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BY: WHITE, IN OLDHAM

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DR. ROBERT EDWARDS, 52, MARRIED WITH FIVE DAUGHTERS, IS THE OTB HALF OF THE TEAM. HE'S NOT TALKING EITHER VACUUMING OF OLDHAM FILES PRODUCES THIS: A CAMBRIDGE PHYSIOLOGIST, HE'S ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED THE DEPTH OF WOMAN'S NATURAL DESIRE FOR HER OWN BABY. "THE DESIRE TO HAVE CHILDREN MUST BE AMONG THE MOST BASIC OF HUMAN INSTINCTS, AND DENYING IT CAN LEAD TO CONSIDERABLE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL DIFFICULTIES," HE SAYS.

ALTHOUGH EDWARDS NOW LIVES IN CAMBRIDGE, HE IS A NATIVE OF THE NORTH, BORN IN YORKSHIRE, EDUCATED AT MANCHESTER CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL. HE LIVED IN MANCHESTER FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE GOING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES, IN 1944. BUT IN THE SAME YEAR, HE JOINED THE ARMY, SPENDING PART OF HIS SERVICE IN PALESTINE, BEFORE RETURNING TO UNIVERSITY IN 1948. HE GOT HIS BSC, THEN AT EDINBURGH GOT A PHD IN ANIMAL GENETICS AND A FURTHER DOCTORATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WALES. HE'S PUBLISHED MANY RESEARCH AND REVIEW PAPERS IN REPRODUCTION. HIS REPUTATION ALSO LED TO WORK IN THE U.S. OLDHAM NEWSPAPER FILES SAY HE SPENT A YEAR AT THE CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY; THEN TIME AT JOHNS HOPKINS, AND AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA BRIEFLY. HIS LECTURES, AND ASSIGNMENTS, FOR THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION,

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UNESCO, AND THE PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION, HAVE LED TO EXTENSIVE TRAVEL. HE STUDIED AT EDINBURGH AND GLASGOW UNIVERSITIES, AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL RESEARCH BEFORE MOVING TO CAMBRIDGE IN 1963.

ONE NEWSPAPER STORY SAYS: "CHANCES TO LIVE AND WORK IN AMERICA DO NOT INTEREST HIM. HE ENJOYS THE ACADEMIC ATMOSPHERE OF CAMBRIDGE AND HAS ALSO THROWN HIMSELF INTO LOCAL POLITICS. FROM TIME TO TIME, DR. EDWARDS HAS BEEN CALLED UPON TO DEFEND HIS WORK WITH DR. STEPTOE. HE TOLD THE DEBATE ON 'FABRICATED BABIES: THE ETHICS OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGY IN BEGINNING LIFE,' IN WASHINGTON (NO DATE GIVEN), THAT THEIR WORK WAS A WAY OF PROVIDING BARREN WOMEN WITH CHILDREN. THROUGHT THEIR EXPERIMENTS DR. EDWARDS HAS LED THE FIELD IN THE RESEARCH OF IN VITRO FERTILIZATION. EDWARDS IS ALSO THE MICROSCOPY EXPERT; USING A CONTRAST MICROSCOPE WHICH CAN BE FOCUSED AT VARIOUS DEPTHS OF FLUID, HE WATCHED THE EGG AND SPERM UNITE AND BEGIN THE CELL BREAKDOWN" TWO, FOUR, EIGHT, 16 AND 32-- UNTIL AT 64 CELLS, IT CAN BE REIMPLANTED INTO THE MOTHER. ONE OBSTACLE WHICH HE AND STEPTOE HAVE BOTH HAD TO FACE IS THE SHORTAGE OF MONEY FOR THEIR RESEARCH. AND WHEN HE NEEDED TO TRANSPORT FERTILIZED EGGS FROM CAMBRIDGE TO OLDHAM, HE COULD BE SEEN DRIVING HIS CAR WITH A RABBIT IN A BOX ON THE PASSENGER'S SEAT-- THE RABBIT BEING THE HOST WHICH CARRIED THE FERTILIZED EGG IMPLANTED IN IT TO KEEP IT AT THE RIGHT TEMPERATURE." (THE ABOVE WAS NOT WRITTEN BY A SCIENCE REPORTER, FYI.)

NOTE: WE'VE SEEN THE STORY ABOUT THE RABBIT BEING USED, IN SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS, BUT NO WAY TO CONFIRM IT. IF USING, ATTRIBUTE IT TO PUBLISHED REPORTS. DO NOT SAY THAT MRS. BROWN'S EGGS WERE

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TRANSPORTED IN THIS FASHION, BECAUSE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF THAT. THERE IS NO REPORT OF MRS. BROWN'S EGGS BEING TRANSPORTED AT ALL. THE ASSUMPTION IS THAT THE REMOVAL OF EGGS, FERTILIZATION AND REIMPLANTATION TOOK PLACE IN OLDHAM, AT DR. KERSHAW'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL, WHERE STEPTOE DID MUCH OF HIS WORK. (OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL, WHERE MRS. BROWN IS AWAITING HER BABY, AND WHERE DR. STEPTOE IS CONSULTING GYNOCOLOGIST, IS ABOUT A MILE OR SO AWAY FROM DR. KERSHAW'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL).

THE OLDHAM CHRONICLE, WHICH HAS HAD A TEAM OF REPORTERS FOLLOWING THE STORY, SAYS STEPTOE USES "FOUR PRINCIPAL GROUND-FLOOR ROOMS AT THE TINY COTTAGE HOSPITAL IN ROYTON, KNOWN AS DR. KERSHAW'S HIS SECRET ROOMS STRADDLE A SMALL OPERATING THEATRE AND THEIR ANONYMITY IS PROTECTED BY LOCKED, SLIDING DOORS WITH A RED WARNING LIGHT IN THE WALL ABOVE. TWO OF THE SMALL ROOMS CONTAIN SIMPLE, YET VITAL, EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING OVENS AND WEIGHING SCALES. THE WALLS OF THE OPERATING THEATER, 18 SQUARE FEET, ARE FINISHED IN WHITE VITREOUS ENAMEL AND THE CEILING IS GREEN. THERE IS VERY LITTLE ROOM FOR ANY EXTRA SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT. DR. KERSHAW'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL WAS BUILT IN THE EARLY 1900S AFTER DR. JOHN KERSHAW, WHO DIED IN 1909, LEFT INSTRUCTIONS IN HIS WILL THAT HIS MONEY SHOULD BE USED FOR THE "ENDOWMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A HOSPITAL FOR ROYTON PEOPLE." (ROYTON IS A SUBURB OF OLDHAM).

KERSHAW'S WILL, INCIDENTALLY, ALSO INSTRUCTED THAT NONE OF "SOCIALIST TENDENCIES" SHOULD HAVE ANY PART IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE HOSPITAL. "THE HOSPITAL WAS HANDED OVER TO THE LOCAL COUNCIL IN 1930... APART FROM THE WORK WHICH DR. STEPTOE CARRIES OUT THERE, THE HOSPITAL IS STILL A COTTAGE HOSPITAL, USED BY FAMILY DOCTORS FOR REFERRAL."

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ALTHOUGH KERSHAW'S IS WHERE DR. STEPTOES DID HIS WORK, AND WHERE EDWARDS WORKS WITH HIM WHEN EDWARDS IS IN OLDHAM, THE FACILITIES ARE INADEQUATE AND STEPTOE-EDWARDS HOPE FOR A BETTER FACILITY. PUBLISHED STORIES SAY THEY WILL BE MOVING THEIR WORK FROM THERE SOON. KERSHAW'S IS A VERY SMALL, TWO-STOREY HOSPITAL, CONSTRUCTED OF RED BRICK. IT IS ON TURF LANE, IN ROYTON. THERE ARE GREEN FIELDS AROUND IT. A POULTRY FARM IS NEARBY. IT WAS AT KERSHAW'S, PUBLISHED STORIES SAY, MRS BROWN HAD HER EGGS REMOVED, FERTILIZED AND REIMPLANTED.

OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL, ALSO RED BRICK, IS A MUCH LARGER, SPRAWLING COMPLEX OF BUILDINGS, ONE OF WHICH IS THE NARROW MATERNITY UNIT, WHICH HOUSES MRS. BROWN. THE REAR OF THE NARROW UNIT FACES SHEEPFOOT LANE.

OLDHAM, A BLEAK, DRAB (BUT WITH VERY FRIENDLY PEOPLE) TOWN, POPULATION 227,000, IS AN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION MILL TOWN, NOW HAS A MIXTURE OF SMALL INDUSTRIES. THE OLD COTTON MILLS STAND LARGELY DISCUSSED. OLDHAM IS ABOUT EIGHT MILES FROM MANCHESTER, ABOUT 200 FROM LONDON. ALMOST 2,000 YEARS AGO THE ROMANS BUILT ONE OF THEIR MAIN ROADS THROUGH THE AREA, THAT FROM MANCHESTER TO YORK. THE REMAINS OF A SAXON SETTLEMENT HAVE BEEN FOUND AT ROYTON. OLDHAM REACHED ITS PINNACLE AS A TEXTILE-BASED AREA IN THE YEARS BEFORE WORLD WAR ONE. TEXTILES DECLINED AND NOW IT HAS DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRY, INCLUDING MISSILES, PLASTICS, ELECTRONIC.

END TAKE TWO MORE TO COME.

RELAYED: 1530/SG

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