

AMD08 (RT 2/5/89)

QU: Can you tell me about yourself a bit, what you're doing here.

AN: ..(002)..here, I was at school, at a private school.

QU: Was that in Manchester?

AN: No, that was in Sheffield because I actually live in [NAME OF TOWN]. Lived all over the country really. I eventually got settled in Doncaster, in a school in Sheffield, a private school.

QU: So, why were you moving around so much?

AN: My dad's job.

QU: What does he do?

AN: Well now he's a managing-director of a [COMPANY]. But before he was like a sales-rep, and we were just like moving all over and then he changed his job to this one at Doncaster, and he's been there ever since...where he is now.

QU: So there's been quite a lot of instability then. Do you live in Doncaster?

AN: Well, it's sort of a mile out of the Doncaster area. So it's near enough Doncaster, I mean [NAME OF TOWN'S] about two inches square. Oh, it's horrible.

QU: Did you find it disrupting then, having to move around to lots of different schools?

AN: Well, when I was younger it didn't really bother me because I suppose I was too young to realise. Because we moved six times in the first ten years. And I think I was a bit too young to realise what I was doing. And then I got settled in Doncaster, and we lived in this village where I knew just about everybody, because I'd been to school with them; and the ones I hadn't been to school with I got to know anyway. And then we moved again out into the middle of nowhere. The only reason we moved was because my mum and dad fell in love with this house, it's no further for them to get to work..

QU: But really disruptive to your life I should think..

AN: So there were a lot of arguments anyway. We moved there this time last year, and I started (?)here in September.

QU: So have you got a lot of close friends in the places where you were living before?

AN: Not close friends, but sort of casual friends. It was a home, I knew everybody. But the thing is, I've got friends but they live all over the country.

QU: Tell me about what sort of schools you went to. You went to private school, was that secondary age?

AN: Yeah, when I was 11.

QU: What was the school like?

AN: Well, when I went there it was a very good school, it had a good reputation; everyone was coming out with ten 'O' levels and four 'A' levels. And gradually it went down-hill. And I left a year early, I started my 'A' levels and left last summer; I should have been doing them now. But only because it went down-hill. Because when I did my 'O' levels, I got one of the highest, I got six, and there were people coming along with one and two and that was it.

QU: So why did the school go down-hill, do you know?

AN: I don't know, I think they were money-minded; they wanted to get as much money as possible, but not feed it back into the school. And it just went down-hill, it's ..(036)..now.

QU: Disappointing. Did you enjoy yourself at the school, was it a good school to be at, even if you didn't get a terribly good education there?

AN: Yeah, but they were very academically inclined. It was an all girls' school; and they didn't do any cookery or needlework which being girls, I think you need. My uncle and my mother let me play around with the cooker and that and the sewing-machine, but I'm sure there's plenty of mothers that won't. But it was very academically minded. But saying that,

there was another private school just up the road, where they were the total opposite: they were like teaching them values as opposed to lessons. They were thrown out of school to be young ladies, and we were thrown out to be sort of young executives.

QU: So do you think you were trained up to be some sort of business type thing?

AN: Yeah, they were trying to get everybody to go to university. And, when I turned round and said, I don't want to go to university, I want to be a beauty therapist, they just ignored me, they just forgot about me. And I had to sort my own life out. Sort of get on this course on my own. I didn't have a talk. I mean I know I left a year early but, they had all the prospectuses for all the universities and good colleges and that, but they didn't have one for here. And I knew from when I was about 14 that I wanted to do beauty therapy.

QU: So what happened about that, how did you decide?

AN: Well, they used to have careers evenings every couple of months or so. And they sent out a letter saying who was coming. And they had one on beauty therapy. But they also had one on, what do you call it, when they do x-rays?

QU: Radiography.

AN: Yeah, and I wanted to do that. So I went along to this careers evening; and there was this speaker doing beauty therapy as well, and the only reason she was there was because she used to go to that school. And it just like, changed my mind. From then on I wanted to be a beauty therapist. I went home and told my dad, and he said, oh, don't be so stupid.

QU: Why? Didn't he like the idea?

AN: Well, he does now, but he thought, I was only 14, he thought it was a passing phase. He didn't know any different. He didn't know you had to do all the massage and all that, he thought it was just putting in make-up.

QU: Do you find it interesting?

AN: Yeah, definitely. I prefer the practical side as opposed to the chemistry and all that. It seems a bit pointless, and all the teachers have said you don't use it at all. I mean, if you were a client coming to the salon, you don't want to know how all the creams are made really, do you?

QU: No, I suppose you don't get many people asking, but I suppose you should know what you're putting on someone. Tell me what type of sex education, health education did you get at this school.

AN: Well, we did Biology, and then, I think it was when we were about 15, 16, you know you do a two-years course for 'A' level, it was in there that we actually had sex education; but there wasn't anything on AIDS, it was just like how the baby is produced. And then, when we were in the sixth form, we had to have these sort of community lessons, where all these people came in to speak. And we did about six weeks on birth control, AIDS, sexual diseases and everything. So it was quite..(079)

QU: So tell me who came in to talk about birth control?

AN: There was a woman - because the school was just opposite the [NAME OF PLACE] in Sheffield - there was a woman from the family planning clinic there. And then there was a batty old teacher who should have retired about 20 years ago who came in; but she was really good and she brought loads of leaflets and talked about it and everything. I mean with it being all girls, it was quite easy to talk about.

QU: Did you find that then?

AN: Well they did have boys in the sixth form but our particular group was all girls. So it was easier to talk when you're all girls, there wasn't many of us anyway, we split into small groups.

QU: Did people ask questions then?

AN: Yeah. I can't remember, it was quite a while ago, but yeah.

QU: So did they give you useful information?

AN: Oh definitely, the leaflets... I mean, as I say, we spent about six weeks on it. It was only about an hour a week.

QU: What did they tell you about sexually-transmitted diseases?

AN: I can't remember, but we did cover most of them. And there was leaflets on AIDS and other STDs...

QU: Can you remember what they told you about AIDS?

AN: No, I can't really. I just know we got a load of leaflets....We did get loads of leaflets and we did talk about it but I can't really remember. It was over a year ago, 18 months ago.

QU: Tell me what you know about AIDS then.

AN: Well, it can be transmitted by body fluids, but not saliva. And when it comes into contact with the air it dies. You don't necessarily know you've got it, it can stay in hibernation for five to 20 years. It's passed by needles and drugs. We weren't actually told what happens when you get it. We were just told how you get it.

QU: Did they tell you how not to get it?

AN: Don't use drugs, use sheaths when you're having sex, things like that really.

QU: Tell me what sort of relationships you've had or are having.

AN: Well, I've got one at the moment.

QU: Is this your first relationship?

AN: No, second.

QU: Second sexual relationship you're talking about?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Tell me about your first.

AN: Don't laugh, but it was virtually a one-night stand; and I realised afterwards that he just wanted me for one thing.

QU: How old were you then?

AN: It was about a year ago, I was 17.

QU: Did you want to have sex?

AN: I don't know, it just sort of happened really. I didn't think either way. It sort of happened. Because we went to a party a friend of mine, it was a party, a load of us went. We went back to this girl's, another friend of mine, house, and stayed the night and it just sort of happened.

QU: Were you drunk?

AN: No, I wasn't. Afraid not.

QU: Had you before then wanted to lose your virginity.

AN: No. Well, yeah because when we were all at school, I mean there were some girls that were really sleeping around and then there were the other lot that were sort of left behind. I had a close friend who was 12 days younger than me. We were really close because when I was living in Doncaster, it was a long way to travel to Sheffield, and she lived in the same village, so we were friends. It was her sort of main ambition to lose her virginity. It was like, ringing each other up, have you done it yet? I know it seems a bit immature, but at the time..

QU: You're pressured to think that, aren't you?

AN: And then she did and she said, I'll fix you up, and I said, no, no, I'll take my own time. It was all sort of light-hearted, but it seemed really serious at the time. I have to do it.

QU: Was it a disappointment when you did, were you expecting it to be a great fulfilling experience?

AN: Yeah, I think it was. I mean, when you're all girls at school, and one of them has and is sort of going on about how wonderful it is. And I wasn't, I wasn't that impressed, but I wasn't impressed sort of thing; it was just another thing to do really.

QU: So you didn't have a bad experience from it?

AN: No.

QU: So this relationship lasted...

AN: It lasted six weeks.

QU: How did you feel about it finishing?

AN: I wasn't, well, I was more annoyed at him for doing what he did. And I'd like to get my revenge back on him. I know it sounds silly but.. I don't know, it just sort of petered out really.

QU: Did you feel so strongly because you'd had sex with him?

AN: I think that probably made it more, but even so, because I haven't had many boyfriends anyway. I spend a lot of time on my own when I'm not with my friends...(155)..What's the matter, I can live on my own sort of thing.

QU: You don't feel that you need...?

AN: It's nice to have. Me and my friend that have never got boyfriends...(157). But I'm perfectly happy at the moment, on my own. I mean I don't fancy spending the rest of my life on my own.

QU: I'm sure you won't. You've got a long time to go yet.

AN: I feel older than I actually am.

QU: I think you do, going through that period. Think you're going to be left on the shelf. So when you slept with this boy, did you use any contraception?

AN: No, I didn't. Well, I was on the pill; but not because of having sex. The doctor put me on the pill because I had bad period pains, and it just so happened that I slept with him when I was on the pill.

QU: So you were protected then?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Were you conscious of using contraception, or had you not thought?

AN: No, I didn't really think because I'd been on the pill for a while; it was just like a routine, you don't really think about it.

QU: So you hadn't planned then, not to get pregnant. Were you thinking about the possibility of pregnancy when you thought about the possibility of having sex? Did they go together?

AN: I suppose they do, yeah.

QU: Did they in your mind?

AN: No, I don't think they did.

QU: So if you hadn't been on the pill for medical reasons, you probably wouldn't have used contraception?

AN: Probably not because that was the first time. I would have thought after that, you know, I'd have done something about it.

QU: Why for the first time, did you think it was less likely that you would get pregnant?

AN: Well, I wasn't planning it out, it sort of happened.

QU: Is there a difference between planning it and...?

AN: Well I think if you've got a steady boyfriend, at my age it's sort of one of the things to do, when you're 14 you don't go around sleeping with everybody. I don't know whether it's just my views or what, but at my age you do sleep with your boyfriend. I know 20 odd years ago it would've been a sin. I think because it just happened, if I'd been seeing him for quite a while, then we'd talked about it, then I would've done something about it, but it just happened, I didn't think at the time. Fortunately I was on the pill.

QU: So do you feel that you realise that you will be sleeping with men in the future?

AN: I'm not saying that I sleep with everyone!

QU: No, but it's quite important the way you think about...

AN: Well, the way I see it is, you know the way everyone's going on about virgin marriages and 20 odd years ago you had to be a virgin, but if you ask me sex is quite a big part of a relationship. And if you get married a virgin and you have sex with this bloke and you don't enjoy it, you could, if you'd had sex with him before and other people, you could have found out if you enjoy it. Because I think it's 50% of a relationship. It's quite a big thing really.

QU: Especially if you don't enjoy sex with a person.

AN: I mean, you could sort of hate it with one bloke and love it with another.

QU: Have you found that with this new boyfriend that you've got, that sex is a lot better with him and you wouldn't know beforehand?

AN: If I'd married him, he might have been brilliant or he might have been crap.

QU: When you say brilliant or crap...

AN: Well, good or bad. I mean, either you enjoy it or you don't enjoy it.

QU: Do you think you enjoy sex more with this new boyfriend because he cares more about how you feel? I mean is it a different type of sexual relationship, a different type of sex that you're having?

AN: Well, it's not just sex, it's a different type of relationship really. I mean we just get on really well. We can talk about everything, I mean, some people, male or female, there are certain things you can't talk about. But with him I can talk about anything anyway. So I think that helps and if he wants to do something I don't like, I just tell him. And he doesn't mind.

QU: So you talk about sex openly, between each other?

AN: Mmm.

QU: I'm asking you because I'm interested in the way people think about sex and what sex is in terms of things like safe-sex and having different types of sex which aren't so risky. We talk about high-risk and low-risk factors, something like intercourse is high-risk if it's not protected. Whereas there's a lot of other things that you can do which are still sexual which aren't so risky, in terms of passing the HIV virus on. So we're interested in how people have relationships in which they do a lot of other things and how other people see sex just in terms of intercourse. So do you see sex in terms of other things?

AN: Oh, yeah, definitely.

QU: And is that important to you? Do you use contraception with this boyfriend you're with?

AN: I'm on the pill.

QU: Would you, did you think about using a condom as well?

AN: To be honest I've never really thought about using one because like, in the mad heat of the moment, you say - 'oh, excuse me a minute' - and it spoils everything.

QU: Do you think that's how sex should be, in the 'mad heat of the moment'? Is that important to it?

AN: No, but it helps. I mean it depends who you're with and everything. I don't know, it's just my point of view of it. To be honest, I don't know a thing much about AIDS. I mean, I'm not small-minded to think it's only drug-users and homosexuals. But I am in a sense that I think - oh, it'll never happen to me. So I think the only reason I have contraception is to stop myself getting pregnant.

QU: So you haven't thought that you might be at risk?

AN: No.

QU: What sort of person do you think would be at risk?

AN: Just...(251)..a drug-user who shares needles, possibly, who was a homosexual. I know it could happen to anybody. I mean you get people who have blood transfusions who have got AIDS. But it's more in the drug-users, homosexual population.

QU: Do you have any idea why gay men have borne the brunt of the AIDS epidemic?

AN: Because they exchange bodily fluids where there was little protection. With blood cells..

QU: Do you think it was anything to do with them being gay, in any way, that makes them more at risk?

AN: How do you mean, because they're gay someone's put a (264)on them..?

QU: Well, a lot of people feel that it's something to do with the fact that they're degenerate..

AN: Well, if they want to be gay, they can be gay. I don't mind gay people, I mean, to be honest I've never met one; they're supposed to be brilliant people to get on with. But I take the opinion that they can do what they want as long as they keep me out of it.

QU: Do you resent the idea of bisexual men...

AN: I think bisexual men need their head looking at, because they can't decide who they are. It's the same as transvestites, they want to be women, I mean, you're born what you're born. I mean it's ok being one or the other but being bisexual's like being unfaithful. I don't like the idea of being unfaithful.

QU: Do you think of 'being unfaithful' in purely emotional terms, like somebody rejecting you, or do you ever think of the risk of AIDS involved in that? That 'being unfaithful' might put you at risk.

AN: No. I don't really think of it; I always think it won't happen to me, which it probably will do now, now I've said that.

QU: You can do something about it, you can protect yourself against it. Do you think you would ever ask a man to use a condom?

AN: I'd be very (?)unnerved about it.

QU: Why would you be embarrassed?

AN: I wouldn't really..I just would.

QU: Do you find it embarrassing talking about sex to a man, to the man you were going to sleep with?

AN: Every other one apart from this one; I don't with this one, we can talk openly about anything and everything. I mean I get embarrassed about some things. But I still talk to him about things that I wouldn't even say to my best friend. Well, everybody but my best friend, sort of thing.

QU: Are these things particularly about sleeping together, having sex?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Well that's sensible isn't it if he's the one you're sleeping with, you talk to him about it. Because a lot of women do find it quite difficult talking to men about it.

AN: I find it hard talking to a lot of people about it. I mean, I've never ever spoken to my mother about anything sexual. When I was about 8 or 9, she handed me this book and she said go and read this..

QU: ..and don't ask any questions...

AN: Yeah, and that was it. She's not an old maid that won't mention it, it's just that I can't talk very easily to my mother.

QU: Do you wish you could have?

AN: Well, no because I've got other people I could talk to. Like my best friend LYNN, we can talk about anything, well practically anything.

QU: You say you'd be embarrassed to ask someone to use a condom, if you'd talked about it more openly at home, do you think you'd find it easier, or do you think it's a problem anyway in that situation?

AN: Possibly. I don't know, I think it's probably a bit of both. You know, the situation, and the fact that I've not been able to talk openly at home. But with me being at an all girls' school, we sort of got on quite well. Like girls can talk a lot easier. I mean if you're all sat round the table you talk about the weather and everything else, don't you?

QU: You said that you would find it difficult to ask a man, do you think it's your responsibility to ask him to use one?

AN: I think it's 50-50 really.

QU: Do you think it's likely that a man would say to you, I think we ought to use one..?

AN: ...I've never come across one. But then again I've only had two relationships anyway.

QU: Do you think they'd be likely to be worried about it?

AN: ...(333)..(?)there must be plenty somewhere.

QU: So if a man said to you let's use a condom, would you be happy then to use it?

AN: Mmm.

QU: But you wouldn't want to be the one to say it?

AN: Mmm.

QU: How about buying them?

AN: To be honest I've bought a packet. I bought some before I went on holiday. But I didn't use them.

QU: Is that because you didn't sleep with anybody on holiday?

AN: Mmm.

QU: So if you had slept with someone would you have used them?

AN: I don't know, it depends. On holiday abroad I'm very nasty about foreigners. I don't like them at all.

QU: Is this foreign men?

AN: Yeah, well, there was me and my friend on holiday at Easter..

QU: Where did you go?

AN: Malta. Two girls on their own. There was all these Maltese men who just swarmed round us, and some of them were really annoying. So I just shut myself off with them. And we only talked to English people, and there weren't many out there.

QU: You bought condoms to go over there, so you were being careful in that way, were you thinking about AIDS particularly or just generally STDs?

AN: Anything, anything transmitted.

QU: So where did you buy them from?

AN: In town.

QU: Did you find that difficult to buy them?

AN: Yeah, I needed some cotton wool anyway. So I went and got some cotton wool and then I got some as well. But, I mean I used to work in [HEALTH AND BEAUTY STORE] in Doncaster and there was all these people buying them. And it didn't bother me selling them; it was the buying of them that I was a bit timid about. I just sort of put my head down and gave her the money really.

QU: Would it have made a difference to you if it had been a man or a woman who you had been giving the money to?

AN: I would have preferred a woman, I think I got a woman, but I think I could've survived with a man.

QU: You know you can get condoms from petrol stations and Virgin Records etc., would you be able to buy them from places like that?

AN: Yeah, but it's easier to go to somewhere like Boots or a chemist.

QU: Have you seen them in toilets or anywhere like that, do you think that makes it easier?

AN: No, no.

QU: So you've never used them then? Still got them saved up.

AN: Yeah. (376)

QU: Do you think you've been well enough educated about AIDS and STDs?

AN: Yeah, I mean, we got the facts. We weren't exactly convinced that we had to use them. Well, I mean they didn't say you have got to use condoms and that. But we got all the facts and knew what would happen if we didn't.

QU: Do you think you got the choice whether to use that information or not?

AN: Yes.

QU: Do you think it's an easy choice to make one way or the other?

AN: Well, like I say, with the heat of the moment, you can't really stop, or you can stop but it's difficult starting again.

QU: Do you think you could have done with more help about how to put that knowledge into action? Talking about actual relationships rather than the facts because the facts are really easy, aren't they? But doing something about the facts isn't quite so easy.

AN: Yeah, yeah.

QU: Are there any questions that you'd want to ask, that are unanswered? You don't feel there's any problem?

AN: Mmm. I definitely think it should be more about what you actually do, as opposed to - here are the facts for your own..(399). I mean a lot of people get bored reading more and more leaflets about safe-sex. You need something different.

QU: Have you any ideas about the best way of doing that. What do you think you would listen to?

AN: I don't know really. I suppose it would be easiest to do something on television. But then again a lot of people might object because of what you've got to get across. You want somebody that's actually there as opposed to giving a leaflet, to sort of talk about it..(409). Because I mean you get a leaflet and it answers a few questions, and then it says for more information write. And you never get round to writing. So you're still back at square one; you know the basics, but you don't know anything else.

(end: 416)