**DISCUSSION POINTS FOR TOPIC 2 OF *UNPLANNED***

1. His mother was ashamed and humiliated by the illegitimacy and refused to talk about his birth. She saw no purpose in telling him and kept the story secret for 63 years. Was this justified? Did he have the right to know?
2. John had always been suspicious and somehow intuitively knew he was different. As a young child, he recalls sitting on the school bus headed for primary school and hearing some boys talking about the “bastard” boy who lived across the village green. The boy’s last name was different from his parent’s surname. He felt they were also talking about him. His blessing was that his mother changed his last name when he was three. How would you describe his mother’s love towards him?
3. There was also his grandfather who cared, and on occasion, when he had been abused by his stepfather, he told his grandson “that man is not your father”. If John asked his mother about the statement, her reply was always that her father was being “silly”. Should she have confessed the truth (despite the feeling of shame) or have continued the charade as she did? How might the story have altered had she disclosed the truth?
4. The author never felt an urgency to investigate his origins until his mother began to age. He always had good relationships with his mother. Prosecuting his father, had he known, with the author being “the victim”, was impractical, and his father’s refusal to provide court-mandated child support suggests any legal efforts would have been a waste of time. Was it better for John to concentrate on his future than worry over his past?
5. There is nothing during the author’s upbringing that caused guilt or embarrassment to enter his character; he was close to his mother and was protected when needed. Was it this that secured his future? If you were in the same situation, what might you have done? Would you have been more persistent to find out the details of your conception?