Number 33

In this interview I'll ask you to talk about AIDS and I want you to know that you don't have to answer and I want you to know that you don't have to answer all the questions, if you don't want to answer the questions, just let me know and we'll go on to the next one. I don't expect that you will feel uncomfortable, but just in case you do that's fine. There is no penalty.

And you can ask me to stop that interview at any time. You'll be asked to talk about everything you know about AIDS, and I'll first ask you to tell me everything you know about AIDS. Then I'll ask you more specific questions, and I do this just to make sure that you tell me everything you know and I understand what you are trying to tell me.

Please do not worry about whether your answer are right or wrong. Just tell me everything that comes to mind. The interview portion you don't have talk about yourself or your behavior. You can talk about other people or just what you think.

No one else is going to hear the tape but me, and I am not going to report back to anyone here about what you tell me. And you name is not attached to what you tell me at all.

I: Please tell me everything you know about AIDS.

S: It's not just a sexually transmitted disease. It can be sexually transmitted. Could be born with it. You can get it from drug use. Blood transfusions, limited. People say that homosexuals are like the people that started it, but that is not necessarily is true. And um...there are ways to protect yourself from AIDS. Like contraceptives and stuff, but not all of them work. Not all effective, the only one that is effective abstinence. And um... you can't get from touching people and stuff like that.

I: Can you tell me more about how the AIDS virus is passed from one person to another?

S: Sexually transmitted. Drug usage through needles and um blood transfusions. Slightly, they say. And you can be born with it.

I: Now I'm going to ask you about each one of those ways. How about if we start with, you can be born with it? Can you tell me little bit more about how that happens and what you mean by that?

S: You can be, like if you parents had it you can like since your chromosomes and that all that stuff is genetically passed, your DNA and that is passed down through and makes like a duplicate of itself, you can be born with it. The virus can be put into your body.

I: Can you tell me how a person may be able to prevent getting the AIDS virus or how parents may prevent their unborn child from getting the virus?

S: They could like, the children they could make sure that they're not, that you're only with one partner. And um, you know who you've been with and stuff. And then you know everybody if you've been with more one or more person that you know if they've not had it.
I: You also mentioned that the AIDS virus can be passed on through blood transfusions. Can you tell me how that happens?

S: If they like, they're transfusion that um...they take somebody's blood from, somebody that might have the virus or HIV. They check all the blood and stuff and but sometimes they do. Well now it's a less [inaudible], in fact. But a while ago they weren't checking it as well as they should be.

I: And does it matter how often a person would get a blood transfusion?

S: I would say if you usually always got transfusions like a lot that you would have a greater risk than not necessarily like you're not liable to get it.

I: And can you tell me how a person maybe able to prevent getting the AIDS virus if they are getting blood transfusion?

S: They could ask the people if they're sure they checked it again before they give the transfusion cause you have a right to do that.

I: How well do you think that would really protect person getting the AIDS virus?

S: I guess everybody makes mistakes I guess that could like make a mistake doing it, so that means it should like, if they do the right chemicals and that they should be able do testing and if you are HIV positive you shouldn't be donating blood and stuff.

I: And you also mention that the AIDS virus can be passed on through drug use and needles. Can you tell me exactly how that happens?

S: Um...if you're a drug user with a hypodermic needles, like passing the needle from one person to the next.. The virus could be on the needle itself and be passed on.

I: And does it matter how often a person would use needles?

S: They'd have a higher risk of getting if they would pass needles from one person to the next but if they are the only one using it I don't see how they could get it that way.

I: Can you tell me how a person can prevent getting the AIDS virus if they are using needles to put drugs in their body?

S: Don't share them with other people and like sanitize it before hand.

I: What do mean by sanitize?

S: I don't think alcohol cause it's not strong enough. [Inaudible], I think maybe bleach maybe. Diluted bleach or whatever with that then like wash it off or whatever.
I: How well do you think that would protect someone from getting the AIDS virus if they do share needles with other people.

S: I don't really think it would protect them a lot, with, cause you don't know who the next person was passing it to is exactly, if they have it or not.

I: And what do you think may lead a person to sharing needles?

S: Just the fact that they want that drug at that time or whatever and if somebody's doing it they really don't, they're not thinking about that. They are just thinking about the drug that they want. [Inaudible-5 words].

I: Imagine a person goes out planning not to share needles, what do you think may mess up these plans?

S: The fact that when they are already high or whatever, that they really don't have control over their mind as well as they should and somebody ask them they be more liable to give it to them.

I: You also mentioned that the AIDS virus can be passed on, sexually transmitted and can you tell me how exactly how that happens?

S: If you are a carrier or with somebody that is a carrier you have sex with them, um...like it's their genital fluids have it genital fluids have which means it would be put in you if they weren't use precautions.

I: And do you mean by if you a carrier or the person you are with is a carrier.

S: If they're with the person who has HIV at the time, or they might not even know it at that time. It could be just in their system.

I: Did you say something about using precautions. And what do you mean by precautions?

S: Like abstinence is the one but, like to like protect you the most, be most effective, but um...they say the condom doesn't work as well, not any more it's not even 100% sure and stuff, but it you're like using more than one type of contraceptive it's more reliable.

I: What kinds of contraceptives are you referring to?

S: I guess, the condoms or spermicide, things like that.

I: Would it matter how often person would have sex without using precautions?

S: Yeah, because they have a greater chance to get the virus, but if they are with one person that they know that's not been with anybody else they could be alright unless they had it from ways of getting the virus.
I: Can you tell me how a person can prevent from getting the AIDS virus, if they are having sex without using precautions?

S: No the person you are with and who they have been with. And um...being like, be only with them don't like go around with 50 different people. Or whatever, and um...I don't know.

I: How well do you think that that would protect the person from getting the AIDS virus?

S: If they were the only person that they've ever had sex with it then they would be pretty safe. I wouldn't say 100% but it would be more safe than with somebody that has been with other people.

I: And what do you think might lead a person to having sex without using precautions?

S: They are not really thinking about that at the time, no one really thinks about that, whenever they are ready to have sex, they are just thinking about how much they want to have sex or whatever.

I: And imagine a person goes out planning not to have sex without using precautions. They plan not to have sex without precautions. What kinds of thing can mess up those plans?

S: The fact that either one of the them might not have a contraceptive at that time. And then they want to have sex at that time. The fact, that um... the other person might not want to and if um..if they are influenced them enough that they might, they might tell them not to use it.

I: What effect does alcohol have on people?

S: It could make you, I guess, you are more vulnerable then. And you are not really thinking at the time and you're slower.

I: Does drinking make much of a difference in a persons risk of getting the AIDS virus?

S: When you drinking you're not really capable of saying what you really want or what you really don't want at that time so somebody wants to have sex with you you might not even know it and you might of had sex with them. Or doing drugs or whatever. And not even remember.

I: Is the risk of getting the AIDS virus different for people who drink a little bit every day, compared to people who drink a lot on certain occasions.

S: I'd say it's less for people who drink a little each day cause they body tolerance is able to handle the alcohol. But the people who drink massive quantities on special occasions get blasted to a point that they don't really understand what they are doing at that time.

I: Can you tell me what happens when a person gets infected with the AIDS virus?
S: I think it's, it's a reproduction of some cell that goes like crazy in your body and like takes over your immunization. Your immune system. And like your red blood cell count goes down and stuff.

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

S: You could be around somebody that AIDS or has HIV and not get it, just by talking, they could be your friend, and you could be around them all the time but never get it.

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

S: Their immune system starts to break down and their body starts to deteriorate inside. And eventually, they will die. Like be sick for 10 years, afterwards.

I: Afterwards, what do you...

S: After they are diagnosed with AIDS, not HIV cause you could HIV but not have AIDS.

I: Can you tell me more about the time between when a person gets HIV and he or she gets AIDS?

S: They develop, it's just storing in your blood and like reproducing itself and taking over, but it's not really AIDS to the point till you're blood cell count goes down below a certain number.

I: How long does it take for a person with HIV to develop AIDS?

S: I would say about, maybe I think like you could have HIV for up to ten years and not know it. So I guess like maybe 10 years before they could have AIDS or something like that.

I: Is that time period different for some people than for others, or is it the same for everybody.

S: It depends on your own immune system. If you immune system is broke down at the time that you have it, it develops more rapidly.

I: How can someone learn whether he or she has HIV?

S: They can go get a blood test. And you can test it to see if they have it yet.

I: Do you know how the test works? What they test for?

S: I think it's, they take I don't know how much blood they take out of you, but um...it's like a two week period time before they get back to you with it. And um...I think they do it multiple test on it, like different types of tests to see if you have HIV or AIDS or something. They mix chemicals or something with it.

I: And why would someone decide to be tested.
S: Because they might of been with somebody that they weren't sure of, or not remember who they've been with, or the fact that they could of, they might of raped or whatever.

I: What would make you think that a person has HIV?

S: A person that I would think might have HIV? It would be a person that you know might be sleeping around that you know that hasn't been using precautions or whatever, but I don't really think you can look at somebody and tell if they have HIV, but when you have AIDS it's more noticeable. Cause it would be, they would be like looking more run down or whatever I guess.

I: And other than looking run down, is there any other things that you may notice about a person that may make you believe that they have AIDS?

S: I don't think you can look at somebody and tell that they have AIDS.

I: What kinds of people have a lot to worry from HIV?

S: Teenagers.

I: Why?

S: Because they are more sexually active, at this point, and they are not really worrying about either using precautions or whatever. And they are more experimental with drugs and stuff. And they are not really taking in consideration that they might get HIV or AIDS.

I: When can people stop worrying about HIV at all or AIDS?

S: Well, I don't think you should stop worrying about it at any given time. It's always there and it's going to be a virus until it gets cured, it's going to multiply rapidly unless people start using precautions and stuff.

I: Do you think people are making too big of a deal of HIV and AIDS?

S: I think it's, I guess in a way if you use all the precautions and stuff it's really hard to get AIDS. But if you don't then you shouldn't worry about it all the time if you are one of the people that don't. And I don't think it's over publicized, I think that the way that it is publicized people experiment a little bit more to see what's going to happen. They like try to take chances to see, oh, I think I can do that.

I: Where have you learned about HIV and AIDS?

S: School, Auberle, television, I watch a lot of educational programs.

I: And what things do they skip about AIDS in health classes at school that you have learned elsewhere?
S: The fact that they miss basically go into like little detail about the fact of when you start talking about how many times you've had sex or whatever, when they start talking about that they really don't want to hear about that. Because they have to teach you abstinence in school. That's not the logical thing to be teaching you should teach them to use precautions. Not to have abstinence. And by teaching us that people aren't you can't really say that there is that many people in our school that are, that stay abstinence at the age of 17 or 18. So they skip that.

I: Do you think you know enough about HIV and AIDS to protect yourself from it?

S: I always want to learn about it, but I think I know enough to not like make to have sex or do drugs, now I won't do drugs, in that case then I wouldn't share someone else's needle.

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

S: I would like to know, the inner body like how it accumulates it. What really happens, in more detail.

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

S: That it starts out as a smaller virus, a bacteria and it develops into a bacteria, later on it transitions into it which means when your, I don't know if it's white or red cells goes down to whatever number then that is what converts it over to AIDS.

I: What does the term safe sex mean?

S: To use precautions, to protect with contraceptives. Stay abstinence.

I: Once again, what do you mean by contraceptives?

S: Condoms, spermicide, the pill don't really help you with that it just helps you not to get pregnant. And foam and diaphragms or things like that.

I: Can you tell me more about condoms, what are the safest condoms to use for protection against AIDS?

S: Lubricated ones, lubricated ones that I guess have spermicide on them, because that um, fights the sperm of, so like um... just in case like if they were to break or whatever.

I: What else do condoms protect you against.

S: Any other sexually transmitted disease, or anything like that but not like fully from getting pregnant, um gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes.

I: And what does IV drug use mean.

S: To use hypodermic needles to inject yourself.
I: And do you think needles can be cleaned?

S: Not, they can be sterilized to a point but I don't think that they could be totally. Being that there is bacteria substance on it.