

**NMC12 RT 23/5/89**

QU: Do you want to move out of the area then?

AN: Oh, definitely.

QU: Where would you move to?

AN: Maybe into Manchester. There are bound to be nicer areas anyway.

QU: South Manchester?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would that be a big thing, moving from North to South Manchester?

AN: Well I want to emigrate really.

QU: Out of England altogether?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Where?

AN: I'd like to go to Canada.

QU: There's nothing much in England, is there?

AN: No, it don't appeal to me.

QU: What does appeal to you?

AN: I don't know, I wouldn't mind going somewhere different.

QU: Have you travelled abroad?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Where have you been?

AN: I've been all round Europe really.

QU: Did you do this with a friend?

AN: No, I went with my family.

QU: Was that on family holidays, you always went abroad?

AN: Yeah.

QU: What sort of places?

AN: Switzerland, Austria, France, Germany.

QU: I think you have to travel to want to travel. Do you live at home?

AN: Yeah.

QU: With your mum and dad?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Have you got any brothers and sisters?

AN: No.

QU: What's it like being an only child?

AN: Awful. Despite what people say. I'd like a brother.

QU: Why is it horrible?

AN: Well, I mean I don't get on well with my mum anyway so...

QU: In what way don't you get on?

AN: I don't know, she's not much older than (?)him; she's what - 35, 36 but, she's got the head on her of a 60-year old.

QU: Is she very old-fashioned?

AN: Yeah. She's one of these people that thinks that...I don't know but - girls shouldn't ask lads out, and you should wait til you're married, you know.

QU: Is your dad like that? Has he got the same point of view?

AN: No. I don't see my dad anymore. They're separated.

QU: Did you used to get on well with him?

AN: I can't remember him; it was ages ago.

QU: They've been apart for a long time?

AN: Yeah.

QU: So you've just got your mum? I can imagine there'd be some conflict there. Do you talk about things to her?

AN: No. I keep..(034)..secrets.

QU: Is that frustrating?

AN: No, I just tell someone else.

QU: You said on your questionnaire that you went to Catholic school. Is your mum Catholic?

AN: She's not a practicing Catholic; she doesn't go to church or anything. I mean I don't.

QU: Do you know why she's like she is?

AN: Well, she got pregnant before she was married, and...(041)..

QU: Was that you?

AN: Mmm.

QU: Did she regret that?

AN: Well, she wanted to be a teacher. And she ended up working..(044)..

QU: How did it make a difference?

AN: Well, she was really good at art, and she wanted to be a teacher.

QU: Does she want to protect you then from the same thing happening?

AN: Yeah. I know she does, because she's always saying that.

QU: Does she talk about the mistakes that she's made?

AN: No, she just tells me about the mistakes that I'm gonna make.

QU: Tell me about the sort of things you and your mum argue about?

AN: Sometimes, I mean, she still thinks I'm too young now to have a boyfriend. That's what she's like.

QU: And you're..

AN: 18.

QU: Would she like you to get married?

AN: Oh yeah.

QU: And then start thinking about sex when you're married?

AN: Yes, she would.

QU: That's a bit of a problem for you. Do you talk to your friends rather than your mum about those sorts of things? Have you got an auntie or something?

AN: I hardly see her; you see, I hardly see my family. Because I'm either at college or I'm doing a part-time job.

QU: Do you think you've missed out on motherly advice and having a good relationship with your mum?

AN: I think I did.

QU: Are there things you'd have liked to have talked about, questions you'd have liked to have asked?

AN: Yeah. I don't know, because I'd like to be able to talk to her as if, like a sister kind of thing; rather than just treating her as if, someone that (?)told me.

QU: Someone that you've got to lie to as well?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Tell me about the course you're doing at college now.

AN: I'm doing three GCSEs and one 'A' level. In the GCSEs we're doing Sociology, Psychology and Biology; and in the 'A' level we're doing English Language/ Lit.

QU: That's in one 'A' level, isn't it?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you get any GCSEs in school?

AN: I've got CSE grade twos.

QU: Obviously you could have done better if you're doing 'A' levels now..

AN: I know.

QU: ..What happened at school?

AN: Well, it was alright til third year; I did well. But then I just got bored with the whole thing.

QU: Couldn't be bothered? Did anyone tell you why you needed the exams at school?

AN: Well, they didn't really; everyone just used to say - you've got to get them, you've got to get them - they didn't give us the reason why.

QU: And then you found out why?

AN: Yeah, you kick yourself when you're doing them and you get your results.

QU: You left school two years ago?

AN: Yeah.

QU: What school did you go to?

AN: [NAME OF SCHOOL].

QU: Some other people I talked to went to [NAME OF SCHOOL]. Did you think it was a good school?

AN: No.

QU: You didn't like it?

AN: No, not really.

QU: Tell me about the school.

AN: Well, it didn't affect me but, like, the people that were in, like we had two bands there - a red band and a white band - if you was in white band, which is below average, you get treated as if you were thick. And they didn't seem to push them to work. Really, they only gave attention to, like, people who were really clever.

QU: So you just got lost?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Were you in the top band?

AN: Yeah. I were in the red.

QU: There were just two?

AN: Yeah.

QU: This was a mixed school?

AN: Yeah.

QU: I think that's what happens to comprehensive schools that don't have enough money. Did you have a good time at school in terms of social life and friends? Did you enjoy that side?

AN: Yeah, it wasn't too bad. I don't know, I always kept myself to myself in school, because I don't mix very well. I used to get on with a lad from my infant school.

QU: What about the girls?

AN: Too bitchy. They were always competing with each other; whereas with the lads you could just have a good laugh.

QU: Did they dislike you for getting on well with the lads?

AN: Yeah. All the time.

QU: Did you get called names?

AN: Yeah, sometimes you get called things like slag, you know anything.

QU: Did you have many close girlfriends?

AN: Well, I had a few but, a lot of them I know from home.

QU: Were they the type of girlfriends that you confided in?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Do you feel that you can get on with boys in the same way?

AN: Yeah, you can tell them anything. A few of them, yeah.

QU: That's good. Generally at school girls and boys are very segregated. Most girls don't talk to boys unless they're being asked out. Are you still friends with boys you knew at school?

AN: Well, I see some of them but, you know, I just talk to the lads at college now, and like the lads at work.

QU: When you were at school, did you have boyfriends, were you going out with them, or was it more...?

AN: It was more friendship.

QU: Did they try that with you?

AN: No, because they knew that I just didn't want that.

QU: How do you think they knew?

AN: I don't know, I just wasn't into that when everybody else was...I might have got called by it like, people going - Oh, you must be a lesbian! You know..

QU: Because you weren't going out with boys?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did people worry you about it?

AN: No, it didn't bother me. I never bother about what people are gonna say anyway.

QU: What's college like?

AN: It's alright. It's a bit boring now and again. I mean, it's quite boring now because everybody's leaving. They're all doing exams.

QU: Is it what you thought it was going to be?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you know about college, the people who were going to college?

AN: Yeah, everybody was alright.. what they said like.. the money's a bit tight; and that was definitely true.

QU: You didn't think of going to get a job straight away?

AN: No, because I mean, if I got a job I'd just end up in an office.

QU: What are your ambitions?

AN: Well, I wouldn't mind being a journalist. Or something to do with English. A lot of them just..I don't want to do a typical nine to five job.

QU: Do you think you're different from the rest of your friends in that way?

AN: Yeah, because most of my friends are either got kids, married or engaged or, you know..really predictable..

QU: Is it predictable in terms of the area you live in?

AN: Yeah, I suppose so. If you just look around you can just see for yourself, all the girls are..they seem to have just wasted their lives.

QU: Did you always realise that you didn't want that?

AN: Well, I think they do it in the wrong order. They get pregnant, and then they get a house and then they get married- if they get married; as if it's a way out.

QU: I was talking to a girl the other day, and she was from Middleton, and she moved from North Manchester to South Manchester on her own. And she said it was like a big important move. She said all her friends, everyone she went to school with were married with babies. And she knew she wanted something different, she wasn't quite sure what it was, but she knew she didn't want that. So she started out by moving out of the area, she said she had to do that first. She said there was pressure on her to be like that. Have you felt that pressure, to fit that mould?

AN: Yeah. It's like JOHN'S mum and family'll come over, and he comes over; and every time he comes over he says - Don't mind that you've not got a boyfriend, SIMONE. I say - God. ..(170)..I don't just want anyone, I don't want..Like most girls these days will settle for anyone, just so they can turn round and say - Oh yeah, I've got a fella on my arm. I'd rather be without.

QU: The sort of lads you come into contact with at college, are they not what you want?

AN: To put it bluntly, they're complete bastards.

QU: In what way are they bastards?

AN: They just don't...(175)..they're all for themselves, you know. They don't give a..They're all nice as pie to you, one minute, and then when your back's turned...Because you can never trust them. They've got no respect for girls at all.

QU: Why do you think that happens? Because these are the same lads you went to school with, they were just younger.

AN: I don't know. I think the lads that I went to school with were nicer than the ones at college. I don't know whether it's to do with the fact that I went to Catholic school; they had more respect for girls.

QU: When you say 'they had more respect', do you mean in the sexual sense; pretending that they're interested in them, and then just wanting them for sex, or was it more general..?

AN: I think it was more general. A lot of the lads in there just think girls don't, should stay in the home; their place is in the home. They're right chauvinists. I just can't stand them!

QU: Have you always been like that?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You must be very different from your mum. Or has your mum brought you up with those type of ideas as well as the conservative ideas?

AN: Yeah. She's always told me about lads to keep away from, and, you know, not to settle just for anybody.

QU: Do you think she regards ..(195)..as bad?

AN: Yeah, definitely.

QU: So she doesn't want you to make that mistake. I think that's very wise. I come from a small town and it was a very similar thing. I just didn't go out with anybody for about two years, and all my mates were going out with them. And I got the same thing; I got called names. But I thought if this is what romance and sex is all about...

AN: ...yeah, there's pressure to..(204)..

QU: ..I didn't want it because they were all idiots.

AN: A lot of them are really stupid! You know, just go away!

QU: Do you get a bad reaction from the boys for your attitude to them?

AN: Sometimes, yeah. Because sometimes....(210)..you know - What's up with you? Can't you take a joke? Can't you have a little bit of fun?

QU: Do you get angry at them?

AN: No, they don't take you seriously anyway.

QU: Do any of your friends say the same sort of things?

AN: A few of them, yeah. It's like when you're going past like workmen, and they're all teasing and whistling and everything; and sometimes they've not even seen your face, they've just seen the back of you. So we walked past all these workmen and we just - Cor, get..! And you should have seen their faces!

QU: Turned it round on them. They don't know what to do, do they?

AN: It's like you see them at the back of..(220)..near college, and they'll call you 'dear' and 'love'. Dear, love, doll, pet.

QU: Do you pick people up on it?

AN: I just leave it. Because they'll just say - Oh, can't you have a bit of fun?

QU: You said you didn't get very much sex education at school. What sex education did you get?

AN: In primary school?

QU: Well, did you get any in primary school?

AN: No. Secondary school. We got a lesson (?)once...(230)...

QU: ...I bet you learnt a lot from that!

AN: In the second year we went into it a bit more. Just a little bit more. Just the basics.

QU: Were they talking about 'the human being'?

AN: Yeah, just like how babies are made, and that's it.

QU: Did they talk about contraception? Not even in the Catholic sense?

AN: No.

QU: Was that it for your sex education?

AN: In the fourth year, this is only if you took Biology in the fourth and fifth year, we did quite a bit. And we did some contraception; but all we did was read from a book. We didn't discuss it or anything.

QU: So no one had a chance to ask any questions?

AN: No. I think we had an AIDS talk. Well, the teacher told us about it, we didn't talk.

QU: What did she say?

AN: She just said - You can't get AIDS from this, you can get it from this.

QU: What did she tell you you could get it from?

AN: Just..what was it? Vaginal fluids, semen, blood.

QU: Did she tell you how to prevent it?

AN: Well, it was a bit iffy, you know what I mean. She didn't really go into detail; she just went very fast. So we didn't have much time to think - Oh!

QU: So did she say that if you use a condom you'll be protected?

AN: No way.

QU: She didn't, right, because it was a Catholic school.

AN: ..(250)..There's no way we were influenced to use contraceptives; it just wasn't discussed.

QU: Amongst the girls at school, how much did the school view of contraception affect them? Do you think that people went along with it? Tell me about their opinions.

AN: Well, in our school they usually lose their virginity at about 13. It just went in one ear and out the other.

QU: Was it seen as a good thing to lose your virginity?

AN: Depends, if it was a one-night stand, no way. Then you were a slag. For a lad, definitely, you've to get rid of it as soon as possible. But, it wasn't really talked about.

QU: Did girls talk about it amongst themselves?

AN: Only what we called the loose girls.

QU: The loose girls? And they talked about sex or about men?

AN: Yeah, that's it.

QU: What were these girls...?

AN: I don't know. If one of them was sleeping with someone, just coming out with everything what a lad would come out with.

QU: What do you mean?

AN: Just like.. I don't know. But if a girl went out with too many lads, not even if she'd slept with any of them, she could still get labelled.

QU: As a slag?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Who does the labelling?

AN: Well, a lot of girls did. But then again, I've always thought that more girls did it than lads did it.

QU: Do you think that the girls started it?

AN: I think they picked it up off the lads; they carried it out.

QU: But the lads did it as well?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Were people scared of getting a reputation?

AN: Loads of people, yeah. But a lot of the ones that got a name, just lived up to it then because they thought - Well, everyone thinks this and that, and I may as well, you know. They won't believe me if I told them not.

QU: Did loads of people get upset about it?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You said the average age to lose your virginity was about 13, even though it was a Catholic school, did any of the girls have any romantic ideals about virginity, things like waiting til you get married..?

AN: A few, but they were like, I don't know. They were all middle class.

QU: Do you think there's a class difference then in sexual activity?

AN: Well, there was a few people there that were like, their parents were like on the education committee or teachers or something like that. They seemed to stand out from the others.

QU: And they generally weren't sexually active?

AN: No.

QU: The girls who like you were called loose, were they generally the naughty ones anyway, the rebels, doing the least work?

AN: Not really, because I knew quite a few who were really clever, you know, just.. (304).

QU: Because when I was at school, it tended to be the ones that were sexually active that used to lag school, a lot of them were very bright but didn't work very hard. So it wasn't really like that?

AN: No.

QU: Was there much talk among the girls about sex in general, did you learn much about sex at school?

AN: Well really, most of the girls talked about periods, you know, period..(315)..and what they were like.

QU: Nothing more than that?

AN: No, not really. Because the thing was in our school, if you talked too much about sex, you always got someone who picked it up and thought - Oh, she looks a right one.

QU: So it was dangerous?

AN: Yeah, unless it was your best friend, so then it was alright.

QU: Had you got to be able to trust people then?

AN: Oh yeah, you'd got to start out knowing who you could trust.

QU: So it was quite a worrying thing then, you'd got to be careful about what you did and what you said?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You said that people were quite sexually active, were people well-informed about contraception?

AN: I think there was a few that was on the pill but, other than that they all just crossed their fingers.

QU: They didn't use anything?

AN: They did.. a few had abortions, but that was kept quiet because it was..

QU: Do you think if people were taught more about contraception at school, they'd have used it or..?

AN: Yeah, but the thing was, like in that school we wouldn't talk about it because it's against the religion so..

QU: Did you get a lot of girls leaving school pregnant?

AN: Yes.

QU: How many?

AN: Four or five. Some..I think there was one that left who wasn't..(339)..she could've been about 13. That was the youngest.

QU: Depressing. So she had the baby and kept it?

AN: Yeah. Well, like I used to remember seeing her boyfriend waiting for her at school and she was about 11. He had lots of money and older than us.

QU: Was it seen as good to have older boyfriends?

AN: Probably it put the lads noses a bit out of joint, because they thought - You know, what's going on here? Aren't we good enough?

QU: Do you think the girls did it for that reason?

AN: Yeah, they did it to show off to other girls as well; you know, if he had a car that would be even better. Doesn't matter what his brains were like.

QU: It was like a status symbol?

AN: Yeah.

QU: How much older were the boys?

AN: About two to four years.

QU: Did you know girls who were going out with older boys?

AN: A few, yeah. My friend did; she was like 14 and he was about 19.

QU: Did you ever go out with boys that were a lot older than you?

AN: No, because I look so young anyway! I used to get kids coming up to me; it was awful. Embarrassing.

QU: Your friend that went out with the older bloke, did she have much of a say? Because older men have a lot of power and girls don't have many rights.

AN: Not really she didn't, no.

QU: Tell me about yourself. You say at school you weren't interested. When did you start becoming interested in boys?

AN: When I went to college really.

QU: How did it change?

AN: I don't know, I think it just clicked and I thought - Oh, he's nice.

QU: Were you surprised at yourself?

AN: A bit, yeah.

QU: When was the first time that you had a boyfriend?

AN: My first boyfriend, I was about 15 but, it wasn't anything serious.

QU: What sort of relationship was it?

AN: Well, I saw him, he saw me. Dunno, nothing serious really; just like a friendship. Didn't want anything else.

QU: Was it at all physical in any way?

AN: Well...

QU: Was it things like touching each other?

AN: ...

QU: When you were at school was that alright then?

AN: Yeah, as long as you didn't go too far.

QU: So what would be too far?

AN: I don't know because, ..(394)..who aren't 15; a lot of my friends said - Oh no, I wouldn't touch there, you know.

QU: Was it like...(396)...so it was alright as long as you touched them...?

AN: It depends, depends how long you've been going out with them.

QU: So were there stages?

AN: Yeah.

QU: What did the girls think about touching the boys, were they into that?

AN: Well, a bit, yeah. It depends how long you've been going out with them because, if you went a bit too far.. I mean he might (?)want you to do it, but he might also tell his mates what you've been up to.

QU: So you had to be very careful? When it came to touching a boy, did people talk about it?

AN: No, it was all..(412)..really...

QU: ...(413)..

AN: Yeah..

QU: It was quite regimented really then, how far you could go?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Tell me about the first boy that you got interested in, when you were at college.

AN: Well, you know, I just talked to him one time and thought - Oh, I like him so, I opened my mouth, and then I said to someone - I wouldn't mind going out with him; don't you know...(419)...And my friend went and opened her big mouth, and he found out, and he asked me out two days later.

QU: Were you pleased that he asked you out?

AN: I was, yeah. But the thing was, the thing that really got me was a lot of girls liked him, and they hated me afterwards.

QU: All the girls did?

AN: Yeah, and I'd only been there about a couple of months.

QU: So they started giving you a hard time?

AN: Yeah.

QU: So what happened between you and the boy?

AN: I don't know; we'd been for about four months.

QU: Was it a good relationship, did you get on well?

AN: Yeah, I mean it was alright. He was a bit of a pain sometimes.

QU: In what way?

AN: A typical lad really, you know - Are you working (?)Wednesday? - Oh, I'm going out with my mates tonight. But if I hang up and say - Well, I'm going out with my mates tonight - it would be a different story then.

QU: He wouldn't like that?

AN: No.

QU: Did you finish with him?

AN: We both decided to finish with each other.

QU: Did you have a sexual relationship with this boy?

AN: ..Mmm..

AN: Was it the first time that you'd had a sexual relationship? Were you scared about it?

AN: Terrified.

QU: Yes. Did you want to have a sexual relationship or did you think that went along with it?

AN: When I first started going out with him I told him, because I'd been told that you had to watch him; he's a bit..

QU: What happened?

AN: ...(442)..and I told him. I says, look you know, if that's all you want, you can go to hell. And he said - Oh no...(445). I wanted to lose it really bad; I was 17 when I lost it and the names I got called because I was still a virgin.

QU: What did people call you?

AN: Well, I got called frigid, and I used to say, how can I be called frigid when I've never had sex? And they used to come up - What?!

QU: So being a virgin at 17 was a stigma?

AN: I just used to say - Why are you so interested in my sex life? I'm not telling you what I'm doing.

QU: So you were really nervous?

AN: Mmm.

QU: Do you think you sort of used him to lose your virginity?

AN: In a way!

QU: Was it a disappointment?

AN: The first time it was awful. ...(458).

QU: Because you were so tense and worried?

AN: Yeah, really..(461)..I mean, yeah; I never used to be able to wear Tampax or anything like that because..(463)..That's bad enough.

QU: It really makes a difference how thoughtful your partner is, how much they care and know about a woman's body, how it works. What was he like?

AN: Well, he wasn't one of those that was, you know, just out for himself, and he'd have what he wanted and then turn around and go to sleep kind of thing. No, he wasn't like that.

QU: So he didn't spend a lot of time kissing you and relaxing you?

AN: Yeah..

QU: So after you'd had sex the first time and hadn't enjoyed it, did you want to carry on?

AN: Well, I'd been told that the first time was very rarely nice, anyway. So I thought it might get better.

QU: You persisted. And did it get better?

AN: Well, for about three times after it still hurt me. But after then it just stopped hurting.

QU: Did it feel good?

AN: It felt better, yeah.

QU: But was it good? There's a difference between not hurting and getting pleasure out of it.

AN: Yeah, yeah, I did, yeah.

QU: When you learnt about sex, did you ever learn about female pleasure, things like women having orgasms?

AN: No, I just read it out of books.

QU: Did you read about that?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Where did you read about it?

AN: I just got it like, well, my mum had a book in her bedroom cupboard, so I went and had a look at it.

QU: What did that talk about?

AN: It had everything in it.

QU: So you expected that you should enjoy it then?

AN: Yeah.

QU: I think a lot of women think that if sex doesn't hurt then it's good. You expected to get pleasure. Did you ever talk to your boyfriend about that?

AN: Not really.

QU: How did you find talking about sex to him? Was it difficult?

AN: It never really got discussed.

QU: Why do you think that was?

AN: I don't know, I really don't.

QU: Did he never talk about things?

AN: Not really.

QU: Would you have liked to talk about it?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Do you feel that you could have started the conversation?

AN: I could have done, yeah.

QU: But you didn't?

AN: No.

QU: So it got better sleeping with this boy. Did it get to a stage where you started learning about your body and getting pleasure?

AN: I think I didn't go out with him long enough to, because I always think that you can (?)get more experience if you..(?)sleep with every Tom, Dick and Harry. But, you know, I don't think when, he's the only one I've slept with; I don't think he's enough to...(527)..

QU: That's what I'm interested in; you said you could have talked about sex, did you feel that you had enough courage to do that?

AN: Yeah..

QU: And did you? Did you teach him things?

AN: Well, a little bit but, I don't know, I just let him carry on with it.

QU: Did you feel like he was doing it to you?

AN: Yeah. I don't think I felt as confident as I would have liked to have done.

QU: That sort of confidence doesn't just come. And it depends who you're sleeping with; because there are some people who you can never get to that stage with. How long ago did you have this relationship?

AN: About a year ago.

QU: Did that put you off having another relationship?

AN: No, not really because I just think it seemed being..(550)..really.

QU: Did you feel good in a sense because you wanted to lose your virginity and you had?

AN: Yeah. When I first started going out with him, it wasn't like that. I wanted to keep it but, (?)with him that's the way it went. Because my mum always used to go on about keeping it, so I thought (?)I'll lose it.

QU: Was that being rebellious?

AN: Yeah.

QU: You said that your mum said about keeping it, how did she portray it to you?

AN: She just used to say things like - Oh, you don't know what you're catching. You might get pregnant. Don't end up like I did.

QU: So it wasn't that virginity itself was a wonderful state..?

AN: Oh no..

QU: ..having sex was horrible...

AN: It's not like something out of Barbara Cartland.

QU: She and you didn't see it as..?

AN: It was just a burden when I had it.

QU: It was a burden because people were getting at you?

AN: Not really; I just wanted to (?)experiment because I always say like, that I'll try everything at least once.

QU: When you were sleeping with him, were you using contraception?

AN: Er, at the beginning, yeah. For a bit.

QU: Why was that?

AN: I don't know just, couldn't be bothered.

QU: You were using condoms?

AN: Yeah.

QU: What was your boyfriend's name?

AN: WILLIAM.

QU: Did WILLIAM mind using them?

AN: No, it didn't bother him.

QU: So he wasn't saying he didn't want to use them?

AN: No.

QU: So both of you decided you couldn't be bothered to use them?

AN: Mmm.

QU: Did you realise then that you were taking risks in terms of getting pregnant?

AN: I only ever realised every time my period was late. You know, that's when I used to...(589)..but, then when I came on, it was - Oh.

QU: When you were having sex without contraception, you didn't worry at the time?

AN: Sometimes I did, yeah.

QU: Why do you think that you were using it?

AN: I don't know, it was just..because it was like having a bath with your clothes on.

QU: So you didn't enjoy using a condom?

AN: No. Because like, the first time when I lost my virginity, we used contraception. But then we stopped, and it felt better.

QU: So it was easier for you?

AN: Yeah.

QU: So in a way, it was your choice not to be using it?

AN: Yeah.

QU: In future would you use it? The next time you have a sexual relationship.

AN: Well, I'm on the pill anyway; but that's all. I'm on the pill. But the reason I'm on that's because my periods; I don't really think I need it but.. If I wasn't too sure about someone I've just met, then I would, even though I'm on it.

QU: You were 17 when you weren't using anything, did you think it was likely that you'd get pregnant?

AN: No.

QU: Why is that?

AN: Because I don't really imagine myself..

QU: Being pregnant?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Did you feel that you were just too young or..?

AN: No, I just couldn't imagine myself, you know.

QU: You're obviously taking risks then. Do you take risks in other ways in your life?

AN: In what way?

QU: Were you not using contraception because you were taking risks and it was exciting to take risks?

AN: No, I don't think so really.

QU: In a way you were really lucky that you didn't get pregnant. Did you realise that you were lucky not to get pregnant?

AN: Yes.

QU: Say you weren't on the pill now, and you're seeing somebody, do you think that you would do the same thing again?

AN: ...because like, I..(640)..now.. I'm glad I never did get pregnant because I couldn't stand....(642)...because I don't like him, I couldn't think the same thing about the person you've only just met.

QU: You say you're on the pill now, where did you find out about the pill from? Your mum didn't talk to you about contraception?

AN: No, I know that my mum was on the pill for the same reason.

QU: Bad period pains?

AN: Yes. And it didn't work and every time I had a period, I'd just feel really like...(655).. So I told the woman there, and she said...(657)..and they just told me..

QU: They just suggested that that was a way to..

AN: Yeah, go down to the clinic.

QU: So you went down to the clinic and what did you say to them?

AN: I just told them that I had bad periods and I wanted something for it. Preferably on the pill, because I knew that was supposed to (?)relieve it.

QU: They put you on the pill at the clinic. Did they say that that was a good idea to go on the pill?

AN: Yeah, she said at the clinic - Oh, we'll put you on this straight away. She didn't think of any other.. She asked me how bad it got. And she just said - Oh, alright, we'll put you on it then.

QU: What clinic was that?

AN: (?) [NAME OF STREET]

QU: Did they tell you about the risks of the pill?

AN: Mmm, I mean, I already know the risk.

QU: What risks do you think there are?

AN: Loads of them. ..(682), cancer, thrombosis, ..(684)..

QU: Does that worry you?

AN: I think the thing that worries me most about the pill is the fact that they say it can stop you having children.

QU: That worries you more than the health risks?

AN: Yeah, I mean like, they say I've got to go..(691)..to have blood pressure.. and not smoke, and don't drink to excess.

QU: So you wouldn't take too much of a risk..

AN: Mmm, I'm not over-weight or anything like that.

QU: If you had smoked and drank and been over-weight, do you think you would still go on it?

AN: Don't think so, no.

QU: Since you finished with that last boyfriend, have you thought about having any other relationships?

AN: I've been out with a few boys, but I've not slept with them.

QU: Is that because there's been no one about that you've been interested in?

AN: I've become more choosy now.

QU: Is that because of the last boyfriend?

AN: Yeah.

QU: So you really weren't happy with that relationship?

AN: I mean at the time yeah, but now I'd think - God, what a dickhead!

QU: How do you think you get to meet the sort of lads that you want to meet? Have you any ideas about what you're going to be doing in the future to meet nice people?

AN: Well, I think if I got a good job, and I was with people that were like intelligent at least. Because most of the lads that I know are thick, just I don't know. I like lads with a bit of nous.

QU: I think that's completely justified. So what are you thinking of doing when you leave college then?

AN: I'm considering journalism.

QU: Have you got any ideas about how you get into that?

AN: My uncle works for a newspaper, he works for the [NAME OF LEFT-WING NEWSPAPER]. But I mean he works in a totally different field.

QU: Is he a printer?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Do you get careers advice at the college?

AN: They just..(749)..anything; they say - Oh, you'd make a good nurse, wouldn't you?

QU: Have you said to them what you want to do?

AN: Well, I've told them I want to do English; I've got two English teachers. And one says - Oh, you're definitely good enough. One says I should be an English teacher, and the other one says I ought to be a journalist.

(new side)

QU: If you don't come from that sort of background, then quite often you need to do a course....the London School of Printing does a very good course. If you do that, you'll definitely get a job. The other way is to get a low-paid job with a local paper, and then go on from there. If you go to the Careers Advice they'll give you better advice.

AN: Most of the careers advice I've been given was all working in an office; being a nurse or being a nanny..

QU: All things you don't want to do?

AN: It doesn't appeal to me. I don't know. Like my uncle always says - Why are you so clever...(780)..Because he says you should be earning eight grand a year at least.

QU: Do you get on well with your uncle?

AN: Oh, miles better than I do with my mum; well we get on better when..(783)..you know, the rest of my family.

QU: What does your mum want you to do? Has she got ambitions for you, apart from not getting pregnant?

AN: Well, she says that I should do journalism.

QU: So she's behind you on that?

AN: Yeah. She doesn't want me to do a typical female job..(787).

QU: So you recognise that you're being pushed into certain jobs because you're a girl?

AN: Yeah, and there's no one really in our family that has shown us like that, you know...(799)..

QU: That's good; it's important to have that support. Because you get bombarded from it in the outside world; you can't do that, you've got to get married and have babies..

AN: It's like one time I said I wouldn't mind being a psychiatrist or something; and one lad said - Oh, you're too small, SIMONE....(893)..

QU: You're too small?

AN: Yeah, he says - you might get an inferiority complex.

QU: Have you thought about doing a degree? Has anyone mentioned that to you?

AN: I don't think I'm clever enough really.

QU: I'm sure you are. There's a lot of thick people who do degrees, but they come from families where it's expected to do one. You're probably a lot more intelligent than most people doing degrees. Would you know how to apply, has anyone at college suggested that you do?

AN: A few but, I mean my English teacher suggested, because I wouldn't mind doing a degree in English.

QU: I think to do journalism it would help you an awful lot if you had one. And also if you go to Poly or University, you could work on the student papers. That's a way of getting experience.

AN: But I heard that you've got to have at least four 'A' levels.

QU: Generally it's three 'A' levels that you need. You can come as a mature student and you don't need 'A' levels over 23. Or you can do diplomas that qualify you instead. But you should find out about it, because that would give you a lot better chance. It's such a long process getting what you want...

AN: It's not as easy as Scott off Neighbours, is it!

QU: It certainly isn't! You said that they told you very little about AIDS at school, which obviously wasn't enough, what do you know about AIDS and where did that information come from?

AN: From the media.

QU: From the adverts and TV? What did you think of the adverts?

AN: Hopeless. Especially the one at the end.

QU: Why?

AN: I don't know, because there's always something that (?)the electricity board does..you know, you just don't think...it's like the one with the (?)wreath..condom. There just always really romantic.

QU: Do you think they give you enough information?

AN: No, they just say, they just go on about homosexuals, and how you can get it.

QU: Who do you think is at risk from AIDS?

AN: People who sleep around.

QU: So you don't think it's just homosexuals?

AN: No, I think they're a lot more careful now. It's the others that, who say - We won't get it, we're alright.

QU: You mean straight people?

AN: Yeah.

QU: They don't see themselves to be at risk?

AN: No.

QU: Do you think straight people are at risk?

AN: Oh I think now most of them are (?)homosexuals.

QU: ....

AN: ..They've got a really negative attitude.

QU: They're a lot less honest about sex as well. The gay community was hit so hard by AIDS that it had to do something about it. I think they have to be more open about sex because it's difficult to come out if you're gay..

AN: ...(842)..other people who...(843)..homosexuals, they just don't seem to think that, you know... I know loads of people who are sleeping around who could be spreading it as well, and they don't get called for it. Like the lads that do...(845), you know - Oh, well he's a lad isn't he?

QU: ..He's virile..

AN: Yeah, one of the boys.

QU: Do you think there is a double standard for girls and boys?

AN: Yeah, like if girls do it and enjoy it, that's seen as bad, you know.

QU: That's interesting; do you think that girls tend to not show that they enjoy sex, not show that they're interested in sex? It's ok for boys to want sex for sex, to want physical gratification. Do you think girls are able to present sexual desires in that way?

AN: ..Yeah..

QU: How do you think that they do present their sexual desires?

AN: Can you explain a bit more?

QU: Yeah, it's confusing. Do you think girls have the same strong sexual desire that boys do?

AN: I don't know really. I think in a way yeah. But they just don't show them. Or if you do show them, they're...(861)..

QU: So it's put into more romantic things like feelings and relationships?

AN: Mmm.

QU: Have any of your girlfriends ever said that they slept with someone and really enjoyed it or 'he was really good in bed' and that was great sex?

AN: No.

QU: It's not seen in those terms?

AN: No.

QU: If someone did talk like that, what would your impression be?

AN: I'd just think at least they're open about it.

QU: But you'd be surprised to hear that?

AN: Yeah.

QU: When I was at school, definitely; the girls weren't supposed to enjoy it, it was 'love', and you did it to get something.

AN: ...(870)..

QU: Well, everything. You're paying to have a boyfriend..

AN: You're lucky aren't you?

QU: No, I didn't enjoy sex, until I started reading my mum's Cosmopolitan! 'What's this female orgasm thing?' So from what you've seen about AIDS in the adverts, do you think that the way they present situations where people are going to have sex - there's one in the girl's flat and another in the disco - Do you think they are realistic situations?

AN: Well, I don't think the one in the flat is, but I think the one in the club is. Because I can imagine that, I know for a fact that a lot of people just go to clubs to pick up boys, like a cattle market for some people.

QU: Do you think it's wrong for girls to sleep around?

AN: I don't know, not really, no. It depends, it is from a lad's point of view. But then again, if a lad turns round to a girl, like he's going out with and says - Oh, she's really loose. She'd probably agree with him, you know.

QU: Why didn't the girls that you went around with do it?

AN: I don't know.

QU: Do you think they did it because they wanted sex?

AN: I think they just do it for the experience.....

QU: Talking a bit more about AIDS, in what ways do you think that you could stop, prevent, yourself from getting it, from what you see on the media?

AN: Just being careful who you sleep with. I mean like, it's not easy because you can't tell by looking at someone if they have got it. You just have to use contraception.

QU: What, any contraception?

AN: Condoms.

QU: What if you were on the pill, would that still....

AN: I'd still use them. I'd definitely use a condom. I mean I wouldn't tell a lad I was on the pill anyway, although I'd really like to, because I'd think; why should I do it all, make him do something.

QU: ...

AN: Because it's not only the fact that you can get AIDS, you can get anything.

QU: Do you think you can trust a man to be honest with you about who they've slept with?

AN: I don't know, I mean you'll always get some people that will boast and all that, I mean you'll always get someone like that, but some of them are a bit more secretive about it. Because a lot of people don't like to tell a girl.

QU: If you were seeing somebody and you were going to have sex with them, and you asked them who they'd slept with... Do you think you'd be able to ask who they've slept with before you slept with them?

AN: I don't think I'd be able to ask them outright, but I'd get round it some way.

QU: Would you ask other people about them?

AN: I'd just, I don't know, I'd just make like little...to find out in little ways.

QU: Do you think you could ask someone straight? If you just said to somebody - Who have you slept with? I'm worried about AIDS and I want to know...

AN: Well, I think if you turned round and said - I'm worried about AIDS, they'd think you were..(927)..just said..

QU: So you think you have to be careful about ask them?

AN: Yeah, because of..(928)...a melodramatic thing.

QU: If a lad said to you he's slept with three people, would you think he was safe?

AN: You could just sleep with one person really.

QU: Do you think it makes any difference knowing...

AN: No, because someone could have slept with loads and loads of people and still not get it, they might have been lucky...(934)..

using condoms.

QU: So do you think that that's the way you would protect yourself, by using a condom?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Do you think it's easy to ask a lad to use a condom?

AN: Just tell him: 'Look, if you don't want to use anything..(938)..'

QU: What would you do in a situation where he said he wouldn't use one? It's easy to say you'd say that, but it's hard if you really like him.

AN: Well, I'd ask him why; I'd want to know the reasons.

QU: If he said because I don't like sex with condoms, then what?

AN: Well, I'd just turn round and say - Well, I don't want to get pregnant.

QU: So would you use the thing about pregnancy?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would you be happier to say that than to say - I don't want to get AIDS?

AN: Yeah, because if you turn round to him and say - I don't want to get AIDS - he might really get insulted then.

QU: So you'd be worried about insulting him?

AN: Yeah, because I wouldn't like anyone turning round to me and saying, like a lad saying - I'm wearing a condom because you might have got something. I'd be really insulted...(951)..

QU: Why would you be insulted?

AN: I don't know; AIDS is seen as something that's dirty..

QU: That's a strong image of it. Do you think it is about that, that people see it's dirty?

AN: No, it's not, it's just, it's just the thing itself..

QU: If someone said to you - I'm not going to sleep with you unless you have an AIDS test - What would you think?

AN: Well, I don't think I'd have an AIDS test, anyway, because I've heard that like, if you have one, that does your life insurance. So there's no way.

QU: So if someone said I'm going to use a condom because I'm scared about AIDS, what would you think?

AN: I wouldn't be insulted by that.

QU: But you imagine that a lad would be insulted if a girl said it to him?

AN: Maybe, yeah.

QU: I think you're probably right. So do you think that you're at risk from it? Obviously at the moment you're not..

AN: Well, I don't know because that lad I slept with, I mean who he's slept with, I don't know what he's been up to before me. So even now, I'm not 100%. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed.

QU: Do you think that's enough to keep your fingers crossed?

AN: Well, like, I can't do anything now; if I've got it, I've got it but, in the future...

QU: You're going to...(972) about it?

AN: Yeah.

QU: In the future, the sort of relationships you're expecting to have, do you want to find someone to settle down with as quickly as possible, to have a serious relationship, even if you don't get married. Or are you looking to experiment and find out about different people...

AN: Yeah, I don't want to get into the sort of, you know, like if I got married, and it wasn't the right person, you know.

QU: ...(982)...

AN: Yes, you'll just end up having an affair, and I don't agree with that anyway.

QU: Do you think AIDS has made it more difficult for you to do that; to live your life in the way that you want to, finding out about different men, finding out about sex...

AN: Not really, no. I think as long as you use precautions, you're alright.

QU: I think that's right but you said before that the best way not to get AIDS was not to sleep around. Do you think you would have thought that anyway if it wasn't for AIDS?

That you shouldn't sleep around. Or do you think that AIDS has made people more scared about sleeping around?

AN: Well, most of the people I know, no, I don't think it's made a jot of difference to them. They've just got this attitude where it's alright.

QU: Do you know anybody who's got it?

AN: No.

QU: Have you ever met anybody who's got it?

AN: No.

QU: And the people who you're talking about who don't take any notice of it, don't know anybody who's got it?

AN: No. I know a few homosexuals and bisexuals, but I don't think they've got it. I don't assume that just because they are what they are they've got AIDS.

QU: Do you think that AIDS is going to have a bigger effect in the future or do you think there's going to be a cure soon? How do you look at the future in terms of that?

AN: Well, I think they've panicked a bit over it. I think the media's blown it all out of proportion, definitely. But I think it's still serious.

QU: Do you think people are responding to it though, seriously?

AN: Not what I've heard talked.

QU: What sort of information do people need? You say that most of the people you know don't think it's relevant to them. How do you think it should be presented so that people would take notice.

AN: With some people I don't think they'd ever take any notice, you know, I really don't.

QU: Would it be better if there was more explicit information around?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would you know if oral sex is risky?

AN: Er, I think I'd say it is.

QU: It is? It's low-risk; it's not nearly as risky as...

AN: But can you imagine having an advert with that on?

QU: Do you think that would be offensive to have an advert that mentioned oral sex?

AN: Well, it wouldn't be offensive to me, but I think a few mothers would have a few words to say about it.

QU: Your mother?

AN: Oh no, she thinks...(1026)..as well.

QU: Is that the sort of information that you think you need?

AN: Yeah. I think you'd have to be careful about the times you showed it, you know, like young children; you couldn't show it on children's TV.

AN: Would people talk about sex in that detail? Did people at school say whether they'd had oral sex?

AN: No, because that's a bit iffy that one really.

QU: A bit taboo?

AN: Oh yeah.

QU: Why?

AN: I don't know, I think a lot of people think it's disgusting. I mean you either think it's ok or you don't.

QU: Why do you think some people think it's ok and some people don't?

AN: Don't know, they think anything that's a bit different from the norm is to be avoided.

QU: Do you think that has something to do with the way that people think about sex in general, how much they enjoy sex?

AN: Yeah.

QU: Would you find the idea of oral sex disgusting?

AN: Well, when I was younger I used to think - Ergh - but now no, I wouldn't.

QU: When you think about oral sex, do you think about it as something that a woman does for a man?

AN: No...(1050)..

QU: It's something a man does for a woman? I think a lot of people think it's disgusting because they think it's something they've got to do for a man. And they don't want to do that. I think that's understandable. Have you ever had the chance to talk about sex in detail, to talk about what sex could be like for people? All the different things you can do and what people like to do, and actually discussing it, openly?

AN: No, no.

QU: Do you think that would have been good if you had?

AN: Yeah, but there's like no way in our school you'd be able to do that.

QU: And amongst friends, why do you think friends don't talk about it?

AN: Well, in school no one ever talked about it, but like in college a lot of people will like tell you everything.

QU: Do you feel that as you get older it's getting easier to talk about sex?

AN: Yeah. ...(1068).

QU: Tell me about the girls at college, are they having relationships, are they in a similar situation?

AN: A lot of them have got boyfriends; I mean a lot of the girls in my Sociology class have got kids, you know, really young. Well, SALLY, I think she's 20, she's got a kid, that's about three, so she was quite young. Quite a few seem to be having babies; it's like at work, you know, there's at least three that are pregnant.

QU: Where do you work?

AN: You know Miles Platting? You know...(1081)?

QU: And do you enjoy that work?

AN: Yeah, because the lads there are really nice.

QU: Ah! You meet lots of interesting men?

AN: Yeah...

QU: What's the difference then?

AN: They treat girls a lot nicer.

QU: Are they older?

AN: About the same age, but they don't come from round here. A lot of them are either from South Manchester, or Oldham.

QU: So you get a different type of man.

AN: They don't come out with these smutty jokes.

QU: There's definitely an area around Harpurhey and Middleton, a triangle that seems to be very different. It's very poor and that makes a difference. It's Catholic and people don't seem to move about. It's interesting that you want to move out, because a lot of people from that area that I've talked to said - Oh no.

AN: Oh, I couldn't stay there; I hate the place.

QU: Going to college is a way of getting out. Is there anything about AIDS that you would like to know about?

AN: Not really, no.

(end: 1112)