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SAYS THE TEACHER, STERNLY, TO A SMALL BOY AND GIRL IN THE "SUNDAY PEOPLE" CARTOON: "YOU WILL STAY IN AFTER CLASS AND WRITE; I MUST NOT MAKE BABIES IN THE CHEMISTRY LAB, 200 TIMES." ANOTHER NEWSPAPER CARTOON HAS A SCIENTIFIC TYPE WHEELING A BABY-CARRIAGE; INSIDE IS A TEST TUBE. JOKES ABOUND: "DID YOU HEAR WHAT DR. STEPTOE TOLD MR. BROWN?" THE LONDONER ASKS HIS NEIGHBOR -- "CONGRATULATIONS, IT'S A TEST TUBE."

AFTER LAST WEEK'S BATTLE OF THE "EXCLUSIVES," FLEET STREET IS A MITE CALMER, BUT THERE IS GROWING ENJOYMENT AMONG THE RIVALS OF THE "DAILY MAIL," WHOSE OWNER, ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS, BOUGHT "EXCLUSIVE WORLD RIGHTS" TO THE STORY OF THE TEST TUBE BABY FOR A REPORTED 300,000 POUNDS, AT WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE SIGHT OF THEIR EXCLUSIVE OOZING AWAY.

REPORTED THE "DAILY EXPRESS" TUESDAY, UNDER THE ROUSING PAGE ONE HEADLINE, "TELL THE WORLD EXCLAM"; "THE SECRETS OF THE FIRST TEST TUBE BABY ARE TO BE REVEALED TO THE WORLD AFTER ALL -- BY ORDER. THE DECISION WAS MADE LAST NIGHT BY THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT, WHICH INSISTED THAT AS THE HEALTH SERVICE HAD BEEN USED IT WAS ONLY RIGHT THAT THE WORLD SHOULD BE TOLD OFFICIALLY... UNDER HEALTH DEPARTMENT PRESSURE, GYNAGEOLOGIST MR. PATRICK STEPTOE AND HIS

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PARTNER DR. ROBERT EDWARDS HAVE CLIMBED DOWN AND AGREED TO TELL ALL. THEY SAID THAT AS SOON AS MRS. LESLEY BROWN'S BABY IS BORN, AT OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL, THEY WILL RUSH TO A WORLD PRESS CONFERENCE IN NEARBY MANCHESTER FOR A QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION. LAST NIGHT'S DECISION SPELLS THE END OF ANY PLAN TO MAKE THE NEWS AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY TO ONE NEWSPAPER GROUP, AS THE DOCTORS HAD ORIGINALLY INTENDED."

WHETHER THIS TELL-ALL-IMMEDIATELY-AFTER-THE-BIRTH PRESS CONFERENCE BY STEPTOE-EDWARDS ACTUALLY WILL TAKE PLACE, OR WHETHER THIS IS JUST "DAILY EXPRESS" WISHFUL THINKING, REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

TODAY, THE BIG NEWS IS THE REPORT FROM OLDHAM HOSPITAL THAT THE ESTIMATED DATE OF DELIVERY IS AUGUST 4. LAST FRIDAY, THE RUMOR SWEEP FLEET STREET THAT THE BABY WAS DUE, BY CAESAREAN, THIS PAST WEEKEND. IT APPEARS THE DOCTORS PLAN TO ALLOW MRS. BROWN TO GO FULL TERM, AND GIVE BIRTH NATURALLY, AND FULL TERM IS FIGURED TO BE AUG. 4 BUT IT STILL MAY BE EARLIER.

THE SUNDAY TIMES REPORTS (HEADLINE: "HOW THE DAILY MAIL CAME SECOND WITH ITS WORLD EXCLUSIVE") THAT "THE STORY WAS BROKEN, APTLY ENOUGH, IN AMERICA. IN APRIL, OFFICIALS FROM WASHINGTON'S HEALTH DEPARTMENT VISITED MRS. BROWN'S GYNAECOLOGIST, PATRICK STEPTOE, IN OLDHAM. A TIPOFF CAME TO THE NEW YORK POST THAT AT LAST AN IMPLANTATION HAD 'TAKEN' IN A STEPTOE PATIENT AND THAT A BABY WAS ON THE WAY. LATE ON APRIL 18, NEW YORK POST REPORTER SHARON CHURCH (EX-DAILY EXPRESS) CALLED STEPTOE. BUT SHE WAS NOT ALONE. SITTING BESIDE HER WAS NEW YORK LAWYER MICHAEL DENNIS WHO HAD A STRONG INTEREST IN THE RUMORED PREGNANCY. DENNIS WAS ACTING FOR A FLORIDA WOMAN WHO IN 1973 HAD SOUGHT TO HAVE A CHILD BY THE IMPLANTATION TECHNIQUE. AN OVUM HAD BEEN FERTILIZED BUT TWO DAYS

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BEFORE IT COULD BE IMPLANTED, IT HAD BEEN DESTROYED BY A DISAPPROVING DOCTOR. THE WOMAN WAS SUING BOTH THE DOCTOR AND THE HOSPITAL CONCERNED; DENNIS WOULD BE GREATLY AIDED IN HIS CASE IF HE COULD SHOW THAT TEST TUBE PREGNANCIES WORKED. ROUSED FROM HIS SLEEP, STEPTOE WAS CAGEY. UNDER PRESSURE FROM CHURCHER, HE ADMITTED THAT THE TIP OFF WAS TRUE. BUT HE TOLD CHURCHER THAT IF THE POST PUBLISHED THE STORY, 'THOUSANDS OF REPORTERS' WOULD ARRIVE AT THE HOSPITAL. 'FOR GOD'S SAKE,' HE IMPLORED HER, 'DON'T PRINT IT.' THE (NY) POST PRINTED.!! (NOTE: DID A STORY, IN FACT, RUN IN THE NEW YORK POST IN APRIL? WILL CHURCHER OR NY LAWYER DENNIS CONFIRM THIS ACCOUNT?)

AFTER THE NY POST STORY, THE SUNDAY TIMES REPORTS, ANOTHER BRITISH EXPATRIATE JOURNALIST, BILL DICK, FROM THE NATIONAL INQUIRER, WITH OTHER INQUIRER MEN, ARRIVED IN OLDHAM AND APPROACHED STEPTOE, TRYING TO BUY THE STORY RIGHTS. HARD ON THEIR HEELS CAME OFFERS FROM THE DAILY MAIL, AND FROM RUPERT MURDOCH'S NEW YORK POST THE SUN, OF LONDON.

AN OLDHAM SOLICITOR HANDLED THE BIDDING, REPRESENTING THE FAMILY. BRITISH BIDDERS POINTED OUT HELPFULLY HOW DISTASTEFUL IT WOULD BE FOR THE RIGHTS TO BE WON BY THE LURID NATIONAL INQUIRER. THE DAILY MAIL'S BID WAS ACCEPTED JULY 9. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE DAILY MAIL SET ABOUT RETRIEVING ITS STAKE BY OFFERING RIGHTS TO THE STORY AROUND THE WORLD (THE MAIL INTENDS TO PUBLISH THE STORY EXCLUSIVELY IN BRITAIN).

ONE OF THE UNSUCCESSFUL BIDDERS, THE LONDON DAILY EXPRESS (ANOTHER UNSUCCESSFUL BIDDER: THE LONDON DAILY MIRROR), WHICH HAD KNOWN OF THE IMPENDING BIRTH FOR MONTHS (LIKE OTHER NEWSPAPERS), BUT HAD HONORED STEPTOE'S REQUEST TO LAY OFF THE STORY IN THE INTEREST OF THE MOTHER AND BABY'S HEALTH, NOW WAS GLAVANIZED INTO ACTION. THE DAILY MAIL HAD BOUGHT THE STORY, BUT THE OUT-BID

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EXPRESS WASH'T ABOUT TO LET THEM BREAK IT.

ACCORDING TO THE DAILY EXPRESS, THEY LEARNED THE IDENTITY OF THE TEST TUBE PARENTS IN THIS FASHION, THEIR REPORTERS HAD BEEN WATCHING EXPECTANT FATHERS ARRIVE AT OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL. THEY BELIEVED ONE OF THEM WAS THE TEST TUBE FATHER -- BUT WHICH ONE? WHAT WAS HIS NAME, AND WHAT WAS THE NAME OF HIS WIFE, WHO WAS INSIDE THE HOSPITAL? EXPRESSMEN SAY THEY HAD BEEN TIPPED THAT THE PARENTS LIVED ABOUT THREE HOURS AWAY BY ROAD, SO THEY TOOK THE LICENSE NUMBERS OF CARS IN WHICH LIKELY-LOOKING FATHERS ARRIVED AT THE HOSPITAL. ONE OF THE LIKELIST-LOOKING WAS MR. BROWN. HE SEEMED SOMEWHAT NERVOUS. THEY TRACED THE CAR'S LICENSE TO BRISTOL (WHICH IS ABOUT THREE HOURS AWAY) AND FOUND OUT THE OWNER'S NAME, AND ADDRESS. THEN THEY QUESTIONED NEIGHBORS OF THE BROWN'S TO SEE IF MRS. BROWN WAS PREGNANT, WAS TOLD BY ONE: "OH YEE, SHE'S PREGNANT. SHE'S BEEN TRYING A LONG TIME." THAT'S THE EXPRESS VERSION. WE ARE CHECKING THE EXPRESS EDITOR TO SEE IF HE WILL ELABORATE ON IT. AND ALSO TO SEE IF THE BROWNS OWN A CAR, AND IF IT IS, INDEED, POSSIBLE TO TRACE A LICENSE PLATE IN THIS FASHION.

HAVING RUN DOWN THE IDENTITY OF THE BROWNS, THE DAILY EXPRESS JUMPED INTO PRINT TUESDAY, JULY 11 (TWO DAYS AFTER ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS (DAILY MAIL) HAD BOUGHT THE WORLD RIGHTS), WITH A BIG PAGE ONE STORY. HEADLINE: "EXCLUSIVE...BABY OF THE CENTURY." THE EXPRESS STORY SAID: "THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY WILL BE BORN IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE WEEKS TO AN ENGLISH WOMAN... THE WOMAN ... IS THE 32-YEAR-OLD WIFE OF A RAILWAYMAN LIVING IN THE SOUTH-WEST OF ENGLAND. THE DAILY EXPRESS KNOWS HER IDENTITY BUT HAS NOT NAMED HER FOR ETHICAL REASONS. EARLIER THIS YEAR OLDHAM HEALTH CHIEF MR. EDWIN WARREN SAID MR. STEPTOE WOULD ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH

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THROUGH THE SCIENTIFIC MEDIA. " THE DAILY EXPRESS STORY CALLED THE WOMAN "MRS. A."

APOPLECTIC AT THE EXPRESS BEAT, THE DAILY MAIL, NEXT DAY, WEDNESDAY JULY 12, HEADLINED: "DAILY MAIL WORLD EXCLUSIVE. TEST-TUBE MOTHER TALKS FOR THE FIRST TIME." THEY HAD A FEW COMMENTS FROM HER, AND IN LARGE TYPE: "OUR MIRACLE BABY." THE DAILY MAIL IDENTIFIED THE WOMAN AS MRS. LESLEY BROWN, OF BRISTOL, AGED 32. THE DAILY MAIL SAID: "CERTAINLY THE BABY WILL BE BORN FINANCIALLY SECURE, ALTHOUGH THE BROWNS ARE AN AVERAGE COUPLE...THE UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR CHILD'S CONCEPTION HAS PRODUCED A FLOOD OF OFFERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD.... THE WORLD RIGHTS TO THE STORY HAVE BEEN SOLD TO ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS GROUP LTD.' SYNDICATION SERVICE AND WILL BE APPEARING IN LEADING NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN BRITAIN, BY AGREEMENT WITH THE PARENTS, THE EVENT WILL BE COVERED IN EXCLUSIVE DETAIL BY THE DAILY MAIL." ("TEST-TUBE BABY TO BE BORN RICH" HEADLINED THE DAILY MIRROR, WITHOUT IDENTIFYING THE PARENTS).

GIVING THE DAILY MAIL A FURTHER HEADACHE, THE SUN, ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 12 -- THE SAME DAY THE DAILY MAIL IDENTIFIED MRS. BROWN -- RAN AN INSIDE STORY ON THE BROWNS, ALSO IDENTIFYING THEM, AND QUOTING MR. BROWN AT SOME LENGTH. "SUN EXCLUSIVE ON THE BIRTH OF THE CENTURY," TRUMPETED THE SUN.

NEXT DAY, JULY 13, THE DAILY MAIL PRINTED A PICTURE OF MRS. BROWN ON PAGE ONE, ALONG WITH A FEW MORE DETAILS. BUT LO AND BEHOLD, THE SAME DAY, JULY 13, THE SUN ALSO PRINTED MRS. BROWN'S PICTURE ON PAGE ONE: "ANOTHER SUN EXCLUSIVE."

ON JULY 16, THE "SUNDAY PEOPLE" JOINED IN WITH BIG PAGE ONE HEADLINES: "EXCLUSIVE. AMAZING MOMENT WHEN TEST-TUBE BABY WAS

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CONCEIVED. THE MIRACLE AT MIDNIGHT." THE STORY SAID: "A FANTASTIC OPERATION INVOLVING SPLIT-SECOND TIMING ALMOST ON THE DOT OF MIDNIGHT SIGNALLED THE MIRACLE OF THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY. MONTHS OF INCREDIBLE PLANNING WERE FINALLY PUT INTO DRAMATIC AND HEART-STOPPING ACTION ONE NIGHT IN OCTOBER. IT WAS REVEALED YESTERDAY. MIRACLE NUM-TO-BE LESLEY BROWN AND HER HUSBAND JOHN DASHED FROM A SECRET HIDEAWAY TO THE CLINIC OF GYNAECOLOGIST PATRICK STEPTOE. AT MIDNIGHT JOHN PROVIDED A PSEUM SAMPLE WHILE MR. STEPTOE REMOVED A FERTILE EGG FROM LESLEY."

ON MONDAY, JULY 17, THE SUN WAS AT IT AGAIN, WITH "ANOTHER SUN NEWS EXCLUSIVE." THE SUN REPORTED: "IT'S GOING TO BE A BOY. THAT WAS THE HINT FROM THE TEST TUBE BABY HOSPITAL YESTERDAY. THE WARDS WERE BUZZING WITH THE BIG SECRET EVERYONE WANTS TO KNOW. STAFF WERE HEARD TO REFER TO THE BABY AS 'HE' AFTER A SCAN CHECK ON MIRACLE NUM LESLEY BROWN, 32, WHICH CLEARLY SHOWED THE BABY'S SEX."

THE SUN, AS YOU SEE ABOVE, STILL IS SAYING MRS. BROWN IS 32. SO ARE SOME OTHER NEWSPAPERS. AND SO DID THE DAILY MAIL, ON WEDNESDAY. BUT BY THURSDAY, THE MAIL HAD CHANGED HER AGE TO 30. (WHEN WE CALLED TO POINT OUT THE DISCREPANCY, THE DAILY MAIL SAID "MRS. BROWN SAYS SHE IS 30." THEN THE MAIL SPOKESMAN SAID: "THAT'S FREE. THE NEXT ONE WILL COST YOU.")

ALONG WITH THE CONFUSION ABOUT MRS. BROWN'S AGE, HER HUSBAND'S AGE HAS BEEN PRINTED VARIOUSLY AS 38 AND 36. THE MAIL AND MOST OTHERS ARE USING 38. THE DAILY MAIL IS CALLING THE HUSBAND JOHN, ALTHOUGH OTHER NEWSPAPERS ARE CALLING HIM GILBERT. ACCORDING TO THE MAIL, HIS NAME IS GILBERT JOHN, BUT HE IS KNOWN AS JOHN. SOME PAPERS ARE CALLING HIM A RAILWAYMAN, WHILE OTHERS SAY HE IS A VAN DRIVER EMPLOYED BY BRITISH RAILWAYS, WHICH APPEARS TO BE CORRECT.

AFTER THE DAILY EXPRESS PUBLISHED ITS SCOOP ON TUESDAY, JULY

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11. DR. STEPTOE ISSUED THIS STATEMENT: "MYSELF, MY COLLEAGUES AND THE MEDICAL AND NURSING TEAM INVOLVED IN THE FORTHCOMING BIRTH AT OLDHAM, WISH TO STATE THAT PRESSURE BY THE MEDIA COULD ENDANGER OUR PATIENT AND HER CHILD. IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT IN THE WEEKS AHEAD AN ATMOSPHERE OF TOTAL CALM IS VITAL TO THE WELL-BEING OF THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD-TO-BE. IN ALL OF MY MANY CONVERSATIONS WITH THE PRESS, RADIO AND TELEVISION I HAVE REPEATEDLY MADE THIS CLEAR. UNTIL THIS MORNING THEY HAVE ALWAYS REACTED IN A RESPONSIBLE AND UNDERSTANDING MANNER AND, LIKE US AT OLDHAM, HAVE PUT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF THE PATIENT FIRST. THIS MAKES THIS MORNING'S LAPSE BY ONE NEWSPAPER (OUR NOTE: DAILY EXPRESS) EVEN MORE REGRETTABLE I HAPPEN TO KNOW THAT MANY OF ITS RIVALS COULD HAVE PUBLISHED ALL THEY PRINTED AND MORE, BUT EXERCISED RESTRAINT WITH THE WELL-BEING OF OUR PATIENT IN MIND. ANY MORE OF THIS IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS WOULD BE EXTREMELY IRRESPONSIBLE AND ANY RESULTING MISFORTUNE WOULD BE ON THE SHOULDERS OF THOSE WHO ACT WITH SUCH IRRESPONSIBILITY."

THE STATEMENT WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE PARENTS HAD BEEN ADVISED BY STEPTOE TO MAKE AN ARRANGEMENT FOR THE STORY RIGHTS WITH A SUBSTANTIAL ORGANIZATION, AND STEPTOE WAS QUOTED AS SAYING: "THERE WAS A DOUBLE PURPOSE IN THIS. FIRST, TO TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF THE PARENTS, AND SECOND, TO SECURE A FINANCIAL FUTURE FOR THE CHILD." (ONE OF THE LARGER QUESTIONS STILL UNANSWERED IS WHETHER STEPTOE-EDWARDS ARE GETTING ANY OF THE REPORTED 300,000 POUNDS IN THE PACKAGE, AND HOW MUCH OF THAT REPORTED SUM THE PARENTS ARE GETTING. OLDHAM RUMOR IS THAT STEPTOE-EDWARDS INITIALLY WERE IN FOR A SIZEABLE SHARE, BUT STEPTOE HAS SINCE STATED THAT HE HAS SIGNED NO CONTRACT AT ALL, PRESUMABLY MEANING NO MONEY.)

THE DAILY EXPRESS, IN REPORTING STEPTOE'S REBUKE ON

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 12, WAS QUITE UNREPENTANT. "FOLLOW THE DAILY EXPRESS, LIKE THE REST OF FLEET STREET," IT HEADLINED ON PAGE 3. ANOTHER EXPRESS HEADLINE: "IT COST THE DAILY MAIL THOUSANDS." "YESTERDAY THE DAILY MAIL ANNOUNCED A DEAL RUNNING INTO HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS FOR ITS STORY OF THE TEST TUBE BABY. YOU'RE AHEAD WITH THE EXPRESS... THE PAPER THAT CARES."

THE DAILY EXPRESS REPORTED: "MR. PATRICK STEPTOE YESTERDAY CRITICIZED THE DAILY EXPRESS FOR PUBLISHING NEWS OF THE BIRTH SOON OF THE FIRST TEST TUBE BABY. AT THE SAME TIME A STATEMENT WAS ISSUED ON HIS BEHALF ANNOUNCING THAT EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO THE STORY HAD BEEN SOLD TO ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS...THE DAILY EXPRESS, IN PUBLISHING THE STORY YESTERDAY, DELIBERATELY CHOSE NOT TO IDENTIFY THE MOTHER-TO-BE FOR ETHICAL REASONS AND TO PROTECT HER FROM PRESSURES. BUT THE DAULY MAIL TODAY PUBLISHES THE PARENTS' NAME. THEREFORE THE EXPRESS HAS TO RECOGNIZE THAT THERE CAN BE NO FURTHER REASON FOR SECRECY. YESTERDAY'S STATEMENT BY ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS MADE IT CLEAR THAT OTHER NEWSPAPERS OR MAGAZINES WISHING FOR DETAILED NEWS AND PICTURES OF THE BABY AND ITS NOTHER WOULD HAVE TO PAY."

INITIALLY, THE DAILY MAIL HAD THE STORY SO TIGHTLY SEWED UP THAT PRESS INQUIRIES TO THE HOSPITAL SWITCHBOARD WERE BEING REFERRED TO THE DAILY MAIL. THE MAIL ALSO STATIONED A SECURITY GUARD OUTSIDE MRS. BROWN'S ROOM. WHEN OTHER NEWSPAPERS COMPLAINED, THE AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY KICKED OUT THE DAILY MAIL SECURITY GUARD AND PUT IN ONE OF ITS OWN, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO ADMIT ONLY THOSE AUTHORIZED BY STEPTOE AND MRS. BROWN. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, IN A MILD REDUKE TO THE HOSPITAL, ALSO DECLARED THAT INFORMATION ABOUT MRS. BROWN (MEANING BULLETINS) WOULD BE ISSUED TO ALL. THE

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DEPARTMENT SAID THE PATIENT WAS PERFECTLY ENTITLED TO SELL HER STORY BUT IT WASN'T THE POLICY OF THE DEPARTMENT, REGINAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES OR ANY OTHER PUBLIC BODY TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN NEWSPAPERS IN PROVIDING INFORMATION OF GENUINE PUBLIC INTEREST. ANOTHER BLOW TO THE POOR OLD MAIL.

THE RESPECTED "GUARDIAN" COMMENTED EDITORIALY THAT "ACCORDING TO DR. STEPTOE, ONE REASON FOR THE DEAL (WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS) WAS 'TO TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF THE PARENTS.' TRUE TO THE TRADITION OF CHEQUE-BOOK JOURNALISM, IT HAS, OF COURSE, DONE NOTHING OF THE SORT. THE DAILY EXPRESS SPLASHED THE STORY ACROSS THREE PAGES...DR. STEPTOE'S PLEA FOR 'AN ATMOSPHERE OF TOTAL CALM' WOULD HAVE BEEN RECEIVED MORE SYMPATHETICALLY IF HE HIMSELF HAD NOT BEEN ONE OF THE MAIN INSTIGATORS OF THE CHEQUE-BOOK DEAL. IN CASE DR. STEPTOE HAS FORGOTTEN, LET HIM REMEMBER THAT THE (HOSPITAL) IS A PUBLIC HOSPITAL AND THAT MOST OF HIS RESEARCH HAS BEEN FINANCED THROUGH PUBLIC FUNDS... IT WOULD BE HELPPUL IF DR. STEPTOE WOULD TELL US IF HE IS RECEIVING ANY BENEFIT FROM THE CHEQUE-BOOK DEAL. THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH HAS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT TASK: TO REMIND THE OLDHAM HEALTH AUTHORITIES THAT THEY HAVE A DUTY TO INFORM EVERYBODY ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE IRTH." (THIS EDITORIAL WAS FOLLVED BY ACTION BY THE HEALTH AUTHORITIES; IT PROBABLY TRIGGERED IT.)

U.K. PRESS GAZETTE, A WEEKLY FOR JOURNALISTS, POINTS OUT THAT "IN THIS CASE, AS IN MOST CASES WHERE THE CRY AGAINST 'CHEQUE-BOOK JOURNALISM' IS RAISED, THERE IS A MISREADING OF THE PRESS COUNCIL GUIDELINE. THE ALLEGED 'OFFICE' WAS NOT OF PASSING CASH BUT OF GLAMORISING OF BABIES?" IN OTHER WORDS, WHEREAS NEWSPAPER PAYMENTS TO HARLOTS AND CRIMINALS FOR THEIR STORIES MAY BE REPREHENSIBLE, IN THE CASE OF THE TEST TUBE BABY PARENTS WHAT'S

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WRONG WITH IT?

THE "GUARDIAN'S" REMARK THAT CHEQUE-BOOK JOURNALISM IN THIS CASE CERTAINLY DIDN'T TAKE THE PRESSURE OFF MRS. BROWN WAS UNDERLINED LAST FRIDAY NIGHT WHEN SOME IDIOT PHONED THE HOSPITAL AND SAID THERE WAS A BOMB IN THE MATERNITY UNIT. MRS. BROWN, ALONG WITH OTHER PATIENTS, WAS MOVED TO ANOTHER PART OF THE HOSPITAL WHILE A SEARCH WAS MADE. IT PROVED TO BE A HOAX.

THE SUNDAY TIMES SAID EDITORIALY: "INDIGNATION AT THE DAILY MAIL'S HAVING PAID A LARGE SUM FOR THE RIGHTS TO THE STORY... HAS BEEN A LITTLE OVERDONE. SOME OF THE CRIES OF OUTRAGE CAME FROM NEWSPAPERS BEATEN IN THE BIDDING. THE STORY IS OF LEGITIMATE PUBLIC INTEREST... THE REAL QUESTION OF ETHICS, JOURNALISTIC AND MEDICAL, TURNS ON WHETHER PUBLICITY FOR THE BIRTH WAS A GOOD IDEA AT ALL. AS AN INFANT, THE CHILD WILL SUFFER NO HARM; BUT ITS NAME WILL BE KNOWN, ITS PROGRESS THROUGH TALKING AND WALKING AND SCHOOL-GOING DEVOUTLY CHRONICLED, AND IT MAY COME TO BE REGARDED -- AND TO REGARD ITSELF -- AS SOMETHING OF A FREAK. THE DOCTORS AND THE HEALTH AUTHORITY IN THE CASE MIGHT WELL HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THE KINDEST COURSE WAS TO DRAW NO SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE WHOLE AFFAIR. AS AGAINST THAT, IF REPORTS OF THE SUN THE MAIL PAID HAVE ANY TRUTH IN THEM, THERE ARE PLENTY OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE THEIR AMOUR-PROPRE A LITTLE RUFFLED IN CONSIDERATION OF POUNDS 325,000 IN THE BANK."

THE SUNDAY MIRROR SAID IT "DOESN'T MIND A BIT OF CHEQUE BOOK JOURNALISM FROM TIME TO TIME. IF ANYONE HAS AN EXCITING ADVENTURE, SUCH AS ROWING THE ATLANTIC, IT IS PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE THAT THEY SHOULD PROFIT BY SELLING THEIR STORY EXCLUSIVELY TO A NEWSPAPER. GOOD LUCK TO MRS. LESLEY BROWN FOR LANDING A FAT FEE. SOME OF THE PRESS REACTION SOUNDS A BIT LIKE SOUR GRAPES... BUT

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THERE WAS NO JUSTIFICATION FOR THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITIES BEHAVING AS THOUGH THEY TOO HAD BEEN BOUGHT UP BY THE DAILY MAIL...''

SUNDAY EXPRESS COLUMNIST JOHN JUNOR SAID: ''WHATEVER THE SHELL THAT IS COMING FROM THE TEST TUBE BABY CASE, IT SURELY ISN'T ROSES. JUST WHO IS GETTING THE POUNDS 325,000 THE DAILY MAIL IS SAID TO BE PAYING? THE TWO MEN WHO PLAYED GOD, MR. PATRICK STEPTOE AND CAMBRIDGE SCIENTIST DR. ROBERT EDWARDS, DENY THAT THEY HAVE ANY CONTRACT WITH THE DAILY MAIL. THE FATHER CLAIMS THAT HE AND HIS WIFE WERE NOT INTERESTED IN THE CASH. THAT ALL THEY WANTED WAS A BABY. BUT IT APPEARS THEIR 'BUSINESS ADVISERS' ARE GUIDING THEM. BUSINESS ADVISERS?...WHO ARE THEY? ...THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON TO WHOM MY HEART GOES OUT...THE POOR LITTLE NITE WHO WILL LIVE FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE IN THE GLARE OF PUBLICITY AS A TEST TUBE FREAK.''

THE DAILY MAIL REPORTS THAT IF THE TEST TUBE BABY IS A BOY, THE BROWNS HAVE DECIDED TO NAME HIM PATRICK ANTHONY, AFTER DR. PATRICK STEPTOE. THEY HAVEN'T DECIDED ON A GIRL'S NAME, BUT THE FAVORITE SEEMS TO BE KATRINA.

ON A TV PROGRAM, ''THE EDITORS'' (BBC), DAILY EXPRESS EDITOR DEREK JAMESON SAID HE THINKS THE TEST TUBE BABY IS ''A BETTER STORY THAN MAN CONQUERING THE MOON, '' BECAUSE OF ITS STRIKING HUMAN QUALITIES.

GUARDIAN EDITOR PETER PRESTON, ON THE SAME PROGRAM, CRITICIZING THE TEST TUBE BABY PAYMENT, SAID: ''I'M BEGINNING TO BE INTENSELY ANGRY ABOUT CHEQUE BOOK JOURNALISM. THIS COULD HAVE BEEN HANDLED IN A MORE SEEMLY WAY. STEPTOE SHOULD HAVE GIVEN A PRESS CONFERENCE BEFORE THE BIRTH AND SAID, 'WE DON'T WANT THE CHILD TO BE LOOKED UPON AS A FREAK, WE'LL PUBLISH THE DETAILS IN THE LANCET.'''

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DAILY EXPRESS EDITOR JAMESON SAID "WE ARE FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL" AND WHEN THEY LARNED THE DAILY MAIL HAD THE STORY "WE HAD TO DO SOMETHING. WE DIDN'T WANT TO SPEND THAT KIND OF MONEY BUT WE WANTED THE STORY."

AS FOR CRITICISM OF CHEQUE-BOOK JOURNALISM, JAMESON POINTED OUT: "PEOPLE CAN GO TO A NEWSTAND AND MAKE A CHOICE, NOBODY FORCES YOU TO BUY THAT PAPER."

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