



Gorden Schweers

PROFILING

They say the human race shares a common ancestor. Science tells us that our first parents were fur covered primates who walked out of Africa as a small band of nomads, never to look back except for a few traces; bone fragments and chipped flints.

As strange as it may seem, little Jamie Snit's birth at the Vancouver General confirmed these anthropological musings. It was a winter night, flakes of snow clung to the windows of the maternity ward on the 12th floor. Lying prone on her back for the last ten hours, with a swollen belly looking as if it would rupture at any moment, the decision was made amongst the staff to induce Jamie's mother. Dr. Clyde waltzed in to her private room while Mary was staring at one of those tiny insufferable TV screens the hospital rents to their long term patients.

"Why don't we induce?" he proposed, with a big smile, staring into his patient's blue eyes and patting her ponderous belly.

"Induce? As in what?" Mary Snit replied.

"You," was the response.

"And for what purpose would that be?" she asked.

The esteemed doctor avoided telling her the real reason which was that her natural birthing time just might interfere with the hospital's New Year's Eve Party. Instead he offered up:

“It's almost the end of the year. If you delay another day or two...the birth happens to fall in a new tax year. If we induce (and quickly) your *Precious* is born in the year that's almost gone. You and your husband can claim a deduction for the entire past year. That is, if we induce - pronto. If not...” Dr. Clyde flourished his hand in the air, indicating a serious loss of opportunity, “...you claim taxes for *Precious* for January through December – but of the next year.”

“So?” The expectant mother stated her indifference to the suggestion of saving money at her expense.

“I've already discussed it with your husband. He is in full agreement.”

Mary Snit tossed her head with its Nordic features and blond tresses across the pillow, feeling betrayed once again by the male world. It was, after all, her body. Even the decision to turn to artificial insemination was her husband's idea, after six years of a childless marriage. Less than a few weeks after the insemination, she was

pregnant and in the care of Dr. Clyde and his expert clinic.

Mary swallowed her pride and once again conceded. Within what seemed like seconds, the staff of the Clyde Clinic was rushing around her room, preparing injections and setting up monitors. Moments later the doctor appeared at the doorway in his surgical suit and mask, snapping his sterile gloves in place.

“Are we ready now?” he asked. But the reply was “No”. The hours dragged along and the window in Mary’s room became a mirror of black reflection. Mary pleaded with her attendants to close the curtains. Things were not going as planned. This was an unforeseen complication. Still the hospital had several hours before the end of the tax year. Dr. Clyde assured Mary that he would see to it that her birthing went smoothly and on time. Outside the room, in the hallway, a decision was made with Mr. Snit in attendance. The expectant father signed the appropriate papers for a C-section. The mother and child were in danger at this point in time. More injections followed and a curtain was drawn across Mary’s torso, separating her upper body from her lower half, like one of those women sawn in two on the vaudeville stage. It was all over in a

few minutes. Jamie's first wail filled the room and his mother cried too, "My baby!"

Behind the curtain, there was silence. Then, one of the nurses said, "Oh my God!"

For a split second, Dr. Clyde lost his professional decorum, demanding, "How the hell did this happen?"

"What's wrong, what's wrong," Mary cried from the other side of the curtain.

A nurse came to her side immediately and soothed her, saying, "It's alright, Dearest. Just the usual fluid in the child's lungs."

"Give me my baby," Mary demanded.

"In a moment," Dr. Clyde almost shouted back in response.

Mr. Snit was pacing around in the waiting room when Dr. Clyde approached him with a stern look on his face and brow. He consoled:

"Well, you're a father now. Your boy is a healthy 8 pounds 2 ounces."

In a spasm of gratitude, Mr. Snit tried to grasp the doctor's hand but it was withheld. He looked askance at

the doctor who proceeded to tell him there was a slight complication.

“Complication? What do you mean...complication?”

“These things happen,” the doctor replied.

“What do you mean? What things happen?”

“Perhaps it wasn’t our fault after all.”

“What are you talking about?” Snit asked in shock.

“Your wife was inseminated, was she not?”

“By your clinic – as if you didn’t know.”

“Yes, yes, but that’s a small detail. Nothing is taken for granted in a court of law.”

Snit was perceptive and responded quickly, “If you’re suggesting I won’t sue you, you are wrong. So what is *a slight complication* as far as my new son is concerned?”

Dr. Clyde cleared his throat, as if announcing in the most compassionate manner possible his patient had passed away under the anesthetic. Instead, he said:

“Your son is the wrong racial profile.”

“What the...?”

“Look, we don’t live in a perfect world. Mistakes can and do happen. Perhaps the semen samples got mixed up and it wasn’t our fault. Lots of families have adopted children from other races.”

Mr. Snit's eyes narrowed like those of a badger in captivity. He demanded:

“Just what race are we talking about –in terms of this orphan?”

“Do you have a name picked out for your new addition?”

“Don’t change the subject.”

“Negro,” Dr. Clyde confessed.

“I *will* sue!” Snit insisted.

Another intern had entered the room and drew Dr. Clyde aside for a short conference. Together, standing side by side, they approached Snit and proposed an outlandish solution. A new drug was on the market that was totally experimental yet revolutionary. If given to a newborn within the first hour of birth, skin pigmentation could be altered permanently. People of yellow, red, black or colored pigmentation could opt to be pink people, and pass for Caucasians along with all the benefits of being

lily white. The yoke of degradation would fall from the necks of the oppressed simply by being able to afford the availability of the new drug at birth.

“We have to act quickly,” informed the intern. “Already we have lost the first quarter of an hour. Time is running out.”

Papers were pushed in front of Snit who signed them, stating that if the experiment failed, he would still sue the Clyde Clinic, no questions asked. Still, he signed. A series of injections were administered to the newborn as Snit watched from behind a glass window. His wife had fainted and was wheeled away on a stretcher. Before Snit’s eyes, a miracle slowly unfolded. Just under the hour, a nurse appeared in front of the glass partition with a beautiful pink baby wrapped in swaddling blankets bearing the *Snit* monogram. From behind her gauze mask, the nurse’s eyes twinkled, indicating her joy that Mr. and Mrs. Snit finally had themselves a first child who was the right color.

The drug had apparently proven itself to be entirely successful. Time, however, would prove that this was not entirely true. Certain traits remained in the only child of

the Snits which science seemed incapable of addressing even with its arsenal of gene therapies.

As for giving their newborn his first name, the Snits settled on an innocuous name like Jamie, carefully avoiding any reference to his real identity by a name like Martin or Luther; or Nelson (as in Mandela); even more unequivocal, Obama Snit. From any angle, Jamie Snit passed for a Caucasian right from the moment he entered the First Grade. His friends were all white kids and it never crossed their minds to say nasty things to him based on his racial ethnicity. Yet certain traits emerged which were conspicuously incongruous. For instance, Jamie Snit by the age of twelve was known to be a great little dancer with feet and hip movements that would rival *The Jackson Five*. Just as uncanny was his ability on the basketball court. He could dunk a ball from the middle of the court with the ease of another Wilt Chamberlain. But most of all, word passed amongst the young ladies in his school that Jamie Snit was exceptionally well hung.