TAPE 19

I: Okay. Um. in this interview I will ask you to talk about AIDS. I want you to know that you don't have to answer all my questions. If you don't want to answer a question, just let me know and I will go on with the next one. You can also ask me to stop the interview at any time.

In this interview you will be asked to talk about everything you know about AIDS. I will first ask you to tell me everything you know about AIDS. Then I will ask you some more specific questions. I may ask you the same question more than once. I do this to make sure that you tell me everything you know and that I understand everything you say. Please don't worry about whether your answers are right or not, just tell me everything that comes to mind. You don't have to talk about yourself or your behavior. No one else will hear the tape but me and uh we will not be reporting to people here about what you say.

Uh, my first question is: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS.

S: I don't know that much. I know that it's a disease that tears down your immune system which leaves you open to get all kinds of viruses and that's what really kills you, not AIDS itself. And I know it's deadly. I know the ways you can get it and I know a few ways you can get it, I don't know them all...mmm...that's it.

I: Okay, um...can you tell me more about how AIDS um is passed from one person to another?

S: You can get it through sex, you can get it through blood transfusion. And...I forgot the other reason. I can't remember the other reason.

I: Okay. Okay, you told me that uh AIDS is passed on uh when you have sex. Could you tell me more about that?

S: Well, if you have sex with someone and you don't use protection and they have AIDS, then you can catch it sometimes. You don't necessarily have to get it, but there's a real high chance that you can.

I: Okay, and uh can you tell me more about how um AIDS is passed on when you uh have a blood transfusion?

S: Well, AIDS is in the blood and if you get some, if you shot, shoot up or just having a needle to somebody has AIDS and blood's still on there, it gets into your system and you get the virus like that.

I: Okay. What do you mean when you talk about uh um blood transfusion?

S: Like if you need some blood and you go to the hospital or somewhere you find a donor and they like stick a needle from their arm and put um a tube a tube between y'all and the blood goes from that person into you. Or you can get it from a bag and they stick the tube in your arm and it comes out the bag.

I: Okay. Does it matter how often a person has a blood transfusion or has sex?

S: No. You can get it one time or a thousand times, your chances are...well it's more risky the more times that you do it but...you can get it easy as your first time as you would your tenth or your twentieth.
I: Can you tell me how a person can prevent uh getting AIDS if they are uh having a blood transfusion or having sex?

S: Use protection when you have sex and have the blood tested before you have the transfusion.

I: Uh, how well do you think this would really protect a person from getting AIDS?

S: What do you mean?

I: Uh, by you know testing the blood or uh using protection.

S: Oh. It's not a 100% foolproof but it will will like defeats your risk the greater risk. It probably helps it not be so risky if you get it tested and you may find out that you may, but you'd still be safe if you didn't, the risk would be more.

I: Mm-hum. What percentage of a risk do you think it would be? You said it's not a 100%...

S: Well, I'd say like 85% to 90%.

I: Mm-hum. Um, okay. What do you think may lead a person to um uh have sex?

S: Peer pressure, feeling like nobody else loves them, or they just simply don't have any morals. Or love, or... there's a lot of reasons. Feel that you need it...

I: Okay. Um, imagine that a person goes out planning not to uh have sex. What do you think may mess up these plans?

S: Peer pressure uh blackmail, mmm...

I: Would someone would uh blackmail you into doing that?

S: Yeah. Like if they know some dirt on you they'll say well if you do this I won't say anything or simple peer pressure. People or guys using the excuse like well if you love me, you'll do this and you know lies, all types of stuff.

I: Okay. Uh, what effect does alcohol have on people?

S: You lose brain cells or you destroy your brain cells which help you think properly and when you're drunk you're destroying your brain cells and sometimes you don't think properly and you do stuff that you normally wouldn't do under the influence.

I: Uh, does drinking make much of a difference in a person's risk of getting AIDS?

S: No.

I: Does it matter how often a person is exposed to AIDS?

S: No. For them to catch it?

I: Mm-hum.
S: How many times they been exposed to it?

I: Yeah.

S: No, you can get it the first time like you are first time you're exposed to it or the fifth time you're exposed to it. Sometimes you don't get it on the first time.

I: Mm-hum. Um, can you tell me what happens when a person gets infected with the AIDS virus?

S: Ummm, I guess they go to the hospital and they just trying to, they start therapy or whatever they do when you have AIDS. I don't know exactly what they do but they like tell you to stay away from people with colds and stuff like that so you won't get it. They try and tell you don't be around dirty places, so you won't catch viruses cause you can catch them easier cause your immune system's weakening.

I: Can you tell me about what happens when a person develops AIDS?

S: Uh, they get real sick, they lose weight, their hair falls out, and many things. Some people have different side effects to the AIDS virus than others. All depends on what you are, who you are.

I: Okay. Um, how can someone learn whether he or she has AIDS?

S: They can get tested or they can like look for symptoms. But the only way you really find out is to get tested.

I: Uh, what does this test test for? Do you know how it works?

S: They look for the virus in your blood. Cause they, I don't know.

I: Uh, why would someone decide to be tested?

S: They've been very careless or they did drugs with people that they didn't know or had sex with somebody that they didn't know.

I: Uh, what would make you think that a person has AIDS?

S: If they were sick all the time. They were never well. They always had something wrong with them. And then you start like looking real skinny or real sickly, pale, mm-mm.

I: Uh, what kinds of people have a lot to worry about from AIDS?

S: Sexually active people or people who do drugs.

I: Uh, when can people stop worrying about AIDS?

S: Never. They always got to worry about catching diseases whether they have a cure or not. So, you always have to worry about it.

I: Do you think people are making too big a deal of AIDS?
S: No. I don't think they're making a big enough deal about AIDS. Cause they keep stressing the fact and the numbers keep rising and rising and rising. So, whatever they doin' is not working.

I: Uh, where have you learned about AIDS?

S: School, TV, some stuff I made up. Other than that, that's about it. Around me.

I: Uh, what things do they skip about AIDS in health classes at school?

S: They don't show you like what they do for tests, they just tell you that you take blood and they look for it. That's it. Other than that, they get pretty graphic about everything else.

I: Okay. Do you think you know enough about AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: I know a little bit, I don't know everything I possibly could know about it, but I know a little bit to protect myself.

I: Is there anything more you would like to know about AIDS?

S: Mmm...no. I just wanna, I don't know, I wanna know how they test for it. I mean I know they look from the blood, but how or what does it look like, what does the little virus look like? That's about it.

I: Um, AIDS is caused by a virus called HIV. What does that tell you about it?

S: That you just don't get AIDS, the HIV virus and then that develops into AIDS. So there's a chance you can get HIV but you you don't necessarily have AIDS. There is a chance you can get AIDS from having the virus.

I: Uh, what does safe sex mean?

S: No sex, I guess (laughs). Cause no sex is safe sex.

I: Okay. Can you tell me um what are the safest condoms to use for protection against AIDS?

S: You got me. I think they're all the same.

I: Uh, what else do condoms protect you against?

S: V.D.s, most V.D.s. Pregnant, well I know about pregnancy, it's not, it's not a 100%, nothing is but you can lower your risks of pregnancy and V.D.s.

I: Uh, what does IV drug use mean?

S: Um, something that you shoot up into your vein or your nerve.

I: Do you think uh needles can be cleaned?

S: No. I think if you use them all once you should just dispose of them. No way you're gonna get every nook and cranny clean.

I: Mm-hum. Okay. Thank you.