

So much for the sexual revolution

One of the dirty little myths of contemporary culture is that the sexual revolution coincided with the feminist revolution, freeing women to play — and play around — just like men.

Alas, they got too busy, just like men. Men found they didn't have all that time for play any more, either.

That's the fundamental conclusion of a new sex study, based on interviews with 3,432 men and



Suzanne Fields

women between 18 to 59. At least 85 percent of the married women and more than 75 percent of the married men in this expansive group say they're faithful to their spouses. What's more, married people have more sex than their single counterparts. "Good sense should have told us that most people don't have the time and energy to manage an affair, a family and the Long Island Rail Road," says John H. Gagnon, a sociology professor at the State University of New York at Stony Brook and one of the co-authors of the study. Not only that, it's difficult to be sexy when there's a portable phone, a fax machine and a lap top computer between you and your object of desire all-consuming.

Camille Paglia is right: "Male adventurism has always been a costly, painful privilege." In the world of two-career couples most men can't afford that painful privilege. Neither can most women. Given the givens, that everybody lies about sex, these statistics run sharply athwart conventional pre-

Suzanne Fields, a columnist for The Washington Times, is nationally syndicated. Her column appears here Monday and Thursday.

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matter of time until the sexual freeze frames of American society achieved a rating of PG-13. AIDS, herpes, warts, yeast and all the other pesky sexually transmitted diseases tell only part of the story.

Hints of the life buried in the sexual revolution were found in the earlier "The Cosmo Report: Women and Sex in the '80s," a survey of

106,000 Cosmo readers who, we were told over and over, were frantically enjoying erotic experimentation. But a close reading reveals real dissatisfaction by women, who say they are often "sexually insincere" and only pretend to enjoy what they do not actually feel. Fully 53 percent of those interviewed by Cosmo say the sexual revolution "caused sex to be too casual or made it hard for them to find acceptable reasons to say no to a man sexually."

More than a decade later, young women in the new sex survey find it hard to say no to their peers who encourage them to casually contribute their virginity to the evening's entertainment. A third of the younger women blamed peer pressure for their first sexual experience, compared to 13 percent from earlier generations.

Despite the tabloid literature of gamekeepers with rich Lady Chatterlys, or limousine sugarpops with beautiful blonde bimbos, most couples spring from the same social-economic class, marrying neither up nor down. Nor are heterosexuals at much risk of AIDS, as the media has been lying to us for years. Most heterosexual women do not have sex with homosexual men or intravenous drug-users, the high risk groups. Heterosexual men usually don't have sex with the women who do.

What's different about this sex survey and the others, such as by Kinsey, Masters and Johnson, and Shere Hite, is that the sample was random, rather than made up of volunteers who were eager to talk about their most intimate habits. Stories about sex, from Eden on, ain't necessarily so. And when they are so, they're only stories told by people who like to talk about sex.

Freud scores again. Human achievement requires a degree of sexual repression; civilization requires its discontents. If the new sex survey comes even close to plumb the truth of contemporary human experience, it might be prudent to take a better look at the impact of sexual distortions emanating from television soaps, blue movies, the decadence depicted among celebrities of MTV, and the music that appeals to those who cannot exercise self-restraint in the pursuit of pleasure. They're the real victims of the sexual revolution.