

STM LN17/NYK JULY 20TH, 1978 MSG: FIL, RUSH
TO: TIME MEDICINE, PRESS
FROM: LONDON BY: WHITE IN: OLDHAM
SLUG: TEST TUBE BABY TK: 1 EOH:

THERE IS GROWING UNEASE AMONG THE DOZENS OF OUT-OF-TOWN NEWSMEN IN OLDHAM AS THEY COMPETE FOR SNIPPETS OF INFORMATION ABOUT MRS. BROWN AND THE PROGRESS OF HER PREGNANCY. THEIR WORRY IS SHARED BY LOCAL REPORTERS ON THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE (WHICH CLAIMS, APPARENTLY CORRECTLY, TO HAVE BROKEN THE STORY, HAVING REPORTED APRIL 20 THAT THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST TUBE BABY WOULD BE BORN IN JULY).

THE NEWSMENS' PROBLEM IS SUMMED UP IN THE SNARLING COMMENT OF A GUARD AT SPRAWLING OLDHAM AND DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL WEDNESDAY TO REPORTERS NEAR THE ENTRANCE TO THE MARRON MATERNITY UNIT, THE OLD, RED-BRICK, FOUR-STOREY BUILDING WHERE LESLEY BROWN AWAITS HER CONFINEMENT.

"YOU BASTARDS," THE GUARD SAID, "DON'T YOU CARE ABOUT THE BABY?" LATER, A PORTER AT THE ENTRANCE SLAMMED AND LOCKED THE DOOR WHEN A REPORTER APPROACHED, YELLING: "GET OUT OF HERE I'LL CALL THE POLICE." RIGHT ABOVE HIS HEAD, ON THE TOP (FOURTH) FLOOR, IS MRS. BROWN'S ROOM, THE ONLY ONE WITH LACE CURTAINS, TO FRUSTRATE CAMERAS. SHE CAN LOOK OUT, BUT THE CAMERAS CANNOT SEE HER.

NEWSMEN WORRY THAT THE BABY WILL BE BORN DEAD, OR DEFORMED. IF THIS HAPPENS, THEY EXPECT STEPTOE AND OTHERS TO LAY THE BLAME ON THE PRESS. ON TWO SEPARATE OCCASIONS IN RECENT WEEKS HE PUT OUT STATEMENTS TO BE CIRCULATED TO ALL NEWSPAPERS THROUGH THE PRESS ASSOCIATION ASKING THE MEDIA NOT TO PUBLISH THE NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE MOTHER BECAUSE SHE WAS OF A TEMPERAMENT SUSCEPTIBLE TO THE SORT OF PRESSURES IT WOULD IMPOSE ON HER. THEN, WHEN THE DAILY EXPRESS RAN ITS STORY ABOUT MRS. BOWN ON JULY 11, USING EVERYTHING BUT HER NAME, STEPTOE ISSUED ANOTHER STATEMENT, SAYING "PRESSURE BY THE MEDIA COULD ENDANGER OUR PATIENT AND HER CHILD." SIMULTANEOUSLY, OF COURSE, WITH STEPTOE'S BLESSING, ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS (DAILY MAIL) BOUGHT THE WORLD RIGHTS TO THE STORY, AND ON JULY 12 IDENTIFIED THE WOMAN.

"IT WAS SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE THEREFORE," HUFFED THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE, "TO SEE THAT, FOLLOWING A FINANCIAL DEAL WIDELY ESTIMATED AT £325,000 POUNDS, THE VERY FACTS WHICH MR. STEPTOE HAD PREVIOUSLY REGARDED AS POTENTIALLY HARMFUL WERE IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO THE DAILY MAIL, AND, OF COURSE, WITHIN THE TIME IT TAKES TO CHANGE AN EDITION, TO THE REST OF THE WORLD'S NEWSPAPERS TOO... MR. STEPTOE ALWAYS PLEDGED THAT THE FIRST TO BE TOLD THE SECRETS OF THE PROCESS, THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS, WOULD BE THE MEDICAL PRESS.... IT SHOULD BE DONE IMMEDIATELY, AND NO DEAL OVER SYNDICATION RIGHTS SHOULD AFFECT THE PUBLICATION."

THE STEPTOE-EDWARDS EXPLANATION OF THEIR RECOMMENDATION TO THE BROWNS THAT THEY GO AHEAD AND SIGN WAS AS FOLLOWS: "FOR SOME WEEKS WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF DISTRESS BEING CAUSED TO OUR PATIENT BY THE OVERWHELMING ATTENTIONS OF THE PRESS. WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED WITH OFFERS BY A NUMBER OF NEWSPAPERS,

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BOTH BRITISH AND FOREIGN. WE ADVISED MR. AND MRS. BROWN TO CONSIDER THESE OFFERS FOR TWO REASONS-- FIRST, TO GAIN FINANCIAL SECURITY FOR THEM AND THEIR CHILDREN, AND SECONDLY, BECAUSE BOTH WE AND THEY BELIEVED THAT A CONTRACT WITH ONE NEWSPAPER WOULD BE THE BEST MEANS OF CONTROLLING INTRUSIONS BY CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE PRESS." WITH AN OLDHAM SOLICITOR ACTING AS GO-BETWEEN, THE BROWNS-- GUIDED BY STEPTOE-EDWARDS-- DECIDED TO CONTRACT WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS. STEPTOE-EDWARDS SAID: "WE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IT CLEAR, IN VIEW OF THE UNIFORMED SPECULATIONS WHICH HAS APPEARED, THAT NEITHER OF US HAS ENTERED INTO ANY CONTRACT OF ANY SORT WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS GROUP LTD., OR ANY OTHER ORGANIZATION." UNTIL AFTER THE BABY'S BIRTH, THEY SAID, ANY MEDICAL BULLETINS WOULD BE ISSUED THROUGH THE OLDHAM AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY." THIS HAS BEEN DONE, BUT PRECIOUS LITTLE HAS BEEN RELEASED. MEANTIME, THE DAILY MAIL HAS BEEN DRIBBLING OUT COMMENTS FROM MRS. BROWN, WHILE THE REST OF THE PRESS GATHERED AT OLDHAM HAS BEEN FRANTICALLY TRYING TO BREACH THE SECURITY ESTABLISHED AROUND THE FAMILY NEWSMEN HAVE TRIED TO BUTTON-HOLE AND PHOTOGRAPH MR. BROWN AS HE ENTERED AND LEFT THE HOSPITAL. THEY SHOOT PICTURES OF DR. STEPTOE AS HE ZOOMS PAST IN HIS WHITE MERCEDES. STEPTOE HAS TAKEN TO COMING OUT OF ODD DOORS WHERE HE KNOWS NEWSMEN WILL NOT BE. THERE ARE FRONT AND REAR DOORS TO THE MATERNITY UNIT, AND IT CAN BE ENTERED, AS WELL, FROM ANOTHER WING TO THE SIDE.

SAID EDWIN WARREN, SPOKESMAN FOR OLDHAM AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY: "IT SEEMS IF YOU MOVE ANYTHING, THERE IS A REPORTER BEHIND IT. ONE REPORTER HAD THE NERVE TO POSE AS A VISITOR AND GO INTO THE MATERNITY BUILDING QUESTIONING PATIENTS. THAT SORT OF THING IS INTOLERABLE."

AT THE OUTSET THE DAILY MAIL STATIONED REPORTERS OUTSIDE MRS. BROWN'S DOOR TO KEEP OUT THE OPPOSITION, AND ANYBODY ELSE NOT WANTED, AND THE HOSPITAL WENT ALONG BY REFERRING ALL INQUIRIES ABOUT THE BROWNS TO THE DAILY MAIL. THERE WAS AN OUTCRY FROM OPPOSITION NEWSPAPERS ABOUT THIS, AND THE AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY QUICKLY REMOVED THE MAIL MEN AND REPLACED THEM WITH SECURITY GUARDS FROM A PRIVATE FIRM, AND ANNOUNCED THAT THE AREA HEALTH AUTHORITIES WOULD UNDERTAKE TO ISSUE BULLETINS HENCEFORTH. NEWSMEN NOW ARE BANNED FROM THE HOSPITAL. ONLY VISITORS THE BROWNS WANT ADMITTED ARE ALLOWED IN; THIS INCLUDES DAILY MAIL REPRESENTATIVES, OF COURSE.

BECAUSE TEMPERS AT THE HOSPITAL ARE GETTING SHORT, AND BECAUSE NEWSMEN REALIZE THEY WILL BE BLAMED IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, ONLY A FEW REPORTERS ARE STAKING OUT THE HOSPITAL GROUNDS TO TRY AND GRAB MR. BROWN AND STEPTOE. THE ODD PHOTOGRAPHER STILL IS SHOOTING MRS. BROWN'S WINDOW. SUN REPORTERS TODAY CLAIMED THEY GOT A PICTURE OF MR. BROWN SCAMPERING INTO THE HOSPITAL. BUT FOR THE MOST PART, NEWSMEN THIS WEEK ARE LEAVING THE HOSPITAL ALONE. PRESS HEADQUARTERS IS OLDHAM'S BELGRADE HOTEL. THE BAR IS FULL OF NEWSMEN PICKING EACH OTHER'S RUMORS. THE DAILY MAIL CONTINGENT, ABOUT HALF-A-DOZEN STRONG, KEEPS TO ITSELF. THEY SAY THEY HAVE BEEN FORBIDDEN TO TALK TO OTHER REPORTERS. THEY EAT AT A TABLE BY THEMSELVES, DRINK BY THEMSELVES. THE OPPOSITION, INFURIATED BY THE STONE WALL, IS WORKING ON VARIOUS LOWER-LEVEL WORKERS AT THE HOSPITAL, IN HOPES OF GETTING INFORMATION, SLIPPING THEM TWENTY POUND NOTES.

OPPOSITION NEWSMEN SAY THE DAILY EXPRESS ACCOUNT OF HOW THE EXPRESS TRACED MR. BROWN (THROUGH HIS CAR LICENSE TAGS) IS BALONEY. THEY SAY THE EXPRESS PROBABLY PAID SOMEBODY AT THE

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HOSPITAL, OR OTHERWISE IN THE KNOW, TO POINT OUT MR. BROWN.

ONE OF THE MOST STARTLING AND UNSAVORY RUMORS CIRCULATING AT THE HOSPITAL, AND ELSEWHERE IN TOWN, IS THAT THE BOMB SCARE AT THE HOSPITAL ON FRIDAY EVENING WAS ENGINEERED BY A REPORTER, OR PHOTOGRAPHER, IN THE HOPES THAT THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITIES WOULD EVACUATE THE BUILDING, AND THAT IN THIS FASHION A PICTURE COULD BE MADE OF MRS. BROWN AS SHE WALKED OUT (OR WAS WHEELED OUT) OF THE BUILDING. PERHAPS AN ON-THE-RUN INTERVIEW TOO, WHO KNOWS ?

THE FRIDAY DRAMA BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER 5 PM WHEN A MAN TELPHONED THE HOSPITAL PORTER'S LODGE, AND LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, WARNING TERSELY: "THERE'S A BOMB IN THE MATERNITY WING... IT WILL GO OFF AT 7PM." A FLEET OF AMBULANCES RUSHED TO THE MATERNITY BUILDING IN CASE PATIENTS HAD TO BE TAKEN AWAY, AND A FIRE ENGINE STOOD BY. POLICE, USING PRINCE, A LABRADOR TRAINED TO SNIFF OUT EXPLOSIVES, AND HOSPITAL STAFF MADE AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH BUT FOUND NOTHING. ABOUT 65 PATIENTS, INCLUDING MRS. BROWN, WERE TAKEN TO A NEIGHBORING UNIT ABOUT 40 YARDS AWAY, THROUGH A CONNECTING CORRIDOR. THEY DID NOT GO OUTSIDE. DR. STEPTOE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL AT THE TIME, AND KEPT A CAREFUL CHECK ON MRS. BROWN AS SHE WAS MOVED DOWN FROM HER TOP-FLOOR ROOM BY ELEVATOR, AND THROUGH THE CONNECTING CORRIDOR. A HOSPITAL OFFICIAL SAID IT WAS ALL OVER IN ABOUT AN HOUR OR SO. HE SAID: "I JUST CAN'T SAY IF THE CALL WAS MADE BECAUSE OF THE PUBLICITY OVER MRS. BROWN BEING IN THE MATERNITY UNIT-- IT MAY JUST HAVE BEEN COINCIDENTAL." NOBODY REALLY BELIEVES THAT. THE CALL WAS MADE BECAUSE MRS. BROWN WAS THERE. SAID ANOTHER OFFICIAL: "WHOEVER MADE THE CALL. MUST HAVE A SICK MIND. A SHOCK LIKE THAT COULD PUT ANY MOTHER-TO-BE AT RISK."

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IS IT POSSIBLE, JUST POSSIBLE, THAT SOME DEMENTED NEWSMAN, PERHAPS HAVING HAD ONE TOO MANY, PULLED THIS STUNT? LET'S HOPE NOT. THE COPS ARE INVESTGATING. BUT WITH RUMORS LIKE THAT, NO WONDER THE DOCTORS AND NURSES AT OLDHAM GENERAL ARE GETTING FED UP WITH THE PRESS.

LAST NIGHT (WEDNESDAY) WE REACHED THE STEPTOES' HOME, THROUGH THEIR UNLISTED NUMBER. MRS. STEPTOE ANSWERED. SHE LISTENED POLITELY TO OUR REQUEST FOR AN INTERVIEW, TALKED OFF-TELEPHONE TO HER HUSBAND FOR A GOOD FIVE MINUTES, RETURNED TO SAY: "THE ANSWER IS NO. HE'S SORRY, BUT HE CAN'T TALK TO ANYBODY UNTIL AFTER THE BABY IS BORN." THEN SHE SAID, "HE READS TIME QUITE OFTEN ON AIRPLANES WHEN HE'S TRAVELLING." WE ASKED IF DR. STEPTOE WOULD ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS IF WE PUT THEM DOWN ON PAPER AND DELIVERED THEM TO HIM. NEGATIVE.

IT IS THE BELIEF OF INFORMED SOURCES IN OLDHAM THAT STEPTOE AND EDWARDS HAD EVERY INTENTION OF BEING PART OF THAT SYNDICATION DEAL WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS, AND MAY STILL BECOME PART OF IT-- AFTER THE BABY IS BORN, IF THE BABY IS HEALTHY. ACCORDING TO SOURCES, THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER THOUGHT IT HAD A DEAL FOR EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS SEVED UP WITH STEPTOE-EDWARDS, UNDER WHICH STEPTOE AND EDWARDS WOULD SHARE THE MONEY WITH THE BROWNS. BUT THE DOCTORS WERE PERSUADED THAT A BRITISH OUTFIT, ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS, SHOULD HAVE IT. ALTHOUGH STEPTOE-EDWARDS HAVE ANNOUNCED THAT THEY HAVE NO CONTRACT WITH ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS, OR ANYBODY ELSE, IT WOULD NOT SURPRISE INSIDERS TO SEE THEM SIGN UP FOR THEIR STORIES AFTER BABY BROWN APPEARS. TALK IS THAT STEPTOE-EDWARDS BACKED OFF, FOR THE PRESENT AT LEAST, BECUASE OF THE PUBLISHED REMINDERS IN MANY PAPERS THAT THEY HAD PROMISED TO PUBLISH THEIR WORK IN A REPUTABLE SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL FIRST. SOURCES DO NOT

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BELIEVE THAT THE BROWN FAMILY WILL GET ANYWHERE NEAR THE POUNDS 300,000 WHICH IS WHAT ASSOCIATED NEWSPAPERS IS REPORTED TO HAVE PAID FOR THE WORLD RIGHTS. THE FINAL CUT MAY WELL BE POUNDS 100,000 FOR THE BROWNS AND POUNDS 100,000 EACH FOR STEPTOE-BROWN.

IF STEPTOE-EDWARDS ARE CUT IN ON THE SYNDICATION MONEY, IT IS NOT THOUGHT THEY WILL COLLECT IT THEMSELVES, BUT THAT IT WILL GO TO THE CHARITABLE TRUST WHICH THEY SET UP FIVE YEARS AGO TO FURTHER THEIR WORK IN HELPING CHILDLESS COUPLES. IT IS CALLED THE EDWARDS-STEPTOE RESEARCH TRUST, AND IS ADMINISTERED BY STEPTOE'S BANK MANAGER, EDWARD OWEN. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FUND USUALLY ARE SMALL AND ALMOST ALWAYS COME FROM CHILDLESS COUPLES. REPORTEDLY THE FUND NEVER HAS REACHED MORE THAN POUNDS 4,000, AND THREE MONTHS AGO IT WAS DOWN TO ABOUT POUNDS 1,000. MR. OWEN TOLD A REPORTER IN APRIL: "THE MONEY FLOODS IN AFTER HE'S (STEPTOE) BEEN ON A LECTURE TOUR ABROAD. THEN WE GET SMALL SUMS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, BUT I DON'T THINK WE'VE EVER HAD A SINGLE CONTRIBUTION OF MORE THAN POUNDS 500." NOW THAT STEPTOE-EDWARDS SEEM ON THE BRINK OF SUCCESS, ITS HOPED THE FUND WILL REALLY TAKE OFF. OWEN WAS QUOTED IN APRIL: "BIG ORGANIZATIONS WON'T GIVE A LOT OF MONEY UNLESS THEY ARE SEEING CONCRETE RESULTS. IF RESEARCH IS STERILE SO IS THE REACTION. BUT NOW THE DOCTOR IS ON THE FRINGE OF ACHIEVEMENT I'M KEEPING MY FINGERS CROSSED. WE HOPE THAT IF THE FUND WAS REALLY SWELLED WE COULD FOUND A MUCH BIGGER LABORATORY AND TAKE ON MORE STAFF TO TEACH THE TECHNIQUES TO OTHER WORKERS IN THE FIELD THROUGHOUT THE WORLD."

INSIDERS SAY STEPTOE-EDWARDS DREAM OF A MODERN RESEARCH CENTER OF THEIR OWN, TO FURTHER THEIR WORK. THIS, OF COURSE, COULD COST MILLIONS. IF THE TEST TUBE BABY ARRIVES HEALTHY, A FOUNDATION OR ORGANIZATION MIGHT FINANCE IT. IN A NEWSPAPER

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INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN MAY, 1977, STEPTOE SAID HE JUST DIDN'T HAVE THE FACILITIES AT OLDHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL, AND AT DR. KERSHAW'S COTTAGE HOSPITAL (ABOUT A MILE AWAY FROM OLDHAM GENERAL) WHERE HE HAS CONDUCTED HIS RESEARCH WORK, TO KEEP UP WITH THE DEMANDS. HE SAID THERE WERE NOT THE FACILITIES, OR THE MONEY, TO DEAL WITH THE HUNDREDS OF WOMEN WHO CAME TO HIM FOR HELP. STEPTOE SAID HE HAD FACILITIES TO DEAL WITH PERHAPS 60 TO 70 CASES A YEAR OF WOMEN WITH DAMAGED, OR BADLEY-DISEASED FALLOPIAN TUBES, BUT MANY MORE WOMEN WERE IN NEED OF TREATMENT. STEPTOE WAS QUOTED: "I WOULD OBVIOUSLY LIKE TO DEVOTE ALL MY TIME TO CASES LIKE THESE, IN THE EXPERIMENTAL FIELD. BUT YOU HAVE GOT TO REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE ALL THE HUNDREDS OF OTHER CASES OF INFERTILITY WHICH MUST BE DEALT WITH AS WELL... THERE ARE PEOPLE BEING REFERRED TO US FROM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY AND WE HAVE MEDICAL REPORTS OF CASES IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, BUT WE CAN'T ACCEPT AS MANY AS WE WOULD LIKE BECAUSE WE ARE RESTRICTED BY THE NUMBER OF BEDS ALLOCATED TO US AND BY THE FACILITIES WE HAVE." STEPTOE SAID THE AREA HEALTH AUTHORITY, HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT BODIES AND THE REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY ALL DID "MAGNIFICENTLY," MANAGING ON THE MONEY WHICH COULD BE AFFORDED. BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH. STEPTOE SAID: "PEOPLE HAVE AN IDEALISTIC VIEW OF MEDICINE. THEY DON'T REALIZE THAT, NOWADAYS, THE MEDICAL PROFESSION EXPECTS TO, ONE, WORK IN PLACES WHERE THERE IS THE EQUIPMENT AND LABORATORY SERVICES AND SO FORTH, AND TWO, THEY CAN BE CONSIDERED TO BE ADEQUATELY REWARDED FOR THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT THEY HAVE TO TAKE."

IN THIS INTERVIEW LAST YEAR, STEPTOE AGREED THAT THE TEMPTATION TO WORK ABORAD WAS THERE, AND ADDED: "IN A FEW YEARS TIME WE WILL HAVE MANY YOUNGER DOCTORS LEAVING THE HOSPITAL SERVICES HERE."

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THE STORY NOTED THAT "IN HIS TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD, DR. STEPTOE HAS SEEN FACILITIES" WHICH MADE HIS LOOK "PRIMITIVE. WHILE MEN IN HIS FIELD SUCH AS DR. LANDRUM B. SHETTLES HAS THE RUN OF COLUMBIA UNIVERISITY, NEW YORK, AND ANOTHER LEADING RESEARCHER, YU-CHIH HSU IS BACKED BY JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY, MESSRS. STEPTOE AND EDWARDS HAVE BEEN TURNED DOWN IN THE PAST BY THE MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL IN THEIR PLEA FOR BETTER FINANCES."

STEPTOE HAS SAID IN THE PAST THAT HE'D LIKE TO SEE A CENTER ESTABLISHED FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF STUDYING HUMAN REPRODUCTION. SUCH A CENTER WOULD EXAMINE STERILIZATION, CONTRACEPTION, CONCEPTION AND THE PIONEERING FIELD OF TEST TUBE BABIES.

BACK IN 1962, ADDRESSING OLDHAM ROTARY CLUB, STEPTOES SAID A MEDICAL SPECIALIST-CONSULTANT HAS TO BE "FREE OF FINANCIAL WORRIES. HOW CAN YOU MAKE IMPORTANT DECISIONS ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT YOUR OWN ECONOMIC BACKGROUND ? BUT THERE ARE NO RICHES, COMPARED WITH THOSE TO BE MADE IN COMMERCE OR INDUSTRY. ANY MAN WHO GOES INTO MEDICINE WITH THE IDEA OF MAKING A LOT OF MONEY IS A FOOL."

" ON THE QUESTION OF RESPONSIBILITY, STEPTOE SAID: 'I ALWAYS ASK MYSELF WHETHER I AM DOING GOOD BY USING A KNIFE ON A PATIENT. IF THE ANSWER IS 'NO,' THEN I DON'T USE IT. IF 'YES,' THEN I GO AHEAD.'"

END TAKE ONE. MORE TO COME

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