

MAG50 RT 02/06/1989

AN: I study Drama, and I've got Finals next week.

QU: Is that what you're nervous about?

AN: Well, I'm not nervous.... but after that I don't know what I'm doing. I'm just sort of, earn money as much as I can and I really hope that it'll lead to being able to do what I want.

QU: What's that?

AN: Well I want to be a director in the end.

QU: So you don't want to be an actress?

AN: No. More sort of backstage things. But it is really difficult obviously. It is really a matter of getting some experience for a few years, but you can work, but you have to work for..(009).

QU: That's quite a lot of work?

AN: That's the problem. So it's a matter of getting right in the middle so you can then finance doing what you want to do for a while, until you get a job that's actually paid.

QU: Are there courses you can do?

AN: Mm, really expensive. The big difference now, when you finish your three years, is between the people who have the money to go on and the people who haven't. they have to go into jobs for at least a year or two years, then having to sort of try to save it up, you know.

QU: Does that really show on your course?

AN: Yeah. It's really funny.

QU: People with Daddy looking after them.

AN: I know! We get all these sort of sarcy comments - Oh, well - you know.

QU: How long have you wanted to do this? Is it a long ambition?

AN: Yeah, since I was about 15. Before I was going to go for music. And I just sort of switched to theatre; I don't know why really. I just did.

QU: Tell me about your family, where you're from.

AN: My mum's [FROM A EUROPEAN COUNTRY] and my Dad's English.

QU: Where do you live?

AN: [TOWN 1] I've lived in the same house all my life, apart from when I've been here. I've not moved around much yet.

QU: Was it a big change your first time away?

AN: No, it wasn't because I've travelled quite a lot. I had a year out and I was away for about five months of it. And I've been away for sort of longish periods before, so it wasn't all that much of a shock.

QU: Are you the only child or have you got brothers and sisters?

AN: I've got a sister who's three years older.

QU: What does she do?

AN: She's [PROFESSIONAL ROLE] which is like, it's somebody who, large companies get a vacancy really high up, and they need to fill it, and haven't got anyone to take over sort of within the company, so they employ head hunters to find someone really good.

QU: What do your parents do?

AN: My mum's a [EDUCATIONAL ROLE] and my dad, well he now works for [ARTS ORGANISATION] but he's self-employed, as a consultant.

[MATERIAL REMOVED ON FATHERS JOB]

QU: Do you think that was the main influence on you in terms of being interested in the Arts?

AN: I think so; he's interested in Science, but I mean I just got surrounded by Arts the whole time. You don't really think about it do you?

QU: The highest ideals in my house were always artistic as well.

AN: So now my sister's in Business; I don't think they like it as much as if she was doing something less secure!

QU: Do you have a good relationship with your parents?

AN: Yeah, I think so. I mean it is pretty good; we talk about everything really, which is good. We argue a lot but we do get on.

QU: Did they give you any sex education?

AN: Well, my mum, and my dad, always talked about sex and things, always been very sort of open.

QU: So you can tell them about your relationships?

AN: Yeah. I mean I suppose they have slightly different ideals, because they were the first people that ever slept with each other, and they've never slept with anyone else. Although they don't mind that, I sort of get the feeling that it's a bit of a generation gap. They try and go with it!

QU: When you were younger did you get most of your advice about sex from your mum and dad?

AN: Yeah. I think so. I can't really remember learning about it. I always knew, you know sex education's always questions I know about and no point in it; it was really basic.

QU: Did they give you any advice about what type of person you should be, what type of relationship you should have?

AN: I suppose they did sort of suggest that, the indication was because of..(070)..it's better if you're restricted to a few partners, and you have more fun sort of thing. But it's generally sort of concern for my welfare rather than telling me what to do.

QU: Did you grow up not expecting that you would marry the first person you slept with?

AN: I never really thought about marriage. My sister's now living with her boyfriend, and was living with the one before that. And there's no problems over that. She thinks... (076).

QU: Where do you think you got your ideas about your life? Did that come from the school you went to, did most of your friends think in the same way?

AN: I don't know, I don't think they did. Most of them were more.. I went to a school which I really disliked, which is an all-girls school. And now I think - Oh God, why did I go there? - And I never really liked it very much. But they had the attitude of not being.. (083). They came from more restricted backgrounds really, they were quite embarrassed about it...(085)..think about marriage quite soon.

QU: What sort of school was it?

AN: [DETAIL ON SCHOOL]

QU: Was it private?

AN: Yeah,..(089).. The stupid thing was my parents were always making me take decisions, and at that age I didn't want to follow in my sister's footsteps. I've always been like that, and she went to a normal school. And I said - Oh, I don't want to go

where she's gone. And ended up, because it was just down the road, taking the exams my friends were, and they decided to send me there.

QU: Why didn't you like it?

AN: Well, I think it's to do.. I was getting a bursary to go there and most people there are sort of daddies' little girls. And I just didn't ever quite fit in to that sort of bracket. And I used to feel a bit.. I didn't have very many friends that I liked. I had lots of people that I talked to, but I found most of them were not the sort of people that I liked. So most of my socialising was with other people from outside school. Through music more than anything; I was playing in orchestras..

QU: Did being in a girl's school make it different?

AN: Yeah, there was a lot of emphasis on the academic. And a lot of emphasis on Science actually, because they were trying to push girls into Science. They prided themselves on being a single-sex school which would therefore allow girls to do the Sciences.

QU: Did they have any feminist ideas?

AN: Not really, that was basically it. The implication was careers for a lot of girls, but that contrasted quite a lot with the attitude of most of them, you know - well, we should go to University but then we've got to get married after that.

QU: So was it assumed that people would go to university?

AN: Yeah, definitely.

QU: For the whole school?

AN: Yeah, I mean it must have been less than 10% that didn't. I mean when it came to me, there were more people going to Polys, but a few years before it had all been Universities. I think that was just to do with higher grades. Definitely going on to..

QU: In Comprehensives you get a divide between the top stream and the rest. Did you have that?

AN: No, there wasn't really a divide, no. There were a few people that struggled because they didn't like being pushed academically and they weren't really that bright, and they had a terrible time. And I used to get quite angry at that because, I was into Drama, you see, and they never appreciated that at all. I was just told to get my priorities right the whole way up the school. Because I did a lot outside, and I wasn't bothered about being academic that much. And it was not 'fulfilling my potential' and all that stuff. And there was a lot of pressure not to study Drama; they thought that was not on.

QU: Which is why you regretted going to this school?

AN: Yeah, and I had to fight for it quite a lot. And I ended up getting involved in arguing about people lower down the school who wanted to do things like Drama and weren't as good academically. Because I got to know girls lower down the school. And I just used to get so angry about it. It would just make me feel inadequate, you know. And they were really good at something creative.

QU: You seemed to have a strong sense of independence and doing what you wanted. Is that in retrospect or did you feel that at the time?

AN: It was at the time. Actually now I've been really determined to go, since 15, to be a director really. It's only now I'm beginning to think maybe I've been a bit narrow-minded really. And I'm sort of looking out a bit more. But I have been really single-minded. A lot

of people used to say - Well, it's alright if you know what you want. I really did know what I wanted really so it was good.

QU: What type of sex education did you get at school?

AN: We had this woman who came in, called Doctor [NAME OF SEX EDUCATOR AND ANTI-ABORTION CAMPAIGNER] And she's just so prudish, it's just so funny that she does sex education! She came in when we were 14 and talked about heavy petting being as far as we should go!

QU: So she gave you guidelines?

AN: Yeah. And then I remember some of my friends actually having to.. I had one particular friend whose mother hadn't told her anything about periods and things; she had a terrible time. I just remember a time, a lot of the girls there didn't know very much.

QU: You felt you knew quite a lot more than others your age?

AN: Yeah.

QU: So she told you that heavy petting was as far as you should go. Did she go any further and tell you if you were going to go further what you should do about contraception?

AN: Not really. Actually not really, no! ... I suppose there was a divide in the school, between those who thought she was stupid, and others who felt really inadequate because they didn't know very much. There was definitely a contrast between people who had a life outside school and who didn't.

QU: Was there a difference in terms of how sexually active people were?

AN: Yeah. Well, I didn't actually have a boyfriend until I was 17, but that was more because I didn't meet anybody rather than anything else.

QU: But you were in the group that would have?

AN: Yeah. I didn't find it a problem really; I was just sort of waiting until somebody turned up. I mean that's one of the things about being in an all girl's school; you don't really, even now, through orchestras and things, you don't necessarily meet somebody. You do feel a bit more inhibited I suppose than if you're at a mixed school. Just simply because you don't chat every day to blokes basically. You don't get used to them.

QU: Do you think that makes girls who go to an all girl's school more vulnerable when it comes to..?

AN: I really think so, yeah, definitely. Because quite a lot of people did have quite a bad experience with them. And people I know now, who come here, you can actually see the difference, I think.

QU: In what way?

AN: Well, when you come to university, some people, friends, but not close friends; people who have got married, noticeably it's their first boyfriend they've got married to.

QU: Was the difference you mentioned at school linked to academic achievement, were those people less likely to have relationships?

AN: No, I don't think so actually. I didn't notice that. Obviously there were really swotty types who were very much just doing their work. But a lot of the ones that did things outside were also the ones that were really active and academic, doing everything.

QU: Was there a lot of talk amongst the girls about sex?

AN: Yeah, I suppose so....(193)..

QU: You said you told people who didn't know about periods..

AN: Yeah, well they were people who had really had a bit of trouble getting on. I don't know them now, but I imagine that they probably would have had, like you say, more vulnerable.. Because it's just one of those things, you know; I think it's bad, that's one of the things I think is bad about single-sex education. It just gives a false impression, you know..(202)..

QU: Was that the only sex education you had? Did you have anything about sexually-transmitted diseases?

AN: No.

QU: Did you have anything about AIDS at school?

AN: No.

QU: So it was just a moral talk?

AN: Yeah. I had some sex education at my junior school actually. It was better than at 14 with my secondary school.

QU: What was that?

AN: That was all about pregnancy - and sex. And that had like all these little models to show what happened.

QU: That's really unusual. That stopped, they didn't make any effort?

AN: No, that was at a primary school, that wasn't a private school; it was a mixed primary school. Yeah, they were quite good actually for that age group. I can remember one or two girls thought their periods had started afterwards, straightaway, and got really panicked about it!

QU: Was there a status symbol in having boyfriends at your secondary school?

AN: I suppose there was, yes. I don't know, I suppose the emphasis, although I've said there were these two different things, the emphasis was still on the academic. Although you did sort of get a prestige thing about it; it still wasn't considered the most important thing. ..(227).

QU: And you couldn't demonstrate it at school. At mixed schools boys and girls can hang out with each other.

AN: Yeah, it wasn't quite so noticeable during the actual school hours, it was more when we went out and things and would talk about it. But somehow it wasn't a big divide between the weekend and the school.

QU: When I was at school, virginity was an enormous issue. Did everyone at your school know who was a virgin and who wasn't?

AN: Yeah, I think it was. There were quite a lot of people who just didn't talk about it... In fact actually I really think that the less a person talked about it, the more likely they were to be doing it.

QU: So it wasn't something to be boasting about?

AN: Not really, no.

QU: Was there any peer pressure that you ought to be sexually active?

AN: No. No, I didn't actually. I suppose a bit, later. In the sixth form you began to feel, maybe, you know. I don't know, I think it's a combination of the career thing, and not making it the most important thing as well. It might have something to do with the sort of friends I chose, where there wasn't really that kind of rivalry. It was either you were going out with somebody or you weren't. And yeah, you'd gossip about it...

QU: So your friends weren't just from school?

AN: Well, what actually happened was that I threw a (?)flannel which I did in conjunction with a boy's school. You know, the boy's school sort of...together with my sixth form, which was about eight, nine of us. Which was half blokes from the boy's school, and half girls from the girl's school. I mixed with them quite a lot; and they overlapped quite a lot with the people from the orchestra, who were from a variety of schools. So there was like this core of people, there was a larger group of people which was all different schools; but the core was still from these two single-sex schools. I mean I actually think that the blokes from the single-sex schools were more inhibited than the girls were. Which was one of the things when it wasn't too much of an issue, because some of them, they were good friends of mine; we used to talk about it quite a lot. Most of the boys there had problems, whether or not they were gay, things like that. They were sort of talking about that quite a lot at the time.

QU: So you were quite happy to talk about sex?

AN: Yeah. I always had closer friends from the blokes really. From that age when they joined us. And I think that was sometimes because we could talk about it. I don't know, they'd sort of feel that they could talk about it. I would actually say - We don't want to go out with each other, but we are good friends. And then we could talk about it.

QU: Why was it easier to talk to boys?

AN: I don't know, maybe because it was less rivalry, I don't know.

QU: Was there rivalry between the girls?

AN: I suppose there was; we did tend to go for the same sort of bloke.

QU: Did things change very much in the sixth form?

AN: Well, I was mostly with the same social set, regular set.

QU: What was that like?

AN: That was like a sort of group of eight. Before that it was kind of an irregular group of people, from the orchestra, and not every weekend, and not the same sort of group. And that happened in the sixth form; it was every weekend going out.

QU: What sort of things did you do?

AN: Oh, we'd go to the pub, sometimes we'd go out; usually we'd just end up going round to someone's house actually, and getting some alcohol in and sitting around chatting. Going the pub, sometimes going to the theatre, things like that. Because we were quite sort of linked in our outside activities, like orchestra, there's often things going on, that we were doing, and then it would go on to an evening out.

QU: Were you sexually active at this time?

AN: No, I hadn't. Well, I'd been out with someone but it hadn't gone all the way.

QU: You say 'all the way'...?

AN: Hadn't had sexual intercourse.

QU: At that stage were you having physical relationships with men?

AN: For the most part not. I went out with this one bloke for a very short time, so, that was only three weeks or something. This was a bloke that I'd met again, who I'd been to my junior school with, and we just met again and went out. But he was going off to [ASIAN CITY] after the holidays, so it was just like a three-week thing.

QU: Would that have been kissing and things like that?

AN: No, quite a bit further actually. I'm just trying to remember if this is the first.. Yes, it did sort of get confined to waist upwards..

QU: At that stage in your development, did you feel sexually aroused by that type of physical relation? Did you realise that it was sexual?

AN: Yeah, I think I was, yeah.

QU: Were you taking any lead in it, or was it all him touching you?

AN: No, it was both. Definitely. I think I probably would; I think it was a lot to do with him going away, it stopped it from going any further. And stopped me from wanting to go any further.

QU: So you would have been reasonably happy, you weren't worried about it?

AN: Not really, no.

QU: Did you have any qualms about intercourse, were scared about it?

AN: Well, perhaps I should explain.. I think.. I'll say about this; I'm not upset about it now, but the first time I had sex, it was against my will. Which has been a major influence, yeah, yeah.. And it's one of the reasons why I'm interested in doing this, is because this was a bloke, through my Drama I had a lot of sort of sexual encounters that didn't quite go anywhere, because I was sort of thinking no, because you knew people for short spaces of time on courses and things. And this bloke, I sort of met..

QU: How long ago was this?

AN: Well, I met him three years ago, and this happened two years ago.

QU: So this is when you were at Manchester?

AN: Yeah. And I'd been out with three people before that, which had gone almost the whole way, sort of (?)mumbled it. What I mean by that is that I now sort of think back, and I think - Well, it was basically because I wasn't that keen on them, that I didn't go the whole way.

QU: When you talk about 'going the whole way' in that situation, are you talking about mutual masturbation rather than intercourse?

AN: Yeah, yeah. I mean, even oral sex but not intercourse.

QU: It's very strange that that's seen as not the whole way.

AN: Yeah, that's what I realised afterwards. That's something you don't always realise; I think it's a lot to do with fear of pregnancy in young women. It was definitely women. Because..(351)..it was always like - I don't want to risk this.. So I realised afterwards, my mum said to me - I didn't realise you were doing so much, if you had done you might as well have gone the whole way. She was saying - Why were you drawing the line there? She actually said that to me, which was quite good; we actually chatted about it. You just don't quite realise, you just think - Well, as long as I say stop there. I don't know if that characterises most women.

QU: I think it does. Most women aren't quite sure why they don't want it. To say that intercourse is the most important part is a way to demote everything else.

AN: Exactly, yeah.

QU: Did you find that you were sexually satisfied?

AN: Not really, because..

QU: From everything else that you did apart from intercourse?

AN: Not really. I think most of those relationships which lasted about five, six weeks, in fact quite often because of circumstances rather than.. In fact they all finished not really because we wanted to, but because I was going away or something like that. And in all of them, I was actually feeling like going further, and it was sometimes again the fact that I was going to go away that it seemed maybe it wasn't worth getting into this.

Maybe it's not worth thinking about contraception if you're going to go away in about two weeks' time.

QU: Did you never achieve orgasm in that period without intercourse?

AN: No. So then I met this bloke on a course in [SCANDINAVIAN TOWN]. Because I'd been on these courses abroad, drama courses, where I went on one during my sixth form. It was just like really moving on into a completely different world of people. And on this particular course that I was doing then, that was when I was 17, all the people on the course were between 25 and 53, and I was 17 at the time. And I had quite a lot of difficulties handling the blokes at that time. Again that's one of the things, I suppose it might have put me off a bit at that time. Because there was this thirty three year old guy on this course, who was just obviously after one thing. And it was really difficult for me to handle. And there was another bloke who helped me out at that time; and saw what was going on, and said - Are you coming with me now, sort of thing. Because I obviously wasn't aware of what was going on. So that was when I was 17. I had quite a few of those sorts of things. I think when you're in the Drama world, you get exposed quite a lot to those sorts of things. And I was a bit too naive and inexperienced at a quite early age to handle them.

QU: Is the idea that casual sex is positive part of the Drama scene?

AN: Definitely, and I haven't yet quite come to that, coming from a .. basically my mum was saying - Well, it's better if you wait. Although I wasn't against it and she wasn't against it, I was still sort of - Well, if you give me two weeks.. and here was this 33 year old bloke who's after one thing, well, maybe not but..

QU: With you wanting to be involved in Drama, you wanted to be like them as well, as strong as them, at the time?

AN: Yeah, it was quite difficult, it was quite a struggle, because you become aware of the wish to participate in that, and the difficulty. I suppose it is a conflict between you're up and your sense of not being able to cope with it at that early age.

QU: And also you at 17 and him at 33, it's an exploitative relationship, you probably didn't want to.

AN: I remember that being quite a shock actually because I did actually get on with him, and I couldn't understand why someone I didn't fancy or didn't like could actually turn me on so much. That was quite a shock at that age. Because you had that idea that unless you really cared about somebody, it's not actually gonna turn you on. I remember that being quite difficult to handle. So that's going back a bit, that was between 6:1 and 6:2. And then, what happened then? Well, then two years later, I went on the same course, but it's in a different country each year. And that was in [COUNTRY 1] And that's where I met this bloke who came from England as well. And I knew him for about a year after that; he kept sort of turning up at my door and hassling me quite a lot. And basically I think he got it into his head that he wouldn't wait, wouldn't rest until he'd got his way with me! It was really calculated, the whole year; and I can look back now and think - You should have got yourself out of that. But I didn't see it at the time.

QU: Was there nothing between you as far as you were concerned?

AN: Well, it was difficult because I think you also get into a very forced closeness on these courses, where you really feel close to people. And you are quite physical with people, without actually having a sexual relationship, very physical, and it is quite sexual I suppose. Well, there was this other bloke [AARNI] who I really really fancied and

whom I'm still sort of vaguely in touch with, he lives in [COUNTRY 2]. And the three of us made a video in the evenings on this course, as well as doing the Drama course during the day. And there were a lot of difficulties between the three of us, a triangular sort of thing. And also this bloke from [COUNTRY 2] was this real charismatic 30 year old actor/director, really.. the sort of person most women would go for, you know. So I think there was a bit of jealousy from this bloke, with a wish to.. I don't know, I mean I'm just trying to understand it really, I've tried to understand it since.

QU: Was it about the two men battling with each other?

AN: I think part of it was, I really do. Because, one of the things was, the reason I didn't cut off all contact with this bloke was because of that link with him through him, with this other bloke who I really liked. And it was difficult to cut off somebody who belonged to that memory totally. Although under other circumstances I would have thought - No. So I kept in touch with him, but it was more him keeping in touch with me actually. Sort of turning up, you know. He was bisexual and extremely..he'd talk about sex all the time. And the last thing he said when I left [COUNTRY 1] was - Well, I can't wait til I see you again, and I'll sort of hammer you against the wall, sort of thing.

QU: So he was being explicit?

AN: Yeah.

QU: At this point did you feel uneasy about him speaking to you in that way?

AN: Not really, no. Because that happens on these courses as well. It happened quite a lot even though I was younger. These older blokes would be really explicit. I mean quite a lot of blokes that I've met at various times have come straight up to you and said - How about it? sort of thing, having at quite a young age really. I mean really open; it's just a completely different attitude. And it made it very difficult for me as well in normal situations to cope with younger blokes. That is one of the reasons why they never lasted, the relationships with the people I went out with. As a result of that I found most of the blokes my own age a bit immature really..

QU: Do you still find that?

AN: There's still a tendency to like older blokes, just simply because of that, because they're just.. But.. So this bloke was called MARK, he was really sleeping around a lot, you know. And he turned up on my doorstep; he earned quite a lot, came from [TOWN 2] and kept in touch. And every time he came round he tried to stay the night and things. But it's also difficult because on those courses there's an awful lot, like massage, that goes on as part of the course.

QU: In an artificial environment?

AN: Yeah, completely artificial. I mean now, I'd handle it completely differently because I know the difference between the really false closeness that is being enforced by the situation, and something that's really genuine. But at the time it's very difficult to identify the difference, you know, you're a bit less experienced.

QU: Were these courses generally run by men? It sounds like a very male atmosphere.

AN: Yeah, yeah, all the courses were run by men actually. The first time I went to one when I was 17, I look back now and I realise that some of the blokes, the older blokes, were really quite protective of you, which I didn't realise at the time. Because I was just really happy in that environment; it was quite liberating as well. Through naivety and just being really happy in a more open environment, I didn't notice all the things that were going on. And it really was down to some of the other blokes, older blokes, who were

aware and watching out a bit, and even the course leader when I was 17, being a bit fatherly.

QU: But it was a very sexual environment.

AN: And as part of your courses you have a lot of physical contact. Some of the exercises we did were deliberately to break down inhibition. We'd do things like rolling over each other and various things. Trying to get very physically close.

QU: Is there never any discussion of these things? If you don't take on why people are inhibited in the first place. It sounds like a typical sixties idea of women's liberation which has nothing to do with that.

AN: Yeah, yeah.

QU: It just gives men the opportunity to get what they want by consent.

AN: Because you get confused, because there's a difference between the physical sensations you're having and really being able to be objective about it. You're really immersed in it. There were things like, on the first course, we were having saunas, mixed saunas with nobody wearing anything; everybody sitting around with nothing on. Very un-English, very sort of international, yeah, hippie-ish.

QU: Do you think it was a positive thing for you in general, apart from this man?

AN: I think it was, I mean, definitely. Because I come from a home where everybody does run around without clothes on, there's not been any hassle about that. I think that's through my mother's EUROPEAN influence. I didn't find it a problem going into the sauna without anything on; I really enjoyed it.

QU: You didn't feel private about it?

AN: [CUT MATERIAL ON FAMILY] It was suddenly being able to be less inhibited which was more natural to me. But it did lead to.. I suppose it was a contradiction; being from an all girl's school and coming from a background which was quite liberated and then, and not actually having followed through logically to sleeping around when I wanted to, not following that through. It's real contradictions. I look back and I can see why that lead to.. it probably lead to what actually happened, but I don't think it's all to do with that. I can cope with it now, but I didn't at the time.

QU: When you were raped by this man, how did that affect you at the time?

AN: Well, really badly because it'd come to sort of AIDS and things. And that's why I really wanted to do this, because I know how important it is because it really affected me a lot. In my first year here I did a play on AIDS, which is 'Compromised Immunity' which is a Gay Sweatshop play. Everybody that was taking part in that, most of the blokes, were gay. And there was a lot of really open talk about sex and about AIDS. And I was really finding that I was aware of it at that time, that was about 1986, 87, the campaign. Already it made me really think hard about what I wanted and what I would do. And I'd come through the second course where I'd really felt - OK, now I've come to the point where I'm prepared to follow through my emotions whenever I want to. Then I did this play and that made me think again.

QU: It wasn't so simple?

AN: Yeah. So that led to, I suppose to a bit of delaying in actually sort of sleeping around with people.

QU: You say it delayed you sleeping around with people, what were the reasons for that? Did it make you more wary of sex in general?

AN: Yes, definitely.

QU: How did you understand that at the time? It's a contrast to the way you had been thinking, the liberal view of self-expression through sex.

AN: Yes. It was difficult. It was partly because the bloke who was directing me had a friend who'd died of AIDS. And most of the people I knew through the drama, I was coming into contact with people who were..(639)..hospital, because they were really frightened that they had AIDS, and they had all the symptoms and things. And there was a lot of fear around the people that I knew. And a growing awareness. And I think it just, maybe, I don't know, I'm still unsure about whether I give it too much importance, or too little importance. But it made me very sort of over-aware of AIDS, and actually quite frightened about the consequences of it, and whether it would happen in the future and all that sort of thing. And also the awareness that being in the drama environment that I was, that was in a way, the very sort of environment where there was likely to be quite a lot of AIDS.

QU: Because there's a lot of casual sex.

AN: And because there are a lot of bisexuals. At the time, I mean now it's not so much confined to gay or bisexual people, but at the time, because I knew a lot of people who were bisexual, it also seemed difficult to be sure of anyone.

QU: Did it make you wary of sex in general, or did you think just in terms of penetration? Did you think about what was risky or was it just sex?

AN: Yeah, no. Within that group we were working on it; we did talk a lot about safe-sex. That was the basic attitude of the play. We actually rewrote bits of it, and were gearing quite a lot to a sort of university group of people. All the emphasis was on safer sex, not no sex.

QU: What were you thinking at the time was safe-sex?

AN: Well, that was basically using condoms, and thinking about what you were doing.

QU: And being choosy?

AN: Yeah, and being able to talk about it. Actually asking people before you sleep with them. That kind of attitude. That was in the first year. And that was at the time that [MARK] kept coming round. And he kept trying to stay the night, and I kept not allowing him to. Because I was really wary of him, and I didn't really like him; I didn't really trust him that much. Then I went out with, I got off with a couple of people. And then out with someone for five weeks, who I didn't really like that much. But again, I think it was influenced by the wish to go out with, the people that I seemed to fancy were people that were very experienced and older, and I was therefore more wary of. And the people I was actually going out with were people that were less experienced, and I therefore felt safe about. I think that's been one of the things that's been a bit of a problem, actually. A tendency to therefore go for people who are less experienced..

QU: Is that because you could say where you wanted to stop with them?

AN: Yeah, it was partly that. And also it's the thing of being more in control. No, I got very confused; I got into a sort of another trap thing, with two friends, it was really terrible. And the whole thing just got really confused. And at the time I was going out with this bloke, the bloke from [COUNTRY 2], whom I'd met the year before, turned up here in England. And I then went, this was just before my exams in the first year, went for a weekend, which was like [MARK], this bloke I've been describing, [MARK] rang up and said - ..(727).. has turned up and I know you'd like to see him. I know it would be nice. Why don't we go to a cottage for a weekend? And I'll just make it possible for you

to see each other, sort of thing.. And I thought this was a real change on [MARK'S] part. [MARK] brought two friends along. And so we went on this weekend. And I actually didn't sleep with [AARNI] although it came to that, sort of difficult, for these reasons, because I knew that he was extremely promiscuous. And I knew it wouldn't last; he lived in [COUNTRY 2] he was living with a woman. And that I suppose I've regretted; that was an actual decision which was to do with AIDS. [MARK] was extremely jealous again, you know, he'd sort of slam the doors.. And after that [MARK] moved down to London, sort of rang up and said - Come to my housewarming... I felt that it was safer, because he had said on this weekend - I've actually only had one sexual experience. And I thought - God, he's been going on about this for a long, and it's just all talk. And I decided that I could handle him for that reason. Because he was obviously less experienced than I thought he was.

QU: So you thought it was a possibility then?

AN: No, not really. I just felt that I would be able to say no. And he would accept that. And also there were supposed to be other people around. And of course when I went to his housewarming, there was no one else. Pretty obvious when I think about it.

QU: Well, only obvious if you think that's what a person wants to do to you.

AN: But I did know there was a sort of wariness, I did know that he would probably try it. Yeah, it just sounded like a good choice; either you go out into the middle of the night in North London, or you stay here, you know. Yeah, I did realise something at the time. It was a matter of saying no lots and lots of times, and then sort of waking up, going to sleep because I wouldn't be able to handle it, and then waking up...

QU: Did you use any protection?

AN: No, he didn't.

QU: Was this the first time you'd actually had intercourse?

AN: Yes.

QU: Did he know that?

AN: Yes.

QU: What a bastard.

AN: Yeah, I know. But it wasn't the sort of cliché, people tend to think of, one of the things I feel quite strongly about now is the myth of rape just being someone jumping out in a dark alley. Which is just not true at all. The worst thing was, that the next day, I questioned him totally the next morning about who he'd slept with. And it ended up with - Oh, I'm worried about AIDS - and him sort of really taunting me about it. Because we'd had conversations before about AIDS, and he'd said that he would never have a test, because he knew that it was high-risk. And all of this, because he'd slept with loads of women. So I knew that it was very high risk because of all the information that I'd had. But it was really difficult knowing that, and knowing that one occasion shouldn't really lead to that. But I lived with a (?)woman who was pregnant for a while. And then put it out of my mind and.. I was still actually going out with the bloke that I'd been going out with when [AARNI] turned up; so I finished with him then and didn't tell him about it or anything.

QU: Why was that?

AN: Well, I've been going out with that bloke who's here on my course, not really liking him that much. It was to do with just really wanting somebody around, you know. And had become aware anyway, so we'd finished and got back together, and finished and

got back together, at various times, especially when [AARNI] was around. But I didn't tell him about [MARK] because you just sort of know when somebody couldn't handle it. That was petering out anyway.

QU: What effect did that experience have on you, did it change your ideas?

AN: It changed them, because I'm still, I suppose, now getting over it. Which is two years ago. What happened was, I thought - I can handle this, you know, it's not such a big problem. And carried on, and carried on. I did another course, got quite close to people. Then basically sort of collapsed about it and got really ill, and thought that I had AIDS. And went through exactly what a friend of mine had been through a year before, during that play. I knew what had happened, but I really believed that I had AIDS. None of the doctors knew what was wrong with me, and they were the ones that actually suggested having the test. And I did. It took a good half year before I really believed that I didn't have it.

QU: The test was negative?

AN: Yeah, I took two tests. I was just really quite ill in various ways, which I suppose were quite psychological; but various symptoms for about a year. I missed a lot of my second year course because of it.

QU: It comes out some way.

AN: It does. And I think if you think you're handling it, I think sometimes it just comes out worse. I can see so much, why it all happened now. But it did make a big, honestly, for a long while I thought - Well, I won't sleep with anybody without them having a test. It had a big influence on my life. It's partly because he was such a bastard, and he was taunting me about it. But I'd always thought AIDS was quite an important thing to think about, so it all.. And I had counselling with an AIDS counsellor; that was quite good.

QU: How do you feel it's changed your ideas of sexuality?

AN: Well, now I think that it hasn't that much; now I'm sort of coming out a bit. I really thought I would be more, it is a conflict for me still now, because I thought I would always insist on a test. And then I thought - Well, nobody is going to.. With the attitudes nowadays it's very difficult to expect a bloke to get the test. It really is, you've got to be sure, hanging around for so long. I mean it's really difficult. That's what my biggest problem is; you might be wanting to be quite sensible about it, but it's actually pretty impossible. I suppose now I've come to the conclusion that you've just got to be, you know, I'd always use a condom. But I haven't actually, and I wouldn't actually wait, you know, I wouldn't insist on a test.

QU: Have you had a sexual relationship since then?

AN: Yeah, which is only, it started before last term, in the middle of last term. And that was the first one since then. It took me a long time to get anywhere near that.

QU: Did you talk to the partner about AIDS?

AN: No, you see, this is the thing. That's what I mean by, you actually end up not being very consistent. But then I know again, he's somebody that is pretty inexperienced. Which I find really stupid, it's terrible, but I think it has affected me in that way. And just go for that sort of person.

QU: And do you use safe-sex with him?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Using a condom?

AN: Using a condom, yeah.

QU: Did you ask him to use a condom?

AN: Well, yeah, it was just like understood I did, because I wasn't actually using any other form of contraception. So that was understood. But that was the means that we were gonna use.

QU: So you were talking about it in terms of contraception, you weren't talking about it in terms of AIDS?

AN: No. We talked about contraception.

QU: Do you feel that there was also an understanding that it was for safe-sex apart from contraception?

AN: Well, that's the..(852)..thing that happened with [MARK] because obviously it was a problem to begin with. He was pretty good about that; although he's not very good about talking about it. But I suppose he understood it is both. But because he's quite inexperienced he's not really a risk.

QU: Obviously you see it as being a significant risk in terms of your future sex life..

AN: Yeah..

QU: ..It's quite an important factor. You were saying that you went out with younger men because you were more in control, is it also now because of AIDS?

AN: It is to do with AIDS..

QU: Because there's a lower risk?

AN: Yeah. Well, I also think that that's going to change again, because there comes a point where I just think - This is really stupid, you've got to find somebody you really are attracted to, and if they are a high risk, you've just got to sort that out somehow. And all the tendencies, especially now I'm leaving this environment, the fact is that I will meet people who I consider are high risk. And there's still [AARNI] still hanging around...!

QU: If you did meet an older man who you really admired, how much in control do you think you could be? How far could you push your choices?

AN: Well, I think unlike the situation that's arisen now with [CARL] that I'm going out with now, where I haven't insisted on really talking about it, really going into it as a problem, I think I would if it was an older bloke; I would insist on talking about that.

QU: But this is what you're also scared of, that you might not be able to?

AN: Yeah, because it's just difficult, because if you just feel like it, it's very difficult to insist on certain things. I'm sure that's what's happened; I have met this 32 year old at Easter, on this director's course, who I've written to. He's a potential possibility. And I'm sort of thinking about this, you know, what would I do? And also [AARNI] rang up at Christmas, last Christmas, and said that he wanted to leave [COUNTRY 2] 890)..and said, the Company, would I join it, etc, etc. You know, it's a real possibility. And although I don't know how much to believe that really, there's still a possibility, and I'm still sort of thinking - What would I do really now, knowing that I still in a way regret that he didn't come with me at the time.

QU: He's someone that you know well now, do you think that you could talk to him about that?

AN: Well, I think that I would have to really, because I think that I'd be very worried about it with somebody like him.

QU: Would you expect him to talk to you about it first?

AN: Well, I would hope..ideal, but I just don't have much expectation of that.

QU: Has that been your experience up til now, that apart from gay men..?

AN: Yeah, apart from gay men. I mean [MARK] talked about it quite a lot, but his attitude was that you just don't want to find out, so you don't have the test sort of thing. He knew quite a lot about it; he also knew that he was quite high risk, therefore he wasn't going to have the test. So I don't have much trust or belief in bloke's being really responsible about it.

QU: I think that's quite realistic; it's like contraception, we have to take responsibility.

AN: Exactly. Like just recently, in the relationship with [CARL] it's really stupid, he's quite inexperienced, the reason I didn't come in on Wednesday is that I had to take the morning after pill. Because he'd not been careful enough about the way he was using the condom. That gave him a bit of a shock really. But it just pinpoints the problem, it's difficult to sort that out adequately, then it's difficult to talk about AIDS really.

QU: You were saying that you saw safe-sex as using condoms and being careful about your partners, quite an important aspect of it is avoiding risky practices, like for gay men it's avoiding anal sex. Do you think that is a possibility for heterosexuals to take up?

AN: Well, I find it difficult to know, I suppose oral sex comes into that bracket. And I'd find it quite difficult to cut that out completely, so there was absolutely no possibility, I think you really would have to be able to (?)communicate extremely well about it. I think it's a shame that women can talk so much better than the blokes; you'd be quite lucky to find a bloke who'd really be able to sort it out really well.

QU: Would you think that oral sex is a risky thing?

AN: Not as high risk, but it is a risk, in some ways; if you're going to be so careful using condoms, otherwise it seems a bit ironic then to..

QU: In the same way that anal sex is risky for gays, penetration is risky for heterosexuals. You've had two relationships including penetration. The relationship that you're having now, is penetration an important and vital part of the sex you're having?

AN: I don't think it's as important for women as it is for men.

QU: Do you find that you feel anymore fulfilled than in the relationships without penetration?

AN: No, not really, but it would take a really good bloke basically, who understood it, to sort of compensate, or really think about it.

QU: To have sex without it?

AN: Without it; to find ways of having equal amounts of pleasure really.

QU: Do you feel that you would only be able to have an orgasm through intercourse?

AN: No, I don't think so. I don't think so. It would have to be quite a good relationship rather than just.. That's another thing which, it goes against just sleeping with somebody that you feel like at the time. Because you do actually have to build up a proper relationship, so you can actually reach a really good sexual relationship in that way.

QU: Would you like to have relationships where intercourse wasn't seen as an integral part?

AN: Yeah, I would, yeah.

QU: Do you think that's a possibility with the sort of men you know, the men you're likely to be sleeping with?

AN: ...(969)..

QU: Do you think that you'd put yourself on the line, and try for that sort of thing? If I hadn't mentioned it.

AN: I don't know, I don't know if it would have occurred to me actually to just sort of expect that from a girlfriend.

QU: That's part of women's ideas of what their sexuality is, and how it's different from men's. Do you think of your sexuality in terms of physical things like orgasms, or in terms of emotional things like getting close, relationships?

AN: That's something which, at the moment, is difficult for me to say really because I am still quite career minded, I don't really want to feel, I do tend to feel that I could really (?)commit a relationship or one where it's more about getting really close, and sharing things, is one which would in some ways hold me back. Because I've got to be able to travel around, go where I want, not be fixed to one place or one person. So at the moment it's difficult really, because ideally I would like that sort of relationship. But it doesn't actually tend to work, it doesn't really work in practice with that sort of lifestyle.

QU: Do you think it's incompatible with what you want?

AN: At the moment, yes. But ultimately, no. Ultimately that's what I want, in the end. But I can't really see that happening for the next few years. It's more like if you want to have some kind of sexual relationship at the moment or in the next few years, it's going to have to be quite uncommitted.

QU: When you think about a guy you fancy, do you think about it in terms of lust, a physical thing?

AN: Yes, I do. It is a contradiction in me, and I think probably in most women. It is a feminist thing as well, I feel if I want that, that's what I want, the sort of bloke I want, then really that's OK. But at the same time, like the relationship I've got at the moment, it's not particularly fulfilling, because that's basically all it is. And that throws up questions of is it really worth it if there's not more communication and more caring in it? And I don't know..

QU: Are you finding it more difficult now with AIDS on the scene and all the other things. Are you more critical of those sorts of things?

AN: Well, yeah, you mean of actually sleeping around a lot?

QU: The idea that it's good for a modern woman who has her independent sex life?

AN: I think it's a big contradiction; I think it's a contradiction in feminist terms as well. Because I actually think that a lot of people I know, who are very very feminist will just sleep around a lot. And in some ways I don't think it's really genuinely feminist, because they're not necessarily getting what they want; they're kind of reacting against what they've been forced into before. And it's really difficult. And that's really why I haven't had so many sexual relationships, because it's partly to do with that as well, that I don't really see the point always; it seems like just a sort of statement sometimes. 'I want my freedom as well', sort of thing. Unless you really feel the attraction, or you feel that you want something, then.. It's very difficult, it's a contradiction for me at the moment. And that's why I think AIDS has actually thrown feminism back quite a lot, in some ways. But in other ways it could be quite positive. But it is difficult, because it's just putting more of a burden onto women really.

QU: That's interesting, because the men you know I would assume compared to the total population are at the feminist end of the scale. Do you think these men take seriously women's sexual needs and rights?

AN: I think they try, but I think actually when it comes down to it, there's a difference between what they say and what they do. They talk about it, but they don't actually think

about what it really means in terms of a sexual relationship. They'll be quite liberated in some ways, and then when it actually comes down to it, everybody I know is in the most conventional relationship you could imagine. And it's so awful because most of the women I know are getting themselves into completely opposite relationships from the ones that are their ideals, where they say what they want. And I do that as well, at the moment I'm doing that, and it is just so (?)destructive.

QU: What sort of relationship do you want? What is your ideal?

AN: My tendency is to go for people that I find very interesting, rather than necessarily total lust, sort of thing. I think the ideal would be to have some support but a lot of independence. Really a lot because I need it anyway. Something that I've found with CARL is that you can't actually have that independence until you've been through quite a close period, where you've got to know someone really well, and spent a lot of time together to begin with. And then you come to a decision that now you know what you're in. I've found, because of what's been happening with CARL recently, that I've tried to go for that independence without knowing each other, without the trust there to begin with. And it just doesn't work like that. So I think the ideal would be to have a period where you do get quite close, and you really get quite supportive, but then be able to say, right, we're going to have to spend a few months apart, it doesn't matter, you know. I don't know how the idea of being unfaithful within that would then work. Because I think it's very difficult, especially within the drama world, to not feel a loss for other people.

QU: Do you have different political and personal ideas to monogamy?

AN: Yeah, I tend to think quite negative about monogamy really, I think it's a bit backward-thinking really, or unrealistic. But I don't know whether in practice..

QU: In the relationship you're in now, you said you chose a less experienced man for a lot of reasons, how would you feel if he demanded his independence and said he was going to sleep with other people?

AN: I don't know, I don't think I'd feel that jealous really. Because I don't feel that committed..

QU: ..in the first place..

AN: Yes. I think it would worry me in terms of what sort of safer sex we'd be having then.

QU: It complicates things.

AN: Mmm. It does complicate things. But I think if I really really liked someone or fell for them, I'd find it quite difficult if they were having a relationship. That wouldn't be easy.

QU: How about for yourself?

AN: Well, I understand it in myself, because I can actually say, you know, there's [CARL] and there's this bloke I've written this letter to, and there's [AARNI]. And I feel there's a problem with that; I can't say, if I'm going to be like that and think that myself, then I can't really demand anything other of the other person. That's what I mean by the contradiction between your mind, what you think, and how you actually end up feeling. I mean it's..(1112)..relationship with [CARL] at the moment, but if I'm left hanging around, wondering if he's gonna turn up or not, I'd still spend a lot of time thinking, why am I wasting my time thinking about it? And I do, I waste time moping about it. And I find that very difficult that I feel like that, or bother to feel like that. And it gets in the way of everyday life, and I don't want it to. So I don't know; maybe I do want more commitment.

QU: Do you think AIDS has changed people's views of sex in general? Do you think it's changing what sex is going to be for people?

AN: I think it should, but I don't think it is. I'm quite concerned about it, because I'm aware that there's not been the encouragement for people to go and have tests. I am worried because, for example, somebody that I know, who's at college, once did a survey, where they succeeded in linking every single person in that college to each other sexually. They did a chart; it started as a bit of a joke, and it ended up not being a joke at all. Because in terms of AIDS or any other STD it was really quite horrific. Everybody was in about five, six paces of everybody, and some of those people were considered high risk, and some of them weren't, and they were still all linked. So that within any kind of enclosed circuit of people, which the drama world is because you're encountering the same people, you're very likely to be linking yourself to lots of other people.

QU: On the drama scene is having sexual relationships with people part of having professional relationships with people?

AN: I think it is. I went to [TOWN 3] for..(1144)..for some placements, to sit and watch, and there you could see, I mean, all the actors were sleeping with each other. And a lot of them had families back in different places. And it has been traditionally part of it. And I also think it's very very difficult because, speaking from experience, all these feelings that I've had for various people on these courses; they don't necessarily last, but at the time they're very intense. And the logical conclusion of those intense feelings is really to sleep with that person. And in some ways it seems very strange if you don't.

QU: Are the people you have sexual relationships with, and the people you want to have them with, linked to your career as well as to you sexually and personally?

AN: I think they are in that I have to find the person really interesting, and understanding your life or whatever. There's a tendency towards people in the same walk of life as you..(1163). Like with [AARNI], a lot of it basically is to do with admiration or having things in common; same aims, same goals. And liking someone you admire because they're quite talented in that field as well. It's difficult to separate those sort of feelings.

QU: Do you think it's important to be seen as sexually available?

AN: Yeah, I think it is. You generally get two sorts of people in the drama world; you either get people who prefer themselves in an extremely stable background, stable relationship, and have let it be known that they are in that relationship and remain monogamous really. And that's how they cope with it. And then there's the other side which is almost totally the opposite; and it's very difficult to be in the middle of that.

QU: So for most people their public and private lives are mixed?

AN: Yeah, they are.

QU: If you decided that you weren't going to be sexually available and you weren't going to have a monogamous relationship, you weren't going to have sex, do you think that that would make things problematic for you?

AN: Well, I mean it would definitely work the other way around, if you were sexually available it would help you.

QU: Does the same go for men in the drama world or is it different?

AN: No, it's different, there's definitely different rules. I was involved in a production that was supposed to be going to the festival in [COUNTRY3] not last summer, the summer before, and there the administrator was sleeping with the director to keep him there, and

all sorts of things. People actually use it; it's very much sexual politics, that's really part of it. To get parts, in [TOWN 3], you know, the leading lady would sleep with the director to make sure she'd get a part the next time. Definitely, it's totally part of it. I feel quite strongly that I didn't want to be part of that. That would be really just using sex as a means to get somewhere.

QU: How seriously are feminist ideas taken? It sounds as if the feminism in the drama world is Sixties sleeping around as liberation. Would the idea of not being sexually available be treated with the same respect?

AN: I don't think so. Well, there's been situations where I've had the possibility, when I was in [TOWN 2] the bloke that was running the Publicity, more or less walked in the door and said - Oh yes, there used to be a job here, which there isn't at the moment, but there will be next year - and sort of hint, hint - If you sleep with me then you'll get this job. And then really tried it on, and that's happened several times. I've had that situation quite often as well, when I was doing the director's course. You were doing this course, and suddenly you find the person that's running the course says - Oh, you've got wonderful eyes - and you think - This is the director. I could sort of use that.

QU: How much do you discuss these things with your female friends on the course?

AN: I think actually, I've had quite a lot of contact with the drama world outside the department, whereas a lot of people haven't. People on my course stay very much within, they came straight from school. Whereas I've spent my summers doing things round theatres, so I've had a bit more contact with it already. And I don't think there is yet enough awareness of that. But you can actually see within my course, there are women who will use it and there are women who won't. There's a lot of sexism; it's really difficult. It's one of the things, I've tried to get more awareness for women; there ought to be more things which say how difficult it is for women within the drama world. It's a lot more difficult than for men.

QU: Traditionally the actress is seen as somebody who is sexually available. Fallen women go into acting historically.

AN: In [TOWN 3] the stage-manager was sleeping with the writer, everybody was .. (1259)..themselves. It's really difficult if you don't want to. And if you really made a statement - I'm not sexually active - that wouldn't work against you. Whereas I suppose the way you could do it, just sort of not stating it, and taking decisions as they come..but you're going to lose out on the plays. It's really hard.

QU: Is there a position where you could say I'm not interested, and that's fine?

AN: I think you do. I'm not quite sure, I suppose it's different in different companies. I think it's quite difficult.

QU: You've never had any formal AIDS education, you've just received information through the campaign?

AN: Well, the Terrence Higgins Trust, it's through that campaign.

QU: But you've never been given any systematic advice?

AN: No, but possibly yet, there's an actual public issue when I was at school. Perhaps we didn't know..

QU: What was your impression of the media coverage?

AN: I think it caused a lot of panic. Definitely among the people I know it caused a lot of panic. I had the feeling from what I know that's going on in America that in some ways that's quite justified panic. But it was so much used to promote the nuclear family and all

that stuff. I just reacted very badly to it. But now there seems to be nothing much at all. I find that quite a concern. Just because a lot of my friends, I can see them putting themselves at very high risks. And I sort of think - Oh my God - and I'm very aware, although there doesn't appear to have been as much of a rise as people had estimated and predicted then, that it wouldn't show yet anyway, because it would be HIV+ rather than the actual full-blown AIDS. So I don't think people are very aware of that; they think it was a big scare, and that it hasn't been borne out, and that it was purely being used as a political thing to promote the nuclear family. They're not actually as aware as maybe I am that it may only show in quite a few years time.

QU: Do you think people need constant reminding about it?

AN: Well, I think there needs to be much more about it, because most people hate using condoms as well. And just recently, because I went to the Family Planning to get this morning-after pill, and I got this diaphragm now, because I don't want to go on the pill. Not only because I don't like the idea of being on the pill because it's necessarily, a totally long-term relationship, but also because I think the temptation is there just not to use anything else, if you're on the pill. You just wouldn't use a condom, because it's such a pain half the time.

QU: What about the diaphragm?

AN: Well, I haven't yet tried it out really! I think the main..(1324)..is just how easy it was to get it..

QU: And you're told how disgusting they are..

AN: I certainly..(1327)..was a problem, you know, it just seems a nice.. I'm really quite pleased about that at the moment. But sometimes I think - This is going to be a bit over the top, because I'll probably want to use a condom as well. And that might seem like being a bit over-protective. But it seems like a good thing to do.

QU: Do you think people might react to you as being irrational and paranoid about sex?

AN: They have at times, the thing was, I was very paranoid about it for a while. And they have reacted at that. Because of being overly interested in it, I have talked about it quite a lot. And there's quite a lot of discussion of AIDS, and I'm always the one that's got the strictest position on it, more aware of it; I think it's just more aware of it. But they seem to think it's more paranoid about it.

QU: If someone knew you were using a cap, would you feel a bit silly saying - I want to use a condom as well?

AN: They'd probably think that I was being a bit too..yes, I'm sure they would.

QU: So it's not taken terribly seriously?

AN: No. But I don't think I'd mind that much about those sorts of problems in a way.

QU: But in that situation you'd still say you wanted to?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would you sleep with anybody now without using a condom?

AN: No, I wouldn't. I might find it quite tempting, but I don't think I would.

QU: What is it about condoms that you don't like?

AN: Well, I think part of the problem with this at the moment is, first of all I don't like it on its own, because if you're not sure of your partner, it's up to them to use the condom well. And I don't really like that feeling. Again, unless you are quite close, it does interrupt things. They've got to be quite liberated themselves as well to use them in a way that is really good. It's frustrating in a way that without the sort of knowledge.. I've

found that there isn't an equal amount of knowledge..on how you'd use it; especially not [CARL] at the moment. I don't think it would be a problem with..(1381)..he's really quite experienced and does it as a matter of course.

QU: It depends whether penetration is the whole of sex, then it is a problem. If it's just one of the things you do, it's not.

AN: Exactly.

QU: Is it women or men you know don't like using them?

AN: Women.

QU: Do they say why?

AN: Well, mainly because it interrupts things, but also, I think they just say it, they say it isn't as good, it doesn't feel as good or whatever.

QU: Have you ever noticed the difference?

AN: Well, I haven't because, well apart from the time with CARL..

QU: Which isn't a good comparison..

AN: ..So I don't know.

QU: Most of the women I speak to say their partners hate them because it spoils it, but they say they can't tell the difference.

AN: That's something I've talked about with my parents, because they've always used a condom and they've always said...

QU: ..They've always used that as their main contraception?

AN: Yeah, and they say that it really depends how you use it, as to whether or not it's..

QU: So you're able to talk to them about that? They've talked to you about their contraception?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Are they imaginative with their condoms then?

AN: I think so, yeah!

QU: Have they found them reliable as well?

AN: Yes, and I think they were quite aware of things like time of the month as well. It sounds to me as though because they were already in a nice steady relationship, it wasn't really that much of a problem. I think that's the difference really; everything that they tell me was fine because they didn't have a problem, they talked a lot to each other, and knew each other well and that sort of thing. It's a bit more difficult if you're not quite sure of the partners.

QU: Do you think it's quite difficult being young, free and single? Do you feel pressure on you now?

AN: I think so, yeah. Because a lot of my friends, most of them, are in a steady relationship. It doesn't put me off that much because I've only seen about one relationship that I've thought I wouldn't mind being in. Mostly, I've thought - Oh my God, why are they in that?

QU: Compared to ten years ago where it would have been really exciting. It's not as meaningful as that anymore.

AN: No, I don't think so. Some of my friends that are in couples, I wonder if that might be their reaction to AIDS really. I do seem to have friends who are either in a really strong relationship, or else who are really very promiscuous. And I'm sort of really in between; that's not very common amongst my friends actually.

QU: How important is having a relationship, what sort of priority is it in your life?

AN: I don't know, I'm quite happy on my own usually, but there's always that feeling - Oh, who do I fancy? It would be quite nice. But I usually find it more of a burden being in a relationship. I've found that the whole time. And that's why they've only lasted six weeks generally, because I prefer to do my own thing really. That might be just to do with the blokes not being..

QU: ..It's probably a mixture. Do you think there's pressure on women to always be in a relationship?

AN: I think there is, yeah. I think, definitely. I don't know anyone who doesn't feel that.

QU: ..(1494)..

AN: Nobody I know ever said - no, I'm not interested at all.

QU: So it wouldn't actually be very easy to do that if you wanted to.

AN: No, I don't think so. People would think you were abnormal, you know.

(end tape: 1511)