

STM: NYK37/LDN, JULY 28TH 1978 MSG: PLA

TO: LONDON

FROM: TIME MEDICINE

SLUG: IT'S A GIRL CLOSE: 7/28 EOH:

THE FOLLOWING STORY SENIOR-EDITED BUT UNCHECKED, IS
SENT TO YOU FOR COMMENTS AND CORRECTIONS:

MEDICINE (TOUFEXIS)EG

LJ

IT'S A GIRL

. . FROM TEST TUBE TO TOT

BORN: LOUISE BROWN, 5 LBS. 12 OZ., 11:47 P.M., JULY 25.
WHEN GILBERT JOHN BROWN LEFT OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL
EARLY TUESDAY EVENING LAST WEEK, HE HAD NO IDEA IT WAS TO BE
A SPECIAL NIGHT. HE AND HIS WIFE LESLEY, DUE TO GIVE BIRTH
IN NINE DAYS TO THE WORLD'S FIRST BABY CONCEIVED IN A TEST
TUBE, HAD SPENT A QUIET DAY TOGETHER READING THE PAPERS AND
WATCHING TELEVISION. BUT SHORTLY THEREAFTER, RUMORS BEGAN TO
CIRCULATE THAT THE BABY WOULD ARRIVE SOON. . REPORTERS AND
PHOTOGRAPHERS THROGGED TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE MATERNITY
UNIT, CLAMORING FOR INFORMATION. AT 10:45 P.M., JOHN BROWN
WAS SUMMONED BACK TO THE HOSPITAL. SOON AFTER MIDNIGHT, THE
ANNOUNCEMENT CAME: "MRS. BROWN HAS BEEN SAFELY DELIVERED BY
CAESARIAN SECTION OF A FEMALE CHILD. THE CHILD'S CONDITION

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AT BIRTH WAS EXCELLENT. ALL EXAMINATIONS SHOWED HER TO BE QUITE NORMAL."

THE NEXT DAY, AS JOHN BROWN SAT OUTSIDE THE ROSE-FILLED ROOM WHERE LESLEY SLEPT AND BABY LOUISE WAILED VIGOROUSLY IN THE NURSERY, DR. PATRICK STEPTOE AND ROBERT EDWARDS SPOKE OPENLY ABOUT THEIR ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE FIRST TIME. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE IN OGDHAM, STEPTOE EXPLAINED THAT THE BABY WAS DELIVERED EARLY BY CAESARIAN SECTION BECAUSE LESLEY BROWN HAD DEVELOPED MILD TOXEMIA, A FORM OF BLOOD POISONING THAT SOMETIMES OCCURS IN PREGNANCY AND CAN LEAD TO STILLBIRTH. THE DELIVERY WAS UNEVENTFUL. SAID STEPTOE OF LOUISE: "SHE CAME OUT CRYING HER HEAD OFF . . . A BEAUTIFUL NORMAL BABY."

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STEPTOE ALSO REVEALED THAT THE DELIVERY HAD FILMED AND THAT THE PICTURES WOULD PROBABLY PROVE AN IMPORTANT POINT. SOME DOCTORS HAD POINTED OUT THAT WOMEN WHO HAVE LONG BEEN INFERTILE BECAUSE OF DEFECTIVE FALLOPIAN TUBES STILL ARE SOMETIMES ABLE TO CONCEIVE NORMALLY. IF LESLEY BROWN'S TUBES WERE INTACT, THEY NOTED, STEPTOE WOULD NOT HAVE IRREFUTABLE PROOF THAT HER BABY HAD BEEN CONCEIVED IN A TEST TUBE. BUT, STEPTOE SAID WITH EVIDENT SATISFACTION, "I WAS ABLE TO SHOW THAT THE TUBES WERE ABSENT." LESLEY, HE EXPLAINED, HAD HAD AN OPERATION IN 1970 TO TRY TO CLEAR HER BLOCKED TUBES BUT WITH NO SUCCESS. AFTER SHE WAS REFERRED TO STEPTOE IN 1976, HE DID AN EXPLORATORY OPERATION AND FOUND "THERE WERE HERE REMNANTS OF HER TUBES." BECAUSE THESE REMNANTS BLOCKED HIS ACCESS TO THE OVA, STEPTOE REMOVED THEM.

FINALLY, ON NOVEMBER 10, IN WHAT STEPTOE DESCRIBED AS AN

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85-SECOND OPERATION, HE EXTRACTED AN EGG FROM ONE OF LESLEY'S OVARIES, AND PLACED IT IN A LABORATORY DISH. EDWARDS THEN FERTILIZED THE EGG WITH JOHN BROWN'S SPERM. TWO TO THREE DAYS LATER, WHEN THE EGG HAD UNDERGONE THREE CELL DIVISIONS, IT WAS PLACED IN LESLEY'S UTERUS. SAID EDWARDS: "THE LAST TIME I SAW THE BABY BEFORE THE BIRTH, SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL EIGHT-CELLED EMBRYO."

STEPTOE AND EDWARDS, WHO HAVE BEEN INNUNDED WITH CALLS FROM INFERTILE WOMEN, REFUSED TO CONFIRM OR DENY THAT THERE ARE ANY OTHER TEST-TUBE BABIES ON THE WAY. (BRITISH NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT THREE ADDITIONAL WOMEN ARE WELL ADVANCED IN TEST-TUBE PREGNANCIES) BUT, SAID STEPTOE, HE HOPES THAT "IN A REASONABLE NUMBER OF YEARS, INSTEAD OF THIS BEING A ONE-DAY WONDER OR A SEVEN-DAY WONDER, IT'LL BE A REASONABLY COMMONPLACE AFFAIR." NEVERTHELESS, SAID EDWARDS, A GREAT MANY QUESTIONS REMAIN TO BE ANSWERED, THE CHIEF ONE BEING WHY THE UTERUS ACCEPTS OR REJECTS THE TEST-TUBE EMBRYO. SAID HE: "THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE SOLVED ALL THE PROBLEMS AT ONCE. WE'RE AT THE END OF THE BEGINNING. NOT THE BEGINNING OF THE END."

BLONDE-HAIRED LOUISE, WHOM PROUD FATHER JOHN DESCRIBED IN THE DAILY MAIL AS "BEAUTIFUL, WITH A MARVELOUS COMPLEXION, NOT RED AND WRINKLY AT ALL," IS ALSO AT THE END OF HER BEGINNING. AT WEEK'S END, SHE HAD GAINED TWO OUNCES AND WAS BEING BREAST FED. SHE AND HER MOTHER WILL REMAIN IN THE HOSPITAL FOR ABOUT TEN DAYS. THEN, SAID JOHN BROWN, "WE'RE JUST GOING TO GO HOME AND TRY TO SLIDE BACK INTO OUR OWN WORLD . . . WE DON'T WANT A NEW-FANGLED LIFE." WHETHER

done (was
3 hrs)

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THAT WILL BE POSSIBLE IS ANOTHER QUESTION. ASKED BY
REPORTERS IF THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY COULD EXPECT
TO LEAD A NORMAL LIFE, EDWARDS REPLIED: "THAT DEPENDS UPON
YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES."

COMP/BB/1:14 PM EDST

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