

11NY

OSTM: LN67/NY JULY 20 78 MSG: FIL
TO: TIME MEDICINE, PRESS
FROM: LONDON BY: ART WHITE IN: OLDHAM
SLUG: TEST TUBE BABY TK: 3 EOH:

DR. STEPTOE, 65, GREY-HAIRED, SPECTACLED, A DAPPER DRESSER, IS NOT A POOR STRUGGLING DOCTOR. SOURCES ESTIMATE HIS ANNUAL INCOME AT UPWARDS OF 40,000 POUNDS AND SAY IT COULD BE CONSIDERABLY MORE, PERHAPS DOUBLE THAT. WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS FIGURE. HOWEVER, HE IS WIDELY REGARDED AS BEING WELL-TO-DO. IT IS COMMON TO HEAR THAT STEPTOE MAKES A LOT OF MONEY FROM ABORTIONS, WHICH ARE QUITE LEGAL, AND THIS WEEK THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE CAME RIGHT OUT AND SAID SO, IN AN EDITORIAL.

SAYS THE EVENING CHRONICLE: 'NOW THAT IT'S BEEN CREDIBLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY IS NOT OFFICIALLY DUE UNTIL AUGUST 4, WE HOPE THERE WILL BE A COOLING-OFF IN THE UNWELCOME AND UNDIGNIFIED ACTIVITY WHICH THE WHOLE AFFAIR HAS ATTRACTED. IT WAS NOT WRONG AND IT WAS NOT UNNATURAL THAT THE WORLD'S PRESS SHOULD SCRAMBLE FOR INFORMATION. PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW, AND HAVE A RIGHT TO BE CURIOUS ABOUT SUCH THINGS, AND IT IS THE PRESS'S DUTY TO SATISFY THAT CURIOSITY. BUT IT WAS SURELY A MISTAKE TO TRY TO CHANNEL THE SATISFACTION OF THAT CURIOSITY THROUGH ONE NEWSPAPER SYNDICATE, AND TO ATTEMPT TO CHARGE FOR THE INFORMATION... WE HAVE SURELY REACHED A STAGE WHEN

RESEARCH OF THIS KIND, WHICH WILL BE A BOON TO INFERTILE WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE CIVILIZED WORLD, SHOULD BE PROPERLY REWARDED IN A SEEMLY FASHION. THIS WAS NO TECHNIQUE TO BE SOLD TO A NATIONAL NEWSPAPER IN A DEAL WHICH, HOWEVER HONORABLE THE MOTIVES MIGHT HAVE BEEN, HOWEVER RIGHT IT WAS THAT REWARDS SHOULD BE COMMENSURATE WITH THE ACHIEVEMENT. WOULD INEVITABLY, IN THE LONG RUN, LOOK TO MANY PEOPLE SORDID AND WRONG. AS IT WAS, MR. STEPTOE FINANCED HIS RESEARCHES FROM HIS PRIVATE ABORTIONS. NOTHING WRONG WITH THAT, OF COURSE. THERE IS A CERTAIN ETHICAL BALANCE ABOUT SPENDING MONEY GAINED FROM REMOVING UNWANTED BABIES ON GIVING INFERTILE WOMEN THE BABIES THEY SO DESPERATELY DESIRE. BUT IT IS NOT THE WAY IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE IN AMERICA, SAY, OR GERMANY. THE EXPERIMENTS OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN PROPERLY FINANCED BY AN INTERESTED AND FORWARD-LOOKING GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT. AND A MAN OF MR. STEPTOE'S STANDING IN HIS PROFESSION SHOULD NOT HAVE NEEDED TO SELL THE RIGHTS IN HIS STORY TO A FLEET STREET NEWSPAPER TO GAIN A PROPER REWARD. NOR SHOULD HE HAVE FELT IT NECESSARY TO INCLUDE HIS PATIENT AND HER UNBORN CHILD IN A DEAL IN WHICH, PROPERLY, HE HAD NO RIGHTS. "

COUR NOTE: STEPTOE-EDWARDS HAVE DENIED THAT THEY HAVE SIGNED ANY CONTRACT WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS. BUT OBVIOUSLY, THE EVENING CHRONICLE BELIEVES THEY WERE BEHIND THE PARENTS' SALE OF THE RIGHTS TO ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS, WHICH THEY WERE, AND THE STEPTOE-EDWARDS STILL STILL INTEND TO MAKE MONEY OUT OF THIS. EVEN IF THE MONEY GOES TO THEIR RESEARCH TRUST TO FURTHER THEIR WORK. THE EVENING CHRONICLE HAS BEEN AT ODDS WITH STEPTOE FOR SOME TIME, BECAUSE STEPTOE HAS NOT GIVEN THIS LOCAL PAPER ANY BREAKS ON THE STORY, AND HAS CRITICIZED THE PAPER FOR SOME OF

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THE ACCOUNTS IT HAS WRITTEN. YOU'LL RECALL THAT STEPTOE ASKED THE PRESS SOME TIME AGO NOT TO IDENTIFY THE MOTHER. ALTHOUGH ALL OTHER PAPERS HAVE NOW NAMED THE MOTHER, TO THIS MOMENT THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE HAS NOT. IS STILL REFERRING TO HER AS "MRS. X."

THE EVENING CHRONICLE EDITORIAL SAYS: "SURELY, IT WAS FOR THE MOTHER TO SAY WHETHER HER NAME AND UPBRINGING OF HER CHILD WOULD REMAIN A SECRET OR BECOME A PEEP-SHOW FOR THE WORLD. NO DOUBT IF THE MOTHER HAD NEEDED MONEY IT COULD EASILY HAVE BEEN FOUND BY SELLING THE COMMERCIAL RIGHTS TO MANUFACTURERS OF BABY FOODS AND BABY EQUIPMENT, MUCH AS THE PARENTS OF QUINS OR QUADS DO. THEN IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HER DECISION AND HER RESPONSIBILITY, AS IT OUGHT TO BE. IT COULD NEVER HAVE BEEN RIGHT FOR THE SOLE RIGHTS IN THE STORY TO BE AUCTIONED OFF TO ONE NEWSPAPER. FOR ONE THING, THE STORY IS AND SHOULD BE THE PROPERTY OF THE WORLD; AND FOR ANOTHER, THERE WAS NO WAY THE WORLD'S PRESS WOULD HAVE FELT THEMSELVES OBLIGED TO HONOR A DEAL IN WHICH THEY HAD NO PART. IF WE, THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE, COULD BEAT THE WORLD TO THE STORY LAST APRIL, WITHOUT A CHEQUE BOOK OR EVEN A WALLET IN OUR HANDS, HOW COULD THE DAILY MAIL OR ANY OTHER FLEET STREET NEWSPAPER HOPE TO HOLD TO THEMSELVES A PROPERTY AS HOT AS THIS ONE ? APPARENTLY IT IS NOW DECIDED THAT A PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE HELD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH. THE ANNOUNCEMENT IS NOT BEFORE TIME . PERHAPS IT WILL PUT AN END TO THE UNSEEMLY BEHAVIOR WHICH HAS DONE NOTHING BUT HARM TO THE PRESS'S REPUTATION AS WELL AS RATHER UNFAIRLY, TO THAT OF THE MEDICAL TEAM."

(REGARDING ABORTIONS IN BRITAIN: THE 1967 ABORTION ACT MADE LEGAL ABORTIONS MORE FREELY AVAILABLE. THE CRITERIA FOR SUCH ABORTIONS ARE THAT TO HAVE THE BABY WOULD CAUSE THE WOMAN PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HARM ON MEDICAL GROUNDS. THIS HAS TO BE AGREED BY TWO DOCTORS, NORMALLY A G.P. AND A CONSULTANT(SUCH AS STEPTOE). IN LAW, IT IS CONSIDERED TOO LATE TO HAVE AN ABORTION AFTER 28 WEEKS, AND A GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED COMMITTEE HAS RECOMMENDED THAT THIS LIMIT BE REDUCED TO 24 WEEKS. THE AVERAGE RATE FOR A PRIVATE ABORTION IS ABOUT 180 POUNDS. SOURCES SAY THAT OVER THE YEARS STEPTOE HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY HUNDREDS OF WOMEN TO PERFORM ABORTIONS, AND ITS A KNOWN FACT THAT HE DOES IT, AND WHY NOT, BECAUSE IT IS PERFECTLY LEGAL. HE DOES THEM AT OLDHAM AND DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL, WHERE MRS. BROWN IS TO HAVE HER BABY.

THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE SAYS THAT WHAT MAKES STEPTOE'S BREAKTHROUGH "EVEN MORE OF AN ACHIEVEMENT WAS THE FACT HE WAS WORKING VIRTUALLY ON A SHOE-STRING BUDGET." CONSULTANT GYNAECOLOGIST AT OLDHAM GENERAL UNTIL HIS OFFICIAL RETIREMENT FROM THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE JUST TWO MONTHS AGO, STEPTOE IS CONTINUING TO WORK AND WILL NOT SEVER HIS LINKS WITH HOSPITALS IN OLDHAM UNTIL MRS. BROWN'S BABY IS BORN, NEWSPAPERS REPORT, AND MAYBE HE WILL CONTINUE AFTER THAT. SAYS THE NHS AREA HEALTH ADMINISTRATOR: "WE CONSIDER HIS WORK TO BE VERY IMPORTANT. IT CANNOT BE ENDED JUST BECAUSE HE IS 65."

NOBODY KNOWS WHETHER MRS. BROWN IS PAYING STEPTOE, FOR HIS WORK WITH HER. SOURCES DOUBT IT. BUT OF COURSE HE DOES COLLECT FROM SOME PRIVATE PATIENTS. WHETHER HE CHARGES TEST TUBE MOTHERS NOBODY KNOWS.

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THE NHS HAS STATED THAT MRS. BROWN IS ENTITLED TO NHS FACILITIES. THE NHS SAID THAT AS FAR AS THE HEALTH SERVICE IS CONCERNED, ITS OBLIGATION IS TO RENDER EVERY MEDICAL ASSISTANCE TO BRING THIS UNIQUE BIRTH TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION, 'BUT WE ARE IN NO WAY COMMITTED TO INVOLVING OURSELVES IN THE PUBLICITY OR THE MUNDANE MATERIAL PROBLEM OF FINANCE BEING PAID BY A NEWSPAPER FOR EXCLUSIVITY.'

NEWSPAPERS REPORT STEPTOE HAS ALWAYS HAD THE REPUTATION AS A HIGHLY-SKILLED SURGEON WITH A VORACIOUS APPETITE FOR WORK. A WARTIME SURGEON LT.-CDR. IN THE ROYAL NAVAL VOLUNTEER RESERVE, STEPTOE TOOK UP HIS CONSULTANCY IN OLDHAM IN 1951. HE AND HIS WIFE, SHEENA, ARRIVED TWO YEARS AFTER THE BIRTH OF THEIR SECOND CHILD, SARAH JOANNA. THE STEPTOES, NOW GRANDPARENTS, ALSO HAVE AN OLDER SON. NOBODY SEEMS TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE SON. STEPTOE ARGUED LONG AND HARD FOR A FAMILY PLANNING CLINIC TO BE SET UP IN OLDHAM IN THE LATE 1950'S, IN 1964 PRESENTED A PAPER TO THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF GYNAECOLOGICAL ENDOSCOPY AT PALERMO, ITALY, TWO YEARS LATER LED A TEAM OF DOCTORS, PATHOLOGISTS, TECHNICIANS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS IN OLDHAM IN MAKING AN 18-MINUTE COLOUR FILM ABOUT CERVICAL CANCER.

THE EVENING CHRONICLE REPORTS IT WAS IN THE LATE FIFTIES THAT STEPTOE BECAME AVIDLY INTERESTED IN THE FACET OF INFERTILITY THAT WAS TO CONSUME THE REST OF HIS LIFE, BUT 'IT WASN'T UNTIL THE MID-SIXTIES THAT HE GAVE THE FIRST HINT OF THE HOLY GRAIL HE WAS SEEKING.' WRITING IN THE BRITISH COMMONWEALTH JOURNAL OF OBSTETRICS AND GYNAECOLOGY, HE SAID 'LAPAROSCOPY IS AN

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ESSENTIAL TECHNIQUE TO BE USED WHEN ORDINARY CLINICAL METHODS FAIL. IN THE FIELD OF INFERTILITY INVESTIGATIONS, LAPAROSCOPY TECHNIQUE WAS INTRODUCED TO THE GYNAECOLOGY UNIT AT OLDHAM GENERAL BY STEPTOE IN 1960, THE CHRONICLE REPORTS.

AT VIRTUALLY EVERY STAGE OF STEPTOE'S RESEARCH, THERE WERE FAILURES, COMPLICATIONS AND DELAYS, BUT HE'S SAID TO HAVE GRANITE DEDICATION. A PROFESSOR AT MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY IS QUOTED: "IT IS REMARKABLE THAT THIS WORK HAS BEEN PRODUCED FROM AN EXTREMELY BUSY CENTER OF GYNAECOLOGICAL SURGERY, WHEN A LESSER MAN THAN MR. STEPTOE MIGHT WELL HAVE BECOME ENGROSSED IN ACTIVITIES OF A PURELY ROUTINE NATURE. ONE OF STEPTOE'S FORMER REGISTRARS IS QUOTED: "HE HAS THIS MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION THAT HE WILL CRACK THIS PROBLEM AND NOTHING WILL STOP HIM."

THE CHRONICLE QUOTED THIS MAN AS SAYING STEPTOE CARES ABOUT PEOPLE, "HE WANTS TO SOLVE THEIR PROBLEMS. HE WANTS THE DAY TO COME WHEN EVERY WOMAN CAN HAVE HER OWN CHILD. THAT IS WHY HE DOES NOT SEE ANY CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE FACT THAT SO MUCH OF THE FINANCE NECESSARY FOR HIS RESEARCH INTO THE CREATION OF LIFE COMES FROM PRIVATE ABORTIONS."

IN 1965, THERE WERE RUMORS THAT STEPTOE'S GROWING DISTINCTION HAD LED TO NEW OFFERS AND THAT HE WOULD BE LEAVING OLDHAM HOSPITAL. STEPTOE DENIED IT. TWO YEARS LATER HIS BOOK, "LAPAROSCOPY IN GYNAECOLOGY" WAS PUBLISHED, REVEALING THE DEPTH OF HIS EIGHT-YEAR RESEARCH INTO INFERTILITY. THEN ON FEB. 13, 1969, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT STEPTOE AND HIS CAMBRIDGE SCIENTIST

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COLLEAGUE, EDWARDS, AND A TEAM AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, HAS FERTILIZED A HUMAN EGG WITH MALE SPERM OUTSIDE A WOMAN'S BODY. IMMEDIATELY, THE EXPERIMENTS WERE CONDEMNED BY CHURCH STALWARTS AS VIOLATING NATURAL LAW AND BEING IMMORAL, WHILE HIS ROUTINE ABORTION OPERATIONS ALSO CONFUSED PEOPLE-- A MAN CREATING LIFE ON ONE HAND, BUT DESTROYING IT ON THE OTHER. IN MAY, 1969, STEPTOE WAS GIVEN AN AWARD FOR HIS PIONEERING WORK IN LAPAROSCOPY, BY THE FELLOWSHIP OF POST-GRADUATE MEDICINE. A FELLOW CONSULTANT WAS QUOTED: "I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DOES IT. NOT ONLY DOES HE WORK HARDER IN THE HOSPITAL THAN ANYONE ELSE, BUT HE IS CONSTANTLY INVOLVED IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND COMMITTEE SIDES OF THE JOB. IT'S LIKE WATCHING A WORLD-CLASS FOOTBALLER... HE ALWAYS SEEMS TO HAVE TIME TO CONTROL THE BALL, TOTAL COMMAND OF WHAT HE IS DOING, AND AN ABILITY TO MOVE AT FULL SPEED WITHOUT SEEMING TO RUSH."

THE EVENING CHRONICLE SAYS "DURING HIS OWN MEDICAL CAREER, MR STEPTOE HAS ON TWO OCCASIONS FOUND HIMSELF ON THE WRONG END OF A DOCTOR'S STETHOSCOPE. IN 1954, HE ESCAPED WITH MINOR INJURIES AFTER A HEAD-ON COLLISION NEAR NORTHAMPTON WHILE DRIVING TO COLLECT HIS WIFE, AND MORE RECENTLY WHEN HE HAD TWO PLASTIC JOINTS INSERTED IN PLASTIC HIPS." NO EXPLANATION GIVEN WHY HE NEED THE OPERATION, SEEKING EXPLANATION.

STEPTOE IS DESCRIBED AS AN IMPECCABLE DRESSER, ENJOYS WATCHING CRICKET, AND IS AN ACCOMPLISHED ORGANIST. A 1955 CLIP SAYS STEPTOE GAVE A RECITAL AFTER EVENINGS AT A LOCAL CHURCH, PLAYING CHORAL PRELUDES, AND BACH.

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THE CHRONICLE, WHILE NOT REPEAT NOT SAYING THAT STEPTOE CHARGES FOR HIS TEST TUBE OPERATION, REPORTS "THE PRICE OF A TEST-TUBE BABY IS AROUND POUNDS 2,000. THAT'S ONE CONSULTANTS ESTIMATED COST FOR A WOMAN HAVING THE IMPLANT DONE PRIVATELY AND ALL SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT UNTIL THE DAY THE BABY IS BORN."

MRS. BROWN IS DESCRIBED IN PUBLISHED REPORTS AS QUIET, SHY, AND SOMETIMES DEPRESSED AND VEEPY IN THE HOSPITAL, SPENING HER TIME MAKING PHONE CALLS, DOING PUZZLES, CROSSWORDS AND KNITTING. SHE LIKES POLO MINTS, A MINT CANDY, AND CHEWS GUM. STEPTOE DISCOURAGED CIGARETTE SMOKING, BUT THE LOCAL PAPER SAYS "THAT APPARENTLY DIDN'T STOP HER ENJOYING THE ODD SECRET CIGARETTE." THE EVENING CHRONICLE REPORTS THAT "AT ONE TIME SHE WAS VERY WORRIED BECAUSE HER BABY SEEMED UNDERSIZED IN RELATION TO THE NUMBER OF WEEKS OF HER PREGNANCY. BUT THESE FEARS WERE ALLAYED AFTER SHE TALKED TO OTHER PATIENTS." THE EVENING CHRONICLE DESCRIBES HER AS "FIVE FEET FIVE INCHES TALL AND WELLBUILT WITH A PRETTY DOLL-LIKE FEATURES, SHORT, MOUSEY-COLORED HAIR, CUT IN A PAGE-BOY STYLE. SHE OFTEN LOUNGES IN AN EASY CHAIR IN HER ROOM, WEARING A BROWN AND WHITE STRIPED, ZIP-UP, BELL-SLEEVE HOUSECOAT. SHE EATS ORDINARY HOSPITAL FOOD. A TYPICAL BREAKFAST WOULD BE CEREAL FOLLOWED BY SAUSAGE AND BACON, OR HADDOCK, AND LUNCH WAS USUALLY A CHOICE OF BRAISED STEAK, OR STEAK AND KIDNEY PIE WITH MASHED POTATOES, FOLLOWED BY FRUIT TART, A MILK PUDDING OR SPONGE AND CUSTARD, WASHED DOWN WITH TEA OR COFFEE... HER ROOM IS PAINTED TURQUOISE BLUE, WITH A CREAM CEILING, AND A DEEP CREAM VINYL FLOOR COVERING WITH BROWN AND RED SPECKLES. IRONICALLY, THE WOMAN WHO IS SO DESPERATE FOR A CHILD OF HER OWN, OVERLOOKS, FROM HER FOURTH-FLOOR VANTAGE

POINT, THE CHILDREN'S UNIT OPPOSITE, COMPLETE WITH ITS GAILY
COLORED SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS." MRS. BROWN IS SAID TO HAVE A
TV AND RADIO IN HER ROOM, SO SHE'S AWARE OF THE PRESS CIRCUS
THAT IS GOING ON.

THE PROCESS BY WHICH MRS. BROWN BECAME PREGNANT TOOK A DECADE TO
PERFECT, "MAKING THE DELICATE INSTRUMENT, THE FOLLICLE
ASPIRATOR, USED TO GENTLY SUCK THE EGG FROM ITS FOLLICLE BED,
MIRROR CONDITIONS OUTSIDE THE WOMB TO THOSE INSIDE, AND GAUGE
EXACTLY THE RIGHT TIME TO REIMPLANT THE OOCYTE (EGG) INTO THE
UTERINE CAVITY WHERE IT WILL HOPEFULLY TAKE HOLD AND BEGIN TO
DEVELOP," ONE REPORT NOTED. "AS WELL AS BEING THE NORMAL
MEETING PLACE OF SPERM AND EGG, THE TUBES ARE ACTUALLY RESPON-
SIBLE FOR THE SURVIVAL AND MAINTENANCE OF THE FERTILIZED EGG
DURING THE THREE DAYS IT TAKES TO REACH THE UTERINE CAVITY .
DURING THE JOURNEY, THE EGG... GATHERS ITS NOURISHMENT FROM THE
HIGHLY SPECIALIZED CELLS ALONG THE TUBAL PASSAGEWAY... IT IS
THIS DAYS-LONG JOURNEY THAT STEPTOE MUST MIRROR OUTSIDE THE
WOMB AS THE EGG BEGINS ITS LIFE IN THE ... PHIAL WHERE IT IS
FERTILIZED. ONE OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS IS GETTING AN EGG THE
RIGHT SIZE AND SUITABLE FOR FERTILIZATION... STEPTOE CAN SEE
INTO THE PATIENT'S BODY BY USING A METHOD HE AS WORKED WITH FOR
20 YEARS, LAPAROSCOPY... THE PATIENT IS GIVEN A GENERAL ANAESTHETIC
AND GAS IS INTRODUCED INTO THE ABDOMEN TO SEPARATE ORGANS TO
GIVE FREE SPACE FOR EXAMINATION. GENERAL ANAESTHETIC IS
IMPORTANT AS THE PATIENT MUST HAVE COMPLETE MUSCLE RELAXATION
AND CONTROLLED VENTILATION DURING OOCYTE RECOVERY... THE OVARIES
ARE MANIPULATED BY GRASPING FORCEPS AND ASPIRATOR COLLECTS THE

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CONTENTS OF THE FOLLICLE. GENTLE SUCTION IS USED TO DRAW THE EGG FROM ITS FOLLICLE BED. VERY LITTLE BLEEDING OCCURS. THE WHOLE PROCEDURE TAKES ABOUT 20 MINUTES. EDWARDS WATCHES THE EGGS FORMING IN THE VITRO SOLUTION AS THE CELLS BREAK DOWN. THE SEQUENCE DEVELOPS FROM TWO TO FOUR TO EIGHT TO 16 AND TO 32. AT THIS STAGE AND AT 64 THE EMBRYO CAN BE SQUIRTED BACK INTO THE WOMB. THE ULTIMATE 64-CELL BREAKDOWN WAS FINALLY DEVELOPED IN 1972," SAID THE REPORT, WHICH RAN IN THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE.

THE HOSPITAL STAFF IS REPORTED TO BE RUNNING "A SWEEPSTAKES ON THE DATE OF BIRTH."

ASKED HOW MRS. BROWN IS, A NURSE SAID: SHE JUST FEELS LIKE ANY OTHER MOTHER-TO-BE: TIRED, FED UP AND FAT."

THE CHRONICLE SAYS THE IMPLANT IN MRS. BROWN WAS LATE OCTOBER, RATHER THAN NOVEMBER, AS SOME REPORTS HAVE IT.

IN A LANCET ARTICLE IN 1976, STEPTOE-EDWARDS REPORTED THEY MADE A WOMAN PREGNANT WITH AN EGG FERTILIZED OUTSIDE THE BODY, BUT THE EMBRYO DIED AFTER TEN WEEKS. THE WOMAN, NOT NAMED, WAS 35 AND BECAME PREGNANT IN 1974 THROUGH THE PROCESS DEVELOPED BY STEPTOE-EDWARDS. THE PREGNANCY FAILED BECAUSE THE DEVELOPING EMBRYO FAILED TO SETTLE PROPERLY IN THE WOMB, BUT BLOCKED THE OVIDUCT, THE PASSAGE DOWN WHICH THE EGGS TRAVEL FROM OVARY TO WOMB. STEPTOE-EDWARDS SAID: "OUR OBSERVATIONS PROVIDE THE FIRST DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE THAT HUMAN EMBRYOS CULTURED OUTSIDE THE

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HUMAN BODY FOR FOUR AND HALF DAYS ARE CAPABLE OF IMPLANTATION."

CURIOUSLY, ALTHOUGH THE IMPENDING BIRTH BY MRS. BROWN IS SENSATIONAL NEWS IN BRITAIN AND ABROAD, FOR THE MOST PART PEOPLE IN OLDHAM ARE NOT EXCITED (APART FROM THE PRESS). THIS IS BECAUSE THE WORK OF STEPTOE-EDWARDS HAS BEEN GOING ON LOCALLY SO LONG, AND HAS BEEN CHRONICLED SO OFTEN IN THE LOCAL PAPERS, THAT OLDHAM PEOPLE ARE USED TO IT. THEIR REACTION TO MRS. BROWN'S IMPENDING DELIVERY IS, "THAT'S NICE, BUT LET'S WAIT UNTIL IT HAPPENS AND SEE IF EVERYTHING TURNS OUT ALL RIGHT."

IN NOVEMBER, 1977, IT WAS REPORTED THAT UP TO THAT TIME STEPTOE HAD TRIED EMBRYO TRANSFER ON 36 WOMEN. ON JULY 11, THIS YEAR, THE DAILY EXPRESS REPORTED THAT BETWEEN 80 TO 100 WOMEN HAD HAD IMPLANTS, OUT OF ABOUT 400 WOMEN HE HAS TREATED. SOURCES HERE KNOW OF NO OTHER WOMEN PRESENTLY WAITING TO GIVE BIRTH, OTHER THAN MRS. BROWN WHETHER THERE ARE OTHER SUCCESSFUL, EARLY-TERM PREGNANCIES, IS NOT KNOWN.

ACCORDING TO A REPORT IN THE EVENING CHRONICLE, STEPTOE UNDERWENT "A SUCCESSFUL OPERATION FOR AN ARTHRITIC HIP LAST YEAR (1977)". PRESUMABLY, THIS WAS THE OPERATION THEY REFERRED TO IN ANOTHER STORY, THE ONE SAYING HE HAD TWO PLASTIC JOINTS INSERTED IN PLASTIC HIPS.

JUST LAST MONTH (JUNE), PAPERS REPORTED THAT A SENIOR MEDICAL RESEARCHER HAD CALLED FOR A HALT TO WORK ON TEST TUBE BABIES.

DR. RONALD BARNES, HEAD OF THE EMBRYOLOGY AND FOETAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION OF THE CLINICAL RESEARCH CENTER IN MIDDLESEX, SAID HE HAD STOPPED HIS RESEARCH WORK INTO PRODUCING MICE AND RABBIT EMBRYOS IN THE LAB BECAUSE OF ABNORMALITIES IN THE ANIMAL PREGNANCIES. SAID BARNES: "WE HAVE CHOSEN TO LOOK AT THE ANIMAL MODEL, WHICH IS THE SENSIBLE WAY TO LOOK AT THIS. I AM CONCERNED BECAUSE WE GOT SO MANY RED LIGHTS IN THE FINDING WE HAVE HAD SO FAR IN RESPECT OF MICE AND RABBITS." (STEPTOE SAID HE HAD NO COMMENT).

DR. BARNES SAID: "I AM CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON WITH THE HUMAN TEST TUBE BABIES-- VERY LITTLE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS... UNTIL SUCH TIME AS IN VITRO FERTILIZATION IS PROVED TO BE SAFE IN ANIMALS, I SUGGEST THAT TO USE THIS PROCEDURE IN HUMANS IS UNWISE." BARNES LISTED THE DANGERS HE HAD OBSERVED IN HIS EXPERIMENTS: INCREASED CHANCES OF IMPERFECT EGGS, MICRO-ORGANIC INFECTION OF THE FERTILIZED EGG, INCREASED RISK OF CHROMOSOMAL ABNORMALITIES AND THE CHANCE THAT NATURE'S FAIL-SAFE MECHANISM-- WHICH MIGHT ABORT AN ABNORMAL EMBRYO-- MIGHT NOT WORK FOR THE ARTIFICIALLY FERTILIZED EGG.

THE DEL ZIO VERSUS DR. VANDE WIELE CASE IN NEW YORK IS GETTING BIG PLAY IN BRITISH NEWSPAPERS, TIED IN WITH THE BROWN PREGNANCY.

IN 1971, STEPTOE WAS QUOTED IN THE BRITISH PRESS: "WE ARE NOT IN A RACE TO BEAT THE AMERICANS TO A TEST TUBE BABY."

IN 1972, STEPTOE WON AN ITALIAN AWARD FOR PRODUCING AND DIRECTING A FILM, "OPERATIVE LAPAROSCOPY IN GYNAECOLOGY," WHICH SHOWED HIS TECHNIQUE FOR EXPLORING THE ABDOMEN. IT WAS

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MADE AT OLDHAM HOSPITAL.

AN INTERESTING INDICATION THAT STEPTOE ALL ALONG HAS PLANNED TO PUBLICIZE THEIR WORK THROUGH A COMMERCIAL AGENCY IS GIVEN IN A LETTER TO THE ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR OF THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE, SEEN IN THEIR FILES. STEPTOE WROTE MAY 26, 1978: "I AM SORRY THAT I CANNOT ALLOW ANY STORY OF ANY KIND TO BE COLLECTED FROM THE MEDICAL AND NURSING TEAM IN OUR WORK. IF EVENTUALLY THERE WILL BE ANY STORY, PICTURES AND TELEVISION RIGHTS RELEASED THEY WILL BE DONE THROUGH AN AGENCY AND YOU WILL HAVE TO DIRECT ALL YOUR QUERIES TO THEM AND MAKE ANY OFFERS TO THEM FOR MATERIAL. YOUR EDITOR WILL BE INFORMED IN DUE COURSE OF THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE AGENCY."

LATEST "SCOOP" FROM THE HOSPITAL, THE "SUN" CLAIMS, "ACCORDING TO THE STAFF AT THE HOSPITAL," THAT "LORRY DRIVER GILBERT BROWN WILL WITNESS THE BIRTH OF THE CENTURY. (HE'S) ASKED DOCTORS IF HE CAN BE IN THE OPERATING THEATER" WHEN HIS WIFE GIVES BIRTH. STEPTOE HAS AGREED TO THE REQUEST. THE STORY CLAIMS.

UPDATING AS INDICATED. END OLDHAM FILE.

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