

AYC21 M/1423/RT

A: 16.

QU: 16. So what's your date of birth? So the .. can work it out.

A:72.

QU: So you're 16 in So do you live at home or what?

A: Yeah I live with my Mum and Dad. And me sister.

QU: How old are they?

A: Me Mum and Dad?

QU: No, your sister.

A: Me sister. She's 18 now.

QU: So what's she doing?

A: Nothing. She's pregnant.

QU: Has she left home?

A: Yeah. She's got her own house with her boyfriend. Very nice.

QU: So she's got it all to herself. That's pretty good. What does your Mum and Dad do?

A: Me Mam's in catering. And me Dad's an engineer.

QU: So what do they do?

A: I dunno. (Laughter). No, he works at [NAME OF COMPANY], I know that. You know if one of the machines breaks down.

QU: Is it a good job?

A: Yeah it is good really.

QU: That's good then. Thing's like engineers, they don't mean anything to me.

A: They really don't to me either. ... engineer that's what he is.

QU: Tell us about the job you're going for.

A: On a Y.T.S. really. That's what it is. Sales assistant, three days a week at the shop and two days a week at college. It's for 2 years and for the second year you just go to college for 1 day a week and work for 4 days. But they try and get you like, the employer subsidy. I'm on £40 a week now which is quite good for a YTS. On the employer subsidy it guarantees me a job at the end, but they pay my wage which'll be about £50 - £65 a week.

QU: Is that normal? Even at your age?

A: If I was working there yeah. They're pushing it at the moment. Said he might give it me, but it wasn't 'til about June. If it comes off.

QU: So would you stay if you got that?

A: Oh, no. ... (026)

QU: So did you leave school at 16. Did you not want to stay on?

A: No. I was bored with it. I went for an interview for a college course for two years and I got it but I thought no. College every day. Jeez. I thought, no, I don't want to do that.

QU: You want to get out of it. So when you took this YTS job were you thinking of wanting to do that just for a while or of it being a permanent job?

A: I was thinking of doing it really just because there was nothing else to do. Only college courses I don't want to do.

QU: Is there anything that you've always really wanted to do? That you fancied at school...

A: Air hostess.

QU: Air hostess. Have you applied for that?

A: No. You've got to be 18. I'll do that when I'm 18.

QU: What sort of qualifications do you need for an air hostess?

A: Well I've been told you don't really need qualifications, it's just experience.

QU: How do you get experience? (Laughs.)

A: English, French, Spanish, all languages. You need some experience with them. You need to talk. I don't know you just have to go to them. You have to have like a (044)

QU: So did you want to travel and things?

A: Yeah, .. I'll be travelling like the adverts, shooting to New York, all places like that, Spain.

QU: So do you want to get out of Manchester?

A: I don't know. I'd still like to live in Manchester but like travel about.

QU: Something to look forward to. I don't blame you. So what did you do at school? What exams and things? what did you come out with?

A: I did um.., English, maths, French, Spanish, chemistry, contemporary studies which is all like politics, abortion, all different things mixed into one.

QU: Was that good?

A: It was alright but it was all coursework, I don't like coursework so.. I didn't get a very good mark in that because I didn't do a lot.

QU: Were you the first year of GCSE?

A: Yeah.

QU: Was that difficult?

A: I don't know really because I don't know what the other exams was like, do you know what I mean?

QU: Did it feel disorganised?

A: Yeah it did.

QU: I feel really sorry for you. It's like being guinea pigs.

A: The teachers didn't even know what they was doing properly.

QU: Did you get any sexual education? I don't know what you call it here. At my school it was sexual education. PSE or..

A: PSE yeah. You don't get an exam in that.

QU: But you had classes in that.

A: Yeah. We had classes.

QU: And what sort of things did you go through in that?

A: Um.., we went through AIDS and contraception, um.., I don't know really. How boys react to girls and how girls react to boys. How they grow up.. .

QU: Was that in mixed classes?

A: Yeah. It was in your own form and I was in mixed school so..

QU: What was it like?

A: I don't know.. We didn't start doing it til the third year so that we knew our class, we didn't feel embarrassed. If we'd started in the first year it would have been more embarrassing because we didn't know them.

QU: I'm sure. Did you learn things there, or the things you learnt there did you already know?

A: Well I learnt things at school and I'd learnt the same things outside. You learn them all over really. Like off your parents.

QU: Around AIDS for example. What did they tell you about AIDS when you were at school, can you remember?

A: Um (laughs). Just the basics really. They didn't really go into it all, just don't use anybody else's needles and use condoms, just things like that. They didn't really go into it.

QU: But they told you about other things like contraception. So anyway, the things that you know now. Where did most of that come from?

A: Friends mostly because like girls talk and parents really.

QU: Do your parents talk to you about these sorts of things?

A: Yeah. They talk about all things like that.

QU: Is that your Mum or your Dad?

A: Both of them.

QU: That's pretty impressive. Have they always been like that?

A: Yeah. They've brought us up like so that we'll come to them if we've got problems.

QU: So do they tell you about sex and contraception? When did they tell you that?

A: Um.. I don't know when it was. When I started going out more. Going out with lads. They told me, 'be careful, watch what you're doing.' You know, things like that. I was about 14,15.

QU: What's their attitude towards those sort of things?

A: Well me Dad.. is a bit old fashioned really. Me sister's just got pregnant and he doesn't like it. He's not taking it out on her but he's more protective of me now. He doesn't like.. you have sex now before you get married nowadays don't you, and me Mum and Dad didn't. I was only talking about it last night actually to me Mam. I asked if she had sex before she was married, and she said no. I said, 'you didn't', so she went, 'well, when we was engaged but not before we was engaged'. You know they're like more old fashioned now.

QU: But do you see it as fine to have sex before marriage?

A: Yeah. I do.

QU: I think it's.., I don't know what it's like for you but when I was at school, 4 or 5 years ago, the attitude was to lose your virginity quickly, you know, as quick as you could lose it was the best thing. Whereas I reckon probably 5 or 6 years before then or 10 years before, it would be the opposite way round. If somebody... What was it like for you at school, there's always a general attitude isn't there?

A: Just that it happened when it happened. You get some of the girls, 'yeah, I've done it,' and all this, and you get some of the girls who are dead shy about it all. It varies really, I think it's a bit of both.

QU: At school it's all closed in. Do people know who had and who hadn't?

A: Me and me friends, yeah.

QU: Keep a count. (Laughs.)

A: I remember a girl. Who was really, really, 'Oh, I've done it,' she was chuffed with herself but she didn't want to show that she was. It was really funny.

QU: So do you think that people aren't doing it out of pressure, you know, having sex for the first time because they feel that they need to keep up with everyone else?

A: I think some do, but not a lot. I don't think a lot really. If you're in with one of the top girls and they have, I suppose you feel like they're laughing at me. I think that's when they're influenced.

QU: When you're at school and that there's different sets of girls. The top girls, would they be a set of girls that's more experienced?

A: Yeah. They might just say they're experienced but they're not.

QU: But it makes you top girl. It hasn't changed at all. (Laughs.) So were you one of the top girls when you were at school?

A: Not really, no. In between.

QU: Safer. If you're in the top girls you've got to keep it up and it's a bit of a pressure. So then, to go back to things like AIDS, did you see all the television programmes that were on?

A: Some of them.

QU: What did you think about those?

A: They may be good, but they tried to make it a laughing thing as well, on one of them you know, they was laughing about condoms and holding them and showing them about. I don't know, I think it was a good thing in a way, but not in another.

QU: Do you think they made condoms more acceptable, through doing those sorts of things?

A: Yeah, they do, I mean like... I don't know really. The way they was messing about with them and everything and like when they'd got the coloured ones on they was laughing and joking about them, but other people, you know, might be thinking, 'oh, that's a bit rude', and it might make people think, 'oh. AIDS, it's just a laughing matter'. But I don't know, I enjoyed watching them.

QU: It was also dead unusual to see something like that on television anyway. Did it have a sort of impression on people? I know that people I knew at the time it was all on TV, it had quite an impression, you know, just people showing you how to put a condom on, on television. It shocked me because I've never seen anything like that so public before.

A: No I hadn't, not so public. Things like saying the girl should put it on a lot. I don't think it was like that years ago.

QU: The things they showed you, would that make it any easier for you now, like to ask him to use a condom?

A: Yeah, yeah.

QU: You would, because you'd think he'd seen it.

A: Yeah.

QU: But would you ask a boy to use one?

A: Yeah.

QU: Have you?

A: Yeah.

QU: Why did you ask, what was the reason?

A: I weren't thinking about AIDS, I was thinking about getting pregnant really, to use it. I wasn't taking any contraception or anything. So I asked him to.

QU: Was this the first time that you'd slept with someone?

A: Yeah.

QU: Who was this then?

A: Me boyfriend at the moment.

QU: So how long have you been with him?

A: Since about November. But he's um.. 27.

QU: So he's a lot older than you.

A: He's a lot older. But he's a bit of a secret, because me Mum and Dad don't know. That's one thing I've not told them, that he's an older lad that I'm seeing.

QU: Why would they be against him being 27?

A: Well I don't think it's against him being 27, well it is..., they know him. They've known him since he was a little kid. They know what he's got up to and you can get up to a lot when you're 27. He asked me Dad if he can take me out which I thought was nice, you don't get that nowadays, but me Dad turned around and said no. That was in June at a wedding, but I never went out with him until November.

QU: Is he the first person you've thought about sleeping with then?

A: Yeah.

QU: What made you think of him?

A: I don't know. All the boys I've been with they've all been the same age as me or like a year older. He's like older and more mature, well he's not (laughing), he acts about 23, but he's more mature and to me he knows what he's doing more than what the other lads do.

QU: Yeah, you trusted him more. Did you want to sleep with him when you slept with him or was it something to do with him being older. I mean was it your choice, was it something that you wanted to do?

A: Yeah. I know it was yeah. (Laughter.) I mean like he tried before and I said no, and he tried again and I said yes. I felt like I was ready.

QU: Did you enjoy it?

A: Yeah it was alright.

QU: Yeah, so it wasn't like a bad experience. Were you let down at all, it's a big thing isn't it? The first time you do it.

A: Yeah. No, I enjoyed it.

QU: It's always... I remember when I first slept with someone. You're expecting I'll feel different afterwards. You wouldn't feel like a virgin anymore. There'll be suddenly some transformation. I wasn't really expecting to enjoy it or anything, it was all about changing what you were and you didn't feel any different afterwards, it's dead confusing. Whether you're a virgin or whether you're not. So have you ever talked to him about contraception?

A: Um..., I've talked about going on the pill. But um..

QU: Does he want you to go on the pill?

A: Well he doesn't like using condoms he's told me he doesn't, but he will which is fair enough. So in a way I think he wants me to so that he doesn't have to use a condom, but he doesn't. He wouldn't force me to it, he wouldn't say, 'right you're going on the pill or that's it because I'm not using them anymore'. He's told me he doesn't like them. He wouldn't force me, no.

QU: Do you have any opinion about using them?

A: No not really, because I don't know the difference because I've always used them. So I don't know what the difference is in using them or in not using them.

QU: I think that a lot of the blokes make a lot of the difference, it's a very typical thing isn't it. A lot of them don't like using them because they think it spoils their manhood or something - it's a bit debatable whether it does. So if you went on the pill then you would be protected against pregnancy, you wouldn't be protected against AIDS. Would you take that into account? If I hadn't brought it up, if I hadn't mentioned it to you and you had decided to go on the pill?

A: Um, no I wouldn't use condoms, I'd just use the pill.

QU: Had you thought about AIDS or HIV as being any risk to you? Individually?

A: No, not to me individually, no.

QU: I mean do you know about its' history?

A: I know quite a bit about its' history. I know he's terrified of AIDS.

QU: Is he?

A: He's absolutely terrified of AIDS. I mean like he wouldn't sleep with any Tom, Dick or Harry.

QU: Does he talk about it then, about AIDS, does he mention it to you?

A: Not actually to me personally, in a group he's talked about it. Not actually when we're on our own.

QU: Why not?

A: I don't know. It's just never come up. But he's terrified of AIDS.

QU: Is he doing anything about it or is he just scared?

A: Um, I don't know. Like he's away this week. I said to him, 'take plenty of condoms.' You know messing about, and he went, 'I won't need them what do you take me for?' So I says I'm only messing and he says, 'I know you're only messing but you know I won't go around and just sleep with anyone'. So I don't know.

QU: Do you trust him? Are you sure that he won't?

A: I trust him that he won't sleep with anyone but seeing somebody I don't know. Like he'll meet someone but I don't think he'll sleep with them.

QU: But it all becomes.. it would be important in terms of your relationship, it's difficult to think about it in terms of AIDS as well.

A: I don't know. It's not like as if AIDS was never heard of. I don't know, he might. With him being a lot older as well, I mean if he was younger and I was having a relationship and he went away and there was the same closeness I don't think he would, but with him being older and him going away, you know what that's like, so because of his age as well..

QU: Does it feel important to you that he's that much older and more experienced? Does it matter that there's a gap with you being less experienced?

A: No, it doesn't matter.

QU: It doesn't make a difference. I'm interested in contraception again. So you haven't been to a Family Planning Clinic or anything like that? Did you buy your condoms?

A: No, he bought them.

QU: Would you go and buy some? Have you ever done that?

A: Um, I don't know that I would at a chemists, but they sell them in toilets now don't they. I would there. I don't know that I could go in and buy them.

QU: It's not easy is it. Would you be prepared, if you don't stay together with him, in the future to carry them around with you? If you went out and there was the possibility that you were going to cop off or something was going to happen. You would be able to do that?

A: Not if I wasn't seeing anyone. If I was going out with somebody and I was older myself I think I would have some on me if I was seeing someone, but not the first night, no.

QU: Do you see contraception as being your responsibility or of the boy?

A: Both. I don't think it's on one person.

QU: If you're taking the pill though that changes it around a bit, using condoms you both can see what you're doing. When you're on the pill does that make a difference to the way you feel about it?

A: Well it's our responsibility when we're on the pill because we're the one that's got to take it. I don't know, um.., yeah in that sense I think it's the woman's responsibility. If a woman's doing something about it it's her responsibility, but, like, condoms they do it together, it's different really, I don't know.

Q: I think the way it feels is a lot to do with your age as well. I don't know, the type of relationship you're in plus the age you are. I think people change the type of contraception they use as they get older. From the people I've talked to, people use condoms when they're first having sexual experiences quite a lot but they seem to drop that after a while. I mean one thing about condoms is joint responsibility. So how long do you see this relationship lasting?

A: I don't know. It depends really if it lasts longer. I want it to last as well but with my parents and that I know it won't last. We have actually finished it because of my parents.

(The tape is turned off here. 438)

QU: Get back to it now. If you wanted to go on the pill or whatever, would you be going to go to your Family Planning Clinic or going to your doctor or what? Have you thought about that?

A: I've thought about it and I'd go to me doctor.

QU: Why would you make that decision?

A: I don't know, I think it's more private when you go to your doctor. At Family Planning there's more people there and they can see you. If you go to your doctor and you're sat in the waiting room, people don't know what you're there for.

QU: And would you be embarrassed if people did know what you were going for?

A: Some people, yeah. I mean like there's all people that you know, nearly everybody there (laughs). They'd say, 'oh aye, what's she doing here?' and the kind of the relationship I'm having it'd be difficult.

QU: Keep it secret. .. (459). From the AIDS education that you've been given already, you said that you'd been told the basics, what do you mean by that? Don't use needles, use condoms?

A: Yeah.

QU: But are there any things that you haven't been told, that you're unsure about?

A: No not really.

QU: Let me give you an example, something like oral sex, you may not be having oral sex, are you, out of interest?

A: No.

QU: Would you know whether that was a risky thing to do?

A: No, I don't know if it would be.

QU: I think a lot of people know condoms and they know needles but there's more shades than that. The education that you were given, did they explain where the virus is in the body and that type of thing?

A: Blood and stuff.

QU: Yeah, so do you know how it's actually passed?

A: Sperm like, needles again, blood transfusions, a very large amount of saliva...

QU: Pints. (Laughter).

A: That's all I know really.

QU: Have you ever met or do you know of anybody who has got AIDS?

A: No.

QU: Nobody. Not in the neighbourhood or anything that you know of.

A: No.

QU: Do you think that's got an influence on how you feel about it, that you don't see it as a risk?

A: Yeah because if you knew somebody you'd think, 'oh, I live near her or I live near him, what have they.., where've they been'. Yeah, I think your reactions are different if you know of somebody. Definitely.

QU: Yeah. Do you think you'd feel difficult with somebody if they told you they had AIDS?

A: No. Not like friendship like.

QU: You wouldn't be scared of them. Do you think that's how most people of your age think?

A: No. 'Eh look, you've got AIDS, I'm not going near him'. But I think if I was sat here and you told me now that you'd got AIDS I'd shiver. But I mean, I'd just, it wouldn't mean anything to me.

QU: You wouldn't be scared?

A: No.

QU: When they told you at school about AIDS did they tell you about other sexually transmitted diseases, other venereal diseases?

A: No, they didn't really go into things like that.

QU: So you're not worried about getting a sexually transmitted disease?

A: I've never really thought about it.

QU: Did they tell you anything about cervical cancer?

A: No they didn't.

QU: Do you know anything about it?

A: I know you can get it from having sex too long. That's all I know. You can get that.

QU: But you don't know what it is that...

A: It's um.., the womb isn't it?

QU: Yeah it's the cervix, just inside it. It's just that using a condom as well as protecting you from pregnancy, protects you against sexually transmitted diseases. It also can protect you against cervical cancer, it's one of the things that can cut down your chances...

A: No I didn't know that.

QU: They keep these things quiet don't they. (Laughter). So there's nothing else that you would want to know, until I bring these things up, I mean if someone came along who could tell you anything you want to

know about AIDS? There's nothing else that you'd thought about and weren't sure about?

A: No not really.

QU: Do you think if you did need to know, do you feel that you could find it out. Would you know where to go to find things out?

A: Um...

QU: You wouldn't know who to ask?

A: I think I'd ask me Mam.

QU: Your Mum. It seems like you've got a good relationship with your Mum. Do you get on well?

A: Yeah.

QU: Good. The last thing, have you heard of a Well Women clinic?

A: Yeah, you give me a leaflet.

QU: If you had a choice between going to your doctors and going to a Well Women's Clinic that was for young women, do you think you would like to have something like that?

A: It depends what you're going for. If I was going for me pills I think I'd go to the doctor, if I was going for something else I think I would go to the Well Women's Clinic.

QU: Is that because you would want to keep privacy?

A: Yeah.

QU: Do you feel happier talking to a woman doctor? Have you had a woman doctor?

A: No, I've never had a woman doctor.

QU: Would you want a woman doctor if you went for the pill?

A: No, it wouldn't bother me.

QU: I don't know what you girls talk about but when I was your age the big thing was knowing that if you went on the pill you had to have an internal. And that's what we..

A: You don't have to have them, or you do?

QU: I think you still do, yeah.

A: Do you?

QU: That was one of the things, it was quite a big block for a lot us you know, going to do that. Does that worry you?

A: No, because I mean... The doctor's is all private isn't it, he's seen it all.

QU: Yeah. I'm sure, millions of them. Okay, great. (581)

