from Phyllis Schlafly

November 28, 1991

The Lessons of Magic Johnson

“Even me,” screamed the cover of Newsweek about Magic Johnson. “It can happen to anybody, even me,” the famous basketball player said at his news conference announcing that he has the AIDS virus.

I watched Johnson's news conference on television in which he told the world he is retiring from basketball and why. He is a very likable guy. We all felt sorry for him and our hearts reached out to him.

But I waited in vain for him to tell us how he got the AIDS virus, and he left us guessing. The answer came out a couple of days later in Sports Illustrated.

Magic said he got it from a woman, but he doesn't know who, when or where. Why can't he figure out the source? Because he's slept with so many women he can't identify the HIV carrier. “The problem is,” Magic said, “that I can't pinpoint the time, the place or the woman. It's a matter of numbers.”

It boggles the mind to contemplate having sex with so many people that you can't remember who they were. He can probably remember the cities he visited and the restaurants he ate in, but he can't remember the women whose bodies he enjoyed.

Then he added defensively, I'm no Wilt Chamberlain, but as I traveled around the N.B.A. cities, I was never at a loss for female eompanionship.tr That's a reference to Chamberlain’s recent autobiography, View from Above, in which he boasted he had had 20,000 sexual encounters.

So Magic says he's not in Wilt's league. Well, how many women did he have sex with in his twelve glorious seasons with the Lakers since 1979? Maybe only half as many as Wilt? Maybe only 5,000 or 10,000? Magic doesn't know. He lost count.

How does Magic rationalize this extraordinary behavior? “Before I was married, I truly lived the bachelor’s life.” That’s an insult to all bachelors.

Magic showed no remorse that he had done anything wrong, merely regret, about the consequences. He offered no apology to all those thousands of women. He seems to think that the only thing he did wrong was not to wear a condom.

What about those thousands of women? Did he call them after all those one-night stands to say, “If you find you are pregnant, I’ll support your baby, or send you $300 for an abortion?” Obviously not; he doesn't even know who they are. They are scattered around the country and left for the taxpayers to pay the bills.

What do you suppose is going on in the minds of all those women after they saw his confession on TV? Will they be proud that they got AIDS from Magic Johnson?

What about his wife Cookie, whom he married only recently and is now two months pregnant? So far she doesn’t test positive for the HIV virus so far. Magic’s case demonstrates for the world that promiscuity when single is an offense against your future spouse.

Dr. Theresa Crenshaw, the national authority on AIDS, once challenged an audience of some 300 medical personnel: “If you had the partner of your dreams available sexually, and knew that person was HIV infected, would you have sex with him or her depending on a condom for protection? If so, raise your hand.” Not one hand went up. She concluded: “It's irresponsible to advise students, clients, patients to do what you would not do yourself.”

So much for the future life of Mrs. Magic Johnson.

Magic says that having the AIDS virus is “God’s way” of directing him “to carry the message about the dangers of AIDS to everyone.” Then he added, “Everything I’ve done, He’s directed me.”

Sorry, Magic, somebody has sold you a bill of goods. God certainly didn't direct you to live your life of irresponsible promiscuity, “accommodating as many women as you could.”

Those who think Magic's lifestyle was OK have set up a chorus of calling him “courageous” for going public with his story. He wasn't courageous; he knew he couldn't hide his disease. What would he give as a reason for leaving the Lakers -- that he suddenly didn't like basketball anymore?

Yes, Magic Johnson is a victim -- a victim of all those who told him that sex with anyone is a social custom of bachelorhood. He is a victim of all those who failed to harm him about the high cost of so- called free sex.

Magic Johnson's new career is to be a preacher about AIDS. If he preaches condoms, he will be giving a dangerous message. Wouldn't it be more helpful to his young admirers if he would preach the good morals and good health of chastity before marriage and fidelity afterwards?