

IIINY

OSTM: LN-NY60 JULY 21 78 MSG: CAC RUSH

FROM: LONDON BY : WHITE

SLUG: TEST TUBE TEMPEST EOH:

SOURCES IN OLDHAM (WHICH DO NOT HAVE THE NEW YORK POST STORY OF APRIL 19) INSIST THAT THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE, WHICH HAS COVERED STEPTOE AND HIS EXPERIMENTS LIKE A BLANKET FOR YEARS, BROKE THE STORY OF THE IMPENDING BIRTH OF THE TEST TUBE BABY.

THE EVENING CHRONICLE HEADLINED ON APRIL 20 REPEAT APRIL 20: "FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY IN THE WORLD." THE LEDE SAID: "THE WORLD'S FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY WILL BE BORN AT OLDHAM AND DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL IN THREE MONTHS TIME. THE MOTHER, WHO HAS BEEN CARRYING THIS UNIQUE EMBRYO, WILL HAVE HER HISTORIC CHILD DELIVERED BY MR. PATRICK STEPTOE IN JULY." THE STORY WAS BY-LINED BY PETER O'REILLY, THE NEWS EDITOR.

IT WAS THE EVENING CHRONICLE STORY WHICH ALERTED THE DAILY MAIL, WHICH CARRIED A STORY NEXT DAY, APRIL 21, ON AN INSIDE PAGE. THE DAILY MAIL STORY CREDITED THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE, BUT NOT BY NAME. THE DAILY MAIL STORY WAS WRITTEN STRAIGHT OUT OF THE EVENING CHRONICLE STORY. IN THE BODY OF THE STORY, THE DAILY MAIL SAID: STEPTOE "REFUSED TO CONFIRM OR DENY AN 'AUTHORITATIVE' STORY IN THE TOWN'S EVENING PAPER THAT THE LONG-AWAITED BIRTH WAS ONLY 12 WEEKS AWAY." (THE DAILY MIRROR ALSO CARRIED THE STORY APRIL 21, ALSO FROM THE EVENING CHRONICLE)

WE DO NOT HAVE A COPY OF THE NEW YORK POST STORY BY SHARON CHURCHER. DID SHE SAY, ON APRIL 19, THAT THE FIRST TEST-TUBE BABY WOULD BE DELIVERED IN JULY? IF SO, SHE HAD IT FIRST. IF NOT, THEN THE CREDIT GOES TO THE EVENING CHRONICLE.

BE AWARE THAT MANY PAPERS HAVE KNOWN FOR A LONG TIME ABOUT STEPTOE'S EXPERIMENTS, AND HAVE WRITTEN ABOUT THEM.

BUT THE 'BEATS' ON THE STORY HAVE BEEN,

1) THAT APRIL 20 (OR 19) STORY THAT THE BIRTH WAS EXPECTED IN JULY. AND 2) THE DAILY EXPRESS EXCLUSIVE JULY 11 IN WHICH THE EXPRESS LAID OUT ALMOST EVERYTHING EXCEPT THE NAME OF THE MOTHER. (THE EXPRESS SAID SHE WAS THE 32 YEAR OLD WIFE OF A RAILWAYMAN LIVING IN THE SOUTHWEST OF ENGLAND, AND THAT THE BABY WOULD BE BORN IN THE NEXT TWO OR THREE WEEKS. THE EXPRESS CALLED HER "MRS. A."

BE AWARE, ALSO, THAT, ALMOST CERTAINLY, OTHER NEWSPAPERS KNEW AS MUCH AS THE EXPRESS KNEW ON JULY 11, INCLUDING THE IDENTITY OF THE MOTHER. THEY PROBABLY SIMPLY BOUGHT THE INFORMATION FROM SOURCES AT THE HOSPITAL, OR THE EVENING CHRONICLE, AS THE EXPRESS MAY HAVE DONE, THE LICENSE PLATES STORY NOTWITHSTANDING.

IT WAS NOT THE FACT THAT THE DAILY EXPRESS SUDDENLY DISCOVERED THE IDENTITY OF THE MOTHER THE DAY BEFORE THEY RAN THE STORY, THAT CAUSED THEM TO DO IT. IT WAS SIMPLY THAT THE EXPRESS, AND EVERYBODY ELSE, HAD BEEN OUT-BID JULY 9 FOR THE STORY RIGHTS BY THE DAILY MAIL, SO THE EXPRESS DECIDED TO GO AHEAD AND PUBLISH WHAT THEY KNEW. OTHER PAPERS LIKELY COULD HAVE DONE THE SAME.

THE OLDHAM EVENING CHRONICLE HAS BEEN OUT FRONT ON THIS STORY ALL ALONG, WITH THE LONDON PAPERS WATCHING WHAT THEY SAID. PLEASE MAKE THIS CLEAR.

WHERE OUR STORY RELATES THE CLAIM BY THE DAILY EXPRESS THAT THE



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EXPRESS DISCOVERED THE BROWNS' IDENTITY THROUGH THE LICENSE PLATES, BE SURE TO SAY THE DAILY EXPRESS "CLAIMS" THIS, OR TELLS THIS STORY, BUT THAT OPPOSITION PAPERS SUSPECT THEY EITHER BOUGHT THE INFORMATION OR GOT A TIP. MAYBE DURING THE BIDDING FOR THE BROWNS' STORY THE EXPRESS IS TRYING TO MAKE IT APPEAR AS IF THEY GOT THE INFORMATION FOR THEIR JULY 11 SCOOP FROM OLD-FASHIONED DIGGING. WE SHOULD, LIKE OTHERS, TAKE THIS WITH A GRAIN OF SALT. IT SHOULD STILL BE USED, BUT SHOW A SMIDGEN OF SCEPTICISM.

RE PREVIOUS ANSWER ON WHAT THE HOSPITAL WAS ORDERED TO DO BY THE REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY AS REGARDS GIVING OUT INFORMATION. THE HOSPITAL WAS TOLD TO STOP REFERRING CALLS TO THE DAILY MAIL, AND TOLD THAT PRIVATE SECURITY GUARDS HIRED BY THE HEALTH AUTHORITIES WOULD REPLACE THE DAILY MAIL MEN AT THE HOSPITAL. THEN, THE REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY SAID THAT ANY INFORMATION TO BE GIVEN OUT WOULD COME FROM A REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITY MAN, FROM ANOTHER OLDHAM OFFICE NOT FROM THE HOSPITAL (NONE HAD COME ANYWAY).

IN PRACTISE, THIS HAS MEANT THAT SEVERAL VERY BRIEF STATEMENTS ON THE MOTHER'S PROGRESS, FROM DR. STEPTOE, HAVE BEEN RELEASED IN THIS FASHION. SUGGEST MAKE IT: "EMBARRASSED, REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES ORDERED THE FEW BITS OF INFORMATION COMING FROM STEPTOE ON MRS BROWN'S PROGRESS BE GIVEN TO ALL CORNERS."

(THIS HAS CONSISTED ONLY OF TWO OR THREE SENTENCES LAST WEEKEND DENYING THE BIRTH WAS IMMINENT, SAYING THE PREGNANCY WAS PROGRESSING WELL, AND THAT NO DECISION HAD BEEN MADE ABOUT METHOD OF DELIVERY. AND A COUPLE OF ONE-SENTENCE BITS SINCE, SAYING, IN EFFECT, THAT MRS. BROWN IS PROGRESSING OKAY.)

SENT 1841 AW

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