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OSTM: LN69/NY JULY 21 78

MSG: FIL, RUSH

TO: TIME PRESS

FROM: LONDON BY: WHITE

SLUG: TEST TUBE TEMPEST

RIGHT YOU ARE (EXCLAM). THE SUN TODAY HAS A STORY ON PAGE ONE, HEADLINED "TEST TUBE BABY HAS STOPPED US SPLITTING UP." AND "FATHER TELLS OF FIGHTS AND ROWS." (I WAS ASTONISHED TO GET YOUR WIRE BECAUSE I READ THE SUN, ALONG WITH ALL OTHER NEWSPAPERS, ON THE WAY BACK FROM MANCHESTER THIS MORNING, AND IT WAS NOT IN THE EDITION I HAD. THE STORY DID NOT MAKE EARLY EDITIONS.)

A SUN EXECUTIVE SAYS: "WE GOT IT (THE STORY) FROM OUR NEW YORK OFFICE." THE SUN STORY SAYS THE SOURCE IS "AN AMERICAN WEEKLY," AND THE SUN EXECUTIVE IDENTIFIES THAT WEEKLY AS THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER. THE SUN EXEC SAYS "I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE MAIL HAS GOT SEWED UP, BUT WE THINK IT IS A GOOD STORY."

INDEED IT IS. IN THE STORY, MR. BROWN SAYS THAT HIS MARRIAGE WOULD HAVE BROKEN UP IF LESLEY HAD NOT BECOME PREGNANT.

NOPE, THE SUN DOESN'T SAY IT IS "EXCLUSIVE." ITS NOT A VERY LONG STORY. HERE IT IS, AS RUN IN THE SUN:

"THE FATHER OF THE TEST TUBE BABY WHICH IS DUE TO BE BORN SOON HAS REVEALED THAT HIS MARRIAGE WOULD HAVE BROKEN UP IF HIS WIFE LESLEY HAD NOT BECOME PREGNANT. BRISTOL LORRY DRIVER JOHN BROWN SAYS IN AN AMERICAN WEEKLY: "DESPITE OUR LOVE, LESLEY AND I

HAD BEEN SHOUTING AT EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME AND THE WHOLE THING WAS BECOMING IMPOSSIBLE. YOU SEE SHE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN AND SHE WAS ANGRY WITH HERSELF -- AND THAT LED TO ROWS. WE'D BEEN TRYING TO HAVE A BABY SINCE OUR MARRIAGE IN 1969. BUT NOTHING HAD HAPPENED. DOCTORS FINALLY FOUND THAT LESLEY'S FALLOPIAN TUBES WERE BLOCKED AND SAID THE CHANCES OF HER BECOMING PREGNANT WERE A MILLION TO ONE. THAT'S WHEN OUR MARRIAGE REALLY SEEMED IN DANGER. WE BEGAN FIGHTING OVER TRIVIAL THINGS AND SHARON (HIS DAUGHTER FROM A PREVIOUS MARRIAGE) AND LESLEY ALSO BEGAN ARGUING. AND SOME TIMES THE TWO OF THEM WOULD TURN ON ME....''

MR BROWN REVALS IN THE INTERVIEW THAT, IN THE STRUGGLE TO RAISE CASH TO MEET DOCTORS' BILLS, HE SUDDENLY WON 750 POUNDS ON THE POOLS. HE SAYS: ''IT SOLVED OUR MONEY PROBLEMS , AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT EVEN WITHOUT A WIN I WOULD HAVE FOUND THE MONEY SOMEHOW. IN FACT, I WAS GETTING READY TO SELL THE HOUSE AND CAR. WE DESPERATELY WANTED THAT BABY. I CAN'T DESCRIBE HOW I FELT WHEN I FOUND OUT LESLEY WAS PREGNANT. MY DAUGHTER, SHARON, WAS JUST OVERJOYED. SHE KNEW IT WOULD BRING US ALTOGETHER AGAIN.

''IF IT'S A BOY I KNOW WHAT WE NAME HIM, PATRICK AFTER DR. STEPTOE.''

MRS BROWN SAID IN A BYLINED ARTICLE THAT SHE UNDERWENT AN OPERATION IN A BRISTOL HOSPITAL. WHEN SHE WENT BACK THREE MONTHS LATER A DOCTOR TOLD HER: ''IF YOU REALLY WANT CHILDREN, YOU HAVE TO ADOPT. THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.

''NOW I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S REALLY HAPPENING.''

(END SUN STORY)

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