

**THW01 RT 13/6/89**

QU: You're doing your 'A' levels?

AN: I'm doing 'A' levels at the moment in English Lit...(004)..English Lit and Sociology.

QU: Do you work then?

AN: Yeah, I have a full-time job in the day.

QU: And you do 'A' levels at night?

AN: Mmm, well it's not that bad because we're on flexi-time...35 hours a week..

QU: It's still a lot of work, isn't it? You must be highly motivated?

AN: It's not too bad, if it's something like Maths...(009)..

QU: You're doing three 'A' levels?

AN: Two, I've already got one, I did one last year.

QU: What are you going to do when you finish this, go to University?

AN: Eventually, but I don't know whether it's going to be straight after my 'A' levels or not, maybe. I'm (?)going away...(013)..but I'm not too sure..

QU: How old are you?

AN: 20. It's dreadful, isn't it? ...she's finished her 'A' levels and she's like two years younger than me! I left home when I was 16, and so it was really hard to go and do... you didn't really want to, I didn't really want to do them at 16, start off at 16, to 18 anyway.. Me leaving home as well, like home wasn't too good, my parents..

QU: Where are you from?

AN: From Wythenshaw, well moved round to different houses, I've lived in about three houses since leaving home. Now I'm living with my friend's father, it's like a big house on [ROAD NAME], Whalley Range. It's quite nice...(025). The landlord wants to turn it into about six flats.

QU: A person I know, his landlord's trying to get him out. It's a beautiful house, but he wants to turn it all into bedsits.

AN: That was one of the troubles with having a landlord, you know, dreadful. Especially when you have to rely on something like Housing Benefit to pay the rent, you've got to hassle them..

QU: Why did you leave home at 16?

AN: It's just that I didn't get on with my father, he's just.. I mean after that people said to me - Your parents! - or whatever, but he's just basically not a nice man. So I didn't really want to stay there any longer.

QU: Was he violent?

AN: Oh yeah.

QU: Did your mum put up with it?

AN: Yeah, they've only recently got divorced. But it wasn't the fact that it was, you know, just a couple of years of bad, and then they got divorced, it was like continuous. I just thought, well I (?) can go now I'm 16.

QU: Do you have brothers and sisters?

AN: Yeah, I have. That's why I'm glad they've got divorced now because...(044). Well, if I was just mainly on myself, or my mum, me being the eldest, it wasn't just like violence against me personally; it was just because there was nobody else there. He wanted to be violent, and started picking on one of my sisters or my brothers, when I was the oldest. I mean he used to...(049).. on my mother, so.. It wasn't anything like a deep,

personal thing against me, or my mother. It was just as bad, (?) they just seemed to really take it out..(053)..somebody's punch bag.

QU: Did he drink as well, or had he always been like it?

AN: It was mainly the way that he was brought up, the way that his mother was. He was just selfish; there's probably some reason for him doing it, but he was never.. It used to make him worse if he used to have drink, but I've never seen him falling over drunk.

QU: (?)So it wasn't alcohol?

AN: Not that I could see. I think it was more..

QU: Do you think that's made you cynical about men?

AN: Mmm, a little bit. I went through a stage I think.. I'm OK now, I'm OK now, but I would've thought.. Now looking back to what it was like at sort of about 16, what I thought then, how I was that mixed up and things, I would have probably gone to some kind of psychologist or whatever. But then you don't say, you know, you think - Oh well, I'm fine. It's like I didn't even realise there was anything wrong, until I started thinking about it. I mean I must have known really, because things like Gym, you know, where I used to have all these marks on my back; I knew that if anybody saw those. I must have known it was wrong, that there'd be trouble so I used to have to, sometimes.. I mean it wasn't that bad compared to what some people get but I knew that he was not completely normal. So I used to put my Gym shirt on in the morning, and then wear it as a blouse. So I suppose I must have known then that things weren't completely right, even though I'd probably never have admitted that. I wouldn't have ever said - I used to get beaten up by my father - or whatever, at that time.

QU: ..(080)..

AN: No, especially as my mum, after the arguments, my mum used to support my father, and like rush off..

QU: You were divided over it?

AN: Yeah, it was worse because after the arguments, when she was still mad at me, she'd go, you know - poor girl, poor girl, don't worry we'll get out. And then you knew that the next day he was just going to be OK for say a couple of weeks, and it would start all over again then.

QU: Did you get angry with your mum about it?

AN: I felt bitter about it, you know, I got mad. But..(088)..apart from the bitterness, I felt she was something like a victim rather than..

QU: Was she downtrodden?

AN: She was downtrodden to the extent.. I think she must have been to keep on letting him stay. Because, you know, if I had an experience with a boy that hit me, then after a month or so when I knew that he wasn't going to change, I'd just think enough's enough. I probably put up with it more than, you wouldn't think so, you wouldn't think so, but I probably put up with it more than I should have done, because of what happened before. It's sad. But then I thought- God, you're just being like she was. Just being constantly taken in by excuses, so I just thought, you know, get out again.

QU: It's easy to fall into the trap, to accept things?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Was there trouble when you left home?

AN: No, because before this, when I was about 14, 15, I did get really upset one time this was going on, I did phone my gran. And I went to live there for about a year, while

they got.. It wasn't ever referred to why I actually went there, but it was because of him hitting me. It was while my mother sorted their troubles out ..(110).. I just felt like really bad about it, because I was mad at him, and everybody else just seemed to be pushing it aside, you know.

QU: Do you ever see your dad now?

AN: Oh God, I very rarely see my mother and my father, once a year.

QU: You don't feel anything towards him?

AN: I hate him, I just can't stay.. I've made friends with a lot of people, everybody's silly like..(116).. 'Why don't you see him?' Father and mother..(118).. But you can't go into explaining, but I just say, we just don't get on. But if I say - Well, you know, I just can't stand to be in the same room as him - people will say, you know, a rebellious - well they used to - a rebellious teenager. Her dad probably shouted at her too often, and she doesn't, you know.

QU: Nobody takes it seriously?

AN: I don't actually explain, but they just presume that, and I feel really stupid because, you know, I literally can't say - ...

QU: Most people can't accept child abuse, because it's too frightening.

AN: It's OK now, because with me going through that with this other person that I went with, I mean I must have gone out with him for about a year a half. It was only something like the last one or two months before we split up. I just couldn't understand it, and I started to blame myself a little bit. I was thinking - Oh God, what is it, this perfectly normal..(132). But then my friend, my friend made me feel better, because she comes from, the friend that I'm with now, a perfectly normal background, and she had a little bit of trouble with violence with her boyfriend. So I thought - Oh God, maybe it isn't me after all.

QU: You're not a beacon that attracts violent men?

AN: Yeah, exactly, it sounds silly but I actually did think that it was me. Even though you look back at the arguing, you can't see why. But I didn't ever hit him back even, so, I thought God, you know, what must I do? Then I realised that you can't blame yourself for (?)violence. I don't care, it's just that I've had a bit of trouble in the past.

QU: When you left home, how did you manage, were you completely alone?

AN: I wasn't completely on my own, because, that was the worst thing about this boy that I was going out with.

QU: Were you going out with him at this point?

AN: Yeah, when I left home I'd been going out with him a couple of weeks, not very long. And I suppose that, I wasn't like obviously dependent on him, but, you know, on this side I was. Or if he let me down, I just thought - Oh my God.

QU: How long did you go out with him?

AN: I think about a year and three months.

QU: Did you live together?

AN: I lived together with him for a while until.. I think that's probably, I thanked God afterwards that I did move in..(156)..just don't know. And it was only when we started living together, I mean we'd been living together for about four months, and he started.

QU: What, arguments started?

AN: I'm really argumentative, I'm not saying that I'm not. I did probably say some really horrible things to him, who doesn't in an argument? But I was never like physically

aggressive like he was. I always, he got me really mad, because it was like my father; my father and me, I used to argue with my father. But I had good reason to argue with the things that he was doing. I used to argue with him, but it always seemed like when he couldn't give an answer, he used to be violent. And it was the same with this person that I was living with for a while.

QU: So it was when you were winning an argument?

AN: Oh yeah, it usually is with men I've found. But those were the only two people that were like violent.

QU: Did those two experiences change the way you thought about relationships with men? Shatter your illusions?

AN: Yeah, definitely.

QU: What effect do you think it had on you?

AN: Well, you lost trust in them. Especially with it being so long when he was actually violent. And I thought - Oh God, you know, you're going to have to.. I would never consider living with somebody again, before I'd known them years and years.

QU: You wouldn't go into a relationship so quickly?

AN: No. No, I'd rather not get involved as much. Because now I'm more independent than I was. I really didn't see myself as dependent then, but in retrospect I was emotionally. But now I feel far better and far more independent, and I don't like to give that up. You know, I'm afraid of getting involved with somebody unless I get the same (?)worth.

QU: It's hard enough to be independent without having that to cope with as well.

AN: It's not something that I've..(190)..on my own. Like me and my friend now we talk about it...it's at least something positive. We just like put it behind.

QU: I suppose you learn to do that.

AN: It's not really dwelling on it..(195). I suppose in a way I feel better for the experience, this, you know, in a way..(197).

QU: Did you go to school in Wythenshaw?

AN: Yeah. I went to school in Wythenshaw until I was 13, and then I went to stay with my gran. I wasn't really sure how long I was going to stay there, if I was ever going to go back home. So I changed schools to an all-girls, the [NAME OF SCHOOL] school, which is now [NAME OF SCHOOL]. I went there until I left. And then I..(304).

QU: Was there a big difference between the schools?

AN: It was strange at first because you suddenly walked into this hall on the first day, and...(208)..tons of girls; it was a shock.

QU: Because you'd been at a mixed school before?

AN: Yeah. Because at that time, I think there was only one year of college students there, and in the second year, you know, it was gradually phasing out into a college, so they didn't take any in. I thought it was better because, I don't know, I didn't feel as nervous as I probably would do if it was (?)mixed. I don't know why, it sounds a bit silly. But I didn't feel as nervous as I would probably have...

QU: Going to a mixed school?

AN: Yeah, and I was like really quiet when I was younger anyway. I never really, I really really was shy. But now here, since being about 15, I've been through coming out of my shell.

QU: Did they give you any sex education at the Wythenshaw school?

AN: Yeah, they did, yeah, in Biology classes, they gave us, it was only things like.. We each had a little film, one for the boys and one for the girls.

QU: So it was done separately?

AN: Yeah, and then we had like, I think it was a couple of films where we both watched.

QU: Do you know what the films the boys saw were about?

AN: No. Probably about puberty or whatever.

QU: Were the girls' films about puberty and periods?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Was there much discussion in the mixed group?

AN: We did have one time where we all had to write down on a piece of paper questions, and then hand them to the Biology teacher. I don't know, she probably thought it was a really good idea, because nobody would have to sign their name. But you'd come up with these really stupid questions. I don't think I would have written down any questions at that time, and handed them into the Biology teacher. You had ones with these really silly answers, and every single one was made up, and was as embarrassing as possible for the Biology teacher to answer. It wasn't really..

QU: Do you think people didn't ask questions they actually wanted to know the answers to?

AN: No.

QU: So it wasn't much of a discussion?

AN: We just thought it was really funny, she was trying to explain.. She was really embarrassed about it.

QU: Would you say that at that age the things you were learning about sex..?

AN: ...(251)..

QU: ..(251).

AN: Probably not as much...as I knew about 16, the things they were showing me, I didn't sort of sit down with the girls anyway or whatever.

QU: Had you talked to your parents about it, had they given you any advice about sex?

AN: Yeah, not morally, not morally, just things like the basics, my mum told me. My dad, I didn't have anything to do with him by this time anyway. I remember being really, really angry once when my mum told my father that I'd started my periods, and he told me that he knew. And I was really, really mad that he knew.

QU: My mum did the same, she told my brother and I wanted to die. So you learnt most of what you knew from mates?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Do you think you get a good education that way?

AN: Not really because you build up a false interpretation of what it is. They're just as ignorant really as you, so I suppose it's like, it becomes a little bit dangerous when it comes to things like what's (?)immoral, what you feel you should and shouldn't do. Because they give you their interpretation, and just like..(277).. They're all giving secret information, and you collect this information up and you're thinking..(279)..

QU: This is how it is?

AN: ..It like misses out all the big parts, and especially, it's just like the basics..(281).

QU: It puts a romantic gloss on serious problems as well.

AN: Mmm.

QU: Would you talk about problems you had with boyfriends to your girlfriends? Or was it seen as just getting hold of a boyfriend?

AN: It wasn't, I don't think that anybody I knew would ever say that they really wanted a boyfriend, or whatever just because, you know, they'd be cast as desperate or whatever. So you'd be kind of, well you know, and I don't think, you were really scared of..(292).. saying - Oh he's nice over there - because the girls would probably start saying, you know, oh, we'll go and tell him, we'll be helpful! I usually kept those kind of things to myself. But if there was somebody harassing me or whatever, coming up to me and messing around or whatever, even if I didn't like them, I'd make it known... (299)..

QU: Was it a good thing at school for girls to be sexually active, or were they slags?

AN: There must have been because I can remember a girl that I think that people would be calling slags or whatever, so I suppose they must have been. I mean you knew who was sleeping with who. And this is what..(312)..I don't know how much of it was the truth or whatever, but it was like, you know.. But they did get name-called, names, not so much to their face or whatever, but just like being pushed into the circle of such and such and such..

QU: Bitching behind their backs?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Was there an identifiable group that were sexually active?

AN: Yeah, I think so.

QU: What were you like at school?

AN: What was I like? Oh I was quite good, it was only (?) the ones with JUDE, and I didn't sit with any of them, so...(323)..

QU: Did you work hard at school?

AN: Quite hard, quite hard with these things at home. I knew that I'd have to.. (326)..when I was 16, so I didn't think about things like 'A' levels, I didn't really aim for anything. I just did the exams.

QU: Was that because you were thinking in the short term about just getting out of home, or was it because it was suggested?

AN: I don't think anybody really encouraged me, they did say, it was obvious that they did want us to do well, one of the classes, and they got really angry if you didn't. It wasn't ever encouraged, it was more like, you know, you're rewarded for doing well, and punished if you don't. It wasn't anything like any kind of encouragement.

QU: Did your parents expect you to get married, what did they expect?

AN: Well, my mum, she was in a way. She didn't push me to get married or whatever, but when I was going with this person, once it got past a year, you know, it was all - You've been going out a long time...(350).. Yeah but, you know, she's really into children anyway, she's got...(353)..

QU: So she wanted you to settle down?

AN: Yeah, but she only wanted them on a superficial level. I would never be encouraged actually..(355-356)..by my mother, because she was alright until we got to about age three, and like with me now, she doesn't actually have that much contact with me. Once I'm over a certain age I'm not dependent on her anymore, and she really doesn't want to know. I find that really hard to understand, you know, what she's like with children. But if I wanted to have children, I'd want to have children to see them

growing up, and it's like, you know, to have a friend later on or whatever. So I mean I wouldn't like, I didn't really listen to the things that she would have said anyway; she did mention children a couple of times, but I didn't listen at all. I thought it was really hypocritical.

QU: Didn't you ever have any romantic ideas at all?

AN: Oh yeah, I used to think that once I left home, I didn't ever think of getting married or whatever, I don't know, I suppose everybody does sometimes. You know, you're with this person, and 'what if', in the future, 'one of these days', I think everybody does. Even my (?)friend (377), she's a feminist and things but.. Also I think it feels, like once you get past 25 or whatever, there's a girl that works for me, like she's 27, and the pressure's really on her; she's just got married. She's been married since just before Christmas, she got married. The pressure's really on her now to have children. It's not so bad with me, because I think once you get married people expect it. Especially when you're aged 27 or whatever.

QU: What was your romantic idea, it wasn't to get married?

AN: I wouldn't say, I was just thinking..(389)..that kind of superficial, romantic ideas, but things like, just someone like the opposite of my father, someone that was actually, you know, I just had this idea of this perfect man or whatever. Just like they're not violent or, you know.

QU: ..(396)..Still looking! Did you get any AIDS education at school?

AN: I think it was a bit soon..

QU: It hadn't really happened then?

AN: I think it was either in (?)2C or in the fifth year..(405).

QU: Some schools started mentioning it quite early, but yours didn't? Did your parents mention it?

AN: My gran does, my gran's a little bit more, cares whether she does... she just says - ooh, you know. I was saying something to her the other day, about this person that I was sort of going out with, that she liked, she'd met him; he had a nice car. And she was going - What about AIDS? You can't go, you can't go with lots and lots of different people. I went - I'm having fun, I'm just like seeing people and going out, and having a nice time. She said - Oh, but you can't do that anymore!

QU: What do you think about her saying that? Did you think it made sense?

AN: Yeah, I thought it was like..(422)..if she wanted, I thought it made sense. But I thought it was slightly unrealistic and whatever, that suddenly I was to totally change what kind of person I am, what kind of personality I've got, just because.. I mean I'm not going to sleep around with everybody, but then again, I'm not going to settle down and get married over night to a person totally incompatible, just because my gran wants me to. It's unrealistic, but I mean I could see the sense behind it and what she wanted, she was looking after my welfare.

QU: Did you see the AIDS advertising?

AN: Yeah, there was a lot about at college.

QU: What effect did those messages have on you, did you accept what they were saying?

AN: I probably, I don't know, I think it's a bit of an insult to your intelligence; this big, black poster with AIDS on it, whereas it would probably have been better, I'd probably take more notice of newspapers reports or...newspaper reports!..(445). 'You can catch it

from a tea cup and things', well, not those kind of reports, rather than just.. I mean obviously, when you see..(448)..and pictures, all these things have an effect on you. But I've probably actually thought more when I've sat down and read some article, rather than just..

QU: Have you read any medical articles about it?

AN: A few, a few.

QU: Is this finding out about the illness?

AN: Mmm.

QU: You said you realised you can't get it from a teacup or whatever, you know what the real risks are, has that changed what you can do sexually?

AN: Yeah, in theory, it has a lot in theory, and it has a little bit sort of thing, you know, what I actually do. But it was just, we were talking about it the other day, me and JESSICA, my friend, and she was saying that rather than say to somebody - Will you wear something, because I don't want to get AIDS? - which sounds really bad, doesn't it?

QU: To say it..(468)?

AN: Yeah, she'd rather..(469)..we would say, no doubt about it, that, you know - You'll have to wear something, because I'm not on the pill, or whatever - we'd use it like that. But when you've just come back from..(472)..or whatever, I don't know..

QU: What would you feel if a man said to you, 'I want to wear a condom because I want to be protected against AIDS?'

AN: I'd feel horrid, I really would. I'd feel really embarrassed, I don't think I'd want to sleep with him after that. Oh dear!

QU: Would you feel he'd made a personal comment on you?

AN: Yeah, I'd see the sense behind it, I'd say he was a pretty sensible boy or whatever. You know, it's commendable that he does do that, but I'd feel it was, not an insult, not as strong as an insult, but, you know, I'd think - Oh dear.

QU: That's probably a lot to do with the way AIDS has been portrayed in the media. It's seen as associated with being degenerate.

AN: Yeah.

QU: What type of person would you think might have it, if you were thinking in terms of partners?

AN: I'd probably judge a person a lot by their looks or whatever...(497)..I probably wouldn't sleep with them. I'd think - Oh God, you know, with the tattoos on their arm or whatever, I'd think - Oh God. Even if I liked them, I probably wouldn't go near them anyway. Because I'd think - Oh God, they must have something! But it's just like how a person looks or whatever. I think that I definitely would, if I need it, if they had in the past any injections or any drugs or.. Not so much if, oh I don't know, if they've slept around, and I think a lot of people do sleep around, at nightclubs, and people that go out a lot and do these kind of things. Compared to a lot of the population, who sit down and watch telly, and read books and go to the pub.

QU: If you went to a club and met somebody, would you feel OK about sleeping with them on the first or second night?

AN: Umm..

QU: Have you before?

AN: (laugh)! I have done in the past, but I'm not too sure now. Now I think more about it. Ideally, I wouldn't. I can't compare how I felt then with how I feel now, because I can't really remember. I mean, I'm..(529)..to say no, not being too keen on sleeping with them in theory, but you know, once you've been dancing or whatever, and you've been drinking.. I mean it's also very easy for me to do that, because the girls are like really open, we've got like our own kind of flat thing upstairs. He's not at all bothered about that.

QU: Is this your landlord?

AN: Well, he's JESSICA's father, and he just lets her do what she wants, because she really can do anything. She's strong, like she'd do what she wants.

QU: So it would be quite easy to take someone back?

AN: Yeah, there's not any, a lot of the people come round that I do go out with..(544).. and whatever.

QU: So you don't have a problem finding somewhere to go?

AN: No, not at all.

QU: Do you think that makes a difference?

AN: It makes a practical difference. It doesn't make a difference to how you feel about when you're judging things up to that stage, you're probably.. But then you think in practical terms - Well, really we can't anyway, so it's no use..

QU: So you're more likely to go through with it?

AN: Mmm.

QU: When you're judging things, is AIDS one of the things that goes through your mind?

AN: It does, it does I think for a flicker, and I usually think about it more when I'm not out of that situation, say - This is not the wise thing to do, this is being stupid. And then you usually wake up thinking - God, what did I do that for? Maybe I regret sleeping with this person if I'm not too keen on him next morning. But you think - oh, well.

QU: If you go out do you drink to help you get off with people?

AN: Yeah, not so I'm falling over, because I used to do it. When I was about 16 I was always falling over; I know now how much I can drink, and how much will make me wake up in the morning and think - God, did I do that?

QU: If you didn't drink do you think you'd be able to go through with it?

AN: Probably not. But I mean I don't go out and have a lot to drink so I don't know what I'm doing. I still know what I'm doing, but it's all the music and everything, and the dancing, oh dear.

QU: I'm not disapproving at all, I'm just interested.

AN: No, no.

QU: A lot of women who find themselves in situations where they're going to be having sex, have very little control, and that might be partly because they've been drinking.

AN: That did happen to me once, but that wasn't because I was drinking, that was because.. I'd had something to drink, and I started to sober up, very drunk and I started to sober up. And somebody, a friend of this person who was having a party, of five or six of us, it was six because it was all couples. We'd had this party, and we'd come back to this person's flat, not the person who I was with, and not one of his friends, just like a friend of a friend. I mean I can't say that I was forced into it or whatever, but I was in that position where I thought- God, I don't want to do this, I don't want to do this - and I sobered up a little bit, and I was still slightly tipsy anyway. I thought - Oh God, you

know, what am I going to say? Because it was obvious what he was expecting. And really when I was quite drunk I went along with this, not really making the decision to do that. But like - Oh yes, we're having a party, you come, you come. And bring (?)KATE, bring KATE. So I didn't really have a conscious decision to make, but it was obvious because I had let myself.

QU: Do you feel that you'd let yourself, and you had to see it through?

AN: Yeah, I didn't like this person, but I really regret it. But being in the same situation I'd probably do the same.

QU: Is it easier to do than not to do?

AN: Yeah, it's easier to do than not to do. I mean I didn't know this person very well, and I thought - Oh God, you know. I was still a bit tipsy and I was thinking - Oh God, this is not right. But I couldn't really, you know.. (?)I can't explain it..

QU: Exactly, what would you have had to have done to get out of the situation?

AN: I was also a little bit worried, but I just tried to brush it off a little bit, but it was obvious that he wasn't going to take no for an answer. I suppose in a way I was scared of what he would do, if I said no anymore. Because he was really like pushing me, not pushing me physically, but pushing me in the sense of - Oh come on, you know. I thought - Oh God. I felt guilty, because I thought - you've led him on, led him on..(651)! I know it is, it's really silly, but you know, given the same situation again I'd try, I'd do my utmost not to get myself in the situation anyway, but..

QU: That's one of the things we're interested in in doing this research, the extent to which young women find themselves in situations they can't control. And the way women go along with men who refuse to wear condoms.

AN: I think if I wanted them to have used it, I don't know if I would want (to) have anything to do with a person like that anyway. Especially if I said that I was(n't) on the pill as a kind of reason why, and they still didn't want to wear it, I don't think I'd do it then, unless, you know, I was like forced to, like I said previously, by.. Where I thought I knew what was going to happen..

QU: It sounds as if you haven't had an awful lot of control so far in your relationships?

AN: Yeah!

QU: It's difficult to in the situations you've described.

AN: I agree.

QU: Is that something that bothers you, or is it something you think is normal?

AN: The kind of person that I am, I've got quite a strong personality, I think, pull yourself together, I mean I'm fed up, the things that I've described to you are really since being from 16 to 18. I mean I do still sleep with people now, you know, Miss Innocent now, I'm not saying this was all in the past, and I've not been angry for..(706)..It isn't, it isn't like that, but I think that after, I mean this, I slept with a lot of people in the shop who.. (711)..the person that I lived with, he was the one.. The first person that I slept with was just like, I don't know, I just wanted to sleep with someone. It sounds really silly but..

QU: Not at all!

AN: Because I talked to some friends, these women I knew, who'd been going out together six months, and I just thought - Alright, God, you know. I was fed up with, I was 16, 17, no, I still wasn't 16 because I was living at home at the time, it was just before I left. And I knew they had a party, and then I went back to his house and whatever. I don't know why I did, because I didn't like him there, I didn't like him there! I didn't like

him then, so then I thought - oh God, you know. But I was just like, I could see why I did it, I was just like really bored with the way my life was going. And I was sick of the situation that I was in then, and I thought I'd try and break out of it, but I don't know.. To break out, to try and change things.

QU: I think that's one of the reasons women do it, as a way of getting out, meeting new people.

AN: I didn't actually want a boyfriend at the time, because I was sick of men, I didn't want anyone like my father, I didn't want a boyfriend. I just..(753)..something new. It's really silly I know..

(end side 1: 755)

AN: ..didn't want to know..

QU: So you knew someone had been going out with..(757)..?

AN: I didn't want to know.

QU: That's fair enough because you wanted to know what sex was, and you found out, and you don't have to have a boyfriend.

AN: I think this person was expecting more, started phoning up, I thought - Oh god, what do I do? How do I..? I mean it's really hard for like a girl to turn round, it's quite easy for a bloke to turn round and say - you know..(761)..Look, I don't really want a relationship, I just wanted to sleep with you. You know, you'd feel..

QU: It's almost impossible for a woman to say the same thing.

AN: So I just like didn't ever answer the phone to him, and then I left home..(765)..really strange.

QU: That's an important part of women not having control, isn't it? Not being able to talk about it, or say that, yes, I wanted you for sex, thank you, that's all. And to be honest about your reasons. Have you been able to tell your partners what you want sexually, or is it generally sleeping with them?

AN: Umm, just sleeping with them. I mean, in the past, I'd never tell someone that I just wanted to sleep with them, just like imply it by not answering when they call. It's always, it's never explicitly said - I just wanted to sleep with you - it's just making it clear - I don't want to see you again. Because I'd feel really crushed if someone said that to me, I'd be really upset about it. I'd think, oh, I'd feel really dreadful. And then after I slept with that person the first time, I started going out with SEAN. It was really strange at the beginning because, although I was like, I did like him a lot, but I wanted to finish with him within the first month. And it was only by him constantly harassing me, and phoning me up all the time, that I did actually end up..

QU: Why did you want to finish with him?

AN: I just didn't want to know, I just, any serious..(790).. I just wanted to be, not by myself, I was scared of becoming dependent on somebody. And my response was always like to back away. I didn't see it so then, it wasn't as easy as it is to think - oh well, I'm backing away, or whatever. Looking back that's how it was, I didn't want to.. He was nice, I went out with him a couple of nights, but after a month, I was..(796)..

QU: ..(797)..

AN: Yeah..

QU: But you did?

AN: I did, only because it was like, when I had nights when I had nothing to do, I thought - oh well, there's no sense sitting here in the house, I might as well go out. And it's only then you gradually get closer to somebody, and I cared about hurting him. That's why I was so upset, because he was a person that I'd got close to.

QU: Did you finish with him because of the violence?

AN: What happened was I thought - this thing is not going to work. So I stopped living with him, and went to move in with a friend. He wasn't very like happy, wasn't very happy about that, and he was really upset about it. He'd always seemed so emotional to me, but I suppose it was just him being unable to control, he just wanted somebody to lean on. Because I always seemed very strong to him, like independent, even though I really wasn't. And he just wanted someone to lean on. And then when I used to get upset, he couldn't cope with it at all.

QU: Did he give you any support when you needed someone to lean on?

AN: Very little, no. Especially if it was something seriously wrong, like with my gran, you know, well I thought she was going to die. She went in hospitals. Because my relationship with my gran and grandad was like a mother and father, I mean, they're the only persons I could say were my family, apart from my brothers and sisters, and my mum I more or less still love. But they're the people that I rely on, because they've never let me down. What was I talking about? And I was just getting really upset, as you would do, and he just couldn't cope with it, he just used to just say - oh, you know, poor girl, poor girl - for a while, and then two minutes later, he'd just have to get out of the house. He wasn't so bad, when he used to go, he used to get like hysterical and whatever. I just used to like sit down and cry a bit. You know, that was what I couldn't understand, why; if I was going round the room and slamming the doors, and knocking over furniture, then I'd understand. I'd probably think - oh, I can't do any good here, and leave him to calm down for a while. But I really wasn't like that, so I couldn't understand why.

QU: ..(834)..gave you what you gave them, I'm sure.

AN: (laugh)..

QU: You've had quite short-term relationships in general?

AN: In general, yeah, I mean I have been out with people for two months and things like that. I mean I don't have anything particularly against going out with people for a long time. I do think it would be nice, because after.. I don't know, when you sleep with a lot of people, I mean I haven't slept with that many compared to some people. But you know, it was just when you've been going out with somebody over a year, and then it was like a lot of people in a short space of time, then you get really dispirited, and think - why can't I even form a relationship with someone? Get to know somebody?

QU: They were different types of relationship from the start.

AN: Yeah.

QU: When you meet people when you're out at clubs, do you expect them to be long-term?

AN: I'd probably expect them to be more long-term than if I met them outside a club, because then it's not really me; well it is me, but you're not.. Well, for once you're usually, not drunk, you're usually quite tipsy anyway which makes your personality slightly different. And you're in an environment that's not like an everyday environment. So it's just..

QU: Is it easier to have that type of relationship?

AN: Yeah..

QU: Have you ever asked someone to use a condom, to practice safe sex?

AN: Yeah, I did, I did once, but apart from that boy that I was seeing for a while, the one was this person I was seeing for about two weeks, dreadful. Yeah, but it was because I wasn't on the pill at the time, it wasn't because.. I mean I'd already slept with him before that without using anything, so to say that it was because of AIDS isn't true.

QU: So you haven't actually practiced safe sex yet, no one has suggested it to you, and you haven't suggested it to anyone?

AN: Well, a person said to me once, I wouldn't..(868).. I was at a night club, and somebody asked me back to their house, and I wouldn't go. He was saying, why? I said - well, I just don't want to. And he said - if it's because of AIDS or anything, I'll use something.

QU: What did you think?

AN: I just thought he was stupid, not because he'd said that, but because it just seemed a pretty silly thing to do, to come up to somebody in a club, that you barely knew and just say, not because.. I mean I thought that was, in anybody else I would have thought that had been quite good. But he put it on me, it wasn't like 'I want to..' it was 'if you want to..', 'if you are worried'. It was just him, he was a little bit of a fool. I thought - Oh God!

QU: In the future would you be happier with safe sex?

AN: I would be happier when I thought about it, like the previous night or whatever. I'd think, oh... I mean I know now that I've got to start being more sensible. I haven't been that bad in the past couple of years compared to when I was 16 or 17. I've realised it wasn't getting me anywhere. It was just, I think I was sleeping with people more out of desperation than anything else, because it was..

QU: For affection..?

AN: Mmm, it wasn't actually, I don't know, I don't know, in some cases I actually, I don't know, it's really, actually wanting to get them back or whatever. I just felt, 'this person's really using me', then when he phoned up and whatever, I just felt, you know - God, I'm not seeing him again. I can understand how a lot of lads can, well I can't really because they're doing just the same as you are, but I can understand how they might lose respect for somebody when.. Because I lost respect for them, because they were in effect like using me. But I think that sometimes, not all cases but sometimes, girls sleep with men for different reasons, rather than just some kind of thrill.

QU: What reasons do you sleep with men for?

AN: Umm.

QU: Is it a purely sexual thing, do you think the libido has to be released..?

AN: No, no, not like that, not like that. It's just, I can't really, there is something else, other than just like a thrill or whatever, but I can't really define what it is. I wouldn't go so far as to say I want to get all men back, and I hate them all; I wouldn't go so far as to say that. But I think that sometimes there is an element of that.

QU: So you do what men do, to men?

AN: Yeah.

QU: What men do to women?

AN: Yeah, I was just like, you know, because I really couldn't..(911)..couldn't care less about.. It isn't just a fact that you're sleeping with somebody a couple of times, and then it's over and done with. There's something else, but I don't think I can define what it is.

QU: Do you think that men don't sleep with women for different reasons, as women do with men?

AN: Umm.

QU: Do you think that men have a stronger sexuality, and more need of sex than women?

AN: It's hard to.. A need, but they have some, they have needs, but I don't think that.. I think that most men have an emotional need as well, rather than just...They always portray men as just having a purely physical need for sex; I don't think it's like that at all. I don't think it's socialised...(927)..I really don't think that. I mean, the people that I've met, I don't think it's just a physical need. But with girls I think it's more an emotional need than a physical need. Like JESSICA, my friend, she gets, well she doesn't get upset, but she gets, you know she sleeps with somebody and they don't phone her up, whereas I don't think the lad would be thinking in the same way. And so she says, you know, she wouldn't say she'd been used, but I think she does feel used really. Although she wouldn't actually say it because she'll say it reading between the lines. She'll say something like - Oh, I'm not really upset about it, it was just I thought he was a nice person - and whatever. So in effect, she wasn't actually using him as he was using her, just purely for sex.

QU: Do you think that's a fear sexually active women have, that you're giving it away and not getting anything back, that you're being used?

AN: Yeah, yeah, but I just think a lot of people, I used to feel that, I used to go and sleep with them, would, you know, it's theory and practice again, I didn't feel like I was getting involved. But then after sleeping with a string of people, I got really depressed about it, and really upset, because I just felt used. And even though I didn't feel anything like a slut or whatever, that's how people would see me. It's not, not.. the places where I go like nightclubs, there's a lot more people sleep around than they do normally, and therefore you don't get criticised by it as you would in school, or whatever, where your private business is known well. And you wouldn't be criticised that much for it, but I'd think - Oh God, what would the people that I've slept with think about me? I used to feel better when he used to phone me up, and I used to not want to speak to him, because I'd think - oh well, at least I meant something to him, and not just some kind of one-night fling. It took effect, that I used to get depressed; this is what stopped me sleeping around. I just got really upset about it, and just, oh God, you know, was it worth how I felt? Now, I didn't actually feel it the next day or whatever, I just felt a little bit down.

QU: Do you think people expect you to be sexually available on the kind of social scene you're involved in?

AN: Yeah, you'd expect them to be. It wouldn't be, maybe in a pub, if some girl went home with a lad that she met an hour before, and they'd been out, if you were known well in the pub by different people, there'd be a couple of raised eyebrows. But there's nothing like that. I'm not saying that the men expect to walk up to a girl, even vice versa sometimes, and they say - oh yes, you know, I hardly know you, but tonight we'll sleep together - or whatever, not going for it so literally, but. You find that a lot of people would

say yes; I don't know whether it would be expected, but it's certainly more expected than..

QU: If you decided you didn't want to take part in the sexual side, would it be difficult to continue that sort of socialising?

AN: I don't know, with girls it seems a little better, because if, I think it's, it would get noticed if you never ever slept with anybody, and you never had any contact with men. If men walked up to you, and you always didn't have anything to do with them, it would be noticed. But I think people would accept it, I don't think people would criticise a girl for it. Whereas if it had been a man, they probably would start going on about it: Do you think it is one of them, gay or whatever?

QU: So the men have a difficult time..

AN: Mmm..

QU: Is sleeping with people one way you can liberate yourself from all the false morality about sex?

AN: I find it far less sexist than it is if you go to the lads' pub or whatever, you know, where you'd only have to sleep with one person, and you'd get a name as a slut. But because like a lot of girls do sleep, it's just not worth talking about, because most people in there, they're not sleeping around, they do sleep with people..

QU: It's not seen as a moral question?

AN: No. But rumours do go round and say, well not rumours, that's putting it on a silly level, but you know, if you're with somebody and somebody knows that he's got a disease or whatever, like VD, or in the past he's had it, depending how close this person is that knows, you'd probably..

QU: You would find out on the grapevine?

AN: Yeah. You'd probably say, somebody'd come up to you and say - Oh hi, how're you doing, I wouldn't really go round with him - you know, he's a bit of a wally in other words. Not purely because of sleeping around, and if anybody does sleep around a lot, I still think they get a name.

QU: Do you think getting STDs are seen as just bad luck, or do you think it reflects on the person?

AN: Umm..

QU: What would you think if you somebody told you that someone they went round with had AIDS?

AN: I wouldn't take it seriously unless it confirmed what I already thought, or if it matched what I already thought, or had suspicions anyway. But I probably wouldn't be too eager to sleep with them if I had the slightest notion that was this person was saying might be true. Because usually, I wouldn't say I took hardly any notice of how, apart from if it was a close friend or somebody I knew well, that I knew did get around. I mean you don't get that anyway, but someone wouldn't have really anything to gain; if it was his ex-girlfriend then I think - oh right, OK then!

QU: If you found out it was true, would you be shocked if it was someone you knew?

AN: A close friend?

QU: Just somebody on the same scene as you.

AN: A friend?

QU: Somebody like you. Would you be more shocked if it was a woman?

AN: Umm, I don't think I'd be more shocked if it was a woman. I'd be shocked anyway, because I mean, that would come secondary after the initial - Oh my God! That could've been me. What the hell am I doing? - That would probably really shake me up.

QU: Have you get any idea how at risk you are?

AN: I think, you know, although I know that you've got a good risk of catching AIDS being heterosexual now, I think it's the gays..(1057)..

QU: Drug-users?

AN: Drug-users, and then it's, you know. So I really I think - oh well, I'm not in that big a risk really. But then I think - God, look at other people, how many people in here do you know that well, that you could say, you know, haven't, have not slept with them, a man slept with a man in the past? Because they are like usually morally lax and whatever, and don't take much notice of what society says is right and wrong. They don't really know what kind of things they've been into!

QU: The people you know, it would be quite possible for them to have had bisexual relationships, or to have injected drugs..

AN: Yeah, that's what I thought initially, but I thought - oh well, as long as I personally haven't done it, then it's alright, I'm fine. But then I think, then the other day I was talking to this boy from work, and we have like these little chats and things, he's OK, and we sit down..(1074)..and we have a talk about sex and relationships all the time. You know, it's just what you usually, when it's getting late, about seven and we have to work late, and it's like night-time, evening conversation takes over, and we're just (?)being friends. And he was saying that, he's 30, he's 30 next birthday, and he's not the kind of person to boast, and he said altogether he must have slept with about 40 different girls. He's been to University and whatever, and I suppose that puts you more into contact with people that you could sleep with, and of your own age and whatever. But I mean I thought, God, that's over four times as many as what I've slept with. So I compared with sort of like.. Well we just had like a little game: How many have you slept with then? How many have you slept with! And I said - well, I'm not going to tell you unless you tell me. And it's like considering his age I still, I mean he's a man, men usually do sleep with more than females.

QU: ..(1092)..

AN: (laugh)..That's what I thought! They must all share them. But it's usually that way, I do find. I don't think that the people I know, the men that I do actually talk to, I wouldn't talk to anybody that was like childish, or pleased with himself. And he'd go.. (1098)..boasting, you know, after..(1099). Those are the kind of people that I don't really like speaking to at all, never mind talking about sex or anything private with. And so, what I can take, he was telling me the truth, and other men that I've talked to, have talked to me about sex; he didn't think that was a particularly large number. So I thought compared to some girls that I know, they've slept with like one person for the first time, they're getting married to. And I was thinking - Oh God, this is dreadful. But then I compare myself to other people, I mean despite his age and everything, I suppose that's got a lot to do with it, he's ten years older than I am. I suppose, I don't know, maybe I haven't slept with that many compared, I mean it makes me feel a lot better..(1112)..

QU: In terms of AIDS numbers is irrelevant; that's the way the adverts presented it, numbers, being monogamous, types of people you sleep with. In the end all that matters is what you do. If you have unprotected penetrative sex then that's risky. If you

use a condom or you don't have penetration, that's safe. It's a red herring to think in terms of numbers. Do you think you feel it's enough of a risk to want to tell somebody to have safe sex, and would you be able to?

AN: I wouldn't demand, I wouldn't demand, I mean, I do like to have some kind of indication that the person I've slept with's a lot..(1132). Or maybe if you're in a say, goes to a lot of nightclubs that I go to..(1135).. and he knows a lot of people I do, maybe I'll try, not asking directly, but try and get it out of him who he's slept with and whatever.

QU: Do you think once you knew that you'd be any better informed?

AN: Yes, I'd know what I was, I probably would be better informed, yeah, but, maybe that might, if it was really bad, or I knew that one of the girls that he'd slept with had slept with such and such a lad..! This sounds dreadful but you get a kind of a social network, and you know, who knows who and who knows who, and who's slept with who. And then you kind of, because I know a lot of people I think I'm..(1148).. It's really (?)gentle; when you think about it, if there's anybody that I know of, then I'd probably say something, not say something like, you know - Would you wear something? You might have AIDS - but just..(1153).. Would you mind using something?

QU: You'd rather say you're not on the pill than it's fear of AIDS?

AN: Yeah, it's like an..(1156)..when you say - oh look.. So I would sooner do that. It seems like a roundabout way of saying the same thing; the outcome is the same, but it's a far less embarrassing way to go about things. With men I suppose it's far worse, because they can't really say - Excuse me, I want to wear this because you're..

QU: ..'Because I don't want to get you pregnant', they could, they could say that.

AN: Unless she says - yes, but I'm on the pill. And then he'd go - oh right, well, just in case. But I suppose, you know, I don't know, I think I'd rather not sleep with him, than say - well, I can't, I'm worried about AIDS, I want you to wear this. I'd be really embarrassed about it.

QU: That's important that people are too embarrassed to ask, some people are too embarrassed to insist on contraception even. Has AIDS changed the way you think of your future in terms of the types of relationships you want?

AN: Yeah. I mean it hasn't changed anything that I want to do, I don't know whether I want one person for ever and ever, you know. But it's made me think about it more since. It's made me actually think about what I was doing, rather than just not bothering about it at all. So it has made me think about things, and hopefully, in the future to be a little bit more sensible about it.

QU: Does it make you feel that you have to go into a steady, monogamous relationship, because that was something you weren't looking for before?

AN: Yeah, yeah.

(end tape: 1196)