

# INTERVIEW: ON ANY GIVEN DAY

## Maureen McHugh

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Emma:

I had this virus, and it was inside me, and it could have been causing all these weird kinds of cancers-

Interviewer:

What kind of cancers?

Emma:

All sorts of weird stuff I'd never heard of like hairy cell leukemia, and cancerous lesions in parts of your bones and cancer in your pancreas. But I wasn't sick. I mean I didn't feel sick. And now, even after all the anti-virals, now I worry about it all the time. Now I'm always thinking I'm sick. It's like something was stolen from me that I never knew I had.

(The following is a transcript from an interview for the *On Any Given Day* presentation of 4/12/2021. This transcript does not represent the full presentation, and more interviews and information are present on the site. *On Any Given Day* is made possible by the National Public Internet, by NPIBoston.org affiliate, and by a grant from the Carrol-Johnson Charitable Family Trust. For information on how to purchase this or any other full site presentation on cdm, please check NPIboston.org.)

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Pop-up quotes and site notes in the interview are included with this transcript.

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The following interview was conducted with Emma Chicheck. In the summer of 2018, a fifteen year old student came into a health clinic in the suburban town of Charlotte, outside Cleveland, Ohio with a sexually transmitted version of a proto-virus called pv414, which was just starting to be identified as a result of contaminated batches of genetic material associated with the telomerase therapy used in rejuvenation. The virus had only been seen previously in rejuvenated elders, and the presence of the virus in teenagers was at first seen as possible evidence that the virus had changed vectors. The medical detective work done to trace the virus, and the picture of teenaged behavior that emerged was the basis of the site documentary, called ? The Abandoned Children.? Emma was one of the students identified with the virus.

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The *Site map* provides links to a *description of the proto-virus*, a *map of the transmission* of the virus from Terry Sydnowski through three girls to a total of eleven other people, and *interviews with state health officials* .

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Emma:

I was fourteen when I lost my virginity. I was drunk, and there was this guy named Luis, he was giving me these drinks that taste like melon, this green stuff that everybody was drinking when they could get it. He said he really liked all my Egyptian stuff and he kept playing with my slave bracelet. The bracelet has chains that go to rings you wear on your thumb, your middle finger and your ring finger. ? Can you be my slave?? he kept asking and at first I thought that was funny because he was the one bringing *me* drinks, you know? But we kept kissing and then we went into the bedroom and he felt my breasts and then he wanted to have sex. I felt as if I'd led him on, you know? So I didn't say no.

I saw him again a couple of times after that, but he didn't pay much attention to me. He was older and he didn't go to my school. I regret it. I wish it had been a little more special and I was really too young.

Sometimes I thought that if I were a boy I'd be one of those boys who goes into school one day and starts shooting people.

(Music-"Poor Little Rich Girl?" by Tony Bennett.)

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Interviewer:

What's a culture freak?

Emma:

You're kidding, right? This is for the interview? Okay, in my own words.

A culture freak is a person who really likes other cultures, and listens to culture freak bands and doesn't conform to the usual sort of jumpsuit or Louis Vitton wardrobe thing. So I'm into Egyptian a lot, in a spiritual way, too. I tell Tarot Cards. They're really Egyptian, people think they're Gypsy but I read about how they're actually way older than that and I have an Egyptian deck. My friend Lindsey is like me, but my other friend, Denise, is more into Indian stuff. Lindsey and I like Indian, too, and sometimes we'll all henna our hands.

Interviewer:

Do you listen to culture freak music?

Emma:

I like a lot of music, not just culture music. I like Black Helicopters, I really like their *New World Order* cd, because it's really retro and paranoid. I like some of the stuff my mom and dad like, too, Tupac and Lauryn Hill. I like the band Shondonay Shaka Zulu. It's got a lot of drone. I like that.

(Music-"My Favorite Things?" by John Coltrane.)

\* \* \* \*

I'm seventeen. I'll be eighteen in April. I went to kindergarten when I was only four. I've already been accepted at Northeastern. I wanted to go to Bard but my parents said they didn't want me going to school in New York City.

My dad's in telecommunications. He's in Hong Kong for six weeks. He's trying to get funding for a sweep satellite. They're really cool. The satellites are really small, but they have this huge like net in front of them, like miles in front and miles across. The net like spins itself. See if space debris hits something hard it will drill right through it, but when it hits this big net, the net gives and just lets the chunk of metal or whatever slide away so it doesn't hit the satellite. That way it won't be like that satellite in '07 that caused the chain reaction so half the United States couldn't use their phones.

My mom is a teacher. She's taking a night class two nights a week to re-certify. She's always having to take classes, and she's always gone one night a week for that. Then there's after school stuff. She never gets home before six. When I was little she took summers off, but now she does bookkeeping and office work in the summer for a landscaper because my older brother and sister are in college already.

The landscaper is one of those babyboomers on rejuvenation. He's a pain in the ass. Like my dad says, they're all so selfish. Why won't they let anyone else have a life? I mean, the sixties are over, and they're trying to have them all over again. I hate when we're out and we see a bunch of babyboomers all hopped up on hormones acting like teenagers. But then they go back and go to work and won't let people like my dad get promoted because they won't retire.

They want to have it both ways. My mom says when we're all through school, she's going to retire and start a whole different life. A less materialistic life. She says she's going to get out of the way and let us have our lives. People have to learn how to go on to the next part of their lives. Like the Chinese. They had five stages of life, and after you were successful you were supposed to retire and write poetry and be an artist. Of course, how successful can you consider a high school teacher?

(Music-"When I'm Sixty-Four?" by the Beatles.)

\* \* \* \*

Okay, we were out this one Saturday hanging outside the bowling alley because the cops had thrown us out. The cops here are the worst. They discriminate against teenagers. Everybody discriminates against teenagers. Like the pizza place has this sign that says only six people under eighteen are allowed in at a time-which means teenagers. If they had a sign that only six people *over* eighteen or six *black* people were allowed in at a time everybody would be screaming their heads off, right? We rented shoes and everything but we weren't bowling yet, we were just hanging out, because we hadn't decided if we were going to bowl and they threw us out.

We went over to the grocery store and the CVS to hang out on the steps and there was this boomer there. He was trying to dress like a regular kid. See most boomers dress in flared jeans and black and stuff and they all have long hair, especially the men, I guess because so many of them were like, bald before the treatments. This guy had long hair, too, pulled back in a dorky pony tail, but he was wearing a camo jumpsuit. He'd have looked stupid in county orange, like he was trying too hard, but the camo jumpsuit was okay.

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In 2018, Terry Sydnowski was seventy-one years old. [Click here for information on \*telemetase repair\*, \*endocrinological therapy\* and \*cosmetic surgery techniques\* of rejuvenation.](#)

\* \* \* \*

We were ignoring him. It was me and Denise and Lindsey, and this older black guy named Kamar and these two guys from school, DC and Matt. Kamar had bought a bunch of forty-fives. You know, malt liquor. I was kind of nervous around Kamar. Kamar seemed so grown up, in a lot of ways. He'd been

arrested twice as a juvenile. Once for shoplifting and once, I think, for possession. He always called me 'little girl'. Like when he saw me he said, 'What you doing, little girl?' and smiled at me.

\* \* \* \*

*Interview with Kamar Wilson* , conducted in the Summit County jail where Wilson is serving eighteen months for possession of narcotics.

\* \* \* \*

I was feeling pretty drunk and I started feeling sorry for this dorky boomer who was just standing over by the wall watching us. I told Denise he looked really sad.

Denise didn't really care. I remember she had a blue caste mark right in the middle of her forehead and it was the kind that glowed under streetlights. When she moved her head it kind of bobbed around. She thought Boomers were creeps.

I said he probably had money and ID. But she didn't really care because DC always had money and this other guy, Kamar, he had ID.

I know that Boomers already had childhoods and all that, but this guy looked really sad. And maybe he didn't have a childhood. Maybe his mom was an alcoholic and he had to watch his brothers and sisters. Just looking at him I felt like there was this real sadness to him. I don't know why. Maybe because he wasn't being pushy. He sure wasn't like the guy my mom worked for, who was kind of a jerk. He wasn't getting in our faces or anything. Boomers usually hang out with each other, you know?

Then DC sort of noticed him. DC is really kind of crazy, and I was afraid he and Kamar would decide to mess him up or something.

I said something about how I felt sorry for him.

And DC said something like, you want him to be really sorry? Kamar laughed.

I told them to leave him alone. DC is crazy. He'll do anything. Anything anybody does, DC has to be badder.

Interviewer:

Tell me about DC.

Emma:

DC always had a lot of money, he lived with this guy who was his godfather because his parents were divorced and his mom was really depressed or something and just laid around all the time. His godfather was always giving him anything. Kamar was nineteen and he had a fake phone id, so he'd order stuff and they'd do a check against his phone id and then he'd just pick it up and pay for it.

DC did all kind of crazy things. DC and Matt decided they were going to kill a bunch of kids. Just because they were mad. They were going to do a Columbine. So they drank like one of those fifths of Popov vodka, you know the kind I mean? They were going to get guns from some guy Kamar knew, but instead DC just took a baseball bat and started beating on this kid, Kevin, who he really hated.

Interviewer:

Why did he hate Kevin?

Emma:

I don't know, Kevin was just annoying, you know? He was this dweeby kid who was always bad-mouthing people. He used to get in a fight with this black kid, Stan, at the beginning of every school year. Stan wasn't even that good at fighting, but he'd punch Kevin a couple of times and that would be it until Kevin started bad-mouthing him the next year. It's like everything Kevin said got on DC's nerves. So DC is totally wasted, driving around with a bunch of kids, and he sees Kevin hanging out in front of Wendy's and he screams, ? Stop the car! ? and he jumps out with this baseball bat and goes running up to Kevin and swings at him and Kevin raises his arm and gets his arm broken and then some other people haul DC off.

No, I wasn't there. I heard all about it the next day, though. And Kevin's arm was in a cast. Kevin was real proud of it, actually. He's that kind of a dork.

No, Kevin's parents were going to go to court, but they never did. I don't know why.

\* \* \* \*

No charges were ever filed. Kevin and his parents declined to be interviewed.

\* \* \* \*

Anyway, that's why I was really worried about DC and this boomer. Luckily, Lindsey had a real thing about DC that night and they went off to walk back down to the bowling alley to look for this other girl whose parents were gone for the weekend. We were all going to that girl's house for a party.

Interviewer:

Where were your parents?

Emma:

My parents? They were home. I had to be in by midnight, but if it was a really good party I'd just go home at midnight and my parents would already be in bed, so I'd tell them I was home and then sneak back out through the side door in the basement and go back to the party.

Interviewer:

Do you think your parents should have kept closer watch on you?

Emma:

No. I mean, they couldn't. I mean, like, Denise has a PDA with a minder. They caught her this one time she went to Rick's in the Flats using Lindsey's sister's id-

\* \* \* \*

An industry has developed around the arsenal of monitoring devices used to track teenagers, *paggers*, *minders*, *snitch packs and chips* , as well as the *variety of tricks* teenagers use to subvert them.

\* \* \* \*

Interviewer:

Can you describe a minder?

Emma:

It's like a chip or something, and it's supposed to tell your parents where you are. Denise walked into the club and now all the clubs have these things line in the door or something that sets off the minder, and then this company calls your home and tells your parents where you are. But Kamar downloaded this program for Denise and put it on her PDA, and when she runs it, it tells her minder that she's somewhere else. Like, she puts my phone number in, and then it tells her minder that she's at my house.

So it was me and Denise and Kamar and this guy, Matt, and Kamar went somewhere ... I don't remember where. Denise starts kidding me about talking to the Boomer

I was kind of drunk by then, and when I got drunk I used to think everything was funny. Oh, yeah, Kamar had gone to look for some other kids we knew, but anyway. We were kind of goofin'. You know? And Denise kept saying that she didn't think I would talk to the guy. So finally I did. I just went up to him and said hi.

And he said hi.

Up close he had that kind of funny look that geezers-I mean, boomers do. You know, like their noses and their chins and their ears are too big for their faces or something. I was pretty drunk and I didn't know what to say so I just started laughing, because I was kind of nervous and when I'm nervous, sometimes I laugh.

He asked me what I was doing, but nice. Smiling. And I told him, 'Talking to you.' I thought it was funny.

He said I seemed a little drunk. He said 'tipsy' which was funny because it sounded so old fashioned.

For a minute I thought he might be a cop or something. But then I decided he wasn't because he could have busted us a long time ago, and besides, we weren't doing anything but drinking. So I introduced him to Denise and Matt. He said his name was Terry, which seemed like a real geezer name, you know? He was really nice, though. Quiet.

Interviewer:

Do you know any rejuvenated people?

Emma:

No, I didn't know any boomers, I mean, not any rejuvenated ones, except the guy my mom works for, and I don't really know him. My grandmother is going to do it next year but she has to wait until some kind of stock retirement thing happens.

I think I asked him if he was a cop, but I didn't really mean it. I was laughing because I knew he really wasn't.

He said he was just looking for someone to hang out with.

I asked him why he didn't hang out with other people like him? I mean now it sounds kind of rude, but really, it was weird, you know?

He said that they were all old, and he wanted to be young. He didn't want to hang around with a bunch of old people who thought they were young. He said that he didn't really enjoy being a kid so he was going to try it again.

That made me think I was right about what I'd thought before about his not having a childhood or something. I liked the idea of his having one now, so I asked if he wanted to go to the party.

Denise thought it was stupid, I could see from her face, but I knew once I explained about the childhood thing she'd feel bad for him, too.

He asked where the party was and we told him it was at this girl's house but we needed to wait for DC and Lindsey and Kamar to come back. Then I started worrying about DC.

Then he said he'd go get beer, which was the coolest thing, because that would convince a lot of people he was okay. He asked us what kind of beer we wanted.

Denise really liked that lemon beer, what's it called, squash, so we told him to get that. He got in this all gasoline car-really nice. No batteries, a real muscle car like a Mercury or something. I told Denise my theory about him not having a childhood.

She was worried DC might be crazy but I thought that if Terry had beer, DC wouldn't care. Denise kept saying that DC was going to be really cranked.

Matt kept saying DC wouldn't care if Terry had beer, but I was getting really nervous about DC, because if he decided he wanted to be a pain in the ass-I'm sorry, I shouldn't swear, but that's the way we talk when it's just us. Is that okay?

Well, I was afraid DC would be a pain in the ass, just because you never know with DC. I was kind of hoping maybe Kamar and DC and Lindsey would get back before the geezer did so we could just go on to the party and forget about it. Kamar got back. But then Terry got back before DC and Lindsey.

But when DC and Lindsey got back, DC didn't even pay any attention to Terry. They told us that Brenda had already gone to her house so we all went to the party. (Music-"Downtown?" by Petula Clark.)

\* \* \* \*

So the next time I saw Terry was with Kamar at another party. I was really surprised. Just because of the way Kamar was. But he and Terry were like good friends, which I figured really pissed DC off. Kamar liked DC, but part of the reason was because DC always had money, and Terry always had money. Terry was always buying beer and stuff. I thought Terry would ignore me because that's what guys do, they're nice to you one night and ignore you the next. But Terry was really nice and brought me a squash because he thought it was what I liked.

It's Denise that really likes it but I thought it was neat that he remembered.

He hung around with me for awhile. He was cute, for a geezer. I bet when he was a kid he was really cute. I just forgot that he was different. He just seemed like a regular kid, only really nice. Then all the sudden I'd look at him and I think about how odd he looked, you know just the way his face was different, and his knuckles were thick. I mean his hands and face were smooth. He told me once that he was self-conscious about it, and that some people, people in movies and stuff, have the cartilage on their nose and chin shaved. After awhile though, I got so used to it I didn't even notice it anymore.

So I hung out with him and after awhile we started kissing and stuff. He got really turned on, really fast. It was already maybe 10:30 and I was drunk, so we went upstairs and Matt and Lindsey were in the bedroom, so we kind of snuck in. They were on the bed, but we spread out some coats. It's really embarrassing to talk about. (Music-"Days of Wine and Roses?" by Frank Sinatra.)

\* \* \* \*

Emma:

Oh my God! I just thought of something. I shouldn't say it.

Interviewer:

You don't have to unless you want to.

Emma:

You won't put it on tape if I don't want you to, will you? (Laughing.) Oh my God, my face is so red. He was a mushroom.

Interviewer:

What?

Emma:

You know, a mushroom. I can't believe I'm saying this. He was cut. I don't remember the word for it.

Interviewer:

Circumcised?

\* \* \* \*

More than ninety percent of all men born between 1945 and 1963 were circumcised.

\* \* \* \*

Emma:

Yeah. I'd never seen a boy like that before. Denise had sex with a guy who was, but I never had before. It was weird. I know my face is so red. I guess you can leave it in. A lot of boomers are circumcised, right?

Oh my God. (Covers face with hands, laughing.) It's such a stupid thing to remember.

(Music-More of ? Days of Wine and Roses by Frank Sinatra, which has been playing underneath this portion of the interview.)

\* \* \* \*

Interviewer:

How many people have you had sex with?

Emma:

Four. I've had sex with four guys. Yeah, including Terry and Luis.

Interviewer:

Do you have any regrets?

Emma:

Sure I wish I hadn't. The anti-virals made me sick. I missed almost a month of school that year because every time I had a treatment I'd be sick for three days. And everybody knew why I was missing school, which was so embarrassing. There were seventeen of us who had it.

They think that the anti-virals took care of it, and we won't get cancer, but they don't know because it's so new. So I've got to have blood tests and check-ups every year. I hate it because I never thought about being sick before, not really, and now, every time I feel weird I'm thinking, is it a tumor? Every headache I'm thinking, is this a brain tumor?

Sometimes I'm so mad, because Terry got to be rejuvenated, he gets like forty extra years, and I may not even get to be old because of him. Most of the time I think the anti-virals took care of it, and like my mom says, all the check-ups mean if I ever do get sick, it will get caught a lot faster than it would in another person, so in a way, I might be lucky.

I usually believe that the anti-virals did it, but sometimes, like when I'm getting blood drawn, I'm really aware of how I feel and I'm afraid I've got cancer, and right then I don't believe it. I was unlucky enough to have this happen, so why would I be lucky about it working? I know that doesn't make any sense.

Terry and DC were arguing one time. DC was saying that when he was old he wouldn't get rejuvenated. He'd let someone else have a chance. But Terry said he'd change his mind once he got old. And Terry was right. I always thought I wouldn't want to be rejuvenated, but every time I think I'm sick, I really want to live and I don't think I'll feel different when I'm old.

Terry didn't know he had the virus. It wasn't really his fault or anything. But sometimes I still get really mad at him.

That's kind of why I'm doing this. So that maybe someone else won't have to go through what I did.

Interviewer:

Have you kept in touch with Terry?

Emma:

No. I haven't seen him for three years.

Interviewer:

Your parents wanted to file statutory rape charges, didn't they?

Emma:

Yeah, but I thought it would be stupid. It wasn't like that.

Interviewer:

Why not?

Emma:

Statutory rape is stupid. He didn't rape me. He was nice, nicer than a lot of other guys.

Interviewer:

But Terry is an adult. Terry is in his seventies.

Emma:

I know. But it's not like a guy who looks seventy years old ... it's different. I mean, in a way it's not, I know, but it is, because Terry was sort of being one of us, you know? I mean, he wasn't all that different from Kamar. It would have been statutory rape with Kamar, too, but nobody says anything about that. I didn't sleep with Kamar, but I know a lot of girls who did, and nobody is trying to pin that on Kamar.

They're trying to pin everything else on Kamar. They said he was dealing drugs to us and he was the ring leader, but you can get drugs anywhere. You can get them at school. And he wasn't the ring leader. There wasn't any ring leader. We didn't need to be lead to do all those things.

Interviewer:

Was Terry one of you?

Emma:

Yeah ... no. No. Not really. He wanted to be. I mean, I wish I had known stuff before, I wish I had known not to get involved with Terry and all this stuff-but I wish I could have been a kid longer.

(Music-"The Kids Are All Right? by The Who.)

\* \* \* \*

The last time I saw Terry? It was before I got tested, before anyone knew about the virus. Before all these people said to me, ? You're lucky it's not AIDS, then you'd have to take medicine your whole life. ?

We went together for four months, I think. From November to March because we broke up right after Denise's birthday. We didn't break up really, so much as decide that maybe we should see other people, that we shouldn't get serious. Terry was weird to talk to. I never knew what he was thinking. I knew a little bit about him. He was retired and he'd had some kind of office job. I found out that he hadn't had a rotten childhood, he just hadn't liked it. He said he didn't have many friends and he was too serious before.

Interviewer:

Why did you break it off?

Emma:

We weren't in sync. He liked all that Boomer music, rock and roll and Frank Sinatra and stuff. And we couldn't exactly fall in love, because he was so different.

He was always nice to me afterwards. He wasn't one of those guys who just ignores you.

We were all hanging out at the park next to the library after school. It was the end of the year, school was almost over. Kamar was hanging out with Brenda. He wasn't exactly her boyfriend because she was also hanging out with this other guy named Anthony and one weekend she'd be with Kamar and the next weekend she'd be with Anthony.

Everybody was talking and something Terry said made DC really mad. I don't know what it was. It really surprised me because DC always acted like Terry didn't even exist. When Terry was around, he'd ignore him. When he wasn't around, DC would hang with Kamar. But DC started screaming, stuff like, why

don't you have any friends! You loser! You fucking loser! You have to hang around with us because you don't have any friends! Well, we don't want you, either! So why don't you just go die!

Terry had this funny look on his face.

A couple of guys pulled DC away and calmed him down. But everyone was looking at Terry, like it was his fault. I don't know why, I mean, he didn't do anything.

That evening I was supposed to stay at Denise's house, for real, not like when I told my mom I would be a Denise's and then went out. So I took my stuff over to her house, and then my brother, who was home from Duke, took us and dropped us off at Pizza Hut so we could get something to eat and then we wandered over to the steps outside the CVS because we saw people hanging out there.

Lindsey was there and she told me that DC was looking for Terry. That DC said he was going to kill Terry. Kamar got arrested, she said. Which meant that there was nobody to calm down DC.

Kamar had gotten arrested before, for shoplifting, but he got probation. But this time he got arrested for possession. Partly it was because Kamar is black.

Everybody was talking about Kamar getting busted and DC going off the deep end.

Lindsey kept saying, ? Oh my God.? It really got on my nerves. I mean, I knew DC hated Terry. DC just hated Terry. He said Terry was a poser and was just using people.

Interviewer:

Were you friends with DC?

Emma:

I knew DC, but we never really talked, but Lindsey had been seeing him for a couple of months so she knew him better than Denise and me.

Lindsey thought DC and Kamar were really friends. I thought Kamar just hung around with DC because he had money. Kamar was something like three years older than DC. But Lindsey said Kamar was just using Terry, but he and DC were really close.

I don't know what was true.

After awhile Terry showed up. I didn't know what we should do, if we should tell him or not, but finally I thought I should. Terry was sitting with his car door open, talking to some people.

I told him Kamar got arrested for possession.

He wanted to know what happened, and I didn't know anything but what Lindsey had told me

Terry wanted to know if he had a lawyer?

I never thought about a lawyer. Like I said before, mostly it was easy to forget that Terry wasn't just a kid like everyone else.

Terry called the police station on his cellphone. Just punched up the information and called. He said, he was a friend of Kamar Wilson's. They wouldn't tell him anything on the phone, so he hung up and said he was going to go down.

I felt really weird suddenly talking to him, because he sounded so much like an adult. But I told him DC was looking for him.

? Fuck DC,? Terry said.

I thought Terry would take off right then and there to go to the police station. But he kept talking to people about Kamar and about what might have happened, so I gave up and I went back to sit on the steps with Denise and Lindsey. We were working on our tans because it would make us look more Egyptian and Indian. Not that I would even think of doing that now, even though skin cancer isn't one of the types of cancer.

So finally DC came walking from over towards the hardware store and Denise saw him and said, ? Oh shit.?

I just sat there because Terry was an adult and he could just deal with it, I figured. I'd tried to tell him. And I was kind of pissed at him, too, I don't know why.

DC started shouting that Terry was a loser.

I don't remember if anybody said anything, but Terry didn't get out of the car. So DC came up and kicked the car, really hard. That didn't do anything so he jumped up on the hood.

Terry told him to get off the car, but DC wanted him to get out of the car and talk to him. After awhile Terry got out of the car and DC said something like, ? I'm going to kill you man.?

DC had a knife.

Denise wanted us to go inside the CVS. But we were pretty far away. And the people inside the CVS are creeps anyway. They were calling the police, right then. Terry stood right by the door of his car, kind of half in and half out.

Lindsey was going, ? Oh my God. Oh my God.? She was really getting on my nerves.

I didn't think anything was really going to happen.

Terry kept saying, stuff like, ? Calm down man.?

DC was ranting and raving that Terry thought that just because he was older he could do anything he wanted.

Terry finally got in his car and closed the door.

But DC didn't get off the hood. He jumped up and down on it and the hood made this funny kind of splintery noise.

Terry must have gotten mad, he drove the car forward, like, gunned it, and DC fell off, really hard.

Terry stopped to see if DC was okay. He got out of his car and DC was lying there on his side, kind of curled up. Terry bent over DC and DC said something ... I couldn't see because Terry was between me and DC, Matt was one of the kids up there and he said that Terry pulled open his jacket and he had a gun. He took the gun out in his hand, and showed it to DC and said to fuck off. A bunch of kids saw it. Matt said that Terry called DC a fucking rich kid.

Interviewer:

Have you ever seen a gun?

Emma:

I saw one at a party once. This kid I didn't know had it. He was showing it to everyone. I thought he was a creep.

Interviewer:

When did you see Terry next?

Emma:

I never saw Terry after that, although I told the clinic about him, so I'm sure they contacted him. He was where the disease came from.

I wasn't the only one to have sex with him. Brenda has sex with him, and this girl I don't know very well, JaneAnne. JaneAnne had sex with some other people, and I had sex with my boyfriend after that. I don't know about Brenda.

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*JaneAnne* and *Brenda's* interviews. *JaneAnne* was interviewed from her home in Georgetown, MD, where her family moved six months ago. *Brenda* is still living in Charlotte, with her mother.

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It taught me something. Adults are different. I don't know if I want to be one.

Interviewer:

Why not?

Emma:

Because DC was acting stupid, you know? But DC was a kid. And Terry really wasn't, no matter how bad he wanted to be. So why would he do that to a kid?

Interviewer:

So it was Terry's fault?

Emma:

Not his fault, not exactly. But he was putting himself in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Interviewer:

Should he have known better?

Emma:

Yeah. No, I mean, he couldn't know better. It was my fault in a way. Because most of the time if, like, we're at the bowling alley and a couple of geezers come in trying to be young, we just ignore them and they just ignore us. It's just instinct or something. If I hadn't talked to Terry, none of this would have happened.

Terry has different rules than us. I'm not saying kids son's hurt each other. But Terry was always thinking, you know?

Interviewer:

What do you mean?

Emma:

I don't know. Just that he was always thinking. Even when he wasn't supposed to be, even when he was mad, he was always thinking.

(Music-"Solitude" by Duke Ellington.)

\* \* \* \*

Emma:

When my parents found out they were really shocked. It's like they were in complete denial. My dad cried. It was scary.

We're closer now. We still don't talk about a lot of things, though. We're just not that kind of family.

Interviewer:

Do you still go to parties? Still drink?

Emma:

No, I don't party like I used to. When I was getting the anti-virals, I was so sick, I just stopped hanging out. My parents got me a PDA with a minder, like Denise's. But I wasn't doing anything anymore. Lindsey still sees everyone. She tells me what's going on. But it feels different, now. I don't want to be an adult. That must have been what Terry felt like. Funny, to think I'm like him.

(Music-"My Old School" by Steely Dan.)

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