



# Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

Portia Hampton  
Interviewed by Stephanie Pennell

British Library ref. C1345/27

## IMPORTANT

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## Interview Summary Sheet

**Ref no:** C1345/27

**Collection title:** Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

<b>Interviewee's surname:</b>	Hampton	<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Interviewee's forename:</b>	Portia	<b>Sex:</b>	Female
<b>Occupation:</b>	Housing Support Worker	<b>Date and place of birth:</b>	1971, Newport

**Date(s) of recording:** 14<sup>th</sup> March 2009

**Location of interview:** The City Inn Hotel, Bristol

**Name of interviewer:** Stephanie Pennell

**Speech to Text reporter:** Hilary McLean

**Type of recorder:** Marantz PMD660 on compact flash

**Recording format :** WAV 16 bit 44.1 kHz

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**Additional material:**

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**Interviewer's comments:**

**[Track 1]**

*This is Stephanie Pennell interviewing Portia Hampton on Sunday 15 March 2009 for the Unheard Voices Project in Bristol City Inn, Bristol. The speech-to-text reporter is Hilary Maclean. I'd like to ask you please to give me your full name and I believe you don't have a married name so if you just give me your full name please.*

Portia Louise Hampton

*Could you give me your occupation or former occupation?*

Former occupation housing support worker.

*And the date and place of birth?*

1 January 1971, place of birth the Royal Gwent hospital in Newport, South Wales.

*Could you tell me of your father's occupation?*

Transport manager.

*And your mother's occupation?*

Housewife.

*Thank you. Moving on to general background questions, I wonder if you can tell me about your family background. Firstly your grandparents.*

Both sets of grandparents are now deceased. My grandparents on my father's side, my grandfather was a miner, and my grandmother was a housewife as far as I know. On my mother's side her father my grandfather was also a miner and my grandmother was also a housewife as far as I'm aware. But both sets are now deceased.

*Do you know anything do you feel you have some knowledge about the mining industry?*

Yes I do because I was brought up in a mining village in South Wales so yes I do have some knowledge. My father when he was younger worked in the mines.

*Do you want to tell us a little more about what it was like?*

I think they had a very hard life especially my grandparents. Definitely not like the life we know today. I think it was very tough to bring up children in those times and I think there was the there was a lot of emphasis on the wife in the family home to look after the children and look after the house whereas today I think a lot more women go out to work. Back then the man was the breadwinner and the woman was the housemaker.

[03:22]

*Your parents. Can you tell me about your parents?*

My father is 63 at the moment. He's still working. Like I said he's a transport manager. Due to retire in 2 years time. My mother hasn't worked for a while. When my first daughter was younger she gave up her job to look after my daughter for me so I could work full-time. Her name is Lynn. She is 60 at the moment. Both still fit and well, thankfully. That's about it.

*What does your father do, what does his job entail, does he have to stay in the home or does he travel?*

No he travels quite a lot with his job. All throughout, well he has customers throughout England and Wales so he does a lot of travelling with the job.

*What form does it take?*

He travels in his car then he goes to customers to do with the company he works for. I don't like him travelling to be honest with you. I'll be glad now when he retires because I think the traveling now is getting a bit much for him at his age.

*Do you have brothers and sisters?*

One brother.

*How do you get on with him?*

Fine yes he lives in the Forest of Dean. Don't see very much of him. He's married. Doesn't have any children. Has 2 dogs which are his children. He's older than me. 2 years older. He was in the RAF for quite a long time. He's now left the RAF and he runs his own computer consultancy business. He's doing really well for himself. Like I said he's married to Nicky. Yes, we get on really well. When I do see him it's always lovely to see him.

*Do you remember your childhood your relationship as a childhood?*

Yes with my brother it was very good yes

*The sort of things you used to do together.*

We used to do a lot. We used to play a lot together. The one thing that comes to mind my brother used to like watching The Professionals on the TV and we used to do what we called an MI5 Dive bed over the bed. We would do these roly-polies over the bed. Yes it was a good childhood. Me and my brother were close.

*Can you tell me about your own family?*

I've got 2 daughters. One is 3. Her name is Caitlin. One, 15, whose name is Carys. A big age gap between the 2 births of my children. Caitlin is a red head, got a very fiery temper like most red heads, and Carys is a typical teenager, doesn't do a thing around the house or help me at all but that's teenagers for you but she's lovely in her own way. Her and Caitlin argue like cat and dog sometimes, but they're very, very loving children both of them. I wouldn't be without them for the world.

*I believe you're a single Mum.*

Yes I am yes.

*Do you find that makes a special relationship with you daughters?*

Yes it does yes. Really does yes. I have really got a good relationship with them.

*We talked a little bit about your grandparents and the mining industry. Can you tell me about the neighbourhood in which you live. Was it in the mining area?*

Yes it was. It was a little village called Markham - MARKHAM. It was a little village built around the mines especially for the families of the miners. Very close community. Everybody helped each other in time of need. Unfortunately since the mines have closed the community has gone quite dead. And people have left. It was a very nice place to live as a child. Very close community like I said. But since the mines have closed although I do think that mining was a horrible job in a way it's a blessing the mines closed it has broken up the community really specially with the unemployment as it is at the moment.

*Can you describe your home? Childhood home?*

My home at the moment?

*As a child.*

[09:14]

Right, as a child. My home was a loving home. My mother stayed at home when we were younger to look after myself and my brother. My childhood memories are very loving with both my mother and my father. My father worked a lot. Seemed to be out at work all the time but things were quite tough money wise when we were younger so that's what you needed to do but yes it was a very loving home. My memories of childhood are very good.

*What about your education? Can you describe something of that.*

I went to a primary school in Markham and then from there I went on to a comprehensive, a local comprehensive, and wasn't the best comprehensive. I think if my parents could have

afforded for me to go private I think they would have. I managed to leave there with some good decent O Levels. Then I went on to further education college where I was a bit of a rebel and didn't tend to go to my lessons. My parents had a letter home saying I wasn't attending lessons so my father sat me down and said you either knuckle down or get a job. So I decided to leave college then I progressed then into employment.

*Did you make many friends at college?*

Yes I had loads of friends

*Do you still keep in touch with them?*

Yes some of them yes I'm still in touch with friends from comprehensive school really and primary school, gone right through.

[11:03]

*And then, when did you start to work?*

I started to work when I came out of college. I would have been - that would have been about 1989.

*Was that when you went into –*

No, no, I started working in a solicitors office as a solicitors clerk. Then I worked progressively in admin roles, until my hearing loss really, up until 2001. I was always in employment up until then.

*What point did you go into the work the*

Of housing support worker.

*The social, the housing.*



Housing support worker. Well, it was actually new job and I was actually I had just started it when I became ill. I was 3 days into the job when I became ill. So I was only there for 3 days. Then meningitis struck.

*Can you tell me, just going back a bit can you tell me about your leisure activities and hobbies and things?*

Yes. Before my hearing loss, I used to really really love music. Concerts, I really enjoyed going to pop concerts, big fan of U2, Simple Minds, Stereophonics, had a huge CD collection, music the I always thought that if I had the chance that I would go into the music business in some way, obviously not singing but some other ways. Also love reading. More so since my hearing loss I read quite a lot. Used to love running. Keep fit. I used to jog a lot before my illness. Don't jog now but before my illness I used to jog miles. My children obviously are my hobbies. Enjoy spending time with my children going places with them. Take them to the seaside a lot when the weather permits.

*That was going to be my next question. Do you have holidays?*

Holidays. Yes we go on holidays. The last holiday we had was year before last we went to Exmouth that was lovely. The weather was quite nice. It rained quite a bit but most of the time the weather was quite OK so can't complain there. We went abroad about 5 years ago to northern Cyprus which was lovely as well. Really enjoyed that. And this year we hope to go to Tenby for a week in August.

*Thank you. Moving on slightly, can I ask you whether you have a religious belief?*

Christianity.

*And are you a practising Christian?*

No, no.

*And on the political scene do you have political views?*

Yes. Well, I don't the well I usually vote Labour. I didn't agree with the war in Iraq. That's turned me a little bit. I do prefer Gordon Brown to Tony Blair. Just see how it peters out now with the economic situation the way it is to see how we decide to vote at the next election but I also have a lot of faith in the new conservative leader David Cameron and just keeping my eye on what he's doing. But in the past coming from a mining village I have been a Labour supporter.

*Are you actively involved with a group?*

No, no.

[15:46]

*Thank you. Moving on now to what you might call healthcare professionals. I'd like to talk now about your hearing loss and the diagnosis. You've said when it happened. When did you notice that your hearing was gone?*

When I came around from the coma in hospital.

*Why were you in hospital?*

Why was I in hospital? Because I had meningitis.

*Do you know how you came to have meningitis?*

Well I had what the doctors thought was a virus, which got progressively worse over the course of 3 or 4 days. I was prescribed antibiotics. But I couldn't keep them down because I was vomiting. Then I collapsed. I don't remember anything then until I came round from the coma about a fortnight later. Two weeks after I collapsed I was in a coma for 2 weeks.

*Do you know if the deafness was caused by the illness or by the treatment?*

Originally I thought it was the illness, but since I have been not told by any health

professionals but a few people that I have spoken to, one lady in the NADP National Association of Deaf People in Cardiff I spoke to her and it was her that first said to me that it was probably the treatment that caused the deafness but I've never actually been told whether it was that.

*What were your feelings and emotions when you realised that you couldn't hear?*

I was absolutely devastated. Sorry ... It was devastating I just couldn't believe I couldn't hear any more. At first I think nobody realised what had happened to me until I come out the coma. My parents were told that I might not even survive and if I did I might become like a baby again and have to relearn everything. At first when I came from the coma everybody was the they realised obviously that I couldn't hear and they were writing to me and I was wondering why they were writing to me and I was so confused, just didn't really understand why they were writing to me and why I couldn't hear. Life changing. Really life changing for me especially as I was so outgoing before it. Fantastic social life and circle of friends. And it just seemed like it had all come to a stop. It just didn't feel like me any more. Felt like a different me. I wasn't the person that I was before.

*I think one ear was affected more than others, is that right?*

Yes I'm profoundly deaf in this ear the right ear, a dead right ear

*Have they worsened or are they much the same?*

They've got a little bit worse. The good ear, I say, the left ear, has gone a little bit worse.

*Yes. Did you find you had any side-effects?*

Yes. I had real bad balance problems. I couldn't walk. I'd lost so much weight. I went from 9 stone to 6 and a half stone. All the muscle had wasted in my legs. I couldn't speak. My tongue, where I'd been ventilated my tongue was all deformed as I call it. I couldn't speak properly. My one eye had a turn in it. It had affected my right side the worst. I think actually when I see my eye I just screamed because to me to be physically affected as well was just - but thankfully the eye did come back over a period of months, thankfully. But my balance

was the worst. I could not walk without falling over. After coming out the Royal Gwent I then went on to a rehabilitation hospital then in Cardiff for another 2 months for them to help me to get walking again but for a long time I relied on a zimmer frame and went from a zimmer on to walking sticks and eventually I walked without the aid of anything but I still find certain situations walking in sunlight, darkness, on snow or on sand, walking on those I still find my balance is not what it should be. But they say that it will never get back to what it was but just that my brain learns to live with it.

[22:05]

*And now can you describe - are you still having exercises?*

I was having balance rehabilitation in Cardiff in the Heath Hospital in Cardiff. But they've now cancelled that due to lack of funds. So I'm waiting to hear now whether they get funding for more. I've got exercises which I do in the house.

*Do you know who the funding body is for that?*

No. I just had a letter to say that the funding had ran out. They would get in touch if they managed to get more funding.

*I believe you had tinnitus.*

Yes really badly.

*Is that something you have now still?*

Yes.

*Do you do anything about that?*

Not really. I just try not to get stressed or too tired because I find if I'm in a stressful situation it becomes worse, or if I get tired it becomes worse. If I get cold it gets worse and at night I'm usually so tired after looking after my little girl all day I usually go out like a light to sleep but

sometimes I wake up in the middle of the night and get the intermittent ringing you know and funny noises which keep me away so I get up and have a cup of tea then because I think if I lie there it just doesn't go away. I get up then and try and take my mind off it. Yes, I think I'd learned to live with it quite a bit better than I did at the beginning but at the beginning my hearing loss I just wondered what all these noises were. But now I know a little bit more about it it's a bit easier to cope with.

[24:11]

*Thank you. How do you feel about the medical staff who cared for you?*

When I was in the first hospital, the Royal Gwent hospital, I was so ill I can't really remember what sort of care I was having. I know I was a bit of a nightmare of a patient. I used to pull my tubes out. Because I was on so many drugs I didn't really know what I was doing you know. Then when I went to Rookwood which was the rehabilitation hospital, I hated it there. The hospital reminded me of an old isolation hospital and they put me on a ward with 2 old ladies, one who had Alzheimer's and the other one had a brain haemorrhage. And I just thought what am I doing here? But the staff there they were really nice to me because I was really depressed at the time and I was under the care of an excellent man called Dr. Tom Hughes, who was a neurosurgeon consultant, and it was him then that referred me to the Welsh hearing clinic in the Heath Hospital in Cardiff. There then I seen a Prof. Dafydd Stevens, who was absolutely wonderful because originally I had a hearing-aid and it was really big and it wouldn't do me much good, I hated it and they give me a new digital smaller aid and give me some information on my balance and what was actually happening to me so it was only when the referral came from Tom Hughes in Rookwood to Dafydd Stevens I actually started to feel like I was being explained to what had actually happened to me. But up until that point I think I'd been so ill that I couldn't really take it in, if you understand what I mean. As far as I can remember the staff were good as they could have been with me.

*Since then how do you feel about the staff in the present time, shall we say?*

I until go to the Welsh hearing clinic. I go there once a year. I go there and I say I've read this and I've read that, there is new treatments you know, stem cell research, and they just look at me and say you're having the best treatment at the moment you know. I wanted an in

the ear hearing-aid because I hate my hearing-aid being so visible but he said the type of hearing loss I got in the ear aid wouldn't help me at all. I think the staff are being as good as they can be to me. Just I think I want to expect miracles and they can't give me miracles.

[27:41]

*Thank you. As far as - oh have you ever had lip-reading lessons?*

No, I haven't. I have looked on the internet for lip-reading classes in my area but there are none where I live. The nearest one is in Tenby which is Carmarthenshire which is a hell of a long way for me. Wouldn't be viable at all.

*Thank you. Talking about what we term interventions, this covers things like hearing-aids which we've already spoken about, hearing dogs, how do you feel about hearing dogs, do you know anything about them?*

I have been on a waiting list for a hearing dog and it come to the point where they were ready to come and interview with me but I decided not to go ahead because my daughter is so young at the moment and she is quite frightened of dogs, plus I don't really accept my hearing loss at the moment. I find it very hard to tell people I'm hard of hearing and I think having a dog with a coat on saying hearing dogs which points out the fact that I've got a disability and I wouldn't like that at the moment, I still haven't come to terms with it that much.

*Have you got a cochlear implant?*

No.

*Is this something you might consider?*

Not at the moment. If my left ear became a dead left ear like my right ear then they said they would consider a cochlear but at the moment they said that the hearing I've got in my left ear is, the hearing-aid is doing a good job because apparently they have said the audiologist that I'm quite a natural lip reader so at the moment I wouldn't consider a cochlear but obviously if

I was - if I had no hearing in the left ear like I don't have any in the right ear then I would probably consider it.

*Nowadays there is a huge move towards technology. Do you have any of the equipment to help you?*

Yes I have a text phone. I have a Bellman pager system throughout the house which activates the fire alarm, baby monitor, telephone, door bell. I have that. That's it.

*Do you have a loop-system in the house?*

No.

*OK. I think we'll take a pause there.*

[Break in recording]

[30:50]

*Moving on now to deal with the impacts of hearing loss on you, we've already covered some of it, can I ask you about your self-esteem. Apart from feeling totally devastated at your hearing loss, how do you feel now about it? Do you feel as if you're learning to cope ma be?*

Compared to what I was at the beginning I am learning to cope a lot better than I was. But, I have to because I've got a 3 year old who needs me, it's her that's driven me really to doing things. I make myself do things like parents evening and they're all a nightmare to me, but it's a lot better than it was at the beginning but I'll never accept it. The way I feel at the moment I'll never accept it. Whether that will change in the future I don't know but the way I feel at the moment I just wished that I could have my hearing back.

*Do you feel that - do you look on it as a disability or a handicap, the hearing loss?*

It is a disability, but I don't like anybody seeing me labeling me as disabled. Although it is a disability and people - because they can't actually see it because it's hidden they don't realise

the effect it's having on your life and how hard every day situations can be just living with a hearing loss. But I agree that it is a disability although I don't like to class myself as being disabled.

*You said that you didn't feel that you would have a hearing dog because it was labelled.*

Yes.

*And is that part of the problem, the label of being disabled, do you feel?*

Yes, it is, yes.

*So the gap between labelled and people recognising that you're labelled, do you feel there is any way or any value maybe in you being able to explain that to people?*

I do think sometimes if people did see me with a hearing dog or may be a badge on saying that I am hard of hearing that they would realise because sometimes I think people think that I come across being ignorant or that I'm thick and that really annoys me but then I'm part of the problem with that because I don't explain to people, I'm not upfront with them about it because my father would say that I'm ashamed, it's like as if I'm ashamed of it, I suppose in a way I am. I know I shouldn't be after what I've been through but I just wished that I was hearing and not a deaf person. I just find it so difficult to tell people that I am hard of hearing.

*Do you feel that you could tell people so that they understand what it's like, perhaps, to help them to help you?*

Yes, yes, yes, yes, if I told people I would probably make it easier for them but then I get the fear of them not knowing how to react to me. If I tell them that I'm hard of hearing well they think "oh my God this is a disabled person here I'm going to shout at her or completely ignore her because she's deaf". I would rather people not know and just treat me normally. I do get by most of the time. I've learned to pick up on facial expressions and nod when other people are nodding and smile when other people are smiling. The majority of the time I am a good actress with it.



[35:30]

*Can I ask you about personal relationships?*

Yes.

*And how that has affected your life.*

Right. With regard to who? My parents or partners? Yes. My parents at the beginning they were devastated as me you know. Very supportive. Have been all along specially my father. Very, very supportive. At the time when I was diagnosed with the meningitis I was actually going through a divorce which is probably one of the reasons why I was so low at the time and contracted the meningitis they said because I was so stressed out. Since then - the relationship with my daughter my oldest daughter Carys, when she was - when it happened she was 7 years of age and she was quite affected by it. She was upset in school. But she accepted it. She learned to fingerspell with me. But she's got older she seems to have become more embarrassed by my hearing loss especially as she's become a teenager. I don't know whether she would agree to what I'm saying but that's the way I feel sometimes. She doesn't tend to speak up and look at me when she's talking. Sometimes she gets annoyed that she's actually got to turn the telly down when she's talking to me. When I go to parent's evening I find it very difficult because we're in a hall with all the other parents and with teachers sat around desks and I've told Carys really I need to be on a one to one in a quiet environment with them and she practically begged me please don't do that please because I think she feels that she would be singled out for having a mother who's deaf. But I try and have patience with her and I struggle through the parent's evening as much as I can. I do have to tell the teachers that I'm partially deaf and can they look at me when they're speaking. With my 3 year old Caitlin obviously she doesn't understand really that - she does say that it's my bad ear, and she knows I wear a hearing-aid but she doesn't really understand at the moment. She's too young. But she's starting to realise that she needs to look at me when she speaks. So I think she will be more accepting of my hearing loss because she's never known any different. Whereas my eldest daughter had 7 years of me hearing. So I think it was a big change for Carys.

[39:02]

*Thank you. What about friends? Do you have a circle of friends now?*

I do have a circle of friends. Most of them have children, young children like myself, so we tend to meet up with the children, but I don't socialise in the evenings, I don't go to any clubs, I don't go to any pubs or for meals because I just find it too difficult. Because it's a group of friends I find it difficult to follow conversation. I just pick and choose where I go basically.

*Yes, thank you. Moving on now, we talked about your employment. Can you tell me how this has affected you financially? Obviously you had a loss of income.*

Like I said I'd just started a new job. I'd gone through a lengthy interview process for this job. Three different interviews and I was so excited to get this new job. It was a change of career for me because before that I was in a credit controller in an accounts department and I got fed up of working with numbers so I decided to go for this job which was working with the women's refuge as a housing support worker helping women who had suffered domestic abuse. I was really really looking forward to it, then I became ill. In all fairness, they kept the job open to me for one year. But there was no way that I could have gone back into the job that they were employing me to do as I would have had to have full hearing for that obviously. But I was too ill to go back to work any way. Even after a year. All the consultants and doctors said that it would probably take two years for me to recover physically. They kept the job open for a year but then they had to let me go because I told them I couldn't go back and I haven't worked since. I've just lost so much confidence, which is a bug bear to me, because I'm on benefits and I really really want and to get out of the benefit system because up until my illness I had never claimed a benefit. My daughter, Caitlin, will be starting full-time school in September. And I'm hoping that I can pluck up the courage and may be get back into employment because financially I am struggling at the moment.

*Do you claim disability living allowance?*

Yes, yes.

[42:40]

*Moving on, do you think you might go into some kind of adult education or lifelong learning?*

I did try to go back to college. I went through a social care course, but I didn't ask for any help and I thought that I could manage if I was sat at the front of the class, but it was no good. I was completely lost with what the tutor - although I had told the tutor he was aware of my deafness he would forget and I'd get lost and I stuck it for about 6 months and then I gave up but I did get in touch with LEA the learning education authority and they said I could apply for a notetaker, but then it was a label, I was disabled, so I decided not to go for it.

*Moving on a little bit now, can you tell me with the change in your lifestyle have you developed or do you think you will be developing any new interests, is there potential to do so do you think?*

I haven't developed any new interests. All my interests have gone since my hearing loss. At the moment my only interest is looking after my children especially my younger daughter. She takes up all my time. Where I live there is no deaf clubs apart from the one I went to in Cardiff which was full of old people. So I give that up. I don't know anybody else who is deafened. I suppose my prime objective now is to get back into employment and try to get some self-esteem back and get some structure in my life but I just don't know what I can do now with my hearing loss. I mean obviously I can't use the telephone any more. I don't think I would be able to go back into the work I've been used to. Then again I don't just want to be stacking shelves at Asda. Really, I would like to go back into further education but then it's me accepting that I need help with that.

[45:38]

*Moving on now to deal with yourself in the wider society, which again we touched on partially. How do you feel your relationships with family and friends have changed since you've started to take, in a sense, stock of yourself?*

I think like as time has gone on friends and family seem to forget about my hearing loss and probably because I'm so good at hiding it I do get very, very tired with it, and sometimes

some of my family when I become tired they can't really understand why I'm so tired you know and I say, well, I lipread all day, I find it very tiring lip-reading and struggling to hear what people are saying. I do find I'm with friends they forget about my hearing loss, they've given up asking me to go out with them in the evenings because they know I won't go but they can't understand why. When they come to my house to see me I can have a conversation with them fine because we're on a one to one and they don't understand how if I can hear them in the house how I can't hear them in the pub. I do explain about background noise but I think unless you are a deafened person with a hearing-aid you don't really understand what background noise can be like. Sometimes I think may be I'm feeling sorry for myself or people have just forgotten because I look so well and like I said I don't make a point of exaggerating my hearing loss they just think that time fine, you know.

*OK. On the subject of support networks, do you belong to any charities LINK for instance are you involved in the work of LINK/Hearing Concern, LINK?*

No I'm not involved with LINK at the moment no. I did read all the literature about becoming a volunteer but again I've got my three year old my time is so spent with her you know. And because I feel like I'm a million miles from everybody living where I am. I wouldn't be of much use living there. Maybe if I was in a city. Like I said the deafened people that I do know or have seen are elderly people. I can't say that in my area I've actually seen somebody my age with a hearing-aid. They must exist surely.

*Are there any volunteer groups that you feel you could join in your area?*

If they were in my area yes I'm sure I would volunteer to join the group but I'm not aware of any in the area, like I said I've looked for lip-reading classes but there is none. I did go to the NADP in Cardiff many years ago but felt like a fish out of water there.

[49:40]

*Is there any community support that you know of where you live?*

Not that I know of.

*On the subject of access and awareness in terms of legislation maybe, do you feel that there is any more that could be done?*

Well, obviously I'm going to say that I would like as much investigation into improving hearing loss or may be a cure for deafness as much as possible. I have heard that there is some stem cell research going on which I've said to my audiologist about but I think he's fed up of me asking questions about it but yes as long as there is investigation I would like - obviously as much money as can be afforded to be put in you know but there are so many other good causes out there.

*As far as discrimination is concerned, do you feel that at any time you've been a victim of discrimination?*

I think I go to my local theatre in the lace that I live the other week and they didn't have a loop-system there and I couldn't believe it because it's a theatre that hundreds of people use and I asked the lady on reception why there wasn't a loop-system and she said it had been broken for years so with the help of my Dad we got in touch with the local Council and I told them that they were discriminating against me because they hadn't got a loop-system not only for me but surely the deaf children there that they do pantomimes that would love a loop-system. Yes I felt discriminated there but they are supposedly doing something about it now because I told them about the Disability Discrimination Act. So hopefully they'll do something about it. I find the doctors surgery a nightmare. Because my doctors are Indian, and I have real trouble lip-reading them, and when I ask them to look at me they always look away. So I am now looking for a British white doctor that I can understand and I'm not racist, but I have tried time and time again in the surgeries to ask them to look at me and speak clearly but they seem to mumble and look away which is quite shocking really for the doctor you know. Yes I feel discriminated against there.

[52:46]

*I'm getting towards the end of the interview now. Can I ask you in a general way whether you have any future plans of any sorts and any hopes apart from the miracle?*

Well my future plans as I said is to hopefully get back into employment within the near future, within the next 2 years I hope to get back into employment. But I hope that I can get back into a fulfilling career and not just a dead end job where I'm earning money and not really being satisfied. I hope for the miracle, every day, of hearing again.

*And finally, the very last question, is: how did you feel about the interview today and the project itself which you know about?*

I really, really wanted to come to this interview today because I think it's important that it is logged how the difficulties that people with a hearing loss face, every day difficulties, and it's important that it will be logged over time so other people can read and use it for purposes that will help them understand how hearing loss affects us all. Not just the person with the hearing loss but the wider circle of people around, family and friends, and children because I think it affects everybody, not just the person with the hearing loss itself.

*Thank you very much indeed, Portia, that was a very interesting and very moving interview. I thank you for being so frank.*

That's okay, no problem.

*And very clear. And honest. Thank you to Hilary for all your sterling service and I'll close the interview now.*

[End of recording]