

Natural and normalized conceptions

JEROME (VOICE OVER): I was conceived in the Riviera. Not the French Riviera. The Detroit variety. They used to say that a child conceived in love has a greater chance of happiness. They don't say that any more. I'll never understand what possessed my mother to put her faith in God's hands rather than those of her local geneticist. Ten fingers, ten toes, that's all that used to matter... Not now. Now, only seconds old, the exact time and cause of my death was already known.

MIDWIFE NURSE (reading the newborn Jerome's blood birth test): Neurological condition, 60% probability, manic depression, 42% probability. 00:09:55 Attention deficit disorder, 89% probability. Heart disorder.... 99% probability. Early fatal potential. - Life expectancy: 30.2 years.

JEROME (VOICE OVER): Like most other parents of their day they were determined that their next child would be brought into the world in what has become the natural way.

INT. GENETIC COUNSELLING OFFICE. DAY.

A GENETICIST stares into a high-powered microscope as ANTONIO, MARIA and 2-YEAR-OLD VINCENT are shown into the office by a NURSE. The Geneticist swings around in his chair to greet his clients. Four magnified clusters of cells - eight cells on each cluster - appear on the television screen.

GENETICIST: our extracted eggs...(noting the couple's names from data along the edge of the screen)...Maria, have been fertilized with... Antonio's sperm. After screening we're left as you see with two healthy boys and two very healthy girls. Naturally, no critical pre-dispositions to any of the major inheritable diseases. All that remains is to select the most compatible candidate.

Marla and Antonio exchange a nervous smile.

GENETICIST First, we may as well decide on gender. Have you given it any thought?

MARIA (referring to the toddler on her knee). We would like Vincent to have a brother... you know, to play with. *The Geneticist nods. He scans the data around the edge of the screen.*

GENETICIST Of course you would. Hello Vincent. You have specified hazel eyes, dark hair and fair skin. I have taken the liberty of eradicating any potentially prejudicial conditions - premature baldness, myopia, alcoholism and addictive susceptibility, propensity for violence and obesity—etc

MARIA: --We didn't want--diseases, yes but...

ANTONIO (more diplomatic): We were wondering if we should leave a few things to chance.

GENETICIST (reassuring): You want to give your child the best possible start. Believe me, we have enough imperfection built-in already. Your child doesn't need any additional burdens. And keep in mind, this child is still you, simply the best of you. You could conceive naturally a thousand times and never get such a result.