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STM: LN33/NY JULY 17 78 MSG: ADV

TO: TIME PRESS

FROM: LONDON BY: WHITE

SLUG: TEST TUBE TEMPEST EOH:

THE FUNNIEST AND MOST FRANTIC FLEET STREET ACTION ON THE TEST TUBE BABY WAS LAST WEEK, WHEN ON WEDNESDAY THE DAILY EXPRESS BROKE THE STORY WITH A BIG "EXCLUSIVE" ON PAGE ONE, FOLLOWED BY THE DAILY MAIL'S "EXCLUSIVE" NAMING THE PARENTS ON THURSDAY, FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER "EXCLUSIVE" FRIDAY BY THE SUN. IT IS SOMEWHAT CALMER THIS WEEK--SO FAR.

HOWEVER, THIS STORY IS NOT GOING AWAY, AND CAN ONLY GET BETTER. THE HOSPITAL AT OLDHAM IS STAKED OUT BY BRITISH (AND FOREIGN) NEWSMEN, PHOTOGRAPHERS HAVE THEIR CAMERAS TRAINED ON THE MOTHER-TO-BE'S WINDOW, NURSES AND DOCTORS AND ANYBODY WHO IS REMOTELY CONNECTED WITH THE CASE ARE EAGERLY PURSUED FOR INTERVIEWS. SOME REPORTERS HAVE TRIED TO SNEAK INTO THE HOSPITAL POSING AS VISITORS TO OTHER PATIENTS, AND A PLATOON OF REPORTERS FROM THE DAILY MAIL, WHICH HAS BOUGHT "EXCLUSIVE" WORLD RIGHTS TO THE STORY, ARE UP THERE THUMBING THEIR NOSES (AND REFUSING TO SPEAK TO) REPORTERS FROM OTHER PAPERS.

ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A PLURRY OF EXCITEMENT THIS PAST WEEKEND WHEN IT WAS RUMORED THE BIRTH WOULD TAKE PLACE BY CAESARIAN ON SUNDAY, WORD TODAY IS THAT THE BIRTH IS NOT IMMINENT, AND COULD WELL NOT TAKE PLACE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. THE BIRTH MAY BE FULL-TERM

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AND NATURAL. IT MAY NOT COME UNTIL AUGUST.

THE BIRTH WATCH WILL CONTINUE, AND INTENSIFY, UNTIL THEN. AND WHEN IT HAPPENS, THERE'LL BE A MONUMENTAL FREE-FOR-ALL AS THE OPPOSITION TRIES TO STEAL AS MUCH AS IT CAN FROM THE DAILY MAIL. THE REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY, STUNG BY CRITICISM OF THE HOSPITAL'S EARLY WILLINGNESS TO GO ALONG WITH THE RELEASE OF INFORMATION THROUGH THE DAILY MAIL, HAS TAKEN OVER THE ISSUANCE OF PERIODICAL BULLETINS, BUT THE MAIL REPORTERS STILL HAVE THE ONLY ACCESS TO THE PARENTS.

TODAY, THE DAILY MAIL DRIBBLED OUT A BIT MORE, REPORTING THAT THE FATHER, JOHN BROWN, HAD LISTENED TO THE BABY'S HEART-BEAT, AND THAT IF THE BABY IS A BOY, IT WILL BE NAMED PATRICK AFTER PATRICK STEPTOE, THE GYNAECOLOGIST.

THERE IS ENOUGH FOR A STORY THIS WEEK, OR IF YOU PREFER, THE FOLLOWING WEEK, ISSUE CLOSING 7/28, WE ARE PLANNING TO GO TO OLDHAM TOMORROW (TUESDAY), TO TRY AND PENETRATE THE DAILY MAIL MONEY AND MAKE SOME CONTACTS FOR A MEDICINE STORY TO RUN AFTER THE BIRTH OCCURS. WE COULD FILE TO YOU THIS THURSDAY, OR WRAP UP AN EARLY FILE FOR A PRESS STORY TO GO NEXT WEEK.

PLEASE ADVISE.

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