

EDD115 (RT 16/8/89)

QU: Are you from Manchester?

AN: Well, I've lived in [SERIES OF TOWNS AND CITIES IN NORTHWEST]. And I've recently moved back to Manchester, six months ago. I put my name down for supply work with Manchester Education, and managed to get a job within two weeks. It was a temporary contract which finished on June 23rd. And then I did a little bit more supply work in a school in Moss Side, in Cultural Studies. That was a good experience for future jobs. So now I'm just waiting until September, and if I can't get a permanent job, I'll just go back on Supply.

QU: That's frustrating?

AN: That's right, I've got to wait. Yeah, that's right. I'd prefer a permanent job for security reasons, it's more secure. But if not, as I say, I'll just go back on Supply work.

QU: Where's your family?

AN: Both my parents live on [TOWN IN NORTHWEST]. I've got a brother who's a social worker, who lives in [SOUTH MANCHESTER]. I've got a sister who's a nurse, who lives in [LANCASHIRE TOWN]. And my younger sister is doing teacher training and doing University.

QU: So you're all in Caring jobs?

AN: Yeah, that's right.

QU: Is that something to do with your background?

AN: Well, I don't know. Initially I wanted to be a nurse. And my sister, my older sister, was going to go into Occupational Therapy and stuff like that. But, because she became a nurse, I didn't want to sort of follow in her footsteps. I've always wanted to work with children. I did actually want to go into teacher training, but I didn't sit any 'A' levels, so hopefully, I'm going to go to night school in September and take my 'A' levels. And eventually, when I've saved up enough money, I'm going to go into teacher training.

QU: Is there any reason why you didn't take your 'A' levels?

AN: I went to a school in Bolton, and it was too far to travel basically, I've been doing it for the past three years. I just really had enough of it.

QU: Did you travel from The Wirral?

AN: No, I travelled from Manchester to Bolton on a bus, you know, it's seventeen hours each day, it got a bit much. I actually went into the sixth form for about two days, and realised there wasn't any lessons with any of my friends or anything, and half of them had left, so I'd just had enough of it. So I went to [NAME] College of Further Education and did the ..(033)..course for two years. And then I moved over to [TOWN IN NORTHWEST][ with my parents, and was a nanny there for 18 months. And I also worked in a Montessori Nursery school. So I decided to move back to Manchester, it's much more lively, if you know what I mean?

QU: ..(037)..?

AN: Definitely, yes.

QU: What was it like living with your parents?

AN: Boring. They were OK, but I don't have any friends over there. And I really wanted my own independence, and I thought Manchester would be much more ideal than The Wirral.

QU: It wasn't a big breakthrough leaving home?

AN: Oh no, it's unnatural really, packed my bags and went basically. My parents were behind me; I didn't run away from home or anything. So I managed to save up quite a lot of money in order to buy my stuff, and things like that. So I've more or less settled in now, I've been here for nine months, something like that anyway.

QU: It's..(047)..?

AN: Oh yeah.

QU: What type of upbringing did you have?

AN: I'd say I had quite a strict upbringing. My parents were wary of things, going out with friends, a lot of my friends, my parents didn't, especially my mother, I don't think my dad was too bothered, my mum especially was quite wary of where I was going and things. Be back by 12 o'clock and all this business.

QU: Did she have reason to be?

AN: I think she was worried basically. Lack of trust, I don't know why but, there you go. They didn't like me going into pubs and nightclubs, and all this sort of business. But of course, I wanted to do it, that's what my friends were doing, so I didn't want to do any different.

QU: Was there a lot of friction because of that?

AN: I'd say so, yes, especially around the age of 17, 18. It eased off gradually after my 18th birthday. Because they couldn't maintain as much control over me, I suppose.

QU: What was your relationship like with your mum?

AN: She was nosey, but I never, do you know what I mean? She always wanted to know what I was doing, and - Oh, have you got a boyfriend? - all this business. But I didn't feel easy talking with her about it at all. I still don't actually, I mean, she'll phone up and she'll want to know if he's with me -what are those noises in the background! Oh, it's the television, it's a radio.

QU: Why don't you feel comfortable, was it something that wasn't talked about?

AN: It was talked about, but because my dad's a vicar, my mum always wanted me to go out with someone, you know, Christian or someone religious. And, I mean, I never met anyone like that, I didn't try to meet anyone like that. I didn't particularly want to meet anyone like that, and I think that's when they started to get a bit suspicious. Because my younger sister is pretty much set up with a nice young man, who's (?) got a bit of a calling, and she absolutely hates my boyfriend. He's in the [SERVICES] and he's got a tattoo. The lowest of the low and all this, and you can tell where you were brought up!

QU: Do you think they're snobs?

AN: Yeah. My mum is, yes, I don't think my dad's too bad. But my mum's definitely stuck up, well, she is.

QU: Do you think you rebelled against that?

AN: I don't think I'm rebelling, it's just that I don't want to do, I just don't want to have to live by their standards all the time, or whatever. I don't, wouldn't say I was rebelling, I hope I'm not. It's just they're going to have to understand..

QU: That you're different?

AN: Exactly, yeah.

QU: Was there pressure on you to be a Christian?

AN: I think they gave up after day one. Yeah, they realised that we were going off onto the wrong tracks and everything. They try very hard, but they didn't force us to go to church or anything.

QU: Did you feel you'd let them down?

AN: No, because I left it all to my younger sister; I mean she followed in the right footsteps.

QU: Did you get any advice on the way to live your life?

AN: Well, first of all they wanted me to set off on a decent career, before I got married. I think perhaps, when I was at school, my mother got me doing my homework and stuff like that, rather than talking to me about sex education. But we did, when I was younger obviously talk about it, so we knew what was what. I learnt more at school, but they definitely gave me the basic facts.

QU: What type of facts?

AN: Well, how you got pregnant, contraceptives. Not much on contraceptives, they didn't go into detail. Also moral information; it was wrong to sleep with someone before marriage, and stuff like that.

QU: Did they tell you why it was wrong?

AN: Oh, they told me why, yes, because I didn't agree with it, and there's no proof that it is wrong, as far as I know anyway. So I didn't agree with that.

QU: Did you (?)argue with them at the time?

AN: Oh yes, I would have told them; it's my life, and all this. But I was very young at that stage, I was only about eight, but gradually, when I was about 14, 15, I told them why. And said - It's up to me, and all this business. I could see they were getting uncomfortable with me, because every answer that I gave them, they couldn't really tell me why. Because I don't think there's any proof in the bible why it's immoral to sleep with someone before you're married.

QU: You're talking a different language in a way?

AN: Yes, that's right, yes. It used to lead to arguments, and me storming out of the house, running away: To the back garden, I didn't get very far!

QU: Were you unhappy about it?

AN: In the earlier days, yes, but gradually, there's nothing you could do about it; you just had to accept it. I used to get - When are you leaving home?

QU: Were you pleased to leave home?

AN: Oh yeah, definitely, yeah.

QU: What did you learn at school?

AN: More about certain things like contraceptives. What else did I learn? Obviously, towards the end, I learnt about AIDS at school, and before I learnt about it at home, and stuff like that. That was five years ago.

QU: Can you remember what you learnt there?

AN: No, not really, I've learnt much more in the last year or so, than I ever did, because I didn't really understand it.

QU: Why didn't you understand it, was it because you weren't sexually active?

AN: No, it's the terminology they came out with, and I just couldn't understand this. Oh no, it wasn't anything to do with that, it was just all the big words they used, and I didn't take much interest in it.

QU: Was it a Grammar school?

AN: It was when I started, it was a Grammar school, but then it turned Comprehensive. It went down the drain from there on. What did you ask?

QU: How did they deal with sex education, did you have special lessons?

AN: Yeah, we learnt about the facts of sex education, in Biology. But, we used to have a lesson called Life Skills, and sex education was brought into that. They went into more detail and everyone was getting embarrassed, and laughing in the back row etc. So that's really where we learnt about it.

QU: Was the atmosphere such that you couldn't ask questions?

AN: It was a teacher teaching, it wasn't a discussion, if you know what I mean. It was an overhead projector at the front, teacher behind the desk; it wasn't an open discussion at all. I mean, obviously people could ask questions, but usually when someone did, it was all this laughing and all this business. It wasn't a discussion, no.

QU: Was the teacher embarrassed?

AN: No, no, I can remember she wasn't embarrassed at all, no. Well, she was behind a desk, if you know what I mean, and she was teaching people and she had this overhead projector, she was just blaring out a load of facts.

QU: It was done as a lesson?

AN: Yeah, that's right, it was definitely a lesson, not a discussion.

QU: What did they have five years ago?

AN: Oh, about AIDS? It was hardly anything, it was just what was coming out into the papers, and they were explaining it to us. Well, as you say not many people knew about it in those days. But it was mainly on contraceptives, and pregnancy and unmarried mothers and all this business.

QU: Did they talk to you about sexuality or (?)homosexuality?

AN: No, that came in, no, they didn't talk about that in Life Skills, but they'd talk about that in something like RE. And I remember the teacher actually saying that it's up to you, but she thought personally that it was totally immoral, and all this. So she was giving her opinion, which isn't strictly right in a lesson. I don't think she should've but..

QU: Would she have got into trouble if she'd had a different opinion?

AN: You mean, if she'd agreed with homosexuality? I don't know whether she'd have got into trouble.

QU: (?)She would do now.

AN: Why, I mean she shouldn't do?

QU: I agree, but with Clause 28..

AN: Oh I see what you mean, yes but that's discriminating against homosexuals, isn't it, from day one.

QU: At that time was the teaching about homosexuality in moral terms as being wrong..

AN: That's right, yeah.

QU: What was your response at the time?

AN: I don't know, I suppose I thought it was wrong in a way. I thought it was funny, I mean that men should sleep with men and women should sleep with women. But I don't think I was particularly bothered. I mean gradually, over the past few years, I've come to accept the fact. I still feel uncomfortable, you know, sitting with people, you know, especially lesbians and things like that. I feel uncomfortable sitting with them. Not so much with gay men as such. I'm always a bit wary about it.

QU: Why is that?

AN: Because how do you know whether they're looking you up like that, I mean you don't.

QU: So gay men aren't threatening to you?

AN: No, no, not at all, in fact I think that's about the most comfortable person you could sit with, isn't it? If you're on your own with a gay person.

QU: Do you think the sex education you got was adequate?

AN: Definitely, yeah.

QU: Were there ways it could have been better?

AN: No, I can't really say, I mean I got all the facts.

QU: So there weren't things you didn't understand?

AN: Well, when it came down to stuff like the pill, and how it worked, I still really can't understand it, you know, about getting the leaflet out and reading it. But I think that's just me, I mean they probably tried as hard as they could to teach me. I remember the doctor asking me about two years ago - Do you understand how it works? I said - Er, no. He said - Well, did you ever go to school? I said - Yes, but I just can't understand it, it's too complicated.

QU: Were you sexually aware by the time it was taught?

AN: Oh yeah, oh you mean, was I sleeping with people, or did I know about it?

QU: Had you started thinking about it?

AN: Oh yes, definitely.

QU: Had you found out before?

AN: You mean before school, before they taught me at school? I can't really remember..er, no, I don't think I had. Not the stuff about contraceptives, not fully anyway, vaguely from my parents, but not fully.

QU: Did you talk to girls at school about it?

AN: I suppose so, in the last two years of school, yeah. Because a lot of them were going on the pill and stuff like that. They used to talk about it.

QU: Was sex something you could talk about?

AN: Yeah, but I'm not sure whether half of them actually, well you know what it's like, lying, you know what I mean, that they've slept with the whole class! All this business, but yeah, they used to come out with a few stories.

QU: Was it a status symbol if you'd had sex?

AN: Definitely, yeah. That's what I mean, everyone had to lie.

QU: Was there pressure to have relationships?

AN: I suppose so, yes. But as I say, I think a lot of them were just exaggerating or lying basically, so I never really used to take much notice.

QU: Did you realise that at the time?

AN: Yeah. I don't know, it was the way they talked about it. It was totally wrong! How did you manage that! I mean, some of them probably had.

QU: Were there different groups of people?

AN: Yeah, there were people who slept with, and the ones who didn't. There were actually three groups, quite a few of the really intelligent ones hung around together. Then there were the ones who all lived in the same area who went out at night. Then there was the rejects like me who lived here, there and everywhere.

QU: What do you mean by rejects?

AN: Well, I always felt a little bit left out, because the friends who I used to go round with, when I moved from Horwich, which is where I lived in Bolton, and moved down to Manchester. When I moved, a lot of my friends actually moved into Horwich with their parents. And they all used to go round together at night time. And of course, when you got back in to school in the morning, it was, you know, all Horwich night life and all this business. So I used to feel left out quite a bit. Used to get a bit fed up about it. I made new friends actually in different classes; I think that was a wise step actually, because I don't think I would have been able to stick with these people for much longer.

QU: Why?

AN: Well, they were very self-centred, and you could only talk about what they'd been doing. I used to understand it, that's what you do isn't it, you talk about what you've been doing the night before. But they must have realised, because I was in Manchester, absolutely miles away from where they lived, that I obviously wasn't doing the same things. They used to talk about hanging around the streets, and the things you do when you're 14, 15. And I used to live in Whalley Range, I don't think..

QU: ..You could hang around the streets!

AN: Exactly, yes, and I remember my brother actually saying as a joke to one of his friends that we lived in a red light area. It was all - Do you live in a red light area, I must come down - and all this business. I don't think they really understood what they were going to let themselves in for if they did come down. So I had to try and explain to them that I can't hang around the streets for my own safety, not even in gangs or anything.

QU: Did you find that a problem?

AN: Yeah, definitely, because when my mum and dad said - No, you're not going out. I said - well, why not? I mean my dad even used to take me to the bus stop, and then bring me back from school, you know, pick me up from the bus stop...(285).. Yes, it was hassle, more so when you got to about the age of 17, and obviously I had to go to college by myself, and walking down the streets and all these men sort of driving up in their cars and propositioning me or whatever.

QU: Were you scared?

AN: Well, when we first moved to Manchester, I was about 13, I used to think it was quite funny actually, these men stopping, but I didn't realise what they were stopping for.

QU: Did you...(294)..?

AN: Well, they didn't get to the point. You know they'd say - You doing business? - and all this, and you'd sort of wind them up. And then someone actually told me about six months later that it was a red light area. So she said - you're not going out - or anything, and she was explaining about what these pimps do...(298) know, the stopping. Anyway when I got to about 17 there was trouble, if you know what I mean, as soon as you stepped out of your house virtually, these men would pull up in their cars. And ask you what you're doing and how much you're charging, and all this business. And the actual prostitutes on the streets, you know, they were all my age sort of thing. And I think they used to look at me as if to say - Are you on the game? It used to really annoy me. I used to cross the road, and daren't look into the driver's eyes, to see if he was actually going to stop for me, because it looks as if, you know, you want to do business.

QU: Did that affect your idea of what sex was about?

AN: No, I don't think it did, because I knew these people were wrong anyway, so no, I don't think so, no. But it was just annoying living round there.

QU: You were saying the prostitutes..?

AN: They used to annoy me, because I used to think - you're not making these streets any safer, I mean I know you've got problems blah blah blah. I mean I actually tried to talk to one or two of them. And they said - oh, you've not got a kid - and all this business, and - your husband doesn't beat you up. Because the fact that they were standing there, virtually dressed the same, if you know what I mean, so how could a pimp tell the difference between us? Because I didn't want them to think that I was a prostitute, that really annoyed me, if you know what I mean, absolutely.

QU: It can confuse you because a man can't tell the difference between you and them?

AN: That's why I think it was something to do with us wearing the same, but fair enough we were both the same sort of age groups. But I think it's to do with what we were wearing, how else could you possibly tell? I don't know.

QU: When did you first become sexually active?

AN: Well, the first time I slept with someone was when I was on holiday with college, we all went up to Blackpool, it was for a long weekend. And we were all in hotels and everything. And I met this guy, a man, and he was up in Blackpool, and sort of one thing led to another, and I went back to his hotel etc. So that was the first time. Then I didn't sleep with anyone for absolutely ages.

QU: Why was that? Because you hadn't enjoyed it?

AN: No, that was a one night, I didn't enjoy it, that was a one night stand and I didn't enjoy it at all. When I say I didn't enjoy it, I mean there was nothing to it, it was totally boring, it wasn't what I expected it to be and all this business. I thought it was boring, I don't know, it didn't put me off, I just thought it was boring, it wasn't as I'd expected it to be. Then I didn't sleep with anyone for absolutely ages, until I slept with my sister's, I'm going to get this right or else it's going to sound awful, my sister's boyfriend's brother..! I sort of met him on a few occasions, he was a nice guy actually, so I sort of slept with him.

QU: Was that very different?

AN: Yeah, because I knew, well if you know what I mean, actions. So I could sort of, I don't know, I could lead the way, if you know what I mean. But he is a nice guy.

QU: You had more say about what happened?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Was that not the case the first time?

AN: No, because I wanted to do it, if you know what I mean.

QU: And you hadn't the first time?

AN: No, I had wanted to do it the first time, just to get it over and done with.

QU: Was it like having to lose your virginity?

AN: No, I wanted to lose it, definitely, just absolutely wanted to. And discuss it over Sunday lunch..! I still see ADRIAN, but I've not slept with him since, I only slept with him on a couple of occasions. And then I met DEAN, who I've just finished with two weeks ago, three weeks ago. And I met him six months ago, and I was sleeping with him on a regular basis.

QU: Has your idea of what sex is changed from the first time?

AN: It's got better, it's my partner actually, do you know what I mean? I knew him and trusted him.

QU: What do you think makes the difference?

AN: I think it's because I loved him more than anything, it wasn't because I liked him. I actually loved him. Now he's gone so.. But since DEAN went, this is going to sound really bad, I don't know whether it should go on tape. This is the ultimate. This is going to sound really bad.. You're sure this isn't going to go..? Yes. Well, when I was at work at..(391).. I met these five chaps, who were actually fitting security doors in the school. Anyway, they said to me - Is there any jobs you want doing? Well, actually there was, there was a couple of holes in the kitchen wall. Anyway they came round and plastered it, and two of them went home back to Liverpool. And the other three of them, well, one thing led to another...

QU: With all three of them?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you want it?

AN: Yeah, I hadn't been, well I had a little bit to drink, but. I remember thinking - What the hell am I letting myself in for doing all this? But the funny thing was that they were all very AIDS-conscious, if you know what I mean: How do we know that you haven't got AIDS and all this? Because they probably thought I did it every day. I can't blame them. I respected them for that in a way.

QU: I don't think there's anything wrong with that..

AN: It was good, it made my day.

QU: Were you excited?

AN: Yeah, I don't think I'd do it again. I think the novelty's worn off now.

QU: What was the appeal?

AN: Three men, three strangers in the house. I mean I trusted them, I don't know why I trusted them. I think because they came from Liverpool and I came from Liverpool...so I trusted them. They were really nice actually, with a great sense of humour and everything.

QU: They were into it already, did you talk about it?

AN: Yeah, no because they gave me a lift back home and everything so.. They were all saying - you're so fast, we haven't got anybody like you, and all this. And they were all whistling. Well, they started it all off, they didn't rape me as such, but I let myself in for it. One of them said to me - you know, we won't do anything that you don't want us to do, and he was pretty serious about it, so..(425)..

QU: Could you have stopped it?

AN: Yeah, yeah, definitely.

QU: You didn't feel frightened?

AN: No, not at all, no. I felt totally in control.

QU: That's the important thing?

AN: Definitely, yeah. If I'd felt uneasy I would have stopped. A few years I would have felt uneasy about it, but since..

QU: Is that something you'd ever thought you'd do?

AN: I remember reading in a book once about a woman's sexual fantasy about having two guys..(434). And I was thinking - oh, that sounds good, But I didn't think I'd ever do it, no. No I was quite surprised. I thought - Hey!

QU: That's fantastic!

AN: You ought to try it, just get down there.

QU: What, hang around school



AN: It's quite good just sitting in the playground, you never know who's going to come along, to fix your kitchen walls.

QU: Was it out of the blue?

AN: I could see it happening, yeah.

QU: From when you met them at school?

AN: Not necessarily from when I met them at the school. When I met them at the school there was five of them. And fair enough, all they were talking about was sex. And there was no children around. All the children were inside, I was just outside in the playground. That's all we were really talking about, you know, sexual fantasies and all this business. And they made me stay, I was talking to them for about three hours, from about lunchtime to about half three. And then they said - Have you got any jobs? I thought - Oh ay? Yeah, I clicked on there. So they gave me a lift home. I remember one of the teachers saying to me - Oh, you don't know what you're letting yourself in for, going home with five strangers, and all this. I said - That's the fun of it. So I went home with them, and we were all sitting around and drank all the booze. And they went out to get chips and wine. And then two of them went home, back to their wives. I mean these three weren't married or anything like that, the ones who stayed. And I realised then, because two of them had gone home, why shouldn't those three go home, what do they want? It's obvious what they want. I mean, what the hell! You're only young once.

QU: Did you...(471)..(contraception)?

AN: Heat of the moment actually.

QU: Is that something you'd thought of?

AN: No, no, I hadn't actually. I mean I should've, but I didn't. When they actually said - You might have AIDS and all this - he made a joke about it, but I think he was pretty serious. So I said - I haven't. Because he thought I might have it, because he probably thought I did this every day. Which is fair enough. So I said - No, I've only slept with three months, and I trust every single one of those. I actually said that I'd had an AIDS test, just to put him at ease; which is a lie, I've never had an AIDS test or anything like that.

QU: What do you think about saying something like that?

AN: I don't think I should have said it to him. I mean I can't say that I definitely haven't got AIDS, I mean I hope I haven't got AIDS. I'm pretty certain that I haven't got it. But I don't really think I should have told him that. That is a lie, isn't it really.

QU: Were you worried about them?

AN: Well, when they brought it up, afterwards, yes. When he actually said - you might have AIDS - I was thinking - oh, he's a good boy, he doesn't sleep with anyone, he's just conscious.

QU: What, because he asked?

AN: Because he asked, yeah. But afterwards I thought - oh gosh, they might have it. Something like that. Perhaps he was a bit concerned that he might give it to me. Then I thought it was my imagination going in to overtime. So I forgot about it.

QU: Had you ever had safe sex before, protected yourself against AIDS?

AN: No.

QU: Used a condom?

AN: No, I never have, I've always been on the pill, that's my contraceptive, but it's never been safe sex, no. Well, safe sex in regards to AIDS, obviously I won't get pregnant but,

no. But I've always had this feeling that it's only sort of homosexuals and drug-users that get it, prostitutes. In fact at work we were given a list about Manchester City Council's policy on AIDS and things like this. And somebody was giving us a lecture, and they said - Whenever you're cleaning up a child make sure you've got gloves on, and everything like that. Even when, you know, vomit and whatever, make sure you've got gloves on; any body fluid.

QU: Did that shock you?

AN: Yeah, more so than sleeping someone without a condom. In fact working at this school in Moss Side, a lot of the parents there were actually drug-users and prostitutes. And who knows, they might have passed the virus on to the children. In fact it's going to show in a few years time. So whenever a child cut itself, even if it wasn't bleeding, you used to put those gloves on, because it used to really worry me. If I had a cut on my finger. So I was more concerned there than if I'd been in bed if you know what I mean, for some reason.

QU: Don't you think it likely that a heterosexual could be infected?

AN: It is likely, but I like to think it's not likely, if you know what I mean. I mean obviously.. I keep thinking it's a chance in a million, isn't it? But I don't know whether it is. I mean I've never met anyone with AIDS. Obviously there are people with AIDS, but I don't know.. I don't know how you can, it's hard I mean, I think that people, you know, prostitutes and drug- addicts or whatever are more likely to have it than people who live normal, you know, heterosexuals or whatever, normal people in inverted commas.

QU: Do you think you might think about having safe sex in the future, or that you'll carry on as you are?

AN: No, if I'm going to be honest I'll probably, the next fella I meet, I won't sleep with him until I know what he's like, unless he's prepared to use a condom or whatever. I don't think so, no. I'm becoming more wary of it if you know what I mean.

QU: Is that partly because of what happened with those blokes?

AN: Yeah, because I can't carry on like that for the rest of my life obviously, yeah.

QU: How easy do you think it will be to have safe sex?

AN: I'll just say I'm not on the pill. Because when I finished with DEAN, I finished with him about six weeks ago, but he came back. And I didn't particularly want to sleep with him, so I said I'm not on the pill. And he said - Do you want me to use a condom? I said - No. But he did eventually. I didn't particularly enjoy it. But I'll just say that I'm not on the pill. I don't think I'd bring the subject of safe sex up, I'd just say that I wasn't on the pill, and sleep with them..

QU: Why is that?

AN: I don't know, I'd just feel more at ease saying that I'm not on the pill, you know. If you're not going to use a contraceptive, forget it. And eventually, he'd probably say to me - Why don't you go on the pill? And I'd say - Well, I feel more at ease with you with safe sex etc.

QU: Do you..?

AN: I don't think it's anything to be embarrassed about. I mean some people.. No, no, it's just how I'd..

QU: Do you think it's insulting to someone?

AN: It depends on how the person takes it obviously. I think I was a little bit insulted when he said to me, you know, but I fully understood why, I mean obviously he probably

thought I'd slept with about 100 blokes in the last week or something. But no, I think it entirely depends on what the person's like, how they take it.

QU: You'd rather not...(584)..?

AN: And if the person gets suspicious, and says why don't you go on the pill, well not suspicious, but if the person asks me - Why don't you go on the pill? I'd actually say - Well I'd prefer you to use a contraceptive for safe sex, you might have AIDS. I'd make a laugh, a joke about it, I mean I wouldn't be deadly serious.

QU: It's interesting that it's acceptable to talk about pregnancy beforehand, but with AIDS it isn't?

AN: I don't know, I think if I, you know, if I talk to someone about AIDS, they probably thought that I didn't trust them. I mean I wouldn't feel embarrassed talking about it. Does it sound as if I'm contradicting myself?

QU: No, because safe sex is not at all simple in actual situations.

AN: I just don't want to sound as if I'm contradicting myself.

QU: I don't think you are, but if you are then that's indicative of the situation, because it is a contradiction.

AN: I suppose so, yeah. But then it sounds as if you're living up to double standards.

QU: I think we probably all do.

QU: It's bad anyway that I'm more concerned about it working in a school, a child with a cut hand or whatever, than..

QU: Well, that's because you know the risk there.

AN: Well, that's right, yeah. But safe sex with a normal person. I mean I would never ever sleep with someone who had AIDS. If a person told me they had AIDS, regardless of whether they had a condom on or not, I'd never even think about it.

QU: Do you know what HIV+ means?

AN: It's before, HIV, is it, what is it? What did it say on the brochure? It's before full-blown AIDS isn't it? It means someone with HIV, there's a chance in ten or something like that, it could actually lead to full-blown AIDS. Something virus, isn't it, deficiency?

QU: Human Immuno-deficiency Virus.

AN: That's it, yeah.

QU: Do you think you'd be at risk if you slept with someone that was HIV+?

AN: Yeah, I'd get suspicious, I treat them both as the same thing basically. I mean I know they're not but..

QU: Do you think someone would necessarily know if they were HIV+?

AN: No. Yes exactly! Unless they had a blood test, no, no. How do they know? How do I know? Yeah.

QU: Do you think that's partly the problem that someone could quite possibly have no idea they were HIV+, because they think - I'm not the sort of person to get it?

AN: That's right, yeah. I wouldn't know, no.

QU: Who do you think now is the sort of person to get it?

AN: Nowadays, prostitutes, yeah?

QU: Why?

AN: Because they spread it, don't they? They could sleep with, drug-addicts and prostitutes. Drug-addicts, because of their dirty needles etc, they could catch the HIV virus. Prostitutes because they sleep around, and unprotected sex. Now, I suppose I could say that I'm a prostitute in a way, you know, unprotected sex. But you don't know

who they've mixed with. I mean they're in a group of their own, aren't they, they probably mix with the drug-addicts. Their boyfriends, husbands, could be drug-addicts, who they've slept with, pimps whatever.

QU: Do you think prostitutes do have unprotected sex?

AN: Not nowadays, no. But I mean up to a few years ago, I suppose so, yeah. I mean they could just be on the pill. But it all started five, six years ago, didn't it? Homosexuals.

QU: Men or women?

AN: Men, just men, I'm not sure about women. I don't think women could. They can't can they, women? They're supposed to be..

QU: They're the lowest risk group.

AN: That's right, yeah. And I suppose people who sleep around a lot, do you know what I mean by that? I mean a girl who sleeps around a lot, an awful lot.

QU: How much is that?

AN: You mean how many people?

QU: I mean what type of behaviour, do you mean 'promiscuous'?

AN: I think it depends on what sort of person she's slept with. She could be sleeping with drug-addicts. By that I mean a girl who doesn't know the person. See, I'm contradicting myself, because I didn't know these people. That's what I mean. She doesn't know what sort of background they come from. She doesn't really talk to them. Lots of one night stands, she doesn't really talk to them, it's just straight in bed, straight out of bed.

QU: Do you think it's more to do with the type of people you sleep with, rather than actually what you do in bed?

AN: Sorry, I don't understand.

QU: You're talking about risk in terms of a type..?

AN: I still actually consider them to be low risk, but there is a risk, yeah.

QU: So heterosexuals are (?)less at risk?

AN: That's right, yeah.

QU: Say that someone has two or three partners a week who they don't know, but they have safe sex, use a condom..

AN: Fine.

QU: They're at less risk?

AN: Definitely, yeah.

QU: So it's not just the type of person?

AN: That's right, yeah.

QU: Do you think the information you've got has made it clear?

AN: Not, I still don't fully understand, I mean, can you catch AIDS through apart from blood and having sex, can you catch AIDS through touching other body fluids? Can you, I don't know?

QU: Like saliva. It's almost impossible.

AN: So you can?

QU: You have to drink about five pints of saliva to have a chance of getting it.

AN: But there's a chance, so therefore..

QU: Well, it's very difficult for it to get into your body. The reason it's easy for it to get into your body through unprotected intercourse is that there are high levels in men's semen and it comes in direct contact with fluids in the vagina. It gets into the blood

stream. And if you've got open cuts. That's why it's risky to share needles, because you inject straight into the blood stream. Hypothetically there are risks with oral sex. Would you have oral sex?

AN: Well, yes, I suppose so, yeah.

QU: With oral sex the risk is with mouth or genital sores. But that is a small risk. What they've found is that anal sex is the highest risk, because of the likelihood of drawing blood. Intercourse is also high risk. Oral sex is much lower risk. You can make it impossible by making sure that you don't come in contact with semen or women's fluids. So be careful about ejaculation in the mouth.

AN: But there's still a risk?

QU: There's still a risk.

AN: Right, fine.

QU: But you can minimise the risk. And you won't necessarily get the virus from someone the first time.

AN: Why's that?

QU: Because it's a difficult thing to catch. The virus can't live outside the body. There are examples of couples where one person is positive and the other is negative. But anal sex and vaginal sex are the riskiest.

AN: And as yet there's no cure?

QU: No.

AN: I did actually hear on television, I don't know whether it was in America, it was from algae in plants, and they were breeding the HIV virus, well the AIDS virus actually on it. I can't remember actually what they said, how they went about it, but apparently it killed it, or something like that. It sounds totally ridiculous. This was on the news yesterday. So they're doing experiments.

QU: They're doing an awful lot of research, but it doesn't look as if they know at the moment.

AN: No, it's a long time really, isn't it.

QU: Would you be certain about those risks I've outlined?

AN: I was uncertain about other body fluids like saliva. Apart from that..

QU: Oral sex you already know..?

AN: I would have known there was a risk there, yes.

QU: And that anal sex was risky?

AN: Yes, I knew all that, definitely, yeah.

QU: Have you thought about minimising the risk in terms of the type of sex you're having?

AN: No, it didn't cross my mind at all. The only thing I was bothered about was if they got carried away, and knew I was on the pill, in fact I should have thought about AIDS, but I didn't.

That's really bad I suppose, you know, not even to think about it. I think it's because I trusted them, if you know what I mean. There's a chance in a million and all that business.

QU: Trust seems to be an important thing. Do you think that if you're prepared to sleep with someone then with your head you trust them? And you would also trust them not to be at risk?

AN: Two totally different things, but I suppose I did in that situation. But I think in future, I'll have to find out about the person, how many people they've slept with, whether they could have AIDS, and all this business. And - Have you got AIDS? I wouldn't make them go for a blood test or anything, but obviously I'd feel much more at ease if I knew that they actually had had a blood test. Because I don't know who I'm going to meet in future do I?

QU: Does it make you nervous? Because if it weren't for AIDS you wouldn't have to worry?

AN: I didn't worry about it though, that's it. But if I actually met someone and I didn't trust him.. Because obviously I do actually think about it, but not always at the right time, if you know what I mean. But if I didn't trust this guy, I think I'd probably give an excuse at first, I'd say - I can't sleep, I'm not on the pill, I can't go on the pill, all this business. Because in a way I don't feel safe on the pill with all the health risks attached to it, because I smoke, I drink, not heavily. I've been on it now for two or three years, no just two years. And there's times when I don't feel safe on the pill if you know what I mean. Just with all the health risks, you know, you hear about it, cancer. I mean it's highly unlikely you'll get anything in sort of my age category. But when you get to about 30, and you're still on the pill. I do actually worry about it. Because at the moment I'm taking the pill and there's no reason. But then I think someone might come along, and I might want to sleep with him, so I carry on taking it. But I've not slept with anyone for three weeks now, but I'm still taking the pill; just started it on Monday, taking it again. I knew there was no reason why I should be taking it, I should stop it now if I was that bothered it.

QU: (?)Would you start using condoms to prevent pregnancy?

AN: No, not really, no. You see that's it, you can't win either way, can you?

QU: Do you think sex with a condom is OK, does it affect your sexual pleasure?

AN: Yeah, I'm not very good with them. Well I've only had experience with a condom I think just two times. It just doesn't work with me.

QU: Is that because you haven't had much experience?

AN: I don't like them, yeah, I don't like them and obviously I haven't had any experience with them. And I don't trust them. I know I was on the pill, but I was scared in case of it splitting.

QU: That happens.

AN: Exactly.

QU: So you'd be happy using one in a short relationship. Would you be happy in a longer one, always using a condom?

AN: As well as being on the pill?

QU: Yeah, or..?

AN: Yeah, I suppose so. It depends, I mean if I am going to have another one night stand, I'd say to this chap - I'm not on the pill. And, I don't know, because it's usually me who's pretty desperate!

QU: That's fine, women do have their own libidos.

AN: Yeah, I think mine must be pretty high as well. If I wasn't that desperate I'd actually say to the chap - I'm not on the pill, have you got a condom? And I'd feel very safe, because I'm actually on the pill and he's using a condom.

QU: What would you do if he didn't have a condom?

AN: That's a difficult one. I don't think I would nowadays, unless I fully trusted him. In fact I'd probably..(880)..I'd definitely bring the subject up. If I knew it was just a one night stand.

QU: If he said to you he'd had five sexual partners..?

AN: That's awful, I mean, how do I know? I suppose I'd say - that's one too many for me.

QU: What would be acceptable?

AN: I can't say, I mean that's it. If he'd just slept with one; she might have it and passed it on to him. That's what I mean. That's why I feel I'm contradicting myself. I mean it was only three weeks ago that I actually slept with these three chaps.

QU: Are you worried about that?

AN: The more I talk about it, the worse it's getting! No, not really.

QU: If you were in that situation and someone asked you about your sexual past, would you tell them about that?

AN: No, definitely not. Who would?

QU: So that might be the situation in reverse?

AN: Yeah, yeah. No, I definitely wouldn't. I might bring it up as a joke: 'Apart from that orgy I had with the five Scousers'.. No. I remember going into work on the last day of term, and I sort of went in with a limp..! And it went on for God knows how long, anyway.. I told one of my friends, well I can't say she is a friend; I used to talk to her a lot at work, she's a Probation teacher. And we're the same sort of age group, and sort of every time school finished, all we seemed to talk about was sex. That sounds really bad doesn't it? Anyway I told her about it, and the first thing, she went - Oh! You might have AIDS. But she said it in a jokey sort of manner, so I went - Oh! Yeah, nice - and all this business. But that's the first thing she said. And it sort of clicked on - yeah, I could have it. She's actually saying to me now - You ought to go for a blood test. And somebody else said to me, I didn't actually say that I'd slept with three men, and someone else actually said to me, we were just talking about AIDS, she said - Sometimes you can't tell for years and years whether you've actually got it or not. But I was always under the impression that if you went to the doctor's, and they gave you a blood test, that they'd be able to tell whether you were HIV?

QU: You have to have two tests to be sure, it might not show the first time.

AN: So they'd actually be able to tell then? So this years and years business isn't?

QU: No.

AN: Because an insurance company came round to me once, and actually asked me if I'd been for an AIDS test. They were pretty straightforward about it, because obviously they wouldn't accept you if you had AIDS. Is that the same with all insurance companies nowadays? So I said - No, I haven't been for an AIDS test. And then they wanted to know my doctor and all this business. Say I did have AIDS, but my doctor didn't know me, it's hard luck on them really, isn't it?

QU: Would you want to have a test?

AN: I'd love to have an AIDS test, yes, but I wouldn't want the results if you know what I mean. I'd rather not know.

QU: You should be able to keep the results confidential. Insurance companies put pressure on GPs to tell, so the best way to do it is to go to an HIV test Clinic, where you don't have to give your real name.

AN: Oh really? Do you have to pay for these?

QU: No. It's best to do it that way, because you don't want Insurance companies to find out you've had a test, because they interpret that as risky.

AN: Really?

QU: The best place is MRI, the Genital Unit.

AN: I can actually see the doctors and whoever gives you the actual AIDS test getting suspicious of you, thinking - Oh, she wants an AIDS test, I wonder what..? Do you think they do, get a bit suspicious?

QU: Professionals who work with HIV testing don't tend to ask questions, but GPs can do.

AN: But don't you think they's be a bit suspicious as to why you wanted an AIDS test? They'd probably catogorise you; you're gay, you're homosexual, all this, you're a drug-user, a prostitute. How many normal people, in inverted commas, walk in there and ask for an AIDS test?

QU: Those who are worried about it. The point is if you know you're in the clear you can make sure that you never get it. If you don't want to have a test, you can also make sure that you'll never get it, and if you've got it already, that you never pass it on to your partners. It may make you feel happier to have a test.

AN: But what happens if you actually have it, I mean where now?

QU: Exactly...

AN: That's why I say I'd like to have the test, but I wouldn't want the results, it doesn't make sense.

QU: What they can do is give people counselling.

AN: Oh really? So they give counselling, that's a very good idea.

QU: So people are sure whether they actually want the test, and can cope with a positive test result.

AN: It's like a death sentence isn't it? Once they've said that you're HIV, you have AIDS or whatever, I mean it is, it's a death sentence.

QU: No, there are people who were diagnosed several years ago who are still healthy..

AN: Yes, but they are going to die eventually, aren't they?

QU: Well, unless a cure is found; and if they manage to keep themselves healthy. I know people who are HIV+ and have been for five years and are completely healthy. They don't know enough at this stage to know whether you will definitely die.

AN: Oh right.

QU: Once you've got AIDS... AIDS is a definition of a whole range of symptoms, it's not actually a disease in itself, it weakens your immune system so that you can't fight off everyday illness. You're unlikely to live because of all the viruses in the air..

AN: Like a cold? Right, yeah.

QU: I know people who are HIV+ who are very healthy.

AN: Do you know people with actually full-blown AIDS?

QU: Yeah.

AN: Can I just ask you, I mean I don't know whether you've had this question before, but when you're actually sitting with someone in their own home who's actually got AIDS etc, and they offer you a cup of tea, are you ever wary, does it ever cross your mind?

QU: Well, the first person that I met, I was..

AN: Even shaking hands..?



QU: Yeah, I really didn't know or understand if, for instance, I shared food with them. But I've since found out, and, for example I wouldn't share a toothbrush because you break your gums.

AN: But even so, say you had a cut on your hand, and he had a cut on his hand..?

QU: I would make sure that I would be careful..

AN: I could actually say to you - you're at risk, if you know what I mean, if you're..

QU: I don't think I'm at risk being around people who are HIV+ or who have AIDS.

AN: Would you not say that you've got more of a risk than..?

QU: No, it's almost impossible, unless you're careless around vomit, blood etc.

AN: Did you actually go to this person's home with (?)gums or whatever?

QU: Unless I was going to have sex with someone with AIDS it's pretty impossible..

AN: But there's a risk?

Qu: No, with social contact there really isn't a risk.

AN: Really?

QU: I can share a cup with them.

AN: But surely you have to be careful?

QU: No, there is no risk on that level of contact. That confuses the issue. The risks are: Having unprotected sex with somebody. It's not an infectious disease like flu. It's not air-born, your blood must mix.

AN: Alright, lets have a situation then; say you have a cut on your mouth. He, or she whatever, had rinsed a cup out but not properly, it still had his saliva on, and you drank from it. That's what I'm saying; there's a chance. There's a slight chance.

QU: Well..

AN: A very, very slight chance. But still a chance, isn't there?

QU: No one has been known to contract it that way; it's completely unheard of. It's so minimal.

AN: So you don't bother..?

QU: No, not at all. When you first come into that situation you're worried, but then you start to calm down. You're scared of the person because you don't understand how you catch it. I know what the risks are and I wouldn't take those. What happened was that people were scared by misinformation, instead of thinking about it in terms of things you do that put you at risk. They were scared by people instead of types of acts.

AN: So really I should be more conscious of who I'm sleeping with, rather than who I'm cleaning up at school that's got AIDS or whatever?

QU: I think you should be conscious not of who you sleep with, but what you do with them and how you do it.

AN: Right.

QU: Because the person may have no idea, then you don't either. A person could have had 100 sexual partners and be in the clear, someone could have had one and get it. You just can't tell from someone's past. There are groups, like bisexuals, who are more at risk, where it's spread through the gay community. But now in fact gay people are less at risk because they practise safer sex. Heterosexuals aren't practising safe sex.

AN: So eventually we're going to catch it, that's right, yeah. Sometimes I compare myself with my friends, I say - Well, they've slept with lots and lots of fellas from the age of 15 or whatever. Yet I've only slept with two, well five whatever. And sometimes I think - well, they're going to have more of a risk - and I put myself at ease by saying things

like that. But I mean who knows? Perhaps the hundreds of people they slept with, none of them had AIDS, but one of the people that I've slept with might have got it. It's hard really. Is there any sort of evidence that it depends what sort of social background you come from?

QU: Whether you're at risk or not?

AN: Yeah.

QU: No, it doesn't. In New York working class people are more at risk, because they live in areas where there are more people who are HIV+, more drug addicts. But in terms of you being at risk there are no immune types.

AN: No, none at all?

QU: Did you get an impression?

AN: Sometimes I do, yes. Take Manchester for example, people from a sort of middle class background as opposed to a person from a working class background, I used to think that people from a working class background had more of a risk, because of the way they behaved. You don't get many people from a middle class background being drug-users, who actually inject themselves, if you're going to be honest.

QU: I don't know..

AN: I think most of them sort of come from a working class background. I used to think it's safe to sleep with someone who was sort of a yuppie! I packed that idea in ages ago.

QU: Most of the gay men with AIDS are middle class.

AN: Were middle class? But sort of drug addicts and prostitutes.

QU: It may be more working class people are drug addicts. But also, middle class people sleep with working class people and vice versa.

AN: Fair enough!

QU: Middle class men go to working class prostitutes.

AN: Yes, course they do.

QU: And they go home and sleep with their wives.

AN: Well, I'll pack that idea in. Getting a yuppie! I bet you've not heard that theory before?

QU: I think that's understandable. The advertising tends to portray..

AN: This is it, you see; I'm a single person, ..(1130)..I've lived on this Council Estate, I've been drug needles.. Do you know what I'm getting at? I'm a yuppie from Wilmslow!

QU: They have portrayed it as being young working class boys. Do you think it would be better if they had an advert with a young middle class woman talking about it?

AN: I think it would help me, yeah, yeah. I'm not saying that I'm middle class, I mean far from it, the way I act, but I think so, yes.

QU: So it's not something that happens to other people?

AN: Yeah, definitely. Not the scruff bag off the street, do you know what I'm getting at? Oh, it's them commoners! That sounds awful, but I mean, yeah, I'd like to have someone that I can relate to, rather than these people who I see as a menace to society, which are not but..

QU: What do mean by 'menace'?

AN: I don't know whether they are actually a menace to society, but I see them as people like drug addicts who actually mix with drug addicts, and you know, they've let

themselves in for it. They can't say no or anything like that. And prostitutes and people like that.

QU: Do you see the main risk as from people like that?

AN: Yeah, I still do, and people who have unprotected sex I suppose...me!

QU: Do you know anybody who worries about AIDS and practises safe sex?

AN: No, no one at all. A lot of my friends now are actually married. A few of my friends from school are single parents, and they don't sleep with people, they're too busy looking after the baby, or so they say. A few of my friends are married, and the rest of them have been courting you know the one fella for the last three or four years. It's only a couple of my friends who sort of sleep around like I do. But no, they don't really get into that.

QU: Do you think AIDS puts pressure on you to have long term relationships?

AN: I think it's a good thing really, yeah. I don't think it puts pressure on you, but.. Do you mean when they talk about AIDS on the television?

QU: How you respond to it as well.

AN: Or AIDS in general?

QU: They do present it as if you're monogamous, you're less at risk.

AN: Yeah. I don't know, it makes me more conscious of it, but I don't think about it. You know, when I'm actually into it, it's like the heat of the moment, isn't it? Get on with it..

QU: When people are in situations where they know they're going to have sex..

AN: If I knew I was going to have sex, the first thing I'd make sure that I was on the pill, but I'd like him to use a condom, if you know what I mean, double protection. To be sure.

QU: When you say 'the heat of the moment', do you think that sexual arousal excludes thinking about it?

AN: No, I wouldn't say you can't, but you don't want to think about it. Yeah, forget it, it'll never happen to me, chance in a million.

QU: Why don't you want to think about it? Do you think it spoils the sex?

AN: I don't want to think about it because why should I? Because it's not going to happen to me; that's what I think, that's what I'm actually saying. Thinking, yeah, but afterwards I actually know that it could happen to me, do you know what I mean?

QU: It's afterwards that you think about it?

AN: Yeah. And I actually say to myself - It's a chance in a million.

QU: ...(1205)...You don't have to be too worried at the moment because the risks are few. They are going to become much greater. The virus is among the heterosexual population. Gay people are practising safer sex and they're less at risk now. It's important to remember that it's not the type of person that you sleep with, it's actually what you do. And if you're having safe sex you're not going to be at risk. And what heterosexuals aren't doing is having safe sex.

AN: Right. Yeah.

QU: There are a lot of ideas about safe sex which came out of the gay community. They say avoid anal sex and do other things instead, like oral sex, mutual masturbation, fantasies, etc. Do you think that would be a possibility for you as a heterosexual woman, not to have intercourse?

AN: No, no, it wouldn't.

QU: Is intercourse important to you to have an orgasm?

AN: Well definitely, yeah, I'm not one for sexual fantasies or anything like that. Or not many.. I can't understand what else you can do, it's stupid, I mean, how are you supposed to have a baby. Do you know what I mean? It's no good doing it for five years and then stopping and saying - We want a baby now, we better stop all that business. What's the point? I mean if you've got a long term boyfriend, say I started a relationship, it's all very well doing it for the next few years, but how do you go about having a baby?

QU: Obviously with a long term relationship..

AN: That's it, I think it's rather silly actually, I don't know why.

QU: For gay men not having anal intercourse..

AN: Is this what gay men do nowadays?

QU: Some of them have anal sex with a condom, some do other things. For some women who don't find intercourse that stimulating, it's an idea.

AN: Yeah, I can understand that. But what about the guy, his point of view? I don't know many fellas who don't find it stimulating.

QU: Heterosexuals have got a defined view of what sex is. If I said to you, what is sex? Define it, it would be different from the gay view. Gays haven't got that obvious biological..

AN: Well no..(1371)..

QU: They've got more freedom in a way.

AN: Well it's not natural for them to do it that way any way, is it? But sex as we know it is natural, isn't it? I mean what you were talking about before, people actually enjoy doing that, but I still think they want the full sort of sex eventually. I mean I would anyway. I know some women who don't enjoy sex. Some of my sister's friends say it's boring. I don't know why they say it's boring.

QU: You don't think it's boring?

AN: No.

QU: The other thing is there's (?)a lot of talk about sex, but not much about what you actually do in sex. Was that something that worried you when you were younger?

AN: Yeah, and how do I do it and what role do I have. I still am I suppose, yeah. Because I've only slept with, is it five? Six people. I still don't know whether I'm doing it right, do you know what I mean? Lie back and think of England; I mean I do some.. I think it helps, do you know what I mean? I don't know what to do or anything.

QU: Would you like to do more?

AN: I'd like experience, yeah, I'd definitely like experience. I'd like someone to actually tell me whether I'm doing it right or wrong.

QU: In the relationships you've had, have you been able to say what you like and talk about it?

AN: No, they actually tell me what they like, when they see that I'm not doing anything. On second thought, I know when I slept with DEAN, at first, it was very difficult, I feel embarrassed talking about this, but for the first few weeks when I slept with him, I couldn't actually do anything, do you know what I mean? He couldn't actually.. sort of thing; it's hard. I think, I read it in a magazine what I had. What's it called when your muscles actually tighten?

QU: ...(1318)..

AN: Yeah, but there's a special word for it.

QU: For what?

AN: Well you know!

QU: I'm not quite sure.

AN: I actually had that.

QU: You had?

AN: Yeah, I had it. I can't remember the word for it, it was, I read it in a magazine that once you get over that you never have it again. I actually did manage to get over it.

QU: Was it about virginity?

AN: Something like that, it wasn't that word though, it was something associated with that. But I didn't want to believe that I had that, you know, because I'd slept with other guys, and why should it be different now and everything. Then I was thinking - it must be something to do with DEAN, lack of trust, but I do trust him because I'm sleeping with him. And I wanted it.

QU: Often in those situations a woman isn't willing to..(1336-7)

AN: But I was, I mean I know I was and I was quite ready. It's just that my muscles just tightened, and I was thinking - God, I've got a problem here. And I kept telling him - I'm going to go the doctor's about it. I said it was a physical problem, not a mental problem, all this business. But it wasn't obviously, it was mental.

QU: Was there anyone you could discuss that with?

AN: No, I don't think so. I wouldn't have gone to the doctor's. I wouldn't have talked to my mum about it, obviously! She - You should have been keeping it...(1351).. No wonder you've got it! It's from the (?)dole. I could possibly talk to my sister about it, my younger sister who's 19, 20 in September. Because I think she's had a few problems too, things like that. But I don't want anyone to think - God, what's wrong with her? She's not normal, and all this business.

QU: I suppose that boys in the changing room can look down and..

AN: They can actually compare themselves.

QU: Whereas our bodies are hidden in a way..

AN: That's right, yeah.

QU: It's much more difficult. And we're not used to talking about it, to parents..

AN: I could never talk to them, I'd just be totally embarrassed, yeah absolutely.

QU: So it's very difficult to know whether you are normal, that's why we have a lot of anxieties.

AN: That's right. I was worried when I went for my first cervical smear in case there was something wrong with me, and the doctor actually saw it. Am I normal down there? Apparently I was.

QU: Did you ask?

AN: No, but he would have actually said if there was something wrong with me.

QU: Did you feel quite relieved after it?

AN: Yeah, it was great, I'll go for it again. I was actually quite at ease when..(1387).. I was worried beforehand. It was a doctor on The Wirral, he was very young. I was thinking - Oh God, you know, having a cervical smear done by him! But he was very good actually, there was nothing to it.

QU: A lot of people find it traumatic when they go for their first smear. I went for one a few months ago, and the doctor said something like - You have a nice long uterus! I was so happy. I never knew anything about my body inside. She knew, and she said that it was nice, and normal. I felt so great.

AN: 'I've got a long nice uterus!' Bet you haven't; get an edge.

QU: Do you think it would have been possible to talk about this in sex education classes?

AN: Well, we used to have one of those diagrams, but it didn't mean anything to me, because it's on the inside and I couldn't see it. At least they explained how you got pregnant, all the little eggs go from here to there and everywhere. I didn't really take much notice, it was all biological.

QU: When you were younger, did you explore your own body?

AN: No, I can't say I did. I was frightened I suppose in case I did something wrong. Do you know what I mean? And something happened to me.

QU: Did you feel guilty about it?

AN: Yeah, I always remember my sister asking my mum in the car what masturbation was. And my mum went - It's what sad lonely people do..! It's typical of my mum. I wouldn't say that of my dad, I mean obviously, it was a bit embarrassing.

QU: Is that what you thought it was?

AN: Because you hear from, you know, columns in newspapers that, what are they called when you write in, problems, it's not.. My mum was in total contradiction to what I read in this thingy by a doctor. And I remember my mum asking my sister, she wouldn't have asked me, she asked my sister what oral sex was! As if she didn't know.

QU: Your mum asked your sister?

AN: Mmm. It's bad news isn't it?

QU: To try and find out if she knew?

AN: Yeah, course it was, my mum was seeing if she was totally naive about it. I was outside at the time. And my sister said - Don't you know? And she said - No, what is it? And so my sister explained, and she went - Ugh!

QU: Did you know at the time?

AN: Oh course I did, I was about 18 at the time.

QU: That's a bit of a cagey way to go about it, isn't it?

AN: Go and find out everything. And my sister was sort of - Don't you know seriously, don't you know?

QU: Do you think your mum did know?

AN: I don't think she did to be quite honest. I don't know, I don't know whether it was just a ploy to find out whether my sister actually knew about it.

QU: It's quite strange to think that your mum may not know?

AN: My mum and dad actually sleep in separate beds. I don't know why. When I was younger I used to ask my mum, and she said - Oh, because your dad kicks me in the night. I thought - Well, big deal. I don't know why they actually do sleep in separate beds, they've got a wardrobe between them.....

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