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newsletter...

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Could Your Partner Be Cheating?

All men are alike - at least when it comes to cheating. That's what US authors Elizabeth Landers and Vicky Mainzer argue in their new book, *The Script: The 100 per cent Absolutely Predictable Things Men Do When They Cheat* (Hyperion Books, about \$45).

According to the pair of Californian divorcees, 35 per cent of men are unfaithful. And after hearing hundreds of real-life stories of philandering husbands and clueless wives, they realised they were hearing the same things over and over again.

They claim most cheating men use such similar patterns of behaviour and standard lines, regardless of age or background, that they could almost be following a screenplay for their own personal horror movie.

After her own husband cheated on her, a devastated Mainzer, 66, joined a support group.

"I talked to other women and started to see a tremendous sameness in what they were telling me," she said.

"After a while, I could interrupt stories of cheating husbands and tell the women exactly what would happen next and their jaws would drop!

"It was like I had a crystal ball." And so *The Script* was born.

Famous cheaters such as Bill Clinton, David Beckham and Prince Charles were no different.

"Clinton's hair-splitting definition of sex with Monica Lewinsky was classic script behaviour," she said. "Cigars, apparently, didn't count."

Landers and Mainzer say they wrote the book as a wake-up call to women everywhere: "Women tell us that reading the script earlier might have clued them in to their husbands' straying ways and maybe saved them years of therapy, crushed trust and painful divorce suits."

Melbourne relationship counsellor Janet Hall agreed the script was fairly accurate.

"Telling her she should see a psychiatrist or to get a life is a very common symptom of an unfaithful husband," she said.

"It's also particularly evil as it diverts the heat away from him."

Dr Hall said almost as many wives cheated as husbands, but typical behavioural patterns were different.

"Unfaithful men tend to be egocentric and make the woman 'wrong' by being critical of her, rejecting her taste, telling her she watches rubbish on TV or that her clothes aren't smart enough," she said.

"Whatever she likes, he'll dislike. But cheating women are more clever and less selfish and try to maintain the status quo. They'll keep up appearances, won't let the housework slip and won't show that they've switched off emotionally."

But it's not just their modus operandi that sets the sexes apart; women's and men's motivations for extramarital passion were different.

"When women have affairs, they tend to have an emotional connection with that person," Dr Hall said.

"While men have affairs for lots of reasons, including good sex, novel sex, a midlife crisis, a power thing or an ego boost."

But a husband's roving eye wasn't the only danger lurking in the marital jungle, she warned.

"A wife's biggest problem is actually other women who prey on married men," Dr Hall said.

"If a predator woman wants a particular man and thinks she can get him out of his marriage, she will pursue him, chase him, charm him, make herself available for sex, compromise herself and make it hard for him to say no when it's handed to him on a plate."

And these snakes are lying in grass much closer than most women realise.

"In 90 per cent of cases, the other woman is either a colleague at work or the wife's best friend," Dr Hall said.

"The other 10 per cent is usually someone they've met at the gym or on the kindergarten committee. Women are bitches to each other."

If a woman suspects her husband is cheating, she should:

1. Encourage him to see a counsellor with her. It's best to get an independent third party to help
2. She should not interrogate him, it just gives him more ammunition against her. She should be assertive and express her concerns but if she asks too many questions, he can always make her wrong.
3. Make him apologise, reassure her she can trust him and promise never to see the other woman again, the price paid by a caught cheater.
4. Appeal to the richness of the marriage, how much they've invested together and what is at stake.
5. Work on her own 'femme fatale' and compete with the other woman. Affairs can boost a couple's sex life, so if she wants to improve the relationship, she needs to show him sex at home is as good as elsewhere.
6. Don't bring up the past. The more she rubs a man's ego in it, the more reason she'll give him to leave.

Healthwatch, Ed. Fay Burstin

Thank You

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