weekends -

Q. So he's not around.

A. So he's not around. His girlfriend's there and I can't go round and plonk myself on the doorstep and say - by this time, you see, my brother has moved out of his room in a friend's house across the road from my mum's, because the plan is for dad and MELANIE to sell the house in London and move to COUNTY 2 where my dad's working, and MELANIE commutes in to work in London. So I go to FRASER's; FRASER is losing his mind basically. I am also very very close to killing myself. Go, talk to my brother on the phone - this is a Wednesday when I go to FRASER, I talk to my brother on the Friday about moving in with dad, because I obviously don't want to go and move into his room if he wants to go

back and move into his room and be there, and I can go and live wherever and get my rent paid by dad instead of him getting his rent paid by dad.

Q. 'Cos you didn't get on that well with your brother, then?

A. No, I didn't. And so FRASER takes this opportunity to say "you should never confide in your brother because he will always use it against you", which is not really a very apt thing to say, or a time to say anything negative at all so -

Q. Not very tactful.

A. That's right, not very tactful. So I leave FRASER's in high dudgeon, leaving behind my folder, my schoolwork, which is my lifeline by this time. The next day I say to FRASER, "well, look, you can't be any - you're obviously no good emotionally; you can come over and help me bring some more of my clothes and books round to my mum's, and come and buy a jacket with me" - 'cos I thought I'd cheer myself up by a nice jacket, getting cold, have a nice warming thing. So FRASER comes round, forgets my folder, we go to the shop, tells me to pull myself together and cheer up a bit - "fucking cheer up or else". So I'm left, dad has gone to COUNTY 2 to mend his boat, MELANIE's at work, mum is not somebody I want to talk to, FRASER says "I'm not having any more of this", walks out, leaves me at my dad's on my own. This is kind of bordering on suicide by this time. Dad and MELANIE comes back, say "yes, everything's gonna be lovey-dovey, you can live here until you've done your exams" - which is "we are-" - obviously not from MELANIE's point of view, MELANIE has been an absolute angel throughout all - but the impression I get from dad is "we are making this massive sacrifice for you, therefore you are gonna get three As or else". You know

Q. A bit oppressive for you -

A. That's right, that's right. And also because his first job, which he's still doing now, was to [FINANCIAL ROLE], he was working all the hours that were sent and coming back at weekends and basically, because he doesn't drink, getting stoned out of his mind. So he would come home more or less too tired to speak, and then I would go out for the evening and come back and he would be in no condition to do anything at all except kind of behave like a twelve-year-old. And so this carried on, went on and on; I at one point flipped and said "look, I'm not JOE", because when JOE was living with him, JOE was... take, take, take, money, anything, give, give, give, so dad was - and because this has been his relationship with my mother as well, too - it's always been him guarding his income, guarding his mortgages, guarding his everything from mother's grabby sticky little fingers; and JOES'. So he had this attitude towards me as well. So I tried sitting him down one day and saying, look, I'm not like him, I do - I need support, I need to be looked after, I need communication, I need, I need, I need; and he was saying "mm, yes, mm, yes". This actually didn't work, and so the situation continued where I was not getting on with my mum, I was going out as much as I could. I was going out during the week, I was spending a lot of time with people who were very into drugging and dancing and not being normal basically, being strange, reading strange books, and basically freaking out over this period, after having split up with FRASER.

Q. So you had split up with FRASER? How did that happen?

A. I'd split up - ah, well, that happened because I could no longer stand being in a place where there were so many (?)knives available, young men, and having a

manic depressive sitting on my shoulder the whole time. FRASER and I split up three times and got back together again. We split up, we got back together; this was - happened once when I was still at my mum's and we got back together again, and then we had some really awful times over Christmas. We went - we went to see this woman, who's a friend of FRASER's mother, who thought the best idea was to get FRASER very drunk and let him pour out all his troubles. We - FRASER and I had by this time tried having agreements like "I'm not gonna tell you how to live your life as long as you don't tell me how to live my life" and so - whenever - and so FRASER being, as FRASER was, has carried on pouring out all his troubles to me and weighing me down, burdening me with all his woes, and - and expecting my advice still, and then turning round and saying "what about our agreement that you wouldn't tell me how to live my life?". Very very confusing for a girl. And we went to see this woman; and I'd been telling FRASER to move out, I'd been saying "you don't need this, you need - what you need is to get your degree, because if you don't get your degree you're gonna be so down, you're gonna be mad and - and it's gonna really probably make you very unhappy for the rest of your life if you let your mother get you on this one as well". Because meanwhile there's been happenings in the background, of FRASER's father moving in with tart, the woman who he left FRASER's mother for, and "are you going to get married?" and - and, you know - all - and obviously FRASER's sister still being in a bad way, and problems with FRASER's father not seeing FRASER's sister, and other sister in COUNTRY 2 wanting to buy a flat and, you know, is daddy going to give money to JESSICA? Is daddy - if daddy's giving money to JESSICA, does that mean that daddy's got to give money to PHILIPPA and FRASER as well, and -

Q. Sounds very complicated.

A. Yeah, very, very complicated and confusing. And we - we go to this woman's house for lunch and she gets FRASER absolutely paralytic drunk, which - what FRASER was doing quite a bit was getting drunk and being very very nasty to me in these drunken states, which had occurred a few times. There was also a meal to celebrate the buying of the house, which was another big one, which I won't tell you about because it's too awful for me to talk about really, it was just too incredibly bad. This woman got FRASER completely drunk and then left me in charge of a bottle of whiskey and a bottle of port, because she'd just come into a lot of money through inheritance and thought the best thing was to give me some more booze and for me to take FRASER home and get him even more drunk. So by this time I'm dragging - holding the bottles in one hand so they don't get broken and holding FRASER up with the other hand and trying to get him home from [SOUTH LONDON] back to [LONDON BOROUGH]. And he's trying to throw himself in front of every train that comes along and crying and saying "oh, oh, I can never do anything to please you" and "whenever I come up with a good idea you always get angry with me": because what this woman has said is "why don't you come and live in this house and collect rents for me instead, because I'm going to be moving into my new husband's mother's stately home" or whatever it was. And so he's saying to me, "isn't this a wonderful idea? I'll move out." And I'm saying "God, FRASER, I've been telling you to move out for the past six months!". I said to him, "my whole life has been devoted to getting you away from your mother, and now you're telling me it's a good idea".

And so this was - this was a bad time, and what I was actually forced to do, was I was - I was forced to beg him to come into my father's home where I was already walking on thin ice because of still being with FRASER when obviously it was very bad, and I had to phone - 'cos part - one of our agreements, I had said to him that I would have counselling if he would. Because I knew that this was really what he needed because he was not in a very good way. And so, one of our - this was our agreement that we would get back together again, and we would both have counselling. And so I have luckily been given my counsellor's phone number for the Christmas holiday, and so I phoned him up, and say "what shall I do?" and he was - "it's really not a good idea for me to talk to FRASER because I'm your counsellor and I don't have a relationship with him and...". So... Samaritans' phone number. So trying to get through to the Samaritans between Christmas and New Year is not - not very easy. So FRASER is kind of beating himself about the head and going "oh God, oh God" and I'm sitting there on the phone, a dial phone not a pushbutton phone, the redials, over and over again, pounding the dial trying to get through to the Samaritans. Upstairs my dad and MELANIE are going "oh God, oh God, what's going on?"

Q. Sounds horrific.

A. Yeah. It was, it was really horrific. So finally I confided in my counsellor that there was a nice young man that had taken a shine to me and who I was - quite liked him and perhaps this was something, you know, perhaps I ought to split up with FRASER. Which I did. And I - this was - I spoke to him over the phone when I was - when I decided I would actually split up with him, and I said - 'cos we'd agreed to meet the next day and I was phoning up to confirm this meeting, have a walk around, have a chat, have a cup of coffee or whatever; and he was - he was saying that he didn't want to see me. He wanted to get on with his homework. And I was obviously very very adamant that I did actually really want to see him, and so this made him suspect that there was something wrong. So I ended up doing what we'd sworn we would never do, that we would never be so - so disrespectful as to do it over the phone. But I did it, and I didn't see him for a month, and so - he - he -

Q. Did you tell him about the other person, or did you just say you wanted to split up?

A. I - I can't remember if I - no, I think I did actually, I - or it was implicit in what I was saying, and basically I mean I had enough reasons anyway in spite of that. I had quite a few very good reasons to split up with him. This I did. And then he was writing to me and phoning me up and I couldn't handle having anything to do with him for a month; and then the month elapsed and I still had this bottle of whiskey which he - and the bottle of port but I said "well, I'm not giving you both of them, I'm keeping one". And so, this he wanted back, and he said that he wanted to see me one last time. And so we had this very strange day where we ended up going in the pissing rain going to [NAME OF MUSEUM] and drinking this bottle of whiskey and having this big massive argument in this museum, and drinking more whiskey on the way home, and then him coming back to my house and staying the night, and staying up all night talking and smoking and drinking whiskey. The next morning, going off and - and he's written down, all the possible outcomes of our meet he has written down and they all are based on the fact that it would be completely impossible for us to be friends. Which is

something which I really wanna do. I really wanna be friends with him, because after going through so much together I thought, well, this is, you know - we could be very valuable to each other. And he's got all this list of reasons why it couldn't possibly work out. So it's terribly melodramatic, the next day at the tube station and "yes, you can borrow a pair of sunglasses" because we were both crying, and "oh, God, isn't this really just so completely heart-wrenchingly bad and awful" and "oh, no"; and so off he goes, and he phones up two days later and says he's changed his mind, and could we be friends 'cos it would be really good if we could be friends. And so I said "fuck off" basically. And after that was when I got into going out with... and being really, "God, I'm just so happy to be out of this terrible relationship", and going out and -

Q. Did you feel freer?

A. Yeah, I felt amazing. I was on a high basically, which was what was happening, and I had these - I went - I actually went out with two younger men, because FRASER was older than me and I thought, well -

Q. He was what, twenty-something?

A. I was fifteen, he was twenty-one. And that was - I was seventeen, he was twenty-three. And we actually split up in January. And after that I went out with two younger guys because I thought, you know, not having anybody being older than me, I know what it's about now and I'm gonna have the power in a few relationships. And then I met this guy ROB, which was a couple of months ago. I met ROB, the barman at the [NAME OF PUB], and had a very strange time with him because I had said I would go and see him on Thursday - I'd met him on a Wednesday, I said I'd go and see him on Thursday; missed him, because I went in the evening and he was working during the day; went in on Friday and his girlfriend had come up to see him from CITY, which is where he was from. And so this - this was not very good. And then saw him again the following day, went in there to say "what the hell's going on, what do you think you're playing at?" and he said that he would split up with her, did go ahead and split up with her. Then we had - we had a wonderful time and - and went to the country and - and made love on the side of a mountain and had just a God - wow - kind of trippy, marvelous "isn't this just the best time you ever had in your life" kind of time. And then this - and obviously this was not good news for my exams, which were rapidly approaching, and my dad, who was - who obviously wouldn't like the look of a kind of six foot, muscle-bound lump with green hair and teeth rotted from doing too much speed, and - so it was generally - I mean it was - and because he was really - he was a barman, he was stupid, he was from the country, he was, you know, I could - I was really in control, I thought.

Q. Was he all those things or -

A. What? No - yeah, he was, he was - he was a complete knucklehead. And he still owes me money as well.

Q. Not that stupid then.

A. Oh, no, no, I mean... money back, but that's by the by. And so this - this was generally the situation, and then what actually set me off was - I had written down, everywhere I would write things down. I had written down that my dad's birthday was the [REDACTED], and it wasn't in fact, it was the [REDACTED] for some reason. And still - I'm still very confused about this because I did actually ask my dad, in one of our conversations we had... "when is your birthday? What

day were you born? What year were you born and what day in that year were you born?", and he said "I was born on [REDACTED]", which is obviously a different day every year.

Q. Yeah.

A. And so I thought, when he was telling me that it was his birthday, I thought he was playing a trick on me, being funny, saying "no, it's not your birthday, dad, it's your birthday tomorrow... written down everywhere, it's the [REDACTED] not the [REDACTED]. And so this was - this was what actually got me, I could not believe that I could have had the wrong day for his birthday, because my mother had told me that this was the day it was, and I knew this was the day it was, because all my old diaries, my Beatrix Potter's birthday book, all said that it was the [REDACTED]. And so that was really what got me and - because dad had been progressing in his usual manner of, you know, coming home and getting stoned and being completely uncommunicative, being patriarchal, being boring, mean and selfish, uncompromising, being a complete fucking bastard basically, he didn't realise over the however many months, the four, five months, that since I'd split up with FRASER, what I was doing, how I was reacting to being in a situation where I felt that my only salvation was to pass my A-levels; my bed and board was my three As which I could not do without, and my entire life security was based on passing these exams because - and also what's happened is that JOE has moved out from being with his friend and moved into the big room at mum's, moved into my bedroom at mum's, which I had - me and FRASER had stripped the fireplace in there, and I'd put the pole up with the shelf above it, the excellent wardrobe facility, and it was my room. And this obviously I was a little bit miffed about really, but obviously I didn't want to go back and live with mum, obviously I was happy to be at my dad's, but outraged by the fact that I was being treated like JOE when I was behaving like a complete angel for most of the time. Which was what really got me, which was why I was ready to get into a relationship with somebody who didn't give a damn what happened basically.

Q. So did you feel in control with ROB?

A. Yeah, I did, and I - I mean obviously I wasn't, because obviously he was - he was a barman and I was a student with exams coming up, and I was behaving like a barman, not like a student. But I was - because I was - I didn't feel wanted, I didn't - I'd lost FRASER, I'd lost my walking-stick if you like, I'd lost my security, I'd lost my mother, which was very painful obviously, which was really very hard to get on with. I had just managed to persuade her to get some counselling, because I was still having counselling and I - I was - and I knew that basically my mum had problems and that, because she had - she's always been very hyper and always had funny kind of headaches and strange periods and all sorts of kind of - kind of related - kind of happiness-related illnesses - or unhappiness-related, I should say - and so I - I just had this big conversation with her. And then basically I - what I started doing was I stopped phoning up when I was going out, stopped coming home for meals, stopped - and started taking advantage of the fact that sometimes dad and MELANIE would both stay in COUNTY 2 for the weekend and I was getting ROB to come and stay the night. I only did that once actually, but it seemed like I'd been doing it for ages because I was doing it with such zest and verve, such vigor. And enjoying it so much, in

fact I really was enjoying being what I thought I'd missed out on being by being with FRASER.

Q. Which was what?

A. Which was being - well, basically, just being - being cool and kind of jumping - jumping in ROB's car and going down to CITY to meet all his homeless friends and - "wow, aren't they - aren't they just a bunch of dudes" and "yeah" and this - we thought, yeah, we'll start doing some dealing, 'cos we could get these drugs really cheaply in the country and come and sell them all in London. And I thought - what I did was, I thought, yeah, this is ace, because I've got the capital and ROB has got nothing to lose because he's just a barman, if the police get him they can have him and that's alright and it won't be anything to do with me. And I'll just be - I'll just be getting the profit and that'll be really cool. And so I left him in charge of all the money and he bought himself a bloody expensive watch. And therefore was - was - remained indebted to me. And proved - when I did get very ill, proved himself to be a complete bastard, a complete wanker, because he didn't visit me, he didn't write to me, he didn't send me a card. He was - he still - he had seen - bumped into my mum and so on in the street and was working across the road from my mum's house. Didn't enquire about how I was doing, was - and had gone ahead and got back with his old girlfriend as well, who was in fact a sixteen-year-old student, even younger than me, and completely besotted with him. Which I realised when he showed me that the letter - he showed me the letter she'd written to him after he split up with her, which was really very kind of genuine and coherent and obviously - and honest and open about how she was feeling, and obviously showed that the way he was feeling about me wasn't serious, it was just kind of interested, because I was middle class, had a lot of experience, had a lot of money, had nice clothes, had cred. And could offer him spliffs and that kind of thing. And so, he was just kind of impressed by me rather than wanted any kind of relationship with me, it turned out. And so that was it really. And then I flipped out and then the rest is history. I went - I had some very very strange times at mental hospitals, which is really very interesting in fact. Mental hospitals are very interesting places.

Q. What about the two relationships you had with the younger guys, what were they like?

A. Ah, well, one of them - one of them - they were a complete contrast actually. One of them was this guy BEN, who I'd met when I went to the World AIDS Day Conference [DATE REDACTED]. I met him there - (Tape change)

A. ... this was - his name was BEN.

Q. Yeah.

A. And he had just split up with a girl who he'd been going out with for two years as well. So I thought, well, this is great, you know, he's obviously gonna really understand and kind of be really fabulous and cool and -

Q. How old was he?

A. He was lower sixth, I was upper sixth. And so, I thought, yeah, this is cool, this is wonderful. And it turned out that he was just a spoilt brat basically, and was - literally wouldn't, for instance - I mean wouldn't buy drugs off anybody who was a friend of his, because he said oh, no, it's no good, you always end up owing them money and you stop being friends with them. But actually what - what I observed from being with him and his friends was that they bought their drugs off

a guy in the pub who they spent most of the evening taking the piss out of. And I realised that the reason he wouldn't buy drugs off anybody he knew was because he wouldn't know anybody who would deal drugs, because he refused to associate with anybody who wasn't middle class basically. And so this was a complete (?)wow, because I didn't actually believe there were these people who - who would literally have a token black in their midst as a token black, and just sit around and - and work in Marks and Spencers to get money to buy drugs because their parents only gave them enough to keep them in nice clothes and not really enough to keep them in drugs as well, so they had to - all had to work at Marks and Spencers so they could have lots of money to buy lots of drugs and sit around and smoke a lot and kind of - oh, God, they were awful. God...

Q. What sort of drugs were they into?

A. Oh, just dope, just -

Q. Just dope, yeah.

A. Cannabis. But obviously there - I mean some of them were ... the type of people who were doing ecstasy and going to acid raves and I was - also had another friend called STEPHEN who I was spending a lot of time with, who was very strange, and propositioned me several times although I found out actually that he's - he was homosexual. And there was another guy as well, who was also a closet homosexual and also kept kind of trying to ask me out and things. Very odd. And - yeah, and then there was this other guy who was sixteen, who was very pretty but very very very very weak and wishy-washy, and he'd had a very hard time. His dad was a heroin addict in fact, it turned out after I'd known him for a couple of months. And he was completely besotted with me, which was not very good because in the end I ended up having to actually literally tell him to fuck off, because I could no longer deal with his adolescence... which was really most tiresome. And therefore, I mean, when I met ROB, I thought, it's alright, you know, it's a nice - a nice bit of trouser rather than a milk-sop. And because - because basically I came to this realisation that most men are very very similar in lots of ways when it comes to relationships with the opposite sex and so -

Q. How do you mean?

A. Well, in the kind of where - where - where you come across difficulties, it's like the kind of jealousy and possessiveness and - and basically demanding independence but resenting it as well. And - you know - you know what I'm talking about. And so this - and I was really quite pissed off with it, so when I came across ROB, he was just, you know, very good-looking, very roguish and handsome and very well-built and I thought, yeah, right, this is what I'm in for, this is a good bit of sex and a good laugh and a good smoke and generally drive around in his - in his beaten up old car and play loud music and talk to some interesting people. And I did actually meet some very interesting people when we went to the country, people who were like - just like new age hippies kind of squatting in various places and just meeting people by being in the same graveyard every Monday and this kind of stuff, which is all very interesting. But it was very bad timing.

Q. What, with whatever else was going on?

A. Well, with - with mum, with dad, with exams, with general mental state. So - yeah, I mean this - it was - for me to go out with these two younger guys was like a - a sort of - just a like puppet-master thing really, it was -

Q. Were they sexual relationships?

A. No, not really. I mean, no, I didn't sleep with either of them and I didn't really, because they were both obviously not very experienced. I mean this BEN had been with this girl for two years and I don't know what - what sort of relationship that was at all really. I mean, obviously it was sexual, but - they'd been sleeping together for most of the time they were going out but his attitude towards women was very - I mean, basically he just wanted to bag me, you know, he just wanted to have the - a really good-looking wonderful older woman who he could be going out with and kind of show off to his friends, and he was kind of really excited by the whole idea of it and got a bit carried away. Didn't realise that to sit around with ten sixteen-year-olds, seventeen-year-olds, was really not my idea of a good time. Coming down from having a very serious heavy bad time with FRASER.

Q. Did the time you had with FRASER affect your sexual relationship with him?

A. No, I don't know really, I think I was very wary about getting into another sexual relationship, but at the same time I did want some kind of comfort. Which is what I got from ROB, because ROB was obviously very into sex and drugs and rock and roll and I was kind of pleased with that because it was kind of (?)waiting, sleeping together with BEN and I mean this other - LUKE was a complete virgin and completely green; I really don't know what I was doing with him, I was just - he - he was just my dog for a couple of months basically. Really really cruel, and I was forced to be even crueler to him, to get rid of him, which I did feel very bad about, and I knew that - one of the things I was sure about with ROB was that he could take quite a lot, he could take what I wanted to throw at him, which was basically a lot of confusion and a lot of anger with FRASER, which I thought ROB could handle - but he couldn't handle because when I started freaking out he didn't know how to handle it at all.

Q. And was he a comfort? I mean, was having a sexual relationship with him a comfort?

A. Yeah, it was, it was really good and - it was really cool and fab and everything, 'cos I could take my friends into the pub and say "this is my new man, isn't he a complete hunk?" and "isn't he wonderful?" and hear them all say "yes". And that was really good but he was - he was a bit - I mean he was - he was kind of two-sided, because part of him was "yeah, I'm ROB and no one can touch me" and the other side was "I'm a country bumpkin and whatever, and why is this sophisticated city girl so interested in... bumpkin yokel?".

Q. And was he kind of quite good to you sexually?

A. Yeah, he was, he was great, he was marvelous.

Q. Better than FRASER?

A. Different. I couldn't - I couldn't say that anyone was particularly better, 'cos me and FRASER did have some marvelous times, but he was - yeah, I mean he was - and it was very romantic and everything, and him coming and staying when MELANIE and dad were away, and it was all very sort of teenage-movie kind of stuff.

Q. Was he romantic?

A. No, he wasn't, but I thought him not being romantic was very romantic, you know, I was really quite into being - being man-handled (laugh).

Q. But did you feel in control then? Sort of, like, sexually?

A. No, I didn't actually, because we - when we had sex it was unprotected -

Q. Really?

A. Yeah. And this - I mean I really - I mean I know that I must have been - and I went - one thing I did do which was - which really was marvelous, I went away to CITY on a COURSE where I stayed - I was supposed to be staying in halls but my friend had gone up to stay with her brother in CITY, my - a really really good friend of mine who's - who's like really working class, and her mum killed herself and her dad was an alcoholic and - really, she was a really very strong person, and I went and stayed with them. And this was when I started talking to NICK who's... my mum's, who was really really good to me when I was in hospital and - I'm not answering the question, but this is good as well, this is when I went into the (?) [NAME OF HOSPITAL], he wrote to me when I was... and then when I was at the [NAME OF HOSPITAL] he came up to visit me every day when I was there, and sat by my bed when I went to sleep because I was very afraid of falling asleep because I thought I wasn't gonna wake up again. I was very panicked and so he came up to visit me every day and kind of took me out for walks round the park and really looked after me very well and listened to my insane rambling and -

Q. And you just met him from going up there?

A. Well, I - I'd known him vaguely from the sixth form but, because he was doing retakes, he was older than everyone who was there, so he didn't actually mix with people from the sixth form at all, so I didn't really know him and - there was a big confusion; I was supposed to be getting a train back from CITY with him, and there was a big confusion, and I missed him unfortunately. Which I really regret doing now, because I think if I'd got that train everything would have been alright, and I never would have met ROB, and everything would have been different and I wouldn't have freaked out but - I don't know, I think I was - I was heading for a breakdown, a breakthrough. I was - I was heading for a (?) stoned time anyway... FRASER. And I have spoken to FRASER since then, and it was very - the time I spoke to him was after I'd come out of (?) [NAME OF HOSPITAL 2], before I'd gone to the [NAME OF HOSPITAL], so I was still very delicate; and FRASER was telling me that he'd been having a really marvelous time and he'd been doing a lot of speed to do his revision, and that was really good fun, doing a lot of speed, and he'd been having a really good fun time, and he was going out and - and - I said, "well, can I see you this weekend?", and he went "oh, ... doing this weekend... exams", you know, and really was not helpful at all.

Q. Had he been to see you in hospital?

A. No, he wasn't allowed. He didn't know what to do really. He was very very shocked... Because really it ought to have been him because really what I was partly - I mean obviously, my dad, my mum, but obviously part of it was me getting rid of all the stuff which I'd been - which he'd been forcing down my throat for nigh on two years, so that was a large part of it. And I feel now I really do blame him in a lot of ways for what happened because I know that if - if he had concentrated on sorting his own life out then I would have - I wouldn't have been burdened with so much of - of something which I just couldn't understand, because I wasn't (?) human. It was this whole thing of - which is what my dad's been doing, is I don't - "I'm in such a state, I don't know what to do, therefore you must decide what to do and you must take responsibility for everything which I

do; and you must decide what I'm going to do this weekend, and you must choose the one thing which is exactly what I want to do. You must read my mind." And this is - I mean, I spoke to my dad last night; he came home - because at the weekend I hadn't seen him and it was really bad because I hadn't seen him properly since I'd been out of the [NAME OF HOSPITAL], and I was going out with my mum, and my mum was taking me to these parties of her friends, and I was having a nice time with my mum and not seeing my dad, and my dad... And, whereas, what my dad had done was brought a massive pile of work home with him and - and gone round all weekend going "oh God, oh God, oh God" and not acting in a way which is conducive to sitting down having a big pow-wow, which is supposedly what he wanted to do. So when he came home last night I sat down, it was half past eleven and his girlfriend was there, MELANIE was there, and he was sitting at the kitchen table, and I said to him, "look, it's no good. It's no good abdicating responsibility and then trying to snatch it back when you realise that perhaps what - what MELANIE and I want to do is not what you want to do", and trying to explain to him a terrible thing, which is what - what - what men have generally as their problem, in that they want women to make independent decisions and they want those decisions to be exactly what they want. Whereas they won't actually say what they want, because that would be admitting a weakness, that would be - and the thing is, is because he's been so completely freaked by the whole thing, by this whole experience at work, which is getting into a job and finding out that he really isn't up to taking responsibility for [FINANCIAL ROLE] or whatever it's called, and so - and he actually said to me that MELANIE has a problem, which is her individual problem, which is that she can never decide what she wants to do. Which is basically when dad says "I don't know what to do, what do you want to do?" and MELANIE says "no, no, you decide"; because MELANIE knows that if she makes the wrong decision then she's gonna get a real kick up the arse. Which is not what she wants. And so - and this is what I was trying to do last night, I was trying to explain to my dad that if you're feeling weak and frail then you must freak and wail, you must say, you must admit your weakness, you must admit the fact that you want to go and lie down in the sitting room and be talked to, rather than sitting round the kitchen table and engaging in conversations.

Q. And did he understand?

A. Well, he was sitting there saying "I'm really tired and I'd like to go to bed right now", which was obviously, you know, [DETAILS REDACTED]. At the weekend we've had much opportunity for pow-wow and it was impossible for me to take the initiative and create these pow-wow situations because there was a massive pile of work sitting on the kitchen table saying "do me" which he'd brought home. And I went to the doctor's, 'cos [MINOR HEALTH REASON]; and the doctor said - because he's a big friend of the family as well, this doctor, and - I explained that mum and dad had had this big argument on Sunday and - and he said, well why doesn't your father leave his job at the office? So I tried to say to dad "don't bring it home", and he was saying "well, I try my best, you know..." and "would you rather I spent an extra twenty-four hours in COUNTY 2 than - than bring two hours' work home with me?"; and I was saying "yes, yes I would, because it's you who got yourself this job, it's you who wanted to have a job outside London and you've got to take it" -

Q. - or leave it.

A. Yeah, exactly. And this he couldn't take because this was - this was his teenage daughter telling him some truths which he had been avoiding for most of his life in fact. 'Cos he used to be - I mean, my dad had actually been in a mental hospital because he was an alcoholic and he had to go into an addiction unit and get dried out, and he was in for three months; and there was - and I do feel now that the way my dad handled me being ill made me a hell of a lot worse. I shouldn't have gone to (?) [NAME OF HOSPITAL 3], I should have been kept at home. I should have, because I'm - the thing was, the way my dad was trying to persuade me to take the medicine was by pulling rank on me, which was obviously the wrong thing to do because, the way he'd been behaving for the previous - for the entire time since October, the whole time I'd been living with him, was not - was not a way of behaving which entitled him to pull rank. It was a way of behaving that entitled him only to - to be inferior to MELANIE and I, which was what he was. And so, when it was him being my next of kin, being my responsible carer, it didn't work. It should have been my mum who was persuading me to take the medicine; and it should have been MELANIE who was persuading me to take the medicine, it shouldn't have been him. But obviously, being the product of a private school, [NAME OF PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY], and so on and so forth, he couldn't understand that and so that made it a hell of a lot worse. And that was also one of the reasons why I went back into the [NAME OF HOSPITAL], because when I said my medication had been reduced, he didn't believe me, and therefore reacted in completely the wrong way, and said "I'm gonna phone the doctor, I'm gonna phone your mother, I'm gonna..." and just completely went mad and didn't realise that there could have been just a mistake. Didn't realise that what he - that I wasn't lying about my medication and - 'cos all he was doing was expecting the worst. I mean he was expecting me to be mad for the rest of my life basically, because he had worked himself into this situation where he was so - so miserable, and feeling so sorry for himself, that for me to freak was just like "thank you, God, you've dealt me another blow". And that was - that was the way he saw it, and this is the way at the moment he's still behaving, in a - he's just kind of moping around and feeling sorry for himself, which is very very difficult to cope with. And difficult for MELANIE as well, because MELANIE's just got a new job, which is [DETAILS REDACTED], and MELANIE has her own problems. My mum has problems; she's supposed to be doing exams. She was supposed to be doing exams, doing [LEGAL ROLE] exams - has just changed her job several times, obviously because of the loss of the other job, and basically - and I'm ill, so dad moping around feeling sorry for himself isn't -

Q. - doesn't help at all.

A. Not valid. So that's the situation as it is now. I'm just really glad that I've got myself a new boyfriend. Because really it gave me something to live for, gave me something to feel it was worth getting better for, because mum and dad were really - and JOE as well, I must admit, JOE was a darling, he really was. I mean, when - when I first - when I was - when I broke out of (?) the [NAME OF HOSPITAL 2] and had to be taken back, they let me and JOE go out for a walk. And I didn't wanna go back inside, I wanted to stay and walk around forever, you know, I didn't - I thought, now I'm out of there and I've got JOE here I can carry

on talking to him and - as long as I can keep him involved in a conversation, then I can -

Q. - won't have to go back.

A. Yeah. So - and JOE was actually crying when he persuaded me to go back in, because he realised that I wasn't - obviously I wasn't mad, I was just very confused; and he meanwhile was confused because he was part of the - the game that was happening. And so I mean he's - and still now he's really nice, he's really -

Q. Good.

A. - excellent and wonderful so - that, and my friends coming up to visit me obviously, and mum coming to visit me every day, was sort of what really sorted me out. Because when - when dad came up to visit me, he only came - I think - I think he actually came more times than I remember because my memory goes very funny. And he - he kind of lay on my bed and went "oh, I've had such a hard day!", which wasn't really what I needed.

Q. ...

A. Yeah. So really, as father/daughter relationship... has still much (?)feeling to undergo. But that's - that I'm gonna get sorted out, because I know that my counsellor from college, luckily, is also a trained therapeutic counsellor who does work with family groups and so on, so I'm gonna get some of that. Get my dad down there. Which is really what he needs, because he's - he's still an alcoholic basically, and he still doesn't know why. And that's really a problem.

Q. (?)So what's NICK?

A. NICK is - God, he's just wonderful, he's just marvelous. Everything about him is really really perceptive and sensitive and gentle and -

Q. ...

A. He is, he's got his own - he's nineteen, and he's had a lot of problems with his dad recently, and so... about problems with dads, and he also has - was very depressed for a long time, so he understands when I say I couldn't handle FRASER's depression, because he knows that nobody could handle his depression, and so he's - marvelous.

Q. What does he do? Is he -

A. He was, yeah, he was in the sixth form doing his retakes when I was there and he's actually got a place at [NAME OF UNIVERSITY] and he's supposed to be going in September... He's taking a year out to stay in London and then he's gonna go. He's gonna get some kind of job. He's been looking in the paper today actually, going "I don't wanna job, jobs are awful, I can't type, I can't do anything"; which is stupid because he can speak Spanish and so he could easily get a job...

Q. Well, that...

A. I mean he was just wonderful. I mean, he lives - he lives in [SOUTH LONDON] and he was coming like all the way up from [SOUTH LONDON] every day, spending all day at the hospital, which is not a lot of fun for anybody really... But I feel now, I mean now I've been in two institutions of the worst kind, the worst possible kind, that I can really handle anything. I mean, you don't go any further than that. I mean, when you're in a mental hospital you're no longer in the realms of the acceptable and unacceptable and sort of good and evil and... into fighting with little demons in your head and... very very strange. Yeah, it is, it's

very weird, weird, weird, weird. And weird things happen when you're there as well, because it's - it's pure kind of - it's pure energy from your head, it's not police and thieves, it's angels and devils. Strange. And - and because - and - and NICK having been in the [NAME OF HOSPITAL] and had funny conversations with funny people who just will come up and start talking to you, and will take it badly if you don't talk back -

Q. ... understand.

A. Yeah. It's... and it's alright.

Q. So is that a sexual relationship?

A. Well, not - not yet but it will be soon if I have anything to do with it.

Q. And will that be unprotected?

A. Oh, no. No way. No, no, no.

Q. Why was the other? Why did you have unprotected sex with ROB?

A. I - 'cos I just didn't have any condoms and it didn't - I was just - it was kind of - it was lustful and rampant, it wasn't - it wasn't kind of - it was like, I mean it was basically like being asleep. The whole thing with ROB was like a kind of equivalent of a wet dream. It was just, you know, this is too good to be true, so I'm gonna behave as if it isn't true, kind of thing.

Q. He didn't have any?

A. No, he was - no, no, no.

Q. But was that all the time that you didn't have it or just -

A. No, I mean I only actually had sex with him twice, so it was just that those two times happened to be when condoms were not kind of available.

Q. So you didn't have sex when he came to stay at your dad's?

A. Yeah. But I - I did have a condom when I actually come to think of it. But it was - I don't know, we just didn't - no, it was really really stupid. Especially because I knew he'd been injecting as well. I mean he said - obviously he'd never used dirty works, but why I believed him -

Q. How do you tell?

A. Exactly, I mean -

Q. You didn't feel that you were at risk.

A. No, 'cos I was - I thought I was some kind of god by that time, you know. I can have anything I want, life is completely perfect, the world is revolving around me and I am marvelous, I am strong, I am the god, I am - I was mad basically. Off my head.

Q. You didn't even think you might get pregnant?

A. No. And in fact I think I may actually have been pregnant because I had - when - I mean I - it could have been any number of things, but I did have some very strange painful irregular bleeding throughout the time that I was... the [NAME OF HOSPITAL] - that was the following month after I had been sleeping with him, so I mean it may have been true. I mean, basically, it might all have been his fault. Because I mean to be pregnant and have a miscarriage, it's - it can do funny things to a girl, as I've noticed with my mum's lodger... pregnant. Which was really quite funny actually because when I came out of the - of [NAME OF HOSPITAL 2] before I went into the [NAME OF HOSPITAL], she was - this is when I was at the [NAME OF HOSPITAL] day hospital, I went to see her and she was saying, yeah, yeah, I know about freaking out, and my friend freaked out, and I'll look after you and I'll take you out and we'll take photographs

and all this kind of stuff, and - and then the next time I saw her: "... I don't know what to do, I can't sleep, I can't eat, I can't do anything" and - so it was a complete turnaround and -

Q. You had to advise her?

A. Yeah, that's right, I was sitting at the end of her bed. It's a funny old world.

Q. So are you going to seduce NICK?

A. Well, I've tried already once, I've tried, and he wouldn't let me.

Q. Why not?

A. Why not? Because he - just - he just didn't feel comfortable.

Q. What, with the surroundings? So soon?

A. He's just a - he's just a complete gentleman, I think...

Q. I bet you'd got your condoms in your bag.

A. Yeah, I did, I - waving and he was going... No. He was very lovely and sweet and charming... But anyway, yes, as soon as possible. Any (?) opportunity.

Q. How were you going - did you say you'd met BEN, going back to December, at the AIDS -

A. Yeah.

Q. Why were you going to that?

A. Oh, because they needed some people - I mean it was a - it was an event, a happening for young people to partake in, and the woman who was organising it happened to be friends with my politics teacher, happened to come into a politics lesson and say "do you want to go to a really great, all-expenses-paid good laugh day out and - really great, kind of little bits of theatre and watch videos and have discussion groups with people who are HIV-positive and generally have an interesting time", and it was very interesting actually. It was - part of it was very painful as well, because there was one girl, HELEN, who was - basically was a person of exactly the same ilk as myself, and even had the same jacket and boots that I had, and was - yeah, and really - and there was another guy who was really weak and frail and - greasy hair and big bags under his eyes and - And we all - we all had a go at Virginia Bottomley at the end of it as well.

Q. Good.

A. Unfortunately - it was really stupid actually, we were given some false information. This woman said that the Terence Higgins Trust video had been banned for use in secondary schools, and so I - this was - I asked the first question and I said "why has this video been banned for use in secondary schools when lots of people who leave school at sixteen won't have access to seeing it in higher education?", and then the woman came up to me after and said "actually, that video hadn't been released yet". And everybody there - everybody had been told that this video had been banned, it was just -

Q. ...

A. Yeah, it was just them being over-zealous and implying that the situation was much worse than it was, so we'd all have the bit between our teeth when it came to talking to Virginia Bottomley.

Q. So did that mean that you got much more information about AIDS than -

A. Well, yeah, I mean, it was - although it was - it was split into two groups and it was - the final thing was one group was talking to Claire Rayner about the relationship side of it, and the other group, which was my group, was talking to [DOCTOR] about the medical side of it, which meant that he - doctor whoever he

was - got very elaborate about something eight - hemophiliacs, what's it called, the stuff that they need from the blood -

Q. Oh, yes.

A. Yeah, you know, and he got on about how the blood was heat-treated and the special machine that did this and - "yes, we have - all our blood is treated in this country" and then... when what we were interested in was toothbrushes and oral sex, and it was -

Q. What, whether you can catch it from that?

A. From toothbrushes and oral sex. He didn't really realise though, it was just sort of a bit silly but -

Q. So he didn't answer those sort of questions -

A. Well, no, he did, he did because there was people like me going "hm - actually I'm interested in oral sex" (laugh), being kind of open about it.

Q. He wasn't shocked by that?

A. Well, yes, he was, but that was just too bad.

Q. But did he answer the question?

A. He did, he did, yeah. But he obviously was much more into talking about machines, because men like toys and they like talking about them.

Q. Yes, probably more than they like talking about oral sex.

A. That's right.

Q. So did he say you could get it from oral sex?

A. Well, yeah, he said if you've got cuts in your mouth and so on and so forth. So, yeah, I mean I did learn an awful lot, and I also learnt that - something which I experienced in hospital, was that if you - when you know you've got a terminal illness you're likely to become incredibly much... than it was before, because you realise that life is for living and doing things that you want to do. And this - I mean, when I was in hospital it was - as I say, I thought I'd died and gone to hell, I thought there was nothing to live for, and then when I came out it was all very confusing because it was - I was going to the day hospital and being very - feeling very confused about the day because I was not being helped and not being chaperoned around the hospital, getting lost in the hospital, because all mental hospitals are designed to make you think that you're madder than you are. The [NAME OF HOSPITAL] had [DETAILS REDACTED] and - it would be, this ward'll be locked here and open here, and this ward'll be locked here and open here, and if you wanna get from this ward to this ward and the lifts don't work and - they only work if you keep pressing the button, and they have to go all the way down before they come all the way back up again, and if you wanna go to the - if you press the fifth floor it'll go down to the ground floor whether you like it or not. I don't know why I started telling you about this, but yes, very strange. They - they do make you think that you're ready to die basically, because you think it's just the end of the road, because you can't go any lower than a mental hospital. When you're in a mental hospital you're shit, basically.

Q. How did you actually get out, what triggered -

A. What - it was... day for my dad's birthday... But what I was trying to do - I mean I remember, all I was doing was - I kept saying to people, "I'm strong and I can look after myself, I'm not vulnerable", and I was climbing on the furniture and throwing things around, and waving my watch around saying, "look, I know what the time is, I know you're fifty, I know you're halfway through, and I know I'm

stronger than you, dad, and I know I'm stronger than you, ROB, and I know I'm much nicer than you as well 'cos I'm a woman and you're a man"; and - and basically I was - I was saying what I felt, which was the way a young woman feels living in London knowing that you can't walk home on your own at night, knowing that you're forced to get a lift, knowing you're forced to do as your dad tells you because there's no way you can leave home, live in a hotel and feel safe, and there's no way you can move out and move in with your girlfriends because you just end up bitching with each other because they're in the same boat as you, and they feel shitty about not being able to walk home on their own, and so on and so forth. I was basically telling it like it was and my daddy couldn't handle it and ROB couldn't handle it and no one could handle it. And mum was just so upset to see me doing this. But I went - actually I went to see somebody who was a friend of a friend who had a - who'd had more or less the same thing as me, went hypermanic; I went to see him in [NAME OF HOSPITAL 4] and - it was ALEX, 'cos I - I mean I was telling him about the side effects. I said to him, get a padlock for your locker because then you'll feel safe, because he was doing what I was doing, which was carrying all the stuff around with him wherever he went. And I gave him [JEWELLERY] and said, right, that'll help you to sleep at night because that's what I was wearing at the [NAME OF HOSPITAL], and I was saying, you know those demons that you're fighting with in your head, you've just got to say "fuck off" and - and giving him all this sound advice, and giving him a kind of condensed version of all the advice that any - everyone had given me while I was in hospital, and I had some very good - very good friends came and gave me some very good advice. Which was what got me out of there, because I was sectioned - twice, I was sectioned when I went into [NAME OF HOSPITAL 2] and then I was sectioned again when I went back to the [NAME OF HOSPITAL]. Which is what - people keep telling me to keep it under my hat because I won't get a job if I tell people that I was sectioned twice.

Q. A bit like having a criminal record.

A. That's right, it's worse. ... indictment. But - yeah, and I was - and - and - it was - I just watched him getting better over the afternoon. I was telling him about the side effects of the drugs and telling him how to talk to the doctor and telling him that if any other patient hassled him, all he had to do was scream and the nurse would be there, and if the nurse wasn't there then you could complain to the authorities; and he could get his mum to go to the European Court of Human Rights and so on and so forth. And basically, persuading him that he was in the real world. And he went to see the doctor at the end of the afternoon, and she said he could get out with some friends and go back home and see his family... And I told my dad about this last night, after I'd given him - read the Riot Act to him, I told him about going to see this guy in hospital, because I knew that if he'd been around and I'd said to him "what do you think?" he would have disallowed me. He would have said, "no, I'm not letting you go back, I'm not gonna let you freak yourself out again"; because he thought that the reason I had to go back to [NAME OF HOSPITAL] was because I stupidly didn't write down what medication I was supposed to be taking; it was my responsibility blah-de-blah. He didn't realise it was in fact the doctor's fault for letting me take responsibility for my own medication, which I was in no state to be able to do. And he didn't realise that when I got out of [NAME OF HOSPITAL 2], all I was doing was pretending to be

sane so I could get out of a completely scary environment; because I was in the remissions ward, and on the last day I was there, one guy came in with four policemen, these massive - they were massive blokes, massive mad men around, and I didn't like it.

Q. ...

A. I just kind of watched how my family were behaving and just mimicked them to get out of there.

Q. Do you think you might get a place with NICK or is it too early to -

A. Oh, no. I'm not, I just don't think...

Q. So what do you think'll happen in a few months or years or...

A. I'm only really going one day at a time... not really - I really don't think I'm sane enough to start planning my future. I'm gonna - I've got an aggregate mark for English on my course work which is (?)A; I'm gonna retake politics in November... apply to university.

Q. Do you still feel pressure to get As or is that gone?

A. That's gone. Only just, you know,... my dad, because my dad was a complete whizz at school, and he did all his A-levels at sixteen and he did an S-level at sixteen and got into [NAME OF PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY], and was too young to go to [NAME OF PRESTIGIOUS UNIVERSITY] so he had to take two years off... basically equivalent of a genius, and he's now in this terrible situation because he's working under people who are stupider than he and he just can't handle it.

End of tape.