

STM: LN/NYK-21 21 JULY 78 MSG: FIL, RUSH

TO: TIME PUBLISHER

FROM: LONDON

BY: BONNIE ANGELO

SLUG: MEDICINE PUBL

EOH:

WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE IN NEW YORK TO DO THE COVER STORY ON THE HISTORY-MAKING BIRTH OF BABY BROWN, IT POSED SOMETHING OF A JOURNALISTIC PROBLEM FOR THE LONDON BUREAU: HOW TO GIVE A FULL REPORT OF THIS HISTORY-MAKING BIRTH BEFORE IT OCCURRED, WHEN THE MEDICAL SPECIALISTS AND THE FAMILY INVOLVED WERE SWORN TO SECRECY BY THE BRITISH NEWSPAPER THAT HAD BOUGHT EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO THE STORY.

THE LONDON BUREAU TACKLED THE STORY IN FORCE, SOUNDING OUT MEDICAL AND MORAL LEADERS, TRACKING DOWN PREVIOUS STEPTOE IMPLANT PATIENTS AND OTHER SCIENTISTS IN THIS LIMITED FIELD OF RESEARCH. CORRESPONDENT ART WHITE MOVED INTO THE THICK OF THE FRAY IN OLDHAM, FILING EXTENSIVELY ON THE ENIGMATIC DR. STEPTOE AND THE SEQUESTERED BROWN FAMILY, DESPITE THEIR DETERMINED SILENCE. HE OBSERVED THE MEDIA CIRCUS AT THE HOSPITAL AND AT "PRESS HQ" IN OLDHAM'S BELGRADE HOTEL, WHERE, WHITE REPORTS, "NEWSMEN FRANTICALLY FERTILIZED AND REIMPLANTED IN THEIR OWN PAPERS THE DAILY CROP OF RUMORS. THE DAILY MAIL SQUAD ATE AND DRANK ALONE, REFUSING TO TALK TO OTHER REPORTERS, WHO DELIGHTED IN CHIPPING AWAY AT THE MAIL'S 'EXCLUSIVE.' ONE BRITISH REPORTER, REPEATEDLY SNUBBED BY AN OLD FRIEND COVERING THE STORY FOR THE DAILY MAIL, RESORTED TO LEAVING A NOTE ON THE MAIL MAN'S CAR, ASKING PLAINTIVELY: 'WHY WON'T YOU SPEAK TO ME?' DR. STEPTOE DECLINED TIME'S INVITATION TO BE INTERVIEWED -- BUT MRS. STEPTOE TOLD ME ON THE PHONE THAT THE DOCTOR 'KNOWS TIME WELL AND OFTEN READS IT.'"

BACKING UP THE MEDICAL REPORTING FROM LONDON WAS CONSULTANT-STRINGER DR. ERIC TRIMMER, EDITOR OF THE MEDICAL NEWS.

SENT: 1450/SG

ETX:

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