

AMD2255

QU: You haven't seen the questionnaire?

AN: No.

QU: What's your name?

AN: APRIL.

QU: How old are you?

AN: 16, I'll be 17 next Tuesday.

QU: It just confused me because we talk to women of lots of different..

AN: ...ages, yeah.

QU: We're talking to people between the ages of 16 and 21. Can you tell me at the moment what you think is most important about the relationships, friendships that you...

AN: Well, really I've always grown up, because I've got two older brothers, so I've grown up quick and I've been courting out with the same lad for three years. So really, I don't, I mean, it's just me and him and we don't, we never go off anywhere. Cos he's a lot(!) older than me, he's 21. So he's settled down. He doesn't want to go out. You know when you're young, you mess people about, cos I've grown up I don't want to. So I'm lucky really. I don't find myself in any situations where I may be..(015)

QU: So would you say he was your most important (?)contact or your parents or your friends?

AN: Yeah. Well, I don't know. Cos it's difficult, isn't it? I mean, a few weeks, well in MONTH two of my best friends were killed in a car accident, so we came closer; and then my friends at home that I've always known. But your mum and dad, I mean it's difficult isn't it? You can't really talk.. My mum and dad are old anyway really. You say 'sex' to me mum and she crawls under the table. 'Ooh, I don't want to talk about this'. You say so...

QU: How old is she?

AN: She's 55.

(023)

QU: Your brothers are quite a lot older than you?

AN: Yeah. One's 30, the other's 25.

AN: You're a very spaced-out family?

AN: Yes.

QU: (027)The one you're involved with now was that your first boyfriend?

AN: Not really. My first boyfriend I ever slept with..

QU: Tell me a bit about your relationships before..

AN: It were just maybe a kiss as you came out of the disco. Or necking, or hold hands for...

QU: (030)...going out with him for a few nights or something?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You were 14 when you started going out?

AN: I was 13...was 14.

QU: Where did you meet him?

AN: Well he used to go out with a friend that got killed, I used to go out with her, and she was older than me, she'd be 19 now. And it was her brother's friends. We bumped into them one night. And we started going out with them as a group, just a group of girls with a group of boys. And then as we started to sort of like, see them, the little two-somes started to pair off. And I was the last one to pair off. And it was with him really. And I wasn't involved with any of the rest of them, just him.

QU: How long were you going out with him before you slept with him?

AN: Quite a few months actually; because, I don't know whether I would have done, but we never got the chance really. It was a case of just going out, going to the pub, and - 'see ya', you know, going home, sort of thing. So we never got the chance. But when we were out, I think I would have done before anyway, cos I'd known him a lot before. Like I'd talked to him anyway. I could talk to lads anyway, I'm not embarrassed about anything. I don't go and hide. So..

QU: Did you trust him?

AN: Yeah, I trusted him. One thing that I could trust him was that he could trust me. Like his dad died and within a matter of weeks, like, he poured his heart out, and I was the first person that he'd ever...so I felt good about that really, he was treating me...

QU: Trusting you as an adult?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You felt you got close?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would you say your relationship with him was a sexual one before you actually slept together....did the opportunity arise?

AN: No, I don't know really. I mean really, like I say, we never got the chance; I don't know whether, if we got the chance on the first night we would've done. Or, but you see we only got the chance..

QU: Had you ever thought about it before?

AN: No, not really. Cos I mean, basically because all the other couples around us didn't do that anyway. They were sitting in the pub like us, the same situation. So it wasn't a big talk like...about... (060)

QU: So how did you get the opportunity?

AN: Well my mum and dad went away and asked him to stay with me, because my older brothers had left home. My mum and dad, the good thing about it is, my mum and dad get on with him really well.

QU: Do you think they asked him to stay knowing there was a possibility?

AN: I don't know. My mum, when I was 14, I left it for quite a long time before I asked them to go on the pill, and my doctor had already said that I'd gone on anyway. But I wanted to tell my mum and dad. I wanted to be honest. I thought it was right. I didn't want them to come downstairs saying - 'What's this I've found in the drawer?' - But when I asked, my mum was funny. She said - 'Oh, why?' - I said - 'Well, why do you think?' - 'oh, no, you shouldn't do things like that, ooh..' But it was my dad who was the one who said 'oh yeah, great', you know. ...(072)him for you.

QU: Did your mum already realise that you were already doing it?

AN: I don't know. Nothing was ever said. My dad jokes. Like, last night when he came in, I was coughing like mad. And me dad shouted upstairs - 'It's me that's meant to cough to tell you that I'm in'. Things like, my dad'll talk to me, about me mum and his relationship. But me mum doesn't say anything at all.

QU: So did you use any kind of contraception before?

AN: At first we just used Durex. Twice I got caught, well not caught out, but I had to go to the doctor's for the 'morning-after' pill. And that's when he said - 'Do you want to go on the pill?' I thought, well no, I'm a bit young anyway.

QU: Tell me how you knew about contraception.

AN: Well from all my friends really. Keeping, you know, listening; me older brothers, I don't know really...magazines, things like that. My mum never said anything, but my mum's sister never kept it quiet to me. My mum has quite a young sister who's only 40 now, so she's quite open things...

(Interruption: cough)

Qu: So you had quite a lot of information then. How did you feel about going to the doctor for the pill. Was that your GP?

AN: Yeah. It didn't really bother me. All of my friends at school, one of my friends at school and me friends at home..(094) - 'oh, how can you go and...' - 'oh, you know just say it and...' They've always been like that. I mean even my friend that was older, she was 19, what she used to do was go to the doctors' to get a prescription for a pill, then let me take it into the chemist and come out. Because she hated going in and handing the prescription over. I used to say to her, you know - 'don't be

stupid' - 'oh, no, I can't, she said, ' no I just can't', you know. 'I just know what they're thinking when they look at me'. (101)

QU: When you were using condoms did you go and buy them?

AN: I went to...(102)..the local one. Because what I think is, the places where you can buy them that are a bit more private. They don't always have the (104)mark on. That's wrong. Otherwise you've got to into somewhere like Boots and be really sort of like..

QU: Very public..

AN: I think they should be in toilets. They should have better ones. I went into a girls toilet the other week, and they had a big thing, 'Jiffy's' they were called; liquorice flavour, orange flavour. What were they? You know there's nothing...

QU: (110)so do you basically see this relationship as one that's going to last?

AN: Well yeah. I think so yeah. We've both talked about it. But I'm too young. I've said I want a career anyway before I'll think about getting married. Like STEVE doesn't really want to get married anyway. He never, you know, he always says - 'oh no'. But I think his mind'll change when he's about 28. But I'll perhaps be ready by then, anyway.

QU: ...(118)..

AN: Yeah. He's got his own flat and, see, my mum and dad never say anything when I sleep there. I mean I don't always stay there. I don't like taking a bag and going there for a weekend.

QU: How often do you reckon you stay there?

AN: Quite often. On average perhaps about once a week, you know.. he stays at our house you see, so, and..

QU: Do they expect you to sleep in separate rooms when he stays at your house?

AN: Well, there's a single bed in each room upstairs so, for convenience really, we sleep like that. Rather than be cramped up. So it's easier to sleep like that. But then, me brother ever comes, they say - 'oh, you'll have to sleep with STEVE tonight'.

QU: Do you see that as unusual?

AN: No, not really. Me dad says that me mum...(129). But occasionally, if they're in a funny mood, they'll say - 'well where's STEVE going to sleep?' I'll say - 'well, where has he always slept?' - 'Well!' - you know, but they don't really bother.

QU: So do you think they sometimes think they shouldn't be so (?) lenient? (133)

AN: Yeah. I don't know. I mean we never used to push it, when we first started going out with each other anyway, and it was them that went away at first. But you know, pushed it.. QU: Gave you the opportunity?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you feel that it came at the right time for you?

AN: Yeah. Like I said we would've perhaps done it before that, but I don't think that I'd've gone on the pill..

QU: So it was never something that he pushed you into?

AN: No.

QU: Would you say that it was an enjoyable, positive part of your relationship for you?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Because I know a lot of young women feel they have to just..

AN: ..To keep their boyfriend, yeah. We talk about everything basically; there's nothing that we don't talk about. If I didn't enjoy it I'd tell him, you know I'd say - 'oh, listen, I don't like that' - I'd say something.

QU: How do you think he'd feel if you decided that you didn't want to be on the pill anymore?

AN: We talked about that already. We said, cos I said really, although we do have sex quite often - 'I don't feel we're putting it to its full use as in if we were married, when we're there every night with each other'. Like, you hear a lot of things about it; you know, it's bad for you if you're on it for too long. I've been saying to him - 'I think, you know, for this year I will come off it, and wait until we're more, we're maybe engaged, living together or something'.

QU: It's potentially.....(155)....stretch...

AN: Stretch, yeah.

QU: So if you can keep it quite happy would you go back to using condoms?

AN: I don't know. I really don't know. I'd perhaps discuss that with my doctor. I mean there's a new injection now, isn't there? My doctor was telling me, and my friends had it done. You have it every ten weeks, then you're covered.

QU: (159-163) Can you tell me if girls of your age, when you were at school, were unusual in having that kind of relationship?

AN: Yeah. There was me and another girl. We sort of like, kept together. And when we were in the fifth year, we noticed that everything that the rest of the girls were doing, we did in the second year. And it was funny really, how I never knew her before we went to Senior school; but something brought us together, and there we were. We started, like, doing the same things, going to the pubs.. We were just, I mean, I can remember one girl, who used to go to the canteen in the morning, this was in the fourth year...One girl...(173)..she said - 'This friend of mine', she said, 'You know, doing things with her boyfriend, you know...in her mouth. She thought that she might be pregnant, do you think she will be?' So straight away, I knew it was her. And I just said - 'Well, maybe not', I said. 'But I don't know'. I was amazed how someone could be doing something like that and didn't even know if

they could be pregnant or not. It was just after me. That was a girl, like, in the same year as me, fourth year, and I thought well, I just don't know. I was really shocked about it.

QU: It's interesting that you mentioned oral sex, how did you find out about that?

AN: That is just sort of, like, what you picked up in books, that. I mean, it was sex at school, no intercourse; I mean, oral sex, you didn't say..I mean the only bit we heard that was oral was the oral contraceptive, which was the pill...

(laugh)

QU: Lots of people weren't quite sure where to put that...

AN: Nothing was touched on that at all.

QU: Did you get any hassle at school for being sexually active when the other girls weren't?

AN: No. Basically, no one ever actually came up and said, you know - 'Are you doing it with STEVE?', nobody, you know; it was kept quiet. You did what you wanted to do, and my best friend LORRAINE knew, and I knew she had a steady boyfriend, and I knew, and that was it. But we just didn't..

QU: Do you think it would've been a hassle? I was just thinking about a girl in my school of the same age. And she was the first, and it came out because her mother found her diary. And she was terribly upset. So she told us at school. And it was only me and my friend that would carry on speaking to her. She had the most awful time. But that was a long time ago.

AN: I can understand girls being funny and jealous, especially when you get to the fourth and fifth year. I mean, a lot of the lads laugh, you know - 'oh still...' (203) But we didn't get any hassle because one of the lads were like.. I don't know what it was like at your school, but there's always a gang that seems to be sort of like middle; always a gang that are dead rough; always a gang that are dead simple; and always a gang that are top, sort of thing. And this gang that were tops, in the first year I'd been out with one of the lads; I mean it was only kissing, but so we never got hassled.

QU: You'd got some status?

AN: Yes. But a lot of the girls I've noticed, that were really rough, they did sleep around, they were hassled; they were all slags...I'm not surprised half the time..(212)..I mean you heard, I don't know how much of it was true. But, I mean, there's some stories going around. But you see, nothing could ever go around about me, really, because it was between me and STEVE, and there wasn't anybody else knew STEVE.

QU: He was from a completely different circle?

AN: Yeah. But I think, I don't know, maybe if I'd have still gone out with this lad, I mean looking... He's sort of like, we weren't mature towards them in the fifth year, so looking towards them, perhaps, maybe, a bit of it would have gone around.

QU: I think that's one of the problems of going to the same school.

AN: Yeah.

QU: Tell me a bit more about the sex education you got at school. You did basically intercourse?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you get any information about STDs, or about AIDS?

AN: Slightly. Nothing really on AIDS. We touched slightly on diseases.

QU: (225-226)

AN: No. We did a lot on contraception really. We did a lot on contraception. The teacher came over from the Science department, we had a couple of teachers from the Family Planning clinic. They brought us actually things to pass round so you could actually see what...Slightly on sexually transmitted diseases, but nothing about AIDS, really. I mean, the only bit we heard about AIDS was really in Biology lessons, and that wasn't really, that was only talking about the subject between animals really.

QU: Would you say that you knew very much about AIDS?

AN: Not really, no. I mean only what I've heard on telly. I've heard what people say. I don't know anything. Like I said, really, I'm (238)..because I don't know much, but probably only having one partner, I'm lucky that, you know, obviously I'm not at risk.

QU: Has he had partners before?

AN: No, I don't think so. We've talked about it, I mean, we'll always have a laugh anyway...(241)...I'll say - 'oh, don't be stupid'. But I don't touch him like that anyway much, because I know if it was, it was only...(242) I mean I don't push him about it...(244)

QU: If he was someone that you fancied that had had lots of different partners you might be more worried?

AN: Yeah, I know, but I say to him ...(245)..At one time you used to hear people when they go away and wake up in different people's beds, and you know, all this. And he just said - 'oh, I think you're (?)biased', you know, he said - 'I really would', I said, 'I'd never..', I said that, maybe that's one of the reasons that I've been so faithful to STEVE because deep down, I mean, I'm really careful. I don't get myself into any situations at all.

QU: Do you think that people who say it's not going to happen to them are foolish?

AN: Well, I mean I never say, I mean I've never found myself in a situation where I'm waiting outside a nightclub and I've got an opportunity to go back to somebody's place. But I have seen some girls in a nightclub, and really you wouldn't think there was anything like AIDS going around.

QU: Do you think they just don't know or they just pretend it won't happen to them, or..

AN: No, I just think, there was one girl that (259) messing about with..(259), and I think three of them had a go on separate occasions. And I thought, well I mean that's...I've been to the clubs when she's been there and she's gone off with blokes.. and I mean she's old enough to know, I think she's about 28. She's already got a kid. I only know her really through conversation.

QU: So if I asked you what you thought was meant by 'safe-sex' what would you say? It says 'safe-sex' in the adverts, what do you understand by that?

AN: Well what I understand by that really is if you are going to sleep with different partners that you use a condom, really. That's all I know about it, otherwise just stick to one, or don't at all. That's all really.

QU: What about alternatives to intercourse? Is that something you could think about sex?

AN: I don't know. I've never thought about it...But like I said, I've never had the opportunity to think about it..(276)..so, yeah.

QU: It's a hypothetical question. Can you imagine yourself, say you met somebody and you thought, yes, I like them, I'll see what happens. I don't mean you'd sleep with someone you didn't know, but do you think you could tell them that they had to use a condom?

AN: Yeah. Firstly, if I was still on the pill, I would never tell any lad that I was on the pill. I don't think I'd actually, I mean I sleep with him for quite a long time, I find out about them a lot more. And if they didn't want to know well, tough. You know, I wouldn't just sleep with them just for the sake of it. I think I'd really ask someone, you know, how many partners they've had. We did as a joke last year when we went away. You know, we did this questionnaire thing, my friend typed it up at work. It was something like, 'How many partners have you got? Have you got a girlfriend? Do you think you might have a sexual disease? Do you think..

QU: You mean to give to them?

AN: Yeah to give to them, like if you were chatted up, you'd have to say, we used to say - 'Well just fill this in a minute and give us it back in a minute'. It was just a big joke on holiday, but I said to REBECCA, I said - 'Really, that's what everyone needs to do'. I mean just to make sure that they're safe. (300)..if you were lucky..

QU: So these were Spanish blokes, were they?

AN: Well no, just sort of like English lads.. messing about, a lot of them make jokes. I thought it was quite funny. But in the long run really, yeah, that's the sort of thing you need to do. Like you say, you never know how honest people they are. Especially like you hear so much, and what you see on the telly. I mean they're liars really, aren't they? (308).. you know you go off and - yeah..

QU: It's easy to say...

AN: Yeah. We (?)even never laugh at STEVE's friends about it..... (310-311)I mean you don't know how honest they're being.

QU: So do you think you've learnt that about boys and men?

AN: Yeah, I do actually.

QU: What do you think about the information that's around about AIDS and HIV? Leaflets, etc.

AN: I don't know because I've only picked up a few, and really I don't know that much about it. I think we should have people like you going into every school and doing a lesson on it. Cos I'd have thought in my last year at school, I mean, last year it was perhaps more publicised than it was this year, and there was nothing at school.

QU: Do you actually think the publicity has died down a bit now?

AN: I think yeah, I haven't seen as many adverts. I've seen a couple on the big boards as you go as you go past on the bus, but..

QU: Well, they're just beginning to get round to doing it in the schools in Manchester. Tell me a bit more about the future, you said you wanted a career. You told me roughly what sort of course you're on, what is it you're going to do?

AN: I don't know. I want to work for a big company.. I don't want to work in a corner shop. So I think I'll perhaps have to work in Manchester. I did think, you know of going off, like a new start, sort of like going off somewhere totally different (?)cruise or something. But like I said really, you need experience before you do that anyway, so I think the first step will actually be to come to Manchester and work. And go from there.

QU: What would be the sort of opportunities to work...(340)..?

AN: There's a couple of big firms sort of like..(341). looking about Manchester, so I'd see if...(342).

QU: Are the chances quite good?

AN: Yeah, there's a lot of contacts through sort of like..(344). So I think you've got a better chance, (?)leaving this college (?)or the other idea. So, hopefully..

QU: So are you just going to play it by ear and see..?

AN: Yeah well, after this year I've got another year left, here, so perhaps just before Christmas, next year, that's when I start looking. ..(350)..Because we've got a couple of weeks work-experience here and there. So I'll have to perhaps do is get a couple of weeks (?)selling that..(352)..where they can see me and I can see where they work.

QU: What is it that interests you, excites you most about doing Beauty Therapy, was it something you always wanted to do?

AN: Well, when you're little, you always say you're a policeman, you're going to be this, you're going to be that, but for the last few years, I said I wouldn't mind doing, being a Beauty Therapist. But I didn't know you could just do a course for it, and I didn't want to do hair at all. I was determined not to do hair. And at my local college, you have to do Hair and Beauty, you can't separate them, you've got to do it together.

QU: Where's 'local'?

AN: [NAME OF TOWN]. [NAME OF COLLEGE].

QU: And you travel in every day from [NAME OF TOWN]?

AN: So when I stumbled across this course, that was it. I had to do it. The first job, I worked for my mum and dad, but one of the other jobs I got was at a Beauty Salon. So that pushed me as well cos I enjoy it, you know, I enjoyed working there.

QU: Was that a Saturday job?

AN: I used to work a couple of nights a week. A couple of nights they opened late...(368).

QU: So do you feel pretty adamant that you want to have a career?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Even if it meant moving?

AN: Yeah. One of my brothers lives in Brighton, he moved. The other one still lives locally. STEVE's thinking about going into the Air-Force anyway. He applied ages ago. It was when he first started going out with me.. Like I said now really, it wouldn't matter if he went away the last year of college, cos I perhaps need that work. First seeing him, I could perhaps get a chance to do extra work. And I just said it, you know...(384). The thing is with the RAF is that if you do get married you get a house given to you. And I just said if you like the RAF, obviously he'll have moved away from his friends, and a couple of them, one of them is going in the Army, one of them's going, oh, somewhere to work, so they're splitting up gradually. And I think as long as I , I said to him, depending on how I feel, if he gets in the RAF, and he's based somewhere for a long time, I said, I'd find a job down there, I said, and the best thing for us to do would be to get married. STEVE basically would be better off if he was in the Air-Force and married. Because I have, I've done everything really, not in the sense of sex. I mean sort of like, I've been to nightclubs, I've done this, I've done that. And I really grew up really quick. Like I said, with my friends getting killed and everything, that calmed me down a bit. I don't go out as much, I don't.. I just said perhaps after I've left college...I mean have you interviewed any of the girls from the Hairdressing (404). Do you find they have a different view to it?

QU: Because we've been talking to the second year, there are quite a lot of differences but it's hard to say how much that's to do with age..

AN: [NAME OF FEMALE TEACHER] always says that the Beauty therapists have always got a much more mature attitude. They don't seem to want to smoke, they're much more sensible. But hairdressing girls, for some unknown reason, are sort of like the opposite like.. So I don't know, I feel like, if I got a job I mean people say to you - oh as soon as I get a job, I think I'll buy myself a house.

QU: Even if it's just for you?

AN: For me, yeah.

QU: Regardless of what happens with STEVE?

AN: Yeah, I can't wait to just buy myself a house. And it's so annoying at the moment, you see, I mean I'm only young but I'm thinking like house prices are going up all the time....(421). But my mum says - 'oh, you want to live a bit and do this and go there...'

QU: How about travel, are you attracted to travel?

AN: Yeah, I thought about going on cruises. Like I say, it depends what jobs are open, at the moment a lot of the cruises won't take you on until you've had at least a year's work, you know. Working for someone you need to be experienced. So that would come after a year.

(end:431)