

LJH38 6.2.1990

Linda

Q: ... Oh, God, this chair's a bit hard. This is a new one. This chair suddenly appeared -

A: D'you wanna swap?

Q: No, it's okay... Good. Great. Well, what we're trying to do, as we said in that ad really, in this study, is to try to find out what young women - how they think and feel about their relationships. So, if I ask you what's the most important relationship for you at the moment, what would you say?

A: What, in terms of boyfriends or in terms of all sorts of things?

Q: Anything.

A: The two most important relationships in my life is my mother, who is like a really good friend - and she's not particularly young, she's just really nice, and her boyfriend, who is away, works away in the week and, sort of, he does [MECHANICAL ROLE], sort of HNC, so he's home Wednesdays and... but he's away, so he's like... But up until I'd met ROBERT I'd been out with one boy; I mean I'm only eighteen so it - you know, I'd been out with a guy for ten months but it was - I was about sixteen and it was like really serious, but it wasn't 'cos I wasn't silly enough to think it was, but, you know - but ROBERT and my mum really. I mean I'm close to my dad but they're the most - two most important ones.

Q: Mm, yeah. So you say you've been going out with ROBERT for -

A: Year, year and a month, something like that.

Q: Yeah. How did you meet him?

A: Well, to start, I'd had a lot of boyfriends before, but mostly it was - they'd asked me out and it was platonic really, and we'd go out and they'd give me a kiss goodnight and that'd be it, and I was going out with one of them on Christmas day, and my friend who actually moved in downstairs to me - 'cos I live in a maisonette - she held this party; and ROBERT came and two other guys who were twenty-eight and thirty, and he's like nineteen, and I just looked at them and thought well, you know, and didn't take any notice, and they kept saying... and in the end he asked my friend for the number and she like phoned me first, 'cos she said, well, you know, can't just give out your number, so I said yeah, alright -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: You know, I'll just see what he's like. But it turned out he knew a lot of people I knew, and they said to me he's really nice, if you don't wanna go out with him then he won't come on to you. And we went out and I didn't really think he was - he is nice looking actually, but I didn't think he was staggering, 'cos I really fancied a rest, you know, 'cos I'd been out five days and I just really wasn't interested. But he was so nice, and he took me out to see a film I wanted to see, and it turned out he'd already seen it, and he was just a really nice guy, and so we started going out and it's just sort of carried on from there. And it was nice to have somebody and he's - at first I was really quite, I suppose, jealous in a way, because he goes away and, although it's only a couple of nights, it's sometimes been for a week if there's no college and stuff, and there was like - a girl was up there that he used to go out with just as friends from before, but there was a particular one that he had been out with, and I really used to get very upset about it. Really annoyed. And I haven't got the kind of temperament - but then

she went back home to SOUTHWEST BRITAIN, which is far enough away for me (laugh).

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, and I don't think he - he did, it was just I panicked, but it's a lot calmer now, in fact he's probably worse than me now. 'Cos I think that sometimes happens -

Q: He's getting jealous of you.

A: Yeah. It's been worse since I went to work.

Q: Yeah. What were you doing when you met, were you -

A: I was halfway through my A-levels, and I was just giving up, like working on a Saturday - and I used to work a lot actually, but... and I had a really good social life from there, but I sort of - you know, there are so many things, you have to decide which one you're gonna do, and so I - I see them now and again. And that's just how it started really. But I'm not - the trouble with me is I think I'm too much - I think with my head just a bit too much, you know what I mean?

Q: Yeah.

A: And then I'm not very - I don't get carried away very easily.

Q: What, so how you feel about the relationship then, I mean what - what are you telling me?

A: Well, it's a good relationship and I really like him, so if it was to carry on - but I mean I have friends who are getting engaged; I have one friend who had a really good chance to go to - I've forgotten the name of it, she wanted to be a primary school teacher - [NAME OF SCHOOL], and she got the offer and they said they really liked her, they said two Ds; so I mean LUCY should have got two Ds. But she met this guy who was the same age as... but - I mean, I know him from my junior school; he's a really nice bloke, but he's earning like 250, £200 a week as a manager of one of these [SHOPS] - and he spoilt her rotten, and now she's not working - since the summer, she went to COUNTRY for three months, and then she hasn't worked and she won't come out; a group of us from school went out last night, we don't see each other often, every couple of months, but she won't come out and she keeps getting ill, and I think it's partly 'cos she's sitting in and she's, you know, she's just full time his girlfriend.

Q: You - you feel you wouldn't do that at all?

A: No, definitely not. I got - my parents are very close and so it's like I've seen with them - like I mean, my dad's quite depressed at the moment, like it really upsets my mum, and they're sort of really close and they don't have - well, they don't have any friends outside of the relationship, but they're quite happy, but I - I'm - it's nice for me to have - but I couldn't live like that, having seen it. They're happy and they get on well, but I couldn't do that. But I think that might be just the gap between however old - just the way - it was the way, 'cos my mum was ill through her teens, she didn't have so many - so it - you know, it fits with what she - happened with her.

Q: Yeah.

A: But... different, 'cos it's been - my parents sort of are quite independent, they don't - they didn't like me being too independent, they don't like... but they say well, you go; and like I was very shy... and they wouldn't let me - they wouldn't let me back out, but I didn't - I wanted... and then I wouldn't go, and they said, "If you don't go", you know; and I was very shy. I mean I had an interview at work today for another job, I've been there five months, and I had an interview for a job, it was, like, [RESEARCH] and that. And I know I messed it up because I just went so quiet. Because - it's partly because I was - the only other people that

were going for it were graduates, the only reason why I got it was 'cos my present boss, KAREN, took... off me and put me forward for it. And, although they know me, they both... knew the... so it was - and I couldn't think of anything to say. And, you know, it just didn't work out right at all. So I don't think I've got it and it would have been handy 'cos - I wanna do a degree in the evenings round here, and the thing is that that would be fine for me there. But I can't stay all night out for four years or however long it takes, I'm gonna have to leave; but I could end up in a job up in, you know, North West, and I've got to come down, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I really wanted it 'cos it was just under twelve thousand, and it would have been ideal, 'cos I can - with the natural rate of it going up - they give really good pay rises - it would have been okay. But I can't afford to stay on what I'm on.

Q: Well, maybe there'll be another opportunity anyway.

A: Well, it's really small, there's about sixty of us that run it, and that's it. There's not very many people - actually it's probably not even that, and people don't move.

Q: Mm, yeah... good place to work.

A: Oh, yeah, I mean they'll never go bust, because I mean it's through the [ACCOUNTANCY ORGANISATION] anyway, so -

Q: ...

A: - always accountants.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It's a really nice - I mean, it's a really nice job that I'm doing now, but I get a bit bored, and she thinks I'm not - well, sort of over-qual- - not over-qualified but she says I'm - you know, I shouldn't be doing that, I should be doing something else, so it was really nice of her to put me forward for it, but I came out feeling really, you know, rotten, 'cos I could, you know, it would really be helpful.

Q: Well, have you heard, I mean did they tell you -

A: No, they haven't, but you know - you know you get the feeling; I mean I could be wrong 'cos I have done before, but I... really good idea. 'Cos I went for quite a few interviews before I went for this one - not loads and loads, but you get the hang of what - you know, how you're getting on.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's harder I think, 'cos they knew me, and I couldn't - and you can't say, well, you don't have any of the "well, what A-levels did you do?", 'cos they already know, they've got your grades in front of them. They said, "oh, very good grades", you know, and - you think, "well, great, give me the job", but -

Q: Yeah. It's... put in that situation, isn't it.

A: Yeah. 'Cos, you see, they took me on before I got my A-level results anyway, 'cos it isn't really an A-level result job. I mean it's a good job, it's a good secretarial job, just under 9,000. It's interesting, but it's not - I want something a bit more challenging. I don't wanna be stuck in a... I mean, ROBERT'S training now, but he'll be earning quite a bit 'cos he's in [MECHANICAL ROLE], and I mean... 15,000 straight away, so I'm like - I want - I wanna be independent, I don't want to rely on his money like my friend it, I couldn't stand that.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I like to have my own money... I suppose I compete with him in a way, I think - I think... we just tend to. But he's never - I suppose I'm a bit more competitive than him really; but he - the only time he gets upset is - 'cos he left school at sixteen and... like training, and I mean the stuff he did I can't - I can do some of

it, 'cos I've helped him out with some of it and I've never studied it, but you can understand it, but some of it I just don't know what's going on. I don't understand why he gets so uptight. 'Cos he didn't understand my A-levels - well, he wouldn't if he hadn't sat them.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he, sort of, sometimes says, "oh, you're cleverer than me", you know. And then of course I went straight out of school and started on more than him, 'cos he went on training, and so it really "oh, God, she's gone straight -", you know (laugh).

Q: Yeah.

A: And he was really pleased when we were all sort of really...

Q: It's complicated, isn't it, though.

A: Yeah, but he's very understanding, and my mother's fine about work and that. My dad has to work a twelve-hour day, so he's just quite knackered by the time... really tired so -

Q: What made you decide to go out to work rather than to do a degree straight on?

A: Partly because it would have been very hard for my parents to send me, partly because - which was a mistake - I thought "well, I've had enough of school", which isn't strictly true 'cos I mean it's completely different. I have - my best friend is in CITY IN NORTH WEST at the moment, and I always - and she writes... she's going, I think "well, I'd really like to be doing that", but then I mean I did make - I made the decision when I didn't even have... 'cos it's so far in advance -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and at that point in time I didn't wanna go. I go through these stages of really wanting to go and then really not wanting - and then thinking "no, I'm alright" - I never really don't want to go, I think "I'm alright", and then I get into the stage of really wanting to go. But I mean if I... the degree, I shall have to do it that way. Or if I - I mean, if I suddenly came into loads of money I could afford to stay on. I don't think I have any long-lost uncles or anything, you know.

Q: It's a bit hard doing it in the evenings.

A: I mean, I'm quite happy to do that. 'Cos I sort of - I like being - I suppose being pressured a bit, I like that and I like studying. I like studying. But it's fitting it in - it's hard to fit in studying with a full-time boyfriend and, you know, and work and things. I mean, at work - I mean, I sneaked off this afternoon, 'cos it's flexitime - as long as you do your hours, they don't mind. But when I first joined I had to do a lot of extra hours... I'm still owed eighteen; I normally don't do a full day, I mean when I - I work - when I'm there I have to work really hard because - well, it depends; near press day I'm not busy, and it's sort of average, there's hardly anything actually, and then when I get two weeks before press day I have to ... and typeset it, and it just takes so long. And - they do scan it, I can have some of it scanned if there's certain..., but they take - 'cos they're really busy 'cos we're all pushed, they take so long it's quicker for me to type it in, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: 'Cos what I did was, in my A-levels I did a secretarial course as well, which was - if I hadn't done that actually, I don't know what I'd be doing, I'd probably be in a bank. And I didn't wanna go in a bank. I mean, VICKY, a friend of mine, she's gone in a bank and I think basically she's pretty unhappy. But my friend KIRSTY did, but it was a different case 'cos she's working for... and it's - she talks about it and it's a lot different to what VICKY's doing; I suppose it's cos just

the kind of bank it is. 'Cos it's a personal, very personal bank - she's being trained to be sort of a managerial position, so it's very - like it's interesting. It's a different sort of thing.

Q: What sort of degree would you do in -

A: ... Geography, something along the Geography line. I might do Economics - I did Economics at A-level, purely out of lack of a third A-level really. And I hadn't done it at O-level and I thought, "well, I'll give it a go". My friend HAILEY had done it at O-level, she said "oh, it's not that hard"; and 'course, it got quite tricky. And I used to skip a lot of lessons, I never used to go; and I was lucky 'cos I got a B. And it was only because he brought these books about three months before we were due to sit, and I happened to be in the lesson for once, and my friend got one, KIRSTY, and I took a look at it, and I just understood it, whereas all the other books I just couldn't understand them. And it was so easily written, and so I got ROBERT's dad, he's a taxi-driver, I got him to pick me up one at Dillons. And I just learnt from that for the three months leading up to it.

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cos I failed my trial. Because there was no reason why I couldn't scrape a pass, they put me in. I should imagine they were quite surprised... It was just the luck of the book. I had another - another boyfriend, he was doing Economics... and he said to me that he didn't get it until about a month before and it all suddenly clicked. And that's what happened with me...

Q: Gosh, sounds wonderful, this book!

A: It wasn't that book, he just clicked, like it worked with him. With me it was... the book really. And Geography and English Lit, I did... I mean, the only thing that upsets me is when I go for jobs and they say about graduates, but they don't care what degree it is, you know, it could be any degree whatsoever -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and then they - they look at my A-levels and they say, "well, you could have done one", but it's not really fair, 'cos I... and I think, well, if I could have done one, then why don't you let me have a go? 'Cos they put them all on probation anyway, so like - like I do understand why - it's because you've stuck out the course and you -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but it's just, you know, that's why I feel I'm stuck between two stools really, and I'm not gonna say that, so - I could go - I can't decide whether to go and do a degree or do a short business course in like all different, and really top secretarial courses, 'cos I quite like doing that if it's interesting, but I don't like it if - I can't stand being some man's secretary...

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But I would like to - but if I was like a P.A. I would like to do that, but it's a different thing and they're well paid. The thing I like about my job is they treat them with respect, although a lot of it - all production's women, all of news is women, all the reporters and everything -

Q: Yeah.

A: And it's, you know - you know, they treat you as if that -

Q: You think that makes a difference, that it's all women. Yeah.

A: It's nice that it's all women; then in some ways it's not so nice, 'cos sometimes it's nice but - to have just a bloke in the office to chat to, but it is nice having women. It was quite reassuring for me, going into an office with all women, 'cos, you know, you've got nothing to worry about and you're not gonna be harassed in any way -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: 'Cos I was harassed at HIGH STREET SHOP just a little bit, I mean he was a really nice guy but he just came on a bit strong, and he really - and I felt really annoyed that somebody had - you know, could - it's like, you know, keep following me around, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But everybody in my office is older than me, they're all - the youngest is twenty-three. The nearest next I think is nineteen, but I don't see her very much, another girl is twenty-one. So there's no one like me, I'm the baby.

Q: So they look after you a bit.

A: Well, actually they - they can be quite protective, like one of the girls... girl that I see out, but she was a temp, she's left, she's gone to... she's a bit scatty, she's about twenty-eight, she's a nutter, and she never knows what she's doing so she always comes to me for advice. And I saw her for lunch the other day, and (?)he came in and said, "oh, you've been seen - you lent her..." - 'cos she - ... she was late for a meeting, and he stormed off in a huff and she thought, well I'm not gonna - you know, stuff him -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and luckily DEBBIE, she's twenty, she bailed me out; you know, she said "don't you talk to my friend like that", and like DEBBIE's quite pretty and it's like all the guys really like her, and so they went..."... wasn't DEBBIE" and, you know, it's like... and he slunk out the office. I was really grateful 'cos he was really annoying me. But it's really nice there.

Q: When you were saying about this other guy who harassed you at HIGH STREET STORE, did you do anything about it?

A: No, he - harass is the wrong word really, he didn't harass me. You know like some guys, when they fancy - they're sort of playful, and when they were young they used to punch you and kick you; well, he used to sort of - I mean he never tried to do anything, he'd just like show - you know, go "ooh", you know, and he was older than me and I don't know if it was part - he was about five years older than me, and I don't know if it was partly 'cos I was younger, and I think in a way he was being quite protective as well, you know. So he kept... and he hurt my arm, and I said to him, "oh, just leave me alone" one night, and he - and I went like that, like making to kick him, and he put his hand down like that; I dislocated his little finger! (laugh). And he left me alone after that. I didn't mean to, I was just like - if you're gonna mess around with me, I'm gonna mess around with you, you know. No, I - I haven't - never - apart from him and he was no (?)whore, he wouldn't have - I've never had at work, it just annoyed me. I get annoyed that like coming here - I mean, this is about the smartest skirt I've got and since I had this interview, I normally wear trousers to work, see; I thought, well, I'll put a skirt on, and the amount of guys who said "hello", you know. And it just really annoys me. Sometimes it's - if it's just a whistle and they're young and they're in the - it's not - it's alright, sometimes it can be quite amusing; but when they're about fifty and it's just the way they look, and I think "oh -"

Q: Yeah.

A: - and I - I get annoyed with the fact that - when I went out last night, I walked into a... and it was dark and it was okay, and I got on a bus the rest of the way, and I was sitting there and there's like a circle in the middle, between the three spaces, and I was waiting for some friends, you know, three girls, sitting there, and the amount of blokes I had look at me, you know, as if to think "why is she sitting there?"; and that - and I was getting really mad. I was really relieved when

my friends came, it only took about ten minutes and they were early, but I was really relieved 'cos it's just not very nice being a woman sitting there on your own. And I mean I was wearing cords and just a shirt and - and I mean I've got one of these suede type of jackets, I can't really wear it for work. And, you know, I didn't look, you know... stunningly beautiful sitting there, I was just sitting there waiting. And I was annoyed. That annoyed me and I mean - I mean even ROBERT said to me "you will be careful, and you will get a cab home"... you know, "you will be careful" -

Q: So you think it is a bit dangerous for women?

A: I think it's - I don't think it's incredibly dangerous, and I think it's wrong to stay at home and panic -

Q: Yeah.

A: - because I used to go out and I used to get really nervous at night, and since I've had to get the train home I feel less nervous. And I just feel angry now if it's in the dark and somebody makes me nervous, I think, you know, and occasionally there's been some poor guy walking along - if he's behind me and he steps out he must think "what's wrong with that girl?" 'cos you're sort of like this, but -

Q: Yeah.

A: - it's only wise to be like that because it's not safe if you're the only one in the road and he's not that far behind you. I've had a couple of - seen a couple of flashers, I've had a man try and get me in a van when I was nine, I've had a variety of things, and I've had a man next to me in the cinema doing things to himself when I was about fourteen. And I mean I don't know how they expect you to trust them. Even though it's not that particular person's fault who's behind you, if it's dark and there's a big guy behind you then you're gonna panic.

Q: ... Yeah, yeah. But you think - so you think that women are - in a sense they are at risk from men; I mean, those sorts of things that happened to you.

A: I think they are at risk - I think you're at risk if you put yourself at risk, like if you walk a particularly quiet way - I mean, you should be entitled to walk that way stark naked if you wanted to, but the point is, because of how it is - if you walk a particularly quiet way, like through playing fields on your own and there's no lighting, then, you know - it's not the girl's fault, but you've got to use a bit of sense. I only go where it's lit and I only go - and I will cross the road and then cross back, a few yards back, if there's not houses and there's an alley, I will cross, if I don't particularly like that bit and you can't see before you get to it. I will do things like that and it's - I think it's wrong to have to take evasive action, but you do.

Q: Mm. It does make sense, you mean.

A: Yeah. I mean I don't drive, I panic in the car, I think "oh, he's gonna hit it"; when we go past buses I hate it, like on the other side of the road. I'm fine on the motorway actually, I feel I can handle the motorway, which is really strange, 'cos... didn't like the motorway, but at least you're all going in the same direction (laugh), but with me I see something coming towards me and it's like - and I just - I've got to learn, because I would really rather go to a course near where I live - [NAME OF POLYTECHNIC COLLEGE]'s near me - and then I could sort of - then I would be independent, even more independent, and I wouldn't have to rely on waiting for ROBERT to be home to take me, and things like that. I would like to learn to drive, but since I... so I - he always picks me up if he's home. I walked down - the reason being, that I walked down one night and had several people (?) yell at me, and then I had to... down... It's all houses and it's lit, but not very

well lit, and I just really got nervous - you know like sometimes there's no reason but you just get nervous, and by the time I got there I was in such a foul mood, 'cos he was late and he hadn't - well, he didn't have time to pick me up, and, you know, he never did it again 'cos I was just in such a bad mood. But I - I had - like I said - or maybe I couldn't have been as young as nine because my mum wouldn't have let me out - when they was letting me down the town then I mean I wasn't let that far. I must have been - it must have been about thirteen, it just seems such a long time ago, but I was walking along this road and it was in the back streets - not like back alleys, proper back streets, houses, and there's this guy in this van, and I'd never have thought of it, 'cos he didn't have plates; which mean - which definitely was - I mean, if you don't have plates you are up -

Q: - up to something, yeah.

A: And he leant out and he said something like "... looking for", like he was basically asking me if I was a prostitute, and I was like dressed in trainers and jeans and that; so "no!", you know and - I made sure - and I was behind a lot of parked cars, it was a long road, and then I crossed and - there's now a pub there, it used to be a milk place, and I crossed down, and he drove down this other road and then doubled back, and I did not hear his car, and the door was open, and he was like - and I just - I didn't run, 'cos I thought if I run then he might leap into action, so I kept on walking right on the inside so he couldn't get to me 'cos there was still cars. Being residential there's nowhere to park, you know -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and he went off down this other road, and 'course, this road I know is a dead end, if you live down there you know it's a dead end, it's a very long road but it is a dead end; 'cos he went down; by the time he turned back I was out on the main street, and I ran up behind this old lady, and then I walked along, and though the main street was busy, I was walking along and I saw his van go past, and I thought "he's gonna know if I was looking", and I saw it go past... and I didn't see it until it was past me 'cos I didn't wanna look round, and - 'cos I was on the other side now so it was oncoming traffic, and I saw it and there was no plate on the back. And I didn't report it, which was really stupid of me. If anything like that happened now, I'd report it. Mind you, there was something actually we didn't report; we - my friend and I go to a lot of concerts when she's home and we went to ... CINEMA, and we got on at [LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION] - it's a long way on there - and this guy got on opposite us; there was two young blokes down there and a couple of older women up the end, and we were on those long ones, and he sat there and he had dark glasses on; and it was dark outside and he didn't ring right, but when you're talking you don't notice; and we knew something wasn't right and I didn't realise what it was. And then he had - actually we were sort of sitting like that, 'cos we hadn't seen each other for ages and we were nattering away, and then I saw he had this... a book, it wasn't a paper, it was a book, and he - and then as he moved it I could see he was like showing himself. And I said to my friend "it looks like this is our stop" and she's going "what?" - we'd got about another eight to go, you know; and I dragged her off and - this shows you how persistent he was - we got on the next one - it was really weird, 'cos the next cubicle was people standing - it's really weird the tubes, I can't understand people; we were in that and we sat down and we saw him up the other end. We got down and pushed our way through, you know... we saw him up the other end of it and he was looking. I thought "I wonder if he's still doing it"; and he got off at [STATION]. 'Cos I remember what

station he got off, 'cos we ran off again and went down to another and there was this really big... guy and we sat down on either side of him. He was going to the same concert, I think, 'cos he had all this stuff on. We just sat down either side of him 'cos we thought nobody's gonna come near us sitting next to him... 'cos he was actually... sat there, you know, like this, and we saw this guy get off and walk past. Mind you, I wouldn't have recognised - I couldn't - I couldn't really have described him anyway. So we didn't, because he'd got off and he went out, like we saw him going out, so we thought, well, shall we, shan't we, and we decided not to.

Q: Mm. Quite upsetting, that kind of thing, isn't it? Did you find it upsetting?

A: I found it upsetting - I found it upsetting at first and I was really shaken on the way home, and in fact her dad went down to [NORTH LONDON] to pick us up, because he felt then we wouldn't have to get the last train to [LONDON UNDERGROUND STATION], which can get really quiet, and I was nervous. And then when I went to bed - when I started telling my mum and she was downright annoyed, and then when I got up in the morning we went to... and we went to school, and we told the boys at school, and, you know, it became somewhat of a joke. You know, 'cos he wasn't even - he was just so pathetic and it was sort of - I think, because they were - probably they were embarrassed, or like anyway they were a bit shy, do you know what I mean? And they were embarrassed and so it became somewhat of a joke, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that made it easier really.

Q: That was their reaction, embarrassment or ...

A: I think, yeah, I think... some of the other boys it was more - I think it was embarrassment and - I mean, not that there was anything they could do about it but they were sort of, you know, I think it's embarrassing... done nothing... probably just walking along the road quite happily... some neurotic woman in front of him.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. But all these little things, they sort of pile up, don't they? - so that you...

A: They make an effect, because I find that if I have a row with ROBERT I can't bear him near me. I get very, very - actually I get really mad. Whereas my friend, she always makes up with her boyfriend that way. But I - you know, he'll be damn nice to me for weeks, you know.

Q: Yeah. So you feel - I mean, in a way you're kind of saying it's as if you can't trust men.

A: Yeah, I mean I - I've been out with a lot of boys, as I said, that were friends, and I found - it took me a long time to trust ROBERT. 'Cos... seeing someone else... stupid, you know, and it was not really on anymore anyway and I wasn't really - I wasn't bothered, I said to him "oh, I'm not seeing you anymore". But I really feel strongly about that - if you're with somebody - I mean, if ROBERT saw somebody else, I'd like to try and forget about it but I couldn't, and I couldn't - I couldn't - I don't think I could carry on going out with him. Because he wouldn't be the person I think he is - do you see what I mean - you know -

Q: Yeah.

A: - wouldn't be what I thought he was if he did that. That's why I can't understand it when people say, "well, you know, I really love her", 'cos to me he wouldn't have been the person that I thought I - because he -

Q: ...

A: - 'cos, yeah, 'cos he'd -

Q: Is it a sexual relationship with him...?

A: Yes, but for not quite a long time it wasn't, for about ten months - quite a long time, and it's not - it's not - it's not really - we're very close and we get on very very well really, it's more that. I mean it's occasional, but with him being away and the fact that both of us live at home it's very few and far between really -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and it's not - and that doesn't bother me at all, I'm not particularly - I'm not really - I wouldn't say I'm incredibly highly sexed; I have a friend that is very highly sexed and she - like she says she's - she daren't say she's in love, she says she's in lust, and she, you know - she goes - I mean she doesn't - she's slept with three men that I know of; I mean, she may have a few what she hasn't said - in her life, she's nineteen. And one of them she's been seeing on and off for about four years and they've been going out for a year steadily, and he went off to university and he's just totally freaked out. And she - although they're finished and he was seeing another girl and then they split up, she's still sleeping with him whenever they happen to see each other, which is something I couldn't do, but I think it depends on what you're like. But then she had a rather disturbed childhood anyway.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because she never knew her dad... I think people - just people react differently.

Q: What made you decide that the relationship with ROBERT would become sexual, I mean did you decide together, or did you think - or did he suggest it or -

A: I don't know, that's hard to say. No, he wasn't very pushy. I've had boyfriends say... say, well whenever you want: "whenever you want to, darling, just give me a call", you know. "Get stuffed!"... probably sleeping with about ten women behind my back anyway; and he was just amusing to be with, although I don't find him amusing anymore, he just annoyed me. But at the time he was - they were so - they were like ... and they were just so completely different to anything I'd ever encountered, and my mother just put up with it - 'cos they - my parents... grow out of it. And I mean I really liked the music and I really like a lot of things, and I have friends that are, but they're not the same as those particular ones.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he was funny really... But ROBERT... he sort of - it always sounds so stupid to say it just sort of happened, but it sort of did - it wasn't - it wasn't planned, certainly not. We went away on holiday in the summer and I shared a double bed with him for a week and a half and it was just a cuddle and go to sleep, and it wasn't - his - his friends next door... "come to bed", you know, you know. That sort of thing. But he really wasn't like that at all.

Q: Just seemed like -

A: Yeah, just seemed alright.

Q: Did you take any precautions?

A: Yeah, I'm on the pill.

Q: And you were before - what - what -

A: Yeah, I've been on the pill since I was going out with him four months, just in case.

Q: Ah. So - but you decided that or -

A: Oh, I decided that, he knew nothing about it. I wasn't gonna tell him. He did find out obviously, because I'm terrible for remembering it. If it wasn't for the fact that my mum comes in in the morning and says, "take this", you know, I would forget. I mean, I have forgotten them when somebody hasn't reminded me, and

like, you know, 'cos when we were on holiday he had to tell me... to take it, 'cos... I just do not function in the morning. And I just - I'm quite forgetful like that. Not at work but things like taking... you know, I forget. So he found out then. But he just, sort of, really - he's really good like that; if I'm not interested I just say "no", you know, and he's fine. Yeah, he's quite good like that.

Q: So when you say if you're not interested - I mean, do you enjoy it at all, ever?

A: Yes, I do, but only if - only if I want - you know, if I'm in the mood. And as I said, if we've had a row I -

Q: You wouldn't want -

A: Well, I tend to just say - "just don't get near me"... sort of thing. But I don't - I don't know how I do that actually. Sometimes I can be very, I suppose, probably quite cold actually... Sometimes in the nicest possible way I just tell him to get stuffed sort of thing. I'm not very - I enjoy it but it's not - it's not really why I go out with him. I go out with him 'cos I get on with him and he likes the same... music, and he likes the same sort of thing, and I agree with him. I could never have a sexual relationship with somebody I didn't agree with on things. Just -... we row about loads of things, but I couldn't - even if it was somebody who I found incredibly attractive, if he - I didn't agree with him and I thought he was a bit of a jerk, I couldn't say "oh, well, he's alright in bed".

Q: Yeah.

A: I couldn't do that. Some of my friends say, well, you know, it's alright, but I couldn't do that.

Q: It's more the other way round for you then.

A: I think I'm probably - well, I don't know actually, 'cos some of the girls you talk to find that they are similar, but a lot of my friends - my best friend is very much the same as me. A lot of the others aren't. A lot of them - mind you, a couple of my friends have had boyfriends for three years, four years already, from when they were quite young - well, fourth year, you know at school, and so it was sort of sixteen, maybe younger. One of my friends was probably fourteen. And you just sort of... it never occurred to me to do that I think it's -

Q: So this was your first sexual relationship with him, yeah.

A: Yeah. I mean I went out with another bloke for ten months and that wasn't sexual at all - well, it was, but it wasn't - I wasn't having sex with him. He was very nice actually, but he had too many problems; nearly gave me a flipping breakdown. In virtually the sense that I couldn't - I lost a lot of weight; actually... puppy fat problem actually, I lost the weight and it stayed off; I used to be a lot bigger. I mean I still put it on, but it really did. At that time, I don't know if it was just a part of nature as well, but my mum got really worried, 'cos although I wasn't thin, I'd lost so much weight, she, you know -

Q: When you say it was sexual, but you didn't have sex with him, how - what do you think of sex as being?

A: ... tricky question really, 'cos I mean when we were at school in about the second year, boys used to have a stage thing, a stage where you was holding hands, you know stages...

Q: Yeah.

A: - and I mean some of them really... were above obviously sex, which... twelve or something like that, they dragged it out anyway; and you used to hear them talking, and 'course we knew what they were talking about, and they didn't realise we were getting - it was really stupid but - I don't know... sex, and I suppose that encompasses - would encompass in that if you were to do things

like oral sex, things like that I mean,... anything like that I would say is sex and - although it seems silly, sex and above. Do you know what I mean?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: If you take it as a standard part of - but I would say no, we would just like cuddle a lot, maybe pet a bit but it wasn't - it's never been - I've always been - I suppose like at school there's girls that you know will sleep with, and girls that you know won't, and girls that you know damn well won't, and I was one of the ones that damn well won't (laugh). You know -

Q: Yeah.

A: And I wouldn't say it was because I'm - I suppose - I mean I never got called - I wasn't ever called tight and they were probably looser than me, but I think it depends on whether the boys just like you as a friend before they start cat-calling names. I was never really - I've always been more friends with them. I mean I'm an only child, so I miss - I mean I have always had a friend that was a boy from when I was young. And I had a friend for eight years who was a boy, who I was very close to, from the age of five, something like that. And like he was really important - I think it was important that I had him, 'cos I think it would have been harder for me to mix with boys.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, I went to a both sexes school, which I'm glad of. I wouldn't have gone to a single sex 'cos I've found - a lot of the girls I know who went to single sex is either not really panicky or otherwise really giggly and threw themselves all over them. I couldn't work out which one was worse.

Q: ...Yeah. Yeah.

A: And you get embarrassed for them, 'cos I mean if somebody goes to the pub - one of the pubs we go - one's out in the country, which is really nice, and one's near where we live, and a lot of them are underage, and you think, "oh God, I'm so embarrassed for them" -

Q: Yeah. When you were - still talking about this stage thing, and some things are sex and beyond - I mean, did you do the things which were beyond sex before you did sex at all?

A: No.

Q: Yeah. Because somebody else was saying to me that like oral sex can come before sex, sort of penetrative sex or something...

A: It could have done, it could have done, yeah. It just never did.

Q: ...

A: I suppose it never did with me because that has - maybe it's 'cos however like school - that was - my mum told me everything, from the age of about eight, I used to ask questions, so she'd get me books, so I knew everything, but that never tends to be in the books, and it was sort of - and that was never mentioned in those stages at school, and so it was very much that that was something that was maybe deviating from the path, which I don't particularly think it is -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but it was something that wasn't - if you were to say to boys about, at school, about sex, they were alright; you mention anything slightly like - and they just turn into a complete convulsion panic, you know, it's something they didn't talk about, you know. And I think it is treated like that because in some of the more - I don't know, but the books that I had were very much - they never mentioned it, even some of the more adult books that mum bought me as I got old - you know, older, it was never mentioned. I mean, she never mentioned that.

Q: Yeah, yeah. But do you think - on the whole it sounds as if your mum gave you the information that you wanted.

A: Oh, yeah. 'Cos I mean I had no inkling of it so I didn't ask, whereas I knew -

Q: That's right, yeah.

A: - I think about the age of six I wanted to know where I came from and I was really - "why?", you know, I think I was one of those children. And so like mum used to say, "well, I'll get you a book from the library" and it starts off - one in particular started off from the fact that people get... and it had little cartoons, you know, anyway - "oh", and I just couldn't understand why those other children would laugh... they did, 'cos I used to think, well, it's just like the little book, you know. And I used to - mum used to get me them as it went along, and she used to talk to me; I mean if I want to talk to her about something, I will talk to her about it. I talked to her before I went on the pill, I talk to her -

Q: I was gonna say, when you decided to go on the pill, had you discussed that with her before?

A: Yeah, definitely, yes, 'cos she said to me "if ever you want to", she said, "I want to know", she said, "because I don't want you to ruin your life and get pregnant; or not even get pregnant, but have the panic that you might be and -", she said, "I don't want that, I want you to - you know, if you want to, then it's easier for you". There's a couple of - there's a lot of friends I know that their parents only just let them go on holiday; they've been going out for three years, four years, and they've only just let them go on holiday together this summer, for the first time, not last one, and I mean I think my mum - my mum and I tended to agree on the fact that if you're gonna do it, it doesn't matter if you're on holiday, I mean you could do it in the back of - you could do it in a park, you know, I mean - a bit risky but - things like that.

Q: ...

A: Yeah, I mean you could - I mean I know people who've done it - you could do - I mean you could do it at any time, couldn't you, I can't understand that. My mum sort of, "well, if it's gonna happen you've got and try and prepare, I suppose, as best as you can". So she's not sort of - if I said I slept with him I sort of thought she wouldn't like that, but she was alright, you know.

Q: Did she know ROBERT by the time ...?

A: Yeah, and she... they really like him, I mean he's a really nice guy. Nicest, I mean he's the nicest person that I've ever had. He's like just really kind and he's - I think I'm a bit cold about certain things like - well, he's a nice bloke, he's got a nice family, he hasn't got many hang ups - like a lot of boyfriends I've had have got so many hang ups -

(Tape change)

A: ... get angry when I hear somebody else's parents, and they affect the child and it's not fair. But that's - it's just the way it goes. But I've had a lot of boyfriends, but he's just really nice, sort of - well, he's not clean and wholesome, 'cos he's not - 'cos... get on well with... , but he's just a nice bloke.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he's got good prospects, and he's got... nice car; he's got, you know, a nice... and things like that, and I mean he hasn't got loads of money, I mean we don't go out... every night. I have a friend who's incredibly wealthy... she's getting married this year to a guy who's twenty-four, he takes her out for tea at the Ritz. And I would panic if...(laugh). But... and he's just nice, and I'm very - I mean I do, I love him a lot, and that has got nothing to do with the fact that he's nice and that, but all of it combined makes it sort of that you think, well, I could cope with

this person. I think, being an only child - I mean, I don't think all only children are the same, but with me it's very much I can amuse myself and I feel that I - I don't know, it's hard to explain - I don't need -

Q: Yeah.

A: - I don't need it and - but I find, even my best friend, I can only stay with for a couple of weeks; I couldn't live with her. But I can stay with him - I mean the longest I've stayed with him was a couple of weeks, and then a week when his parents were away, 'cos I stayed there to keep him company; although... eat what, 'cos we both eat huge amounts of food (laugh), it was like mostly - it was really - we got on really well. Which I was quite surprised about; I was pretty nervous actually, I thought oh, we might not get on - 'cos it can happen -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but we sort of seemed to sort out the differences.

Q: So is that somebody, all told, you can handle -

A: Yeah.

Q: - in terms of you like to spend your time with him and he's a nice guy.

A: Yeah. That's what's important. With me, sex with ROBERT is just - it's more like a bonus and it's nice because it's a nice person, it's a nice relationship, it's - and there's always, I mean it's a stupid expression to split it into, but there's like make love and sex; and if you divide it into those, which are pretty ridiculous, but if you divide it into that, it's more on the love side than the sex side, which is what some of my friends have got with guys they see on and off; it's not like that, but then I couldn't - I don't think I could handle that. I think it's however you're brought up or how the things around you have affected you as you've got older. And I went to a nice school - it wasn't a public school but it was one of these ones where you sort of have - people sponsor it, and it was a nice school, and it was - there was no sex education, which I've always thought was really appalling.

Q: I was gonna ask you about that, yeah...

A: The boys had it.

Q: Yeah, you had - you were a bit negative what you said on the questionnaire, about sex education, that the boys were told - it was almost as if they had some protection...

A: Oh, the boys had chats with the headmaster, you know, ask a question, no matter how obscene, and he will answer it for you. And they used to come out, they used to ask really rude questions just for a laugh like, they'd be in hysterics; but from about - I think it was about the fourth year up, you know when they thought - it was very much the boy can get the girl into trouble so let's tell her; well since most of the blokes I know are completely irresponsible, it should have been the girls who were having it if only one sex could have it. 'Cos I think - well, not all of them, but a lot of them, I mean some of them, are married with children now, they're from my year, I just can't get over it.

Q: Yeah.

A: In fact, one's got two. I mean she's got pregnant consecutively... contraception. I mean I can understand it if the girls' like fifteen and it's a mistake, I can understand that; I can't understand having two on the trot -

Q: Well, unless she wanted them.

A: Yeah. But I don't think she did. My friend - my boyfriend's brother's his friend, lives quite a way away but goes up and sees him a lot, and his cousin is seventeen, and she slept with all different boys without contraception; and 'course, eventually she got pregnant, it's a wonder she didn't the first time, and

she's got a little boy - I think it's a little boy, I haven't seen it... and - they panic me, I'm sure I'm gonna drop them or something, and I - I'm quite efficient at work but I'm completely incapable at home, and she - she's got a baby; she doesn't - it's - obviously it's affected her life completely and she doesn't wanna know; she still goes out to the pub every night and her mum looks after the baby. I think my mum would say "you look after it" or, you know,...

Q: Take your own responsibility for it sort of thing.

A: Yeah. I mean, she's very young, but then she's lived in a village so she's gonna be. It makes a difference; my cousin lives out sort of SOUTHERN ENGLAND, she lived in a village until she was about fourteen and she's still, although she's only five months younger than me, she's still so different to talk to; she seems - and it was a single sex school she's at and she seems such a long way behind, not... I mean just in everything. We used to be very close when we were young but there's like this huge gap; and she wants to go to art college, and then she wants to go here, she wants to go there, she can't make her mind up. We're just different now.

Q: The other thing - one of the other things that I was gonna ask you about is, did they mention anything about AIDS at school? I mean, they didn't mention anything, it sounds like, much.

A: The only... however you wanna put it, the only thing I have ever had was on periods. And you could have a free tampon if you liked. And I can remember because it was particularly hilarious, because she was waving a tampon in the air and one of the boys walked in, thinking it was just a Geography lesson, and he ran out... That's the only one I remember, which is probably because of that, but they did mention it - I think in a way, we did it all in Biology, and everything was summed up in the fact that the teacher had to keep stopping because she kept going red. You know, and the whole thing was summed up, 'cos I mean it's, you know, diagrams, the lot, you have to learn this diagram, you know. I suppose that rather takes the glamour out of it, so in a way I suppose that was just as efficient a way, if you took Biology, of knocking it into your head.

Q: So that was just the kind of practicalities, the technical aspects sort of thing.

A: Yeah. And then AIDS was very well publicised. Of course, when AIDS really hit the headlines, you know, I mean it was - my dad used to get New Scientist, and it was around for years before, but it never came to the front, and when - I mean I didn't realise that 'til I started cutting them apart, but when that came about it was very much - you couldn't avoid seeing it, but it wasn't ever mentioned at school.

Q: Mm. When do you think you first heard about it - you saw it in your dad's New Scientist?

A: I - I saw it there, but this was after the day, I saw it mostly, it was on the news and in the papers and everywhere, you know, 'cos it was AIDS mania -

Q: Yeah, that week when it was all over the place, yeah.

A: And - but when I did my Geography A-level, I did a hell of a lot of background work for that, and I would get his New Scientist because they had a lot of conservation, and we knew that, because conservation was in, there was gonna be definitely at least one conservation ... and we did - I learned a hell of a lot, and when I was flicking through the other pages, things like "mystery virus", and it was mentioned - HIV was mentioned years - well, whatever - it was mentioned years ago, it was just they didn't really know what it was. They thought it was just in Africa, then it - you know; and then - I've even seen it in... that they said "did it

come out of a laboratory?", and that was before all the scare. Which is probably quite possible.

Q: So did you - when there was the sort of main push, when it came to consciousness, when it was on the television and so forth, did you get the impression - I mean, sometimes it's been put around as a sort of gay plague or something like that, that doesn't have anything to do with - did you get that -

A: That's just stupid. It's like saying it's not gonna affect me, and I've heard so many people say that, I just - you know, it's so stupid 'cos it can affect anyone. It's the same as any - it's the same as any disease, it's - I mean I've always been... 'cos like... when you get diseases, you know like venereal disease and that, and we did the symptoms of gonorrhoea and syphilis in like, you know, Biology. And so when AIDS came it just seemed to me like another - another one, but worse, because you can cure, provided you catch syphilis in time, which you should in developed countries do that, but I never - it - it affected me because I thought, well, you must be careful, and if I have a partner who has had sex with several - well, a lot - if I ever had a promiscuous partner who's had sex with, say, not that they're too permissive, but had sex with a few girls who I knew of as being rather promiscuous, then I would make them wear one all the time, just in case.

Q: Yeah.

A: Or I might make them have a test, but you can't really say (laugh), you know... go and have an AIDS test, you know. But I would be very careful.

Q: You think you'd be okay asking him to wear a condom straight away?

A: Well, if they didn't do it, they know where they can go.

Q: Yeah.

A: I suppose I'm rather, you know, stubborn... you know, you do it or you forget it (laugh). But I mean I would - I probably would ask them to go and have a test and if they didn't do it, I'd say, well, you know, you've obviously got something to worry about - out! I mean I'm not going to - I don't want to basically die because of somebody else's promiscuity; if I haven't been there, I'm not gonna catch something.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Is that the main way for catching it? Are there other - in what ways do you understand -

A: Well, as far as I know. It's hard - like hypodermic if you're a drug taker, or mainly sex or if you're - just if your blood gets mixed. There's other - I mean, there's other ways, I mean - and then there was all that scare in the paper about when he spat in the policeman's face, but it turns out that they don't think you can get it through saliva. Things like that. I don't - I mean I'm not really up on it 'cos I've never read it, but all I know is that I - if I - well, actually I probably wouldn't even go with somebody who I thought had been promiscuous. I mean you can't - you can't know if you've never met them before, but I very rarely go out with somebody I don't know.

Q: You don't know -

A: No.

Q: And then you'd be liable to know them for quite a while -

A: Well, I'd be liable to know how many girlfriends they'd known in the few months I'd known them and what sort of places they liked. If they liked going to discos, I mean I would say they were eyeing up other girls, I would be suspicious, you know. There's plenty of discos round where it's like a meat market. I never go.

Q: Do you think that your friends - some of your friends feel like that; I mean, if they would look after themselves in that way, or do you think that -

A: My best friend would. She definitely would. She - she's probably tougher than me, but - yeah, most of my friends would. The only one that might not is the girl that sees this bloke on and off, but she - I think she would, she - most of my friends - this sounds, this probably sounds really snobby, I don't mean it like that - but of a certain average intelligence, is the only word I can think of, that they think well, take care of themselves. But some of the girls I did know that left, that I wasn't really friendly with, they weren't in my circle but I would talk to a lot, they were very much that they didn't seem to get it sort of thing, they didn't seem to understand what was the situation.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I think they're really at risk, because if you don't understand the situation, you're not gonna take it seriously. Most of my friends are quite - they want a career and they want - I have one friend who I actually met at my old workplace who is - just wants to get married and have children, though she does work, but she's not - I mean I don't think she's... with anyone. She's a lot older than me, she just wants a stable - she's the only one I know who's not - is really scatty and totally... but she's - she's not the type that is at risk, 'cos she - well, I mean, but then you could marry a guy who could have it so it's very hard to tell.

Q: Yeah, yeah. But you think that - I mean most of your friends would, then, be very aware of the risks and try to look out for themselves - but do you think it's easy, I mean you say you'd be...

A: No, it's clearly not easy, it's not easy. It depends on what you're like in the relationship. I mean I'm quite - I'm really honest and suchlike, and if I lie to somebody I usually end up telling them I've lied; I've never had the necessity to lie at work and I wouldn't like to do that 'cos I'd feel, you know, that I'd lose my job or whatever. But like in my personal life I don't really like lying. I'd never cheat on ROBERT with another guy. If I saw another guy and I had - like if I fancied anyone I think him enough not to want to think, well, you know, ROBERT can see me at the weekends, I'll see this guy in the week; then I would say to ROBERT, because you make a choice - you don't have - I would not do both.

Q: ... two, yeah.

A: No. But then it depends what you want, it depends if you can't make the choice. But I've never had that. One has always come - I have finished with one and then gone out with another one virtually immediately, but I never saw him when I was seeing the other one. I'd say "no", and I would think, well, you've got - you can't keep people hanging on. Even if they don't know about it you're still leading them on to think everything's fine and maybe, you know, we've got a bit of a future, at least for a year, you know, and then you, you know, kick them - "go on, off you go".

Q: Yeah.

A: I wouldn't do that.

Q: Do you feel that - I mean, do you feel that there's a sort of double standard, that men's attitude might be different from -

A: I think it's - I think a lot of men - see, I can't really say 'cos I'm quite young, 'cos I'm saying from the boys that are my age - a lot of them are - like to pretend they think they've got double standards, but I've heard them talking about other guys who treat a girl badly, and say, "what a bastard!" and - "well, I'm not gonna be friendly with him", and there was a lot of that that went on.

Q: Yeah.

A: And boys say it just as much as women do, if not more. You know, you catch them whispering and -

Q: ...

A: Yeah, and they - they didn't take to it terribly kindly, but maybe that's only because the particular age group I'm in, a lot of their parents are splitting up, a lot of their parents have affairs. or they've had to have the boyfriend in the house or, you know, and they can hear them through the walls - I mean I had that, a couple of friends who were really upset. I mean, I'm not surprised - it's not, you know, it's not good, for your son or daughter you should take more care, especially when they're about fifteen... it's a bit selfish really. If you want to you should be somewhere else. Yeah, the boys - there is double standards, because like I suppose there is, they say "oh, the man's a bit of a stud", you know, but - I mean, if it's true the guy's a bit of a stud, I'm more likely to think he was a bit of a prat, really.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: What's he trying to prove?

Q: Yeah.

A: No, I - there are, but I think it's getting less, the gap. But that might just be the people I know.

Q: - you know, yeah.

A: Yeah, 'cos you can't say. I mean, I know a couple of friends at university and there was loads of blokes, you know, just out there for a good time and like if any girl... I mean I even know some boys who've done that. But most of them are the ones that in actual fact are probably only - probably haven't even slept with anyone yet and they're just desperate to, you know, get some experience or something. I don't think there is such a gap, and the thing I always find... My mum watches a thing called Out Of The Dolls' House, it's on Channel 4, about women -

Q: Oh, yeah.

A: - and my mum watches that every week, and she's always - I haven't watched it, but she's always saying "it's disgusting what they had to put up with", she said, "I'd never wanna go back", 'cos... my mum says "never go back", you know. And I think there were differences, and I think there still are - I think it's because of the culture as well, obviously, in - I mean, the culture's sort of - I mean, like the Asians, I have -... I mean, I have a friend who's a Greek, and she wants an arranged marriage, which is very unusual now, 'cos she's about 25; she wants an arranged marriage and she wants that, and she doesn't mind if he plays the field a bit, she finds it acceptable. Whereas if I had then I would, but if I hadn't I wouldn't, you know.

Q: Right. Yeah...

A: I think the women and the men are slightly more equal -

Q: - in our culture?

A: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I can't stand to see it when women are treated really rudely by men, but then if they're women to let them, then I tend to think, "well, more fool you"; but if you've been conditioned to something, then you're gonna accept it, aren't you?

Q: Yeah.

A: And 'cos I wasn't conditioned to that I won't, but - it's a really weird thing actually.

Q: Yeah. Complicated, the relationship question, isn't it?

A: It is strange; and you can have relationships with the opposite sex that are very different. I mean, I have a friend who's always like - I haven't seen him ..., but he's always like pinching my bum and like - he used to be obscene sometimes with the things he'd come out with, but he would never - he would never have like harassed - like harassed me, or done anything to me, we were just friends. And I think if I'd - I went out with him when I was about thirteen for a week, and if ever - he's really..., and if ever I'd made a pass at him I think he wouldn't have known what to do, it was like a joke, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And he used to do it to all the girls, mostly to me, but it was - there wasn't anything to it.

Q: That could have been a sort of protective thing as well, for him, couldn't it, because he pushes so far that people just wouldn't take him seriously, then you don't have to take him seriously.

A: Yeah, it's just - yeah, sometimes I think he did sort of mean it. Because it was a joke, if I - you know... he could laugh, "ah, joke", you know, it was a bit like that; and then it got to be just a joke.

Q: When - you've been telling me a bit, but when you think about safe sex, or safer sex, what do you think, what sort of thing comes into your head?

A: What, you mean in terms of what is - the first thing that comes into my head, I must admit, when I think about safe sex, the first thing that comes into my head is not being pregnant, before AIDS, before diseases, because I think, to a girl who's been brought up - my parents - my mother - my dad - my mum's a Christian, and I was and then I wasn't and then I was and then I wasn't, and I sort of get really enthusiastic and then I get really - at the moment I'm in a very unenthusiastic stage, but then I get incredible guilt about that; and - but my mother never said to me, never made me come to church, I always used to just go, it wasn't - she's never pushed it; but I think that has an effect, so my thing is pregnancy. I think partly it's you shouldn't have sex before marriage. And, though my mum never said "you shouldn't", it's just sort of there, I've read it and I've seen it and it's like - I - I must admit I do feel guilt about that.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I'd find it more sensible if I - if I was engaged. Because - but then and engagement can fall through; and a marriage can fall through, so -

Q: Yeah.

A: - it's a very very tricky thing, but pregnancy to me is the biggest fear, not want to be pregnant. I mean, no way.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, I suppose - I hadn't got my... by any stretch, but I intend to be - I intend to get a responsible job and have a good job and a nice home, before I have a child; 'cos I don't think it's right to have - well, it's - if I were pregnant I wouldn't have an abortion, I don't think. 'Cos I - that is one thing that - because of, partly because of the religion and partly because of other things. When I was about sixteen, I sort of - I agreed with abortion; now I agree with it, if a woman wants to abort, fine, but I couldn't. I know I couldn't. Even now I know I couldn't, even - if I got pregnant right now, I could not do that; it's just something, it's a very personal thing.

Q: Yeah.

A: But then I think about AIDS. But then -... as well, because I think, when you're protecting yourself from being pregnant, it's only when you really - I mean very rarely you ever get it that - but if really the only way you're gonna get it broadly is

having sex, so if you're not wanting to get pregnant you're not having sex and therefore you are protecting yourself anyway. I think -

Q: But sometimes it's taking other precautions. I mean, you're on the pill so you're safe from pregnancy, but I mean you wouldn't, for example, be safe from AIDS necessarily, would you?

A: No, but I make ROBERT use something anyway, 'cos I don't trust the pill. 'Cos I've had several friends -

Q: You said - yeah -

A: - that - I mean, I've had friends that it's split on, so they - I thought, well you can't trust a condom; then you have the pill, but, 'cos I'm so forgetful -

Q: You might not...

A: - if I miss the pill once that month, I know you can't for two weeks without it, and even when you've got it I will not, until it's over the two weeks, even with something else, 'cos it is - I suppose I am paranoid, I suppose I am a bit paranoid about that I will not - now, that is just something, you know -

Q: So you're using a condom anyway? Yeah.

A: Then it kills two birds with one stone, and like it's nice that he sort of respects my view. If I say "no", you know, that he... it's sort of very calm.

Q: So I mean you don't - you don't mind using a condom, it's not that you don't like -

A: No, I don't mind. I'm relaxed more having it.

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cos I wouldn't relax if I didn't have it, 'cos I think - and then - you know, it's just awful. I mean, I go to family planning - my doctor put me on it; but, to be quite frank, my doctors are appalling, and I want to change, but the thing is there are so many, and they're all full up, the good ones, that you just can't move. So - and I don't really have..., I just don't like it, it's just I find them rude, especially the man. I go to family planning, my mum put me on, and I had a scrape and, you know, got checked over, the first time - she said "you can have it this time or you can have it in May", I thought, "God, let's have it now then, get it over and done with"!

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, and that - it's funny, I wouldn't like to - I don't - I don't mind seeing a man doctor and talking about... but I would not want a man doctor examining me.

Q: Mm, yeah. I think that's... I always... position...

A: I don't know why really, but I just wouldn't. I mean, a doctor's a doctor but I just wouldn't, I wouldn't feel right.

Q: Well, if you've got the choice anyway.

A: Yeah. I mean I can't remember exactly what questions were on there, but I - you know, it was very broad in the sense I - it's just a really complex subject, relationships, it's... just what person you come across and who you decide you really like. I mean I could have just as easily found I really like somebody that was a bit nasty, but then I don't think I would like them for any length of time, because I have a very hot temper and I wouldn't put up with it. I don't - I really don't think I would put up with it... "Yeah, but what if you fall in love?" - but I don't fall in love the same as she would in love, it's like it takes a while, you know -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: - and I'm very wary and -

Q: Yeah. No, I was - that was one of the things that I was gonna ask you, about that - 'cos people quite often have very strong feelings about the way that they

would be and what they would do and so forth, and then suddenly something happens and it changes. Like falling in love or, you know, suddenly being attracted to somebody who you'd never have dreamed that you would have been attracted to.

A: Well, I wasn't attracted to ROBERT when I first met him, but when I went out he was so nice, I thought "oh, he's really nice"; and he asked me to go... New Year's Eve somewhere, a pub, and it turned out a lot of his friends I knew, and in fact a couple of his friends had asked me out, when - 'cos they used to come in and bug me in the day, and so it was like quite embarrassing.

Q: Yeah.

A: ... got drunk and it got very embarrassing (laugh). And - but there was another girl there who'd gone off with one of my ex-boyfriends who I'd just split up with, and she was all over him, and I suddenly felt really absurdly jealous; and I hadn't gone out with him - we'd been out but it wasn't dating, it was just like getting to know each other, we were just - we'd go out, have a chat, drink, and it had only been twice anyway; but I felt really jealous and I thought - and that's quite unusual for me straight away.

Q: Yeah. You were saying you were jealous when he was away as well - I mean, the two things... the rational bit of you.

A: Not now. Yeah, there's irrational - not so much now because - I know this sounds stupid but since I've been at work - you've got to be a lot more rational, and - I used to be petrified of the phone, I hated the phone, so I never used to answer them at HIGH STREET STORE. When I put it down, I used to answer the phone, which is total rubbish. And I used to think, "oh, no", 'cos I have to deal with... people who are just incredibly pushy, and used to have to be really charming, and I'm a lot more at ease now whereas before I wasn't, and I was - felt - I suppose basically a bit insecure; I was particularly bad when I was waiting for A-levels, not consciously so but I know I was. I was appalling actually, God knows how they passed me. And I didn't realise it was that, but as soon as I got the results it was like -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: On the day I phoned my mum, she said - whatever -... really peed off 'cos he'd had - put up with so much, and then there I was, having done really well, and sort of... and so - it took him a couple of days to get over that (laugh). He went, "oh, great", and he was cooking lunch, and he went, "oh, after all you put me through!", and he - and he... 'cos he thought, "you'd think she could have done after all that was fail one"! (laugh).

Q: One of the other things we were asking about is risk-taking. Now, it sounds to me like you don't take risks at all in your - in your sexual life, you've been very -

A: No, I wouldn't.

Q: - careful. Do you think you take risks in any other aspect of your life?

A: Well, some of my friends are very staid and they think I take a risk by going to a rock concert like with one other girl, you know, but it doesn't (?)place me out; if somebody's - there could just as easily be some guy on the street that's gonna attack you, and if you've got a lot of big blokes round you then they'll - I have found - I lost my friend - a group of us went, there were some boys and we lost her... and when we found her, there was blokes talking to her; and they weren't like chatting her up, they were talking to her, and they said "do you know where they are?", and she was going "no" and she looked really worried, and so they are - a lot of them are really nice. So - and when she saw us she sort of went (gasp) (laugh); I take - I have been known to take risks, I mean I've done really

stupid things, and when we went home and I - the boy I told you about who was very childish... he had a van from work - I don't know if he was supposed to have it but he had it - and it had - you know the..., I don't know if it's... but it's really big - and we were put in the back, and you couldn't get out when you were in the back, and he drove out somewhere and drove back, and there was me and my friend in the back; we got grease all over our jeans, ... and there was this big canister of gas starts to rolling around, and we've got our feet against it, and - it's not explosive gas obviously, but, you know, I was. And when I got home I thought, "God, how could you be so stupid?", but at the time I just said "fine", got in, they shut the door; I said to my mate, "we can't get out, can we?". And if we'd have crashed -

Q: Yeah.

A: - it might have gone up. Well, it would have gone up. And I thought, "how can you be so stupid?".

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, I wouldn't do it now, I'm maybe a bit older and more careful. But... I met some of my friend's sisters the other day and they're sixteen and... and I felt old, and I'm eighteen, you know, and I felt really old -

Q: Yeah.

A: - looking at them, and it was really weird 'cos they looked so much older, and I thought "Hmm. Have to keep reminding myself, how old I am.". But I - I - I mean I have taken risks, like - I mean I've done stupid things. Going up Oxford Street and GREG - same boy... that year, I - got up - you know how Crocodile Dundee gets up? - he got up on a bin, and it - they were watching it jokingly, but Danny had to do it, and the bin wasn't secured, some kids had obviously been kicking it. It came off the wall and like we were just - went off in different directions and left him standing - well, lying there going - you know (laugh). I've done things like that but I've never - I wouldn't say I've ever done anything really -

Q: - really risky.

A: No. Apart from in the van, which would only have been risky if we'd had an accident, which the way he was driving it felt like we could have done, 'cos... I've never really done anything really risky. I mean, I normally join in with things but - I think it depends on the people you go around with, and I've never really gone around with a group that were - by the time I went round with GREG and that, they did do things that were risky but I - by then I had enough sense to say "no", and they - we don't always get on, in fact I hardly see him anymore, and when we do we don't get on; it's only by accident we see each other because they do such utterly stupid things, and because I wouldn't do what they wanted me to do they didn't like it. 'Cos they're the type that really they've got no confidence themselves, so they have to lead other little kids into trouble who are about three years younger than them, you know -

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: - and I just find -

Q: - you didn't wanna know about it.

A: No. But I just wouldn't do what they wanted me to do.

Q: Yeah.

A: Mind you... five, I used to - I was really good with my parents... really good girl, which my boyfriend just doesn't believe that I was really good and really shy, but they - but I was really quiet at school, and this teacher told me I couldn't add up the way I wanted to, so I was stamping my feet, and I stamped my feet at her,

and she told my mum I... So I suppose that helps, in all sorts of relationships, whereas if you're basically, I suppose, stubborn, you kind of -

Q: You hold out for what it is that you want to do.

A: Oh, yeah. I would never think, well - well, I would if it was said to me "please don't take that job, take another one a bit less", or if I had to work away, then I probably would back down over things like that. But I wouldn't back down to the extent that I - I'd make sure I had another career alternative - I wouldn't -

Q: Yeah.

A: - it depends on the situation; I would back down for people and I have backed down, for my mother and things I would, but only if it was sort of sensible in that case. But then I've got a terrible temper and I've done some really very, very silly things, when I've been angry, things that I've thought... "oh, God!, you've really embarrassed yourself"; I mean, I've flipped - I've flipped - I've flipped in the middle of a play, 'cos my friend was - she was ... bullies, and they were pouring Coke down her back when they stood up... and - but nobody really noticed anyway, 'cos there was so much noise 'cos it was so bad, it was a school thing -

Q: Yeah.

A: - school workshop, because everybody hated every minute of it; and I have done some really silly things; I mean the boy I went out with for ten months - I'm not surprised, I should imagine he hates me - we actually got on very well, but I should imagine he hates my guts and I really don't blame him.

Q: Why?

A: Because I mean I phoned him up so much, I should imagine he could have cheerfully killed me. He must have been really fond of me, really; it was partly that I was - I thought I was in love and I really wasn't, it was like a game, and at the time he said to me "you're play-acting", and I wouldn't have thought I was play-acting but I think I was.

Q: Yeah.

A: Not really play-acting but - 'cos I was genuinely fond of him, but it wasn't - and so I used to have rows, I suppose, basically just to spice it up, you know. And I mean I know I did that, which was a really rotten thing to do; and I've only seen him a couple of times and I've avoided him like the plague, 'cos I'm embarrassed that I -

Q: - that you were behaving like that.

A: He had a lot of problems and he made - he made me much more highly strung anyway, so in the end I wasn't doing - I couldn't help it, it was like -

Q: Yeah...

A: Yeah, whereas ROBERT says to me like "don't be stupid". I used to hit out a lot and like - if I hit... he goes... He would never hit me but he ... I've changed like that since I've been in a relationship, it's been, you know, I mustn't do that, and I mustn't say that. And I do... sometimes and I think, "oh, I shouldn't have said that", you know, "that might have been hurtful", even if it wasn't about him but about somebody else. I think, "oh, I shouldn't have done" - that's hard in a relationship, saying the right thing. If he says something that hurts me, even if he doesn't mean it, I can't - I'm not - I feel, you know, "oh, he said that", but then the amount of times I do it -

Q: Yeah. That is always a difficult one yourself, because what people say to you is always much more, you know, searing -

A: ... "how dare you!", you know (laugh), and then you think, oh well, I did say that about... or I did say that about them when I - when they were rude and I had to be nice and I didn't want to be, you know.

Q: Yeah. It's very difficult to put yourself in the role of the other, but I mean you can do it - as you do it, sort of retrospectively, later you think to yourself "maybe I shouldn't have done it"...

A: Yeah, but - and often I apologise and then sometimes if I've - if I've been particularly hot-tempered then I like - it doesn't really make up for it, but I like maybe buy a card or - I never buy anything - I'm not sloppy, I never... I buy something usually funny, or something rather apt of what I'm like, and things like that, or I might buy - I might buy a bar of chocolate, just a bar of chocolate, not chocolates but just like...

Q: Yeah.

A: Things like that, I do try to make up for it. Whereas before I went out with ROBERT, it was very much "if you don't like it, stuff it".

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cos I went out with quite a few boys and they were all very much - much of a muchness, you know, and I reacted that way to them, it's just how it happened. With him it's sort of - I mean I do respect him... I don't - I don't respect a lot of men. A lot of them I find very irritating and very - some of them - not all of them, I mean there's a lot of men probably that I haven't met because I didn't necessarily go to university, that were very intelligent and very intense, but a lot of them I find just plain irritating and - it's probably because they're so young as well -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and they go on about really inane things. 'Cos it's definitely true is that men are younger; because I went round - we're friends of this couple, and he's nineteen, she's twenty-six, you know, she's been married before and they're living together. They're both really nice, and - we'd had this pizza, me and her, and we couldn't move, we'd eaten so much, and they got out Scalextric that her mum had bought DEAN for Christmas, and then two men - well, they're nearly twenty and they're sitting on the floor playing Scalextric, and ... can be fighting over the police car, but there was a little bit, especially DEAN, it was like... you know, I had a game but they were like really intense. And I thought, they are different. I think they definitely are different. There is definitely a difference. I mean, there's a difference between everyone but there is - there is something that is just -

Q: Yeah.

A: You have to deal with them. Like I see traits in ROBERT that I see in some of the guys I work with and - well, there is one guy in our department who's just freelance, and I see something he's said and then my dad might, and I think, "oh, that's very, you know, similar". I couldn't give you an example.

Q: No, I was gonna ask you about that; I was gonna ask you about the kind of relationship that you have with your dad. I mean, you said he worked twelve hour a day; do you have a chance to see him at all?

A: Oh, yeah, 'cos he goes out at four in the morning, he has to walk to work, 'cos none of them drives, and then he's off at six, so I see him when I get in from work, and I mean obviously he's tired, but I mean he's really nice.

Q: You get on with him okay?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he's got a very hot temper, that's where I got it from. Really, I think - I mean I think - I don't think children are born - well, I suppose they are, born with a certain personality, but I think a lot of it is whatever they've picked up; it could

be something really minor that could have even been a tiny little bit on a TV show when they were three, but some things - I think things trigger things -

Q: Yeah.

A: - and I do pick up things like him, like when he was - the dog - we used to have a dog, now we've got a cat, who's caused so much damage - but the dog used to smash the (?)car; my dad said, "oh, fucking hell!", and I went mad, and dad goes "I don't think...", I kept going "..."; my nan's going, "what's she saying?", my mum's going "I don't know" (laugh), and I was like - and I did used to copy him.

Q: Yeah.

A: When I was little I think I was more of daddy's girl; whereas now I'm older I'm closer - I'm so close to my mum. Which I think maybe he senses in a way. I think that's sad actually with a father, but often the girls, when they get older - not all of them, but if there's - if there's just one child, I think children do tend to latch onto one parent slightly more than the other, and I would say it was my mother. But it doesn't mean I think any the less of my dad really, it's just -

Q: And you have a very good relationship with your mother, as you were saying. Has that been - I mean, has that been the same, have you been always able to talk to her?

A: Yes, until I was about thirteen, and then we did go through this stage she said we were gonna go through, and I said "no, we won't", and we did -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but then by fourteen and a half it had passed.

Q: Yeah.

A: We have had arguments and - she's very calm but when you annoy her, that's it. She's very - she just flips.

Q: So it sounds like she has a temper too.

A: Yeah, but it's a very different temper. Whereas I think since I've been at work my temper's been a lot better, 'cos people... you have to be - you know, you can't say - I mean, they don't have to do anything really to irritate you, but it could be anything - anything, you know,... And I think I'm a lot more controlled than I was. I don't think I'm wonderfully controlled but I ... But I think when ROBERT takes me out, if somebody says something I don't agree with, like one of ROBERT's friends is racist and he really annoys me; we went out, and ROBERT said "he can be," and said "so if he is I'll try and steer him off", and he couldn't seem to steer him off, and I went for him. Which he knew I was gonna, he was sitting there and I could see him thinking "how long's it gonna take?", you know, "oh, God!", and I went, "well -" - I've done it even at his house... and somebody's said something and gone on and on - they weren't family, they were friends that - was just total twaddle; so I said, "well", you know, "I don't agree with you". And this woman just shut up. I thought if looks could kill I'd have been dead. But she really was talking a lot of twaddle, I mean even ROBERT said she was, and I couldn't - I was trying to eat, and I can't eat and listen to people talking a load of nonsense, so I had to tell her. But I was really polite. I think - I could feel ROBERT thinking, "oh, God, she's gonna say "don't be so stupid" or something!", and I wouldn't do that. But I have a - at school I've got a reputation for being - it's funny, when I see people from school, they think I've got through loads of boyfriends and I'm still very fiery and I'm not so much, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: But it's like relationships with people, isn't it.

Q: Yeah. That's another thing I was gonna ask you, about - about your image of yourself, I mean you've been saying bits of it to me as you've been talking, but what would you say - what is your image of yourself?

A: I would say... people... say to me, I mean they say to me at work how calm I was, and I was deeply offended actually, and I went home and I... all night. I really did, I was just so... "What's wrong with you?"; I said, "somebody told me I was calm", and he went "huh!" like, you know. I wouldn't say I was calm. I'd say at work I'm quite efficient and hard and I work hard - I do, I work really hard, 'cos that's the only way I'm gonna get anywhere; then I would say that I'm quite stubborn and I - I suppose in a way I want things in my own way; I think everybody does, except I don't know if I'm worse. But I was never spoilt... I think if there's a lot of money there's more chance of it; I mean we weren't really hard up but there wasn't money to say, you know, especially when inflation started going and that. I'd say I - I just don't get down easily and people - I think people who tried to bully me, they got more than they bargained for at school; I've really gone for them, so I am quite fiery still. I'm - that would be actually how I'd describe me, stubborn and fiery.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I also get very upset very easily, and I will like really really cry and get really hurt. I mean, I get hurt just as easily, so I suppose you could say I was fairly emotional but it's calming down a lot more now. But like I think - with the older you get, the more you control it, 'cos you can't - at school it was okay to go around saying... but you can't do that when you're at work. You can't - well, just - 'cos I mean most of the time when you're older you're actually at work, in a manner of speaking, so you can't carry on like that. So I suppose I couldn't really describe myself 'cos I'm changing.

Q: Yeah. Yeah. Do you think that when you - it sounds as if you think that others agree with your assessment of yourself. Especially ROBERT, for example, you tell him "they think I'm calm" - do you think that they do?

A: I don't know, I think different people see me differently. Like I think my best friend, she sees me for exactly what I am, I'm sure she does, and so does ROBERT; she knows exactly what I'm like, 'cos the amount of times I got annoyed with people and I've said to her "I'm really worried about that, and I'm really upset"; and she, you know, she knows what I'm like - sort of really hard and then I can be really soft. Whereas - I wouldn't say I'm really hard, I mean I can be hard and possessive and - yeah, just anyway - I think most people see me but I suppose it depends what light... at work they see me as calm and efficient, which really, if you saw what I'm like at home, it's like - I mean, I stood... I stood yesterday, because I bought myself this..., it was disgusting, I thought "I'll stir-fry it", there was no frying pans at work - well, there was, but it was disgusting - so I used a saucepan, and I stood there for ages thinking "the oven isn't heating up", and I hadn't turned it on from the plug! And if nobody hadn't have come in and said to me "the oven's not on" - 'cos I kept feeling it and I thought it was, you know... hand on it, you know, and I kept thinking "it's getting warmer", it can't have done... I kept thinking, "what's going on?". And I literally imagined heat. I mean, I must have done, 'cos I was thinking, "it's gonna be hot in a minute". I was so embarrassed (laugh).

Q: Who does all the stuff at home, then, does your mum do it all?

A: My mum cooks -

Q: Yeah.

A: - but then I go - when - I do go out a lot for dinner and stuff and get takeaways and that. I have a bit of a thing for Chinese takeaways. I do eat out a lot when ROBERT's home, it's easier that way.

Q: Mm, yeah... spend time together. Did you say on your questionnaire that you look after your reptiles together?

A: Yeah, I've got... four lizards -

Q: Lizards?

A: - and then a baby, she's got two baby ones that length. I've got two tanks full, one that long, one little one.

Q: Two what?

A: Two tanks.

Q: Oh, tanks, to put the lizards in, yeah.

A: And we've got three frogs and two newts. Yeah, I used to keep them when I was younger - well, my parents didn't, I wanted them. We bought them ... seven pound each. They cost a lot to keep. Like infra-red lamps at night and keep them warm.

Q: Yeah.

A: About twenty-one pounds. It does add up but we - that's the other thing, me and ROBERT split the cost. When I wasn't working he paid a hell of a lot more, but since - for the first month I was working ROBERT seemed to think it was a free ride, you know, and then I said to him, "look, I'm not paying for everything", so it's gone back to like half each.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he's a lot more in debt than me. Because he's got a Barclaycard and his car keeps going wrong, but he needs a car - without the car he can't go to work, so he has to pay. So - whereas I'm more - I've got no debts at all, I just have to pay my mum and my fares and that's it, you know. And I mean I do charities - send money to charities... things like that. I mean, that's the only things I have.

Q: One of the things you were saying - when you were saying about - I mean it sounds like this relationship is fairly stable -

A: Yeah, it is.

(Tape change)

Q: ... gonna say was, about the future - I mean, projecting into the future, what you think you'll be doing in a few years' time; and on the questionnaire you sort of doubt - you said that you might be with your current relationship, or you might not sort of thing. I mean, how do you see -

A: I would like to be with my current relationship, but I couldn't say for sure, and I'm not the type to curl up and die if it didn't work out. I would be upset but I was very hooked on the one before, the ten months, and it finished; well, I thought I was hooked... and I was fine, you know. And it is different, but I think I would be okay because if I did split up with him, I would - I am saving money, so I would go to uni, what the heck? - I would do it.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: You know, so things would be different, my whole life - I would change my whole life, I would join clubs if I didn't... I would do everything, 'cos - 'cos there are things you can't - you've got to fit things in. But I'm quite willing to give some of it up. University is a real issue though.

Q: Well, you might do that anyway, mightn't you?

A: Yeah.

Q: ...

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, I think that was - let me just check and make sure that I have asked you everything that I was meaning to ask you. Yeah. Is there anything that you want to ask about?

A: I want to know what you're using it for, actually.

Q: What we're doing, we're talking to - we're hoping to talk to a number of young women from London and in Manchester, and - the point really is to find out how they feel and think about their sexuality and about relationships and so forth, and hopefully it's gonna feed into sex education. I mean, we're asking lots of questions about...

A: There's got to be a lot more, especially in non-council - I mean, it wasn't a public school and the council did give some money, it was totally free - it was - but the council really couldn't give a toss about that school, and it is the best school in the borough, apart from [NAME OF SCHOOL], which is a grammar school... [NAME OF SCHOOL], and I think it is the best school in the borough.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's a nice school and there's very rarely any trouble and it's - and there should have been - that's the only thing I would complain about, and career education was appalling.

Q: Yeah.

A: That would be the only thing I would say. The sex education really was lacking, especially the women. But it could have changed now, 'cos the headmaster's changed and there's a new deputy headmistress and things change.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: She seems a very formidable woman (laugh).

Q: Well, I mean one of the - I mean one of the things that a lot of young women have said is the sex education is totally inadequate in school...

A: And they wonder why their pupils get pregnant.

Q: Yeah. So that was one of the things -

A: - if - I mean, if your parents aren't telling you, then what are you supposed to think?

Q: Let me just ask you one more question, about the AIDS campaign. You said there was a whole lot of stuff you saw on the telly -

A: Yeah.

Q: ... what did you think of that? I mean, did you think it was effective, ineffective - ?

A: I thought it was effective, but they hyped it, and they do insist on hyping things, don't they; and - see, if you read it in the Sun, I'd think "well, how much of it is true?", but if I was to read it and it was the exact same thing in the Telegraph, I would believe it more. And like I can't stand - they just really hyped it, and it got to be an irritant and people sort of, "that bloody subject! I can't listen to it anymore".

Q: Yeah.

A: Whereas I didn't particularly feel like that 'cos I very rarely listen to the radio, and I very, very rarely watch TV - 'cos I'm either too busy or I listen to records and tapes, so I'm not - I hardly ever watch TV. ROBERT does, but I don't. So for me it wasn't so bad, but yeah, I think - I think people - there was the odd poster, but I think people are beginning probably to forget about it to a certain extent.

Q: Mm. You think that they ought to have another push on it?

A: I think they should have a push but I think they should be a little bit more careful how they do it, and I think they should aim it carefully - like it was just

really...; well, fine. But everybody knows now, so you've got to aim at the people that seem to be at risk, and to me it would seem to be people that aren't very aware and don't grasp things particularly easily. But then I have seen some very, very intelligent girls who are just completely ridiculous where relationships - you know, completely - it's very hard, but I think, well maybe this survey'll help, what they -

Q: Yeah, well we hope so. Yeah. And it's very different sorts of responses that people - people have.

A: I think the age group affects it as well. I think very young ones are likely to say "it's not gonna happen to me", you know, like fifteen, and I think the older ones - and then again, I think that when you get to a certain older age they think it's not gonna happen to them.

Q: Yeah.

A: I think, you know, it's -

Q: They have to hit that group - I mean, your age group really, and up to about twenty-five...

A: Yeah.

Q: - find out, let them know what's happening really. Yeah.

A: This tape's going off, somebody's gonna type it up.

Q: Yeah, yeah, that's right, that's what we do. And then we just compare everything that everybody's said and see, you know -

A: You don't put our names on it, do you?

Q: No, no, it's totally confidential - did I forget to tell you that?

A: No. Well, you didn't tell me, but I assumed it was.

Q: Yeah, it's totally confidential, and - turn it off now -