

# SHOTPUT.

**The Slow Dance**  
**Episode 4: HARDCORE**  
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**Full transcript**

Jim (J):

Welcome to The Slow Dance, a five part podcast series in which teens educate us about sex. We're your hosts, Jim...

Lucy (L):

And Lucy.

J:

Today's episode is called Hardcore.

L:

In nearly every single interview and conversation that we had with teenagers, there was a moment where one teen in the group would blurt out something like...

Respondent (R):

No one's said it yet, so I'm just going to say it because sometimes it just needs to be said. Porn.

L:

Yes, porn. Porn, porn, porn. Is it any surprise that teens are consuming in large quantities porn?

J:

No, but why? What does porn do? This might seem obvious, but it isn't necessarily. Last week's episode was about the manifold failures of sex ed in school. And if you haven't heard that episode, we recommend you go and listen to it. In fact, we recommend you listen to all previous episodes. But because of the failures of sex ed, porn fills the gap.

L:

Yeah, particularly around pleasure.

R:

Porn, when I was younger, I was petrified, I wouldn't go near it. I was far too scared, like shit feart of what I would see, and being uncomfortable, and the guilt thing as well. But in the past year

I have for pleasure, and I don't care, which again I think is fair enough. Me and my pals chat about it. Like my best pal is a guy, and we talk about it really quite open, and funny, because neither of us care. I would never tell my mum, unless she's listening and I get a row when I'm finished, she's like "what have you been up to?" Like "mum, I'm nineteen, leave me alone!"

L:

But although teens might be watching porn, they are very aware that porn can be exploitative, that it's driven by profit and that it creates unrealistic expectations.

R:

I have so much to say about this. You are always taught about straight sex, and the only other place I had to find out what girls do was porn. And it's just not realistic, it's complete fantasy.

R:

Yeah, you see things like... I don't want to get too graphic, so I'm trying to tone it down as much as possible, but you don't see any sweat, no one looks uncomfortable, which is definitely normal. You don't see any more than one body type unless it's being seen as some sort of niche thing. There's absolutely a lot of the time, I know for girls especially, zero body hair.

R:

Yeah, yeah.

R:

It's completely unrealistic.

R:

I think a lot of the time it's that women shouldn't enjoy sex as much as men should, and it should be kind of like not a duty but just something that comes with it. And I think that's not for everyone, and I think it's unfair to put that pressure especially on... I know boys face those pressures as well, but I think it is predominantly on women.

R:

I think for males, body types, always expected to have muscle and stuff like that, which is something that needs to be worked for, and is obviously not natural just to have. So, yeah, maybe it gives people a false sense of what they should be like in their everyday life.

R:

I think something as well, women especially in porn are seen to be like something used for the man to enjoy. So, it's like she's being used to pleasure them, and you don't see anything – well, not as much – as the woman enjoying it, or that the men have to do the work for it. It's always the women that are the ones that are working for the men, in a way.

R:

Well, porn is really a money thing, it's made for money to profit big businesses, and it's always the companies telling them what to do and how to do it.

R:

But it's strange because it's clearly targeted at kids. Even if they say it's not.

R:  
That's so true.

J:  
Teenagers are not blind to the facade that porn can set up. And they're able to generalise this critique to media at large.

R:  
Things in media, they always portray the same type of people. Like I don't think I've ever seen someone who looks like me in a TV show who is seen as attractive and isn't seen as like a jokey character or a side character. You always just see the basic six foot abbed guy.

R:  
Yeah.

R:  
And it's just like "come on, where's the diversity?" Because I'm not seeing any flavour here, to be honest. It's just so bland.

R:  
Like going back to the media, love and sex and relationships and romance, they are everywhere. I can't think of the last TV show or film that I watched that sex, love, or relationships weren't involved in in some way. It's everywhere.

R:  
I think it is really false, especially in your kind of Netflix teen rom-com movies. You never seen anyone struggling with studying or you never see someone panicking because they've got deadlines, they never fight with their friends, they never have any problems with their skirt is too short or stupid stuff like that. You never see anything like that, it's all so perfectly what they want you to think life is like.

R:  
And they're all good looking.

R:  
Oh, yeah, they're all perfectly good looking and shiny and polished, and life just isn't like that. And I think a lot of the time that's why media is so popular, because it's something that people look to as an escape and thinking "oh, imagine if life was like that."

R:  
It's warping people's interpretation of what love actually is.

R:  
That's the problem now because there's such an abundance of it.

R:

Like kids don't want to see what they can see in their everyday, because they wouldn't have to pay for that, but for something that you aspire to be and they think they'll actually be able to achieve that, it's like a false narrative. So, yeah, I think it's more for money rather than what kids actually want.

L:

Porn's not realistic. The media is not realistic. What they hear in school isn't relevant. So, what do they do? The most human thing, they make their own fantasies. Some of the most sexualised fantasies work their way into fan fiction. Fan fiction, if you don't know, is writing by you, me, anyone really, often about celebrities or popular characters, in which those celebs and characters are fantasised about, often sexually. It's sometimes pretty racy, as fantasies can be.

R:

It's an open site where girls write their fantasies about Harry Styles and put them up, and then I was reading it as a child. To be honest, I'm saying this like I wasn't invested in it, like some girls I know definitely were. But from what I know now, again, girls weren't talking to each other about it, it was a secret thing, I reckon.

R:

I felt it was bad, I felt this sense of guilt when I discovered. Like "oh, god, I can't tell anyone I've seen this. I need to get rid of it immediately, unfollow everyone."

R:

Yeah.

R:

It was just this feeling of "oh my god", but part of you was like "I kind of do want to read it just because I have no idea what they're talking about", like to something I've never heard of before, I want to explore it, I want to, but... And sometimes you did find yourself dabbling in a wee bit, and then you were like "no, no, I can't. Shut it down. Shut it all down, shut it away."

R:

I think that for the people that were writing that and then for the people that were enjoying it, that's just an outlet. We're talking about that element of sex and relationships where it is the enjoyable side of it – that sounds so strange, but the interesting side of it, it's not "you do this to make a child", you know what I mean? So, people are finding... young people, that's definitely what we do, as we're growing up, finding ways to have these conversations without explicitly being like... you know what I mean?

J:

Porn might be a useful aid. TV and movies are good on romance. Fan fiction can be a healthy outlet for fantasy. But none of these forms is great when it comes to realities of teenage sexual experiences. Sex can be awkward, and teens seem okay with that. Sometimes.

R:

My pal that spoke to me about sex, she was very open about stuff, and you have a laugh about how it is enjoyable and you have a laugh about how it can be awkward, without it having to be too detailed as well. And that's helpful to have people around about you that you can have those conversations with where it's not about the health aspect, the safety aspect, but like what's fun and interesting and enjoyable about it.

R:

I'd had members of our group be like "yeah, we were doing doggy the other day, and oh my goodness, the biggest queef." And I'm like "that is so funny and so open." [LAUGHS] Like, yeah, okay. That's a bit... you know, because it's not just glamorous, it's not like "oh, yeah, we did this, we did that, it was perfect, it's so sexy. And I wore this underwear and it matched." It's like what it actually is. Like it was awkward, or it was slow at the start. But it's realistic. You're not describing it as this fanciful thing with no errors. Actually, realistically, it's kind of funny. If you can't burst out laughing in the middle of having sex with your partner because something silly happened, are you that close?

J:

It's refreshing to hear teens laugh about this awkwardness, especially because they are actively learning about their own bodies and desires. But beneath the laughter there is a deeper realisation, teens know that the way sex and relationships play out in the real world isn't perfect, that the Hollywood story doesn't reflect lived experience. And this often came out when they discussed their parents.

R:

When I younger, something that I've only ever really noticed later on in life is I didn't have a really good grasp on romantic feelings, simply for the fact that my family aren't very... they don't show emotion physically, it's more of a mental thing. Like for them, showing love is like putting your toast in in the morning or putting the kettle on. I genuinely can't remember my mum and dad saying the word "love" when I was younger, because that's not how my family reacted. I think it's genuinely just because we're kind of rough working class family from Kilmarnock, so it's kind of like that's what it's like. I definitely started to notice nearing the end of primary school that it was something that was missing. Because my best friend at the time lived next door and I would go round to their house all the time, I'd see her mum and dad being huggy and kissy and stuff like that, and I was a bit like "hmm, that's a bit weird, isn't it? That's not really meant to be happening." And then I remember bringing it up to my mum, I must have been like eight or nine, and she was like "no, it's still there, it's just we show it in a different way." And I was like "oh, okay, makes sense." In my head at the time it didn't make sense, I was just like "thank you, it makes sense now", but looking back on it from an older perspective, I can understand it now.

R:

I think for me, because I grew up, it was just me and my mum, my dad didn't really step up to the job of being a father when I was quite young, so I've always had other male family members to fill that kind of father figure. But seeing my mum's not had any other relationships or that since I've been growing up – that I can remember of anyway – so I think having a relationship,

for me, I am more drawn towards people that are so involved in it. Like with other past relationships, I have found myself being so involved in the relationship that I cut out friends, I cut out family, and it gets to a point where it's quite toxic, in a way. But then you kind of back away from that and see how it can be better and healthier. But, yeah, I think that made my inception of relationships.

R:

This is just speaking for myself, but my parents are not a good example of what a relationship is. So, you really need to look other places like in the media, online, and other places like that. Or you just learn from your parents' mistakes.

R:

That's true.

R:

My parents were very young when they had me, they weren't ready for it. My dad left...

R:

Same.

R:

...and they separated for so long and weren't always civil with each other. I just want a relationship where I would actually be able to... I don't know, I never seen them loving each other. So, that's just kind of what I want.

L:

We're not at all trying to erase or minimise the real complexities of sex and relationships, but living in those complexities is maybe the definition of what it means to be a teen. And beneath the more frightening things that we've mentioned in this episode, the exploitation, the misrepresentation, what it seems that teens are seeking is tenderness and connection.

R:

Every morning as soon as we wake up, we'll say good morning to each other and then he'll send me an article on something, and I'll send him one. Even if it's not a proper article, even if it's just the most random thing, I think I sent him one about ten facts about chairs, we just sent the most weirdest stuff so that he has something to wake up to. I really like that.

R:

Just finding any reason to touch the other person, whether it's casually touching them on the shoulder, or getting into full-blown tickle fights.

R:

The ideal relationship is eat food, cuddle, and watch Criminal Minds.

R:

It might be different because we're different ages and different years, because we're younger than you, not by much obviously, but there's still a gap.

R:

I think if I was to get in a relationship, I'd want the physical aspect of it.

R:

Yeah, I'd still want that.

R:

I care more about hugs and kisses, at this age.

R:

See, that actually cringes me out. See if someone was to come and hold my hand, I'd be like "oh, get away from me."

R:

Holding hands is the most awkward feeling in the world, it feels like you're breaking your bones.

R:

If you're lying in the same bed and you fall asleep cuddling, that's fine, or fall asleep holding hands, that's fine. But see if you're outside and they go to cuddle or hold your hand, oh....

J:

Again and again as we spoke to these teenagers it became clear that they are skilled at using all the tools of sensuality that lie before them. So, sometimes that's porn, yes, and sometimes it's a walk in the park.

R:

I think it's kind of where most people would go to go on dates, go a nice wee walk, maybe get an ice cream. At Prestwick beach, which is where I am, there's a few parks and there's a sailing club and stuff, and it's quite long as well so it's good for a nice long chat while walking. It's also the atmosphere because you can just watch the world go by and you've got all the feelings of like the breeze coming in, and the smell of the salt, it's an experience.

R:

You lose all sense of direction and you could go on forever.

L:

That's it for this episode of The Slow Dance. Next week, our final episode of the series, Body Count. What's your number?

R:

It's like that whole thing where if a girl sleeps with a bunch of guys or if a girl sleeps with a bunch of other girls, they're a slut or they're a whore, but if a guy does it, it's just a guy. He's just being a guy, that's what...

R:

Top shagger.

J:

The Slow Dance is a five part podcast series created by Shotput and funded by Creative Scotland. You can like and subscribe on all major podcast platforms including iTunes, Apple Podcasts, and Spotify.

L:

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J:

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L:

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J:

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L:

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