

REBECCA THW50 (RT) 13.6.89

INTERVIEWER: So, you are doing 'A' levels at the moment?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Just quickly sketch for me what you did from going to school to now?

INTERVIEWEE: I went to school and I did quite well in my 'O' levels so I decided to go to Sixth form college.

INTERVIEWER: What school was that?

INTERVIEWEE: High School, it's a comprehensive in Denton.

INTERVIEWER: And then what?

INTERVIEWEE: So, I went straight to Sixth form college and I started doing three 'A' levels; French, History and English, just for a year then I left. I dropped out because I had a lot of problems with other things like I had a bit of a breakdown and I thought I had better leave it and get myself sorted out for a year. And so that's what I did.

INTERVIEWER: Do you mind me asking what sort of other things you were having problems with?

INTERVIEWEE: My family. My father. It's difficult to explain, like it was problems that had built up from years and years and it was may be the pressure of my work, they put a lot of pressure on my 'A' levels and that brought it all to a head. My mum and dad got divorced when I was nine, and my brother died when I was ten and I didn't really do anything about it with the shock and everything.....

INTERVIEWER: ...

INTERVIEWEE: I worked for six months at the university part time and I have travelled a bit, I went to Ireland for a month in...

INTERVIEWER: Did you do that on your own or did you go..?

INTERVIEWEE: I went with a friend.

INTERVIEWER: So that must have been good then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it was brilliant. Yes, I thought I would come back to college after the year and so I did do that and so I came back to college in September. But I found it really difficult to settle down and do my work again and get some confidence about my work after leaving the time before and then and making such a mess.

INTERVIEWER: And you have fallen so behind everybody else.

INTERVIEWEE: And having made such a mess of my first lower sixth. I found it quite difficult to get back into it.

INTERVIEWER: Did you come to a different college then?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So how are you going on now, you say you are finding it pretty difficult to get things done.

INTERVIEWEE: It's a stupid thing but I know that I can do it and I know that I'm clever but when it comes down to it it's just doing it and being organised and it's just physically making me ill.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, day in and day out doing it. 'A' levels are probably the most difficult time I think for work and also it's the age when you really want to be going out and doing other things. But do you think you are going to be OK and you will finish the course?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think I shall have to get my act together sharpish, otherwise I will be well in the shit.

INTERVIEWER: So, what are your ambitions after you have finished college and you have got your 'A' levels.

INTERVIEWEE: I want to go to university or poly but I don't know what I want to do.

INTERVIEWER: You sound just like I was.

INTERVIEWEE: ...

INTERVIEWER: Have you always been brought up to expect that you will go to university?

INTERVIEWEE: My mum works at the university so she thought I should go but she never went and none of my family have ever been. So yes, I suppose she has, ever since I was fifteen she thought I might go, and I thought I wanted to go to university as well.

INTERVIEWER: So.....

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, I suppose there was quite a lot of pressure on you to do it.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.my mum doesn't.....and if I don't do my work she gets on my back about it. Not because she wants it but she said you made the decision, you do it.

INTERVIEWER: So you live at home with your mum now, do you live in Denton?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think of Denton, do you like living there?

INTERVIEWEE: A hole. I have lived there since I was three I think. There is not much going on.

INTERVIEWER: Do most of your friends live around that area?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, quite a lot of my friends do.

INTERVIEWER: Is it somewhere you would be happy to leave though?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. Yes, I won't miss it, but I will probably go back and get all nostalgic about it and think how nice it was.

INTERVIEWER: When you are somewhere even more horrible. If you went to university then you wouldn't go to Manchester, you would go somewhere else?

INTERVIEWEE: I haven't decided. I never thought I would go off to a different place but I mightin Manchester.....it would be quite different from living at home. I haven't quite decided.

INTERVIEWER: So how do you get on with your mum, I mean how is living at home?

INTERVIEWEE: Its OK, I mean but there are lots of arguments and lots of things we have got to sort out between us..... about my brother and things....

INTERVIEWER: So, it's quite emotional?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's quite intense and difficult at times.

INTERVIEWER: Is there a lot of pressure on you, I mean do you feel responsible that you have got to resolve this as well?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I have. Shelast year as well.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had any counselling?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Did that help?

INTERVIEWEE: Well when I first left college I went to see my doctor and he told me to go to, she said she couldn't let me see a psychologist because there was a big waiting list and I got really annoyed and I said I needed to see somebody and she referred me to a psychiatrist which I don't know was a good idea. First of all I went tobut I didn't want that so I went to the psychiatrist and I saw him about ten times but it was good at the time but it didn't really move me on very much and he referred me to this group at [HOSPITAL] and I went there for about once a week for about ten months, or something ridiculous like that and it was really a waste of time.

INTERVIEWER: Was it a self-help group?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it was organised by a psychologist and a psychiatric nurse and it was like a one-way mirror and that sort of rubbish.....was married and the marriage and children.....

INTERVIEWER: Was there anyone else your age?

INTERVIEWEE: No and I don't know why I got put into the group.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds stupid.

INTERVIEWEE: So, I ended up leaving there and then I went to a community psychiatric nurse and it was a man and I don't know, somebody thought it was a good idea if I saw a man and it didn't work out and then I am seeing my counsellor at the college.

INTERVIEWER: Is that better?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's good.

INTERVIEWER: I have heard really good things about the counsellors ... the woman there, she's supposed to be really, really good.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, she's dead nice.

INTERVIEWER: Often what people need is somebody sympathetic that you can chat with.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I don't think anything before really helped and I just ended up thinking I have had all this help and I don't feel any better.

INTERVIEWER: And you think, oh god, there must be something really wrong.

INTERVIEWEE: Or it's me and I don't really want to get better, I enjoy being like this. Before I was seeing VANESSA I went to the doctor and got some anti-depressants and I thought may be some medication might do me some good after all.

INTERVIEWER: So, would you say you have been depressed for quite a long time now?

INTERVIEWEE: I am not sure, I don't know. I think it all goes back to when my brother died and I don't know whether I could say I was depressed from then til now, I don't know. It could be that.

INTERVIEWER: But basically, you have been feeling pretty bad about yourself for quite a long time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Is it beginning to get better now that you are at college?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, since I have been seeing VANESSA.

INTERVIEWER: Ok, well I won't dwell on this too much I mean what I want to talk about is things that are relevant to AIDS but not just about AIDS, I am interested in other things about that and also about types of relationships that you have had and types of

relationships that you want to have. I mean first of all can we start with when you were at school. Did they give you any sex education at school?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, only a few lessons I can remember in biology and the boys and girls were separate and they had to send a letter home to get our parents' permission for us to have these lessons and it was in biology and I can remember watching a video about this woman who was a doctor talking about contraception. I can't really remember it, but she was saying something about a man and a girl. And I thought what does she mean, a man and a girl, a man and a woman or a boy and a girl, what did she mean, and I couldn't believe that a woman would say that.

INTERVIEWER: Was it supposed to be a thirty-year old man and a sixteen year old girl or were they supposed to be the same age?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know what it meant. I think it was the same age, but I think it was quite an old film and really out of date. And I was sat watching it and thinking what has this got to do with anything.

INTERVIEWER: So, it wasn't at all helpful and it didn't answer any questions?

INTERVIEWEE: All we really did was about contraception.

INTERVIEWER: So, they told you about all the different types of contraception that existed and?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, but they didn't really tell you how you were supposed to use it, they just told you well this is what it is and that's what it's called.

INTERVIEWER: And did you get anything about relationships in general, I mean something more than the sex act?

INTERVIEWEE: We had something called life skills. I thought it would be a good idea at first, I think they went on about personal hygiene most of the time.

INTERVIEWER: Were they supposed to be talking about relationships?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think they were, but I think one of the teachers left us and all the course fell to pieces.

INTERVIEWER: But within that they would have talked about things like that. In terms of what you know about sex and what you know about contraception and things like that, does any of that come from what you learnt at school? Was any of that useful to you at the time?

INTERVIEWEE: I think it might have been because I think I was quite naive at that age, I think. But I think it might have been about contraception. It wasn't that my mum wouldn't talk to me about it, it was just that I never asked her about it because I wasn't that interested at the time. I think I learnt a few things I didn't know before.

INTERVIEWER: But you said about your mum, did you never have sort of mother and daughter chats or anything?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, we did do but I can remember her talking to me and my brother when I was about nine, she was talking to us about it. So, she is quite open about it. I think she finds it difficult and a bit embarrassing, but she still talked about it.

INTERVIEWER: Right so do you still talk to her about it, is it something you have still carried on?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I do sometimes but I usually talk to my friends about it.

INTERVIEWER: Most people do.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's easier but it's just I don't know, we just seem to talk about it in college and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: It just depends on what your mother is like. I mean has she ever given you a sort of moral view of what she thinks is right and wrong?

INTERVIEWEE: No, she's not like that. She says whatever I want to do as long as I am happy about it.

INTERVIEWER: You weren't brought up to think that you would get married and have children?

INTERVIEWEE: Not at all.

INTERVIEWER: And the way you were brought up what is your view of your future in terms of relationships, what sort of relationships do you expect to be having in your life? You say it's not marriage and children straight away.

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think I am going to get married until about twenty years or something but at the moment it's not on the agenda and my mum, she has influenced me not to get married, 'don't get married'.

INTERVIEWER: Is that because she and your father had a bad time?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. She doesn't want to get married again she won't hear of it.

INTERVIEWER: Has she had relationships since her and your father split up?

INTERVIEWEE: Not very much just lately. She got engaged once which quite worried me a bit, but she didn't actually get married. She doesn't want to get involved I don't think because she had such a horrible time with dad.

INTERVIEWER: Has your mum and your dad splitting up and then having problems with their relationships, do you think that has influenced you in the way that you feel about relationships?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think it probably has done even though when anybody comes to the door, I think it's mainly I'm cynical about men and actually don't like them. Like some of the people I have been seeing say 'why don't you like men, you hate men don't you', and I say 'no I don't', but I find it difficult because I think they know that I have had bad relations with my dad and with the divorce they think I'm bound to dislike men anyway. They expect it.

INTERVIEWER: You don't feel that?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't know, I don't think I have a real downer on men, but I am just wary about them.

INTERVIEWER: That sounds quite sensible, I mean I think sooner or later you become wary. (interruption). If you can just go back a bit, what I would like to know in a way is the history of your relationships and types of relationships you have had. Tell me when you first started getting interested in having relationships?

INTERVIEWEE: I think I wasn't interested in men for quite a long time. I just didn't feel I needed them, and I thought that was quite abnormal as it was even though all the girls around me were getting boyfriends and going out with people and thinking it was dead good.

INTERVIEWER: Were you made to feel sort of abnormal because of that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it was like a prestige, if you had a boyfriend it was like better and why hasn't this girl, REBECCA been out with anybody, what's wrong with her.

INTERVIEWER: Did that worry you at the time?

INTERVIEWEE: It kind of did at the time but I knew I wasn't that desperate to see anybody so I think if I had done it, it would have been just prestige like everybody else..... was dead into the idea. It didn't worry me though because people..... why

aren't I after men and I thought maybe if I wanted to that much I would go out and get somebody. I first went out about fifteen, sixteenrelationships. The first time I had a mad crush on somebody from the age of sixteen until about six months ago.

INTERVIEWER: Did anything ever happen with it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: It did, was it a disappointment then? They generally are, those.

INTERVIEWEE: I think he couldn't understand or like the idea of being idolised and built up. I mean he knew I thought he was brilliant and dead good, and I liked him for all these years, and I was seventeen or eighteen and I went out with him a couple of times and slept with him.

INTERVIEWER: Was that the first time you had slept with anybody?

INTERVIEWEE: No. I had slepttwo or three.....didn't really like but that was the first time I slept with him. So, we saw each other like one and off for about nine months and.....I think it was quite scary because he didn't want that much to do with me....

INTERVIEWER: Would you have been scared by...?

INTERVIEWEE: By what I wanted and that I wanted to see him.

INTERVIEWER: How serious you felt about him?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, and I don't think he was that sure about how he felt about me, and I don't think he was that sure about his sexuality anyway, so I think it was all very confusing for him anyway. So, it was a bit of a disaster.

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like one of those relationships.

INTERVIEWEE: We still don't know where we are with each other.

INTERVIEWER: Do you still see him on and off then?

INTERVIEWEE: We still see each other but not that much. We talk to each other occasionally.

INTERVIEWER: So, is he still a long-term crush?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. It's not that I feel I've still got a crush on him or anything, but I feel so stupid but I still.... he's a friend of the family as well so it's not as if I am never going to see him again. We see each other occasionally.

INTERVIEWER: What is your view about the way that you deal with whether to sleep with people or not and having relationships? It's different for different people, is it something that you take for granted that you are going to be seeing somebody a boyfriend at a certain time and you will also be sleeping with?

INTERVIEWEE: I'm not sure, I don't really know. I think when I first started sleeping with people it was something more that I did to get experience and I think just recently I have started to think it's not much of a thrill any more sleeping with these people and I don't really know why I am doing it. So, I think the next relationship I am not going to sleep with the person straight away because I felt the last quite recently I will end up being like a slag which is a word I would never use about anybody, but I called it myself and...

INTERVIEWER: And was that what you were beginning to feel about yourself or was it how your partner sort of..?

INTERVIEWEE: Nobody had called me that, it was just what I felt.

INTERVIEWER: It's interesting to talk about that in one way women think in one way they are liberating themselves to be independent, to be sexually independent, and in a way model that on men and what men do, and then it comes to the question that it doesn't feel that good.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes I think it's like men can do that and women can't even though you wanted toand men can do it but we can't anyway so it's like a conscious decision not to sleep with anyone straight away or give it a bit of time and think about it and not go straight away and leap into bed with them.

INTERVIEWER: Also, the other thing is that when men do it, they do it with women whereas when women do it, they have to do it with men which I think that's a probably ... explanation and they find it a lot easier to have those types of relationships than women do. It tends to be a bit more complicated, I mean like you were saying about being a slag. That's what you identify in terms of a woman, even though you may reject those ideas, you can't escape from them.

INTERVIEWEE: I can't think like men probably think, like if I don't feel really good about it even though I feel that he was something good that I was sleeping with, I couldn't feel like that after whatever.

INTERVIEWER: Is it an important part of your life would you say your sexuality identity, is that an important part of your life?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, you can't get away from it.

INTERVIEWER: Has that changed from say when you first had a sexual relationship, has what you feel about yourself sexually changed from that point til now that it's developed, that you have come to understand your own sexuality more?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I have always thought about everything involved ever since and we have spoken to each other and drawn conclusions from the things that have happened and what we feel like but I think she changed and might have got more experience.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think now that you should get more pleasure out of sex than you did when you were young?

INTERVIEWEE: Not recently because I haven't been seeing anyone in particular recently, so I don't know.

INTERVIEWER: What do you think it is that can give you pleasure from sex, do you feel that it's about someone you really like that you're with or is it actually being physical, is there a physical element?

INTERVIEWEE: Both, I think there's a physical thing but if you like having sex with someone for some different or wrong reason, no matter how good it might be, but it just doesn't seem quite right, I don't know I'm not sure. As long as it's really brilliant it doesn't matter, if you only like the person for it being good, you might grow to like them.

INTERVIEWER: I won't stick with your age and people that you hang out with but if being sexually available is quite a part of it, in that people having sexual relationships, and you're going to be having relationships with people and being sexual as well apart from anything else, is that exacting in the way you and your friends expect to live their lives?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, can you explain.

INTERVIEWER: I suppose I should be clearer about what I mean, you could be very aware of this. A lot of our research has been done in North Manchester, talking to a lot of girls from North Manchester and in the poorer areas of North Manchester, they say what you're saying now, the idea that you could decide to sleep with someone or not if you're going out with someone and you know this is not the person you're going to be with for the rest of your life, to a lot of those girls that would be unbelievable that you

could do that, so what I'm interested in, in a way, is how it's different for you, that you don't feel the sort of pressure that they do, which is if you're going to have a sexual relationship it's got to be very serious and long term?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, my friends, the girls, wouldn't judge anybody, who your sleeping with or anything, it's their decision, it's what they want to do. I think a few friends, if they thought I was being stupid in having a sexual relationship they would say something to me but because they'd be saying you've got to think of your reputation, they'd say you've got to think of yourself and why you're doing it, you're messing yourself up.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it's a much better way of thinking but for you, you say you see yourself as a feminist in some way, within that is having the choice of who you sleep with and not having people turn around and say you're a slag if you sleep with more than three people, is that an important part of being liberated, being able to choose who you want?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think that's one of the things about sleeping with people it's part of it thinking I'm liberated, and I can do what I want to. I think when I was something like seventeen, I thought I want to find out about my sexuality and that's why I went out and did it more than anything.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that works in practice, that sort of ideal. In a way it's a big deal isn't it, that we can be sexually liberated, but you were saying that you suddenly felt like a slag yourself, or whatever that word meant, you started feeling something about that, do you think that that idealism works in practice in terms of liberating yourself for a sexual relationship?

INTERVIEWEE: You can think that to yourself and keep that to yourself but when you look at other people thinking what men are thinking about you, about how many people you've slept with or why your sleeping with them then it starts to affect my usual worries about it.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you feel quite confused now?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, because like I said I'm beginning to find I'm being a bit more careful and taking it a bit more slowly than I used to tend to when I first start going out with them, because for me it's what people will think, I think it's because I'm confused. I feel really bad now, but I wouldn't feel that bad if I did it.

INTERVIEWER: If you still wanted to go out with them it's important to take your time and work out why you want to be doing something if at all. Has the publicity about AIDS had any effect on how you feel about these type of things in terms of your own sexual identity and what you want and in terms of sexual relationships, did that have any effect on you?

INTERVIEWEE: It's not the main thing in my thoughts, I'm aware that I have to be careful, I've got to use condoms and I have to be careful, but I've got to do that anyway as a form of contraception as I'm not on the pill, so I'd be doing it anyway.

INTERVIEWER: If you were on the pill do you think it would be more of a problem for you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it would be different, I'd worry about getting anything, it seems as if I need to be protected.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that if you were on the pill you could ask a man to wear a condom?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, the problem with most men is that they would find it quite difficult to understand if you were on the pill and and you wanted them to use a condom, I think they'd freak, but if you explained it..

INTERVIEWER: I presume that the men you're talking about are quite different to men in general, the men that you know now and are likely to be going out with but for those men, do you think they would take a risk of catching AIDS or HIV, seriously, would they be surprised?

INTERVIEWEE: I don't think they would worry about that much, as much as women do as women don't actually get infected from woman to woman, so I think they'd think it hasn't got much to do with them if they're not gay, they think they'd be alright.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that the men you know, know that it's more difficult to get from a woman?

INTERVIEWEE: They probably don't.

INTERVIEWER: I think that it should be kept very secret, they shouldn't be told, they'd certainly be worse than they are being now.

INTERVIEWEE: They probably don't know.

INTERVIEWER: You've had quite a lot of experience having to get people to use a condom because you're not on the pill, is that a difficult thing to do, or have you found it difficult in the past?

INTERVIEWEE: I haven't had that much experience with people but yes sometimes, once, about two weeks ago, I ended up not asking him and had to go and get the morning after pill, I wouldn't say anything, I kept thinking I'll say something in a minute, it's just so difficult, I thought I'd say something in a minute and then it was too late and I thought oh no, I didn't even know this person anyway.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that's what made it difficult?

INTERVIEWEE: No, not at all.

INTERVIEWER: So, it's nothing that somebody hasn't done before.

INTERVIEWEE: I'm quite surprised, he did mention it, he asked me if I was on the pill and I sort of laughed I thought what you are asking me for now, I just said yes, I am I thought I couldn't tell him.

INTERVIEWER: Were you having intercourse with this bloke when he asked you if you were on the pill?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, there wasn't much point.

INTERVIEWEE: I said yes, I am, don't worry dear.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see it as being your responsibility to take care of contraception?

INTERVIEWEE: No, not at all, it should be something that you talk about.

INTERVIEWER: Does it happen like that, in your own experience.

INTERVIEWEE: I think, in a lot of cases, when I didn't say anything they would just carry on, I think men leave it and if you don't say anything and they just presume and hope that you won't say anything.

INTERVIEWER: If they don't say anything they are on the pill? Do you buy condoms and carry them with you?

INTERVIEWEE: I have bought condoms and carried them with me, but I haven't at the moment.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Do you find that a difficult thing to do?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it's quite embarrassing. The chemists don't mind because they have seen it a million times before.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the publicity about the wider availability of condoms, do you think they have become less of a stigma attached to them?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, because you feel more responsible buying them and carrying them with you as well.

INTERVIEWER: You probably read the sort of stuff in women's magazines like smart women carry condoms, what is your reaction to that type of stuff, is it an image that appeals to you?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I have carried them, I am not doing it at the moment, but it's just something I would do, it's not a big deal or being smart, it's just something . . .

INTERVIEWER: You do?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. There is no big hype about it, not like carrying some of these smarty pills.

INTERVIEWER: Did you make a decision not to go on the pill?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I think if I got into a steady relationship, I might consider it more now, but I just wonder about what effect it's going to have on me, on my body.

INTERVIEWER: So, you are quite aware of the side effects and things like that?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I would think about it more.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think you would resent it, if you were in a relationship, because the pill is like the epitome of the woman taking all the responsibility with the risks of cancer and god knows what, do you think it would be something you would resent?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I might do. I know it's a risk if you take it, but I wouldn't take it for that long, I'd be too worried, I wouldn't feel happy about it.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think blokes expect women to be on the pill these days?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, they seem to, they say, 'why aren't you, what's wrong with you, why don't you, it's so easy'. I just prefer Durex because it's a lot easier for me.

INTERVIEWER: The men you have slept with, have they said anything about using condoms, that they don't like using them?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, they have moaned about it and said how they don't like it and how embarrassing it is and how difficult it is. The big thing is whether I should put the condoms on, and I say things like, 'no, it's your body'.

INTERVIEWER: So basically, if they are going to have to use it they like...

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I have to put it on for them. I don't have to and I am not going to be pressurised into doing it either. They are saying, 'well you are asking them to use it so why don't'...

INTERVIEWER: Why don't you take the pill? So, do you feel happy with the contraception you are using. Do you feel it makes sex how you want it to be or does it make it complicated?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, it makes it complicated and that's why I have contemplated using the pill for a bit. When I get into a steady relationship, I might consider it but it's been useful because of AIDS as well.

INTERVIEWER: Tell me the first time you heard about AIDS, what is the first thing you remember hearing about it?

INTERVIEWEE: I can't remember, it was so long ago.

INTERVIEWER: Was it at school, did they tell you anything about it at school?

INTERVIEWEE: It was just on television and in the newspapers. I can't remember the first, I think it was on the news first.

INTERVIEWER: Do you remember hearing about it before you started becoming sexually active?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: You did. In a way AIDS must have quite a lot to do with how you feel about sex in general then if it has always been around?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think the way it was portrayed in the media that it gave a very negative view of sex, gave sex less appeal?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I suppose so. I think fear is what it's about....

INTERVIEWER:

INTERVIEWEE: It's just an extra thing to worry about, getting AIDS.

INTERVIEWER: Has your view on AIDS changed since you first heard about it to what you know about it now?

INTERVIEWEE: I think I was much more worried about it.

INTERVIEWER: What when you first heard about it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, you were really scared about it?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, having to be so careful.

INTERVIEWER: How much of a risk do you see it now?

INTERVIEWEE: I've been worried about it quite a few times. If I get anything like I had a cold three weeks ago and I was tired, and I thought I should go.

INTERVIEWER: You mean to have a test?

INTERVIEWEE: There isn't really much reason why I should before that.

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever had unprotected sex?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I don't know why I thought that.

INTERVIEWER: Is that the time you had the morning after pill?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, it gets to you in lots of different ways.

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, there are lots of different ways you can get AIDS.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that heterosexuals are likely to get it now, or do you think it's that heterosexuals are at risk now?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I don't think it's just the gay people but somewhere like Manchester is quite a ... city...

INTERVIEWER: But you see yourself as quite capable of looking after yourself in terms of?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Would you have sex now without using a condom?

INTERVIEWEE: Say now I would say I would talk to the person I was going to ... get anything or but in that case I would have time to think about it, I wouldn't do it anyway because I'm not on the pill. But before I would do yes and worry about it afterwards.

INTERVIEWER: So, amongst the people you know then like safe sex isn't taken for granted at all, something that anybody practices?

INTERVIEWEE: No, I don't really know but the friends, a few boyfriends that I've got, we all talk about things like that.

INTERVIEWER: They know about safe sex. That's good for me to hear, that there are people, because it seems to be from people we have talked to, there are a lot of people who want to have safe sex but very few of them are able to have it.

INTERVIEWEE: Why, because they can't talk about it?

INTERVIEWER: Exactly and also fears about if you ask a man to use a condom and if you are on the pill or something, then they will be insulted because they will think they are saying they've got AIDS which is not, it's protecting two people, things like the problem of getting men to use condoms to start with and to a lot of people they can't overcome that one of actually getting their partner to use a condom. I have heard a lot of people say they are sure their partner is alright, he's not that type. What sort of person do you think would be at risk?

INTERVIEWEE: I was quite worried about a friend, the one that thought he might be bisexual.

INTERVIEWER: Because you were sleeping with him?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And did he have safe sex when he was sleeping with men?

INTERVIEWEE: I never asked him about it, I was too embarrassed, I don't know why it's stupid. I didn't really ask him about them, and he didn't really tell me about them....

INTERVIEWER: So, it was a completely separate life for him that you didn't really know much about?

INTERVIEWEE: No

INTERVIEWER: Did you have unprotected sex with him?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: So, you feel worried for him as well?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, I meant to ask him, I don't know he just doesn't talk about it and I don't know whether he is seeing anybody or whether it's just the one relationship he had or what, I don't know.

END OF SIDE ONE OF TAPE

INTERVIEWER: Have you ever talked to men you have slept with about sex?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes, but not, I haven't really been in a close relationship for six months. I think I have changed over six months, I think I would do now but then I would have been a bit more embarrassed about it.

INTERVIEWER: So, it's got quite a lot to do with your personal confidence as to how much you are able to deal with these things?

INTERVIEWEE: Yes. I think I have got a lot to say about..... it would be good for me to talk to him.... what I felt about sex and what he felt and what did they think about it and were they the same things as I did.

INTERVIEWER: And also, it's very important in terms of if the woman wants to have sexual pleasure out of sex with a man, generally what a man thinks is great sex ninety nine point nine percent of the time is not what the woman thinks is great sex and that's not if you don't talk about sex.

INTERVIEWEE: When they have talked about sex I have been too embarrassed, like they were saying what do you like, what do you want, and I was like this and not being able to say anything because I was too embarrassed.

INTERVIEWER: You have had men that asked you what you liked? Well that's a start. Most women never get in that situation.

INTERVIEWEE: I was so embarrassed and I don't know why.

INTERVIEWER: Well it's still difficult

FAULTY TAPE FROM NOW ON