

28/02/06

Dear Leonie

Further to our conversations at the end of last year, I wish to put in writing some of the information we discussed.

With his permission, I can reiterate that the donor, coded at Repromed as "VM", donated sperm here between 1990 and 1997.

The dates of birth for the children born as a result of these donations range from 1991 to 1997.

There are twenty children in ten families.

I apologise that it has taken me this long to write to you.

I trust that this is the information you were requesting.

All the best to you and your family.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely

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17th November, 2005.
Leonie Hewitt

Dear Leonie,

Following your recent phone calls to [redacted], Acting Executive Director, regarding all possible information on Geraldine's donor, half donor conceived siblings and what work has been done to locate Geraldine's donor, I have provided the following information for you and Geraldine.

As previously stated by phone, letter and in past interviews, Geraldine's donor code is JAX and we do have his name, but no other identifying details such as date of birth or address and phone number. There are 3 other families who have offspring by the same donor. There is 1 male half sibling, born in 1983 and 2 female half siblings both also born in 1983. None of these half siblings or recipient families has contacted RHW for further information or with a request for contact with their donor. Geraldine's donor's non-identifying characteristics are:

- Height: 5'8"
- Build: Average
- Hair: Fair
- Eyes: Blue
- Race: Caucasian
- Blood Group: O Positive
- Skin Colour: Fair

In relation to what efforts we have made to locate Geraldine's donor, we have:

- Checked the electoral roll in NSW and Australia wide several times, most recently in 2004.
- Checked the phone book Sydney wide and Australia wide on the internet several times, most recently in November, 2005.
- Sent out letters to people with same surname found in the phone book and electoral roll asking them to contact RHW, with no success.

- Searched many times on the world wide web for any possible reference to the donor, using several different forms of the donor's name.
- Phoned several Sydney people with the donor's surname and they have denied being a past donor.
- Advertised in the Sydney papers and via the Donor Conception newsletter for past donors to come forward.
- Developed a RHW Donor register on which all known information of all past donors, recipient families and donor offspring is recorded.
- Social Work has been available to discuss donor issues with Geraldine and with any past donors who ring RHW.

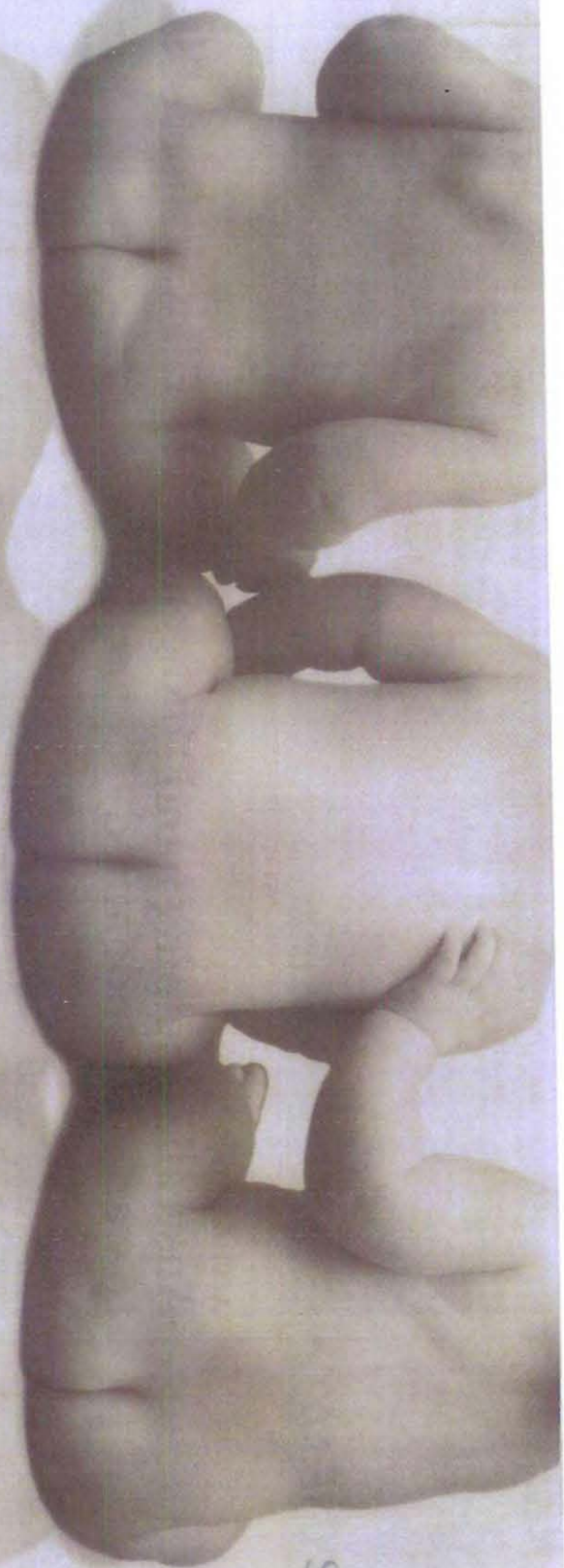
Even though we have the name of the donor, this may not have been his real name. The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages Family History Certificate information is not available to us to search as this donor would have been born post 1905. This is the last date that is available to the public to access. Centrelink information has also been denied to our searching.

As in the past, RHW counsellors are willing to continue to try to find Geraldine's donor and ask him if he would be willing to have contact. As I will be leaving work at the RHW in the next few months, [redacted] has agreed to be a contact point between the Royal and yourselves. Ph

We are sorry that we have been unable to locate Geraldine's donor despite our best efforts.

Good luck for any future search endeavours.

Social Worker



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I desperately wanted a child

I ordered MY BABY ONLINE

With her motherhood options running out, Nicole made a momentous decision
Nicole Moore, 42, Burleigh Town, Qld

BANKING for babies

There are two types of sperm donor - a known donor and a de-identified donor, whose identity is unknown but details will be made available to the child once they have turned 18.

To be a donor you must be aged 18-46.

Donors have no legal or financial obligation to the child.

In Australia, it is illegal to sell your own sperm or eggs.

There is currently a severe shortage of sperm donors in Australia.

Check the regulations with your local IVF clinic before importing sperm from overseas, as the laws differ from state to state.

Bouncing the bub on my knee, I couldn't stop smiling. 'Your giggle's infectious,' I cooed, laying him on the change table. Looking through his pile of tiny clothes, I couldn't choose between the blue jumpsuit or the mini denim shorts - they were all too cute!

At age 39, you would be right to assume this baby was mine - that I was a new mum, or even that he was my second child. But the truth was he was actually my friend's son, Bailey.

I didn't have kids of my own. Over the last 10 years I'd always been the perfect babysitter or aunty... just never the mother.

I hadn't wanted it that way. I'd just never found the right guy.

'I'm never going to find the one,' I moaned to my friend Lisa after another disastrous date.

Even Mum started to worry. 'You've not got long left to have a baby,' she warned.

And as time ticked by I started to panic. *What if I've already missed the boat?* I thought.

Mum suggested I get a check-up, so in 2007, I nervously made an appointment at an IVF clinic. They could tell me the likelihood of still being able to conceive naturally. As scary as it was, if I only had a small opportunity

left then I wanted to know. A gynaecologist at the clinic did a blood test and an ultrasound to determine my fertility levels. Thankfully, she had good news. 'You're still fertile,' she smiled. 'Now is the perfect time to conceive.'

Despite the relief, the news was bittersweet, because I still didn't have a man.

I explained my dilemma and the gynaecologist shrugged. 'You don't need a partner to have baby,' she said. 'Artificial insemination is an option.'

'I've never thought about doing it alone,' I replied. And driving home, I dismissed her suggestion altogether.

I wouldn't want my baby to grow up without a dad, I thought.

But a year later, blowing out 40 candles on my birthday cake, my desperation for a child was reaching fever pitch.

If you want a baby you're going to have to do it by yourself, a little voice was telling me. It was far from ideal but it seemed I was running out of choices.

So back at the IVF clinic, we discussed my options.

'You'll need a sperm donor,' a nurse told me.

Looking through the pamphlets she gave me, I learnt there were only limited donors in Australia because they aren't paid. I would have to go on a waiting list and it could take up to two years!

But I don't have two years, I fretted.

I was at my wits' end when the clinic suggested something else - importing donor sperm from overseas.

'You can order it online,' the gynaecologist said.

'The donor pool is much larger in a country where men are paid for sperm donations, so there wouldn't be any waiting time.'

At first I was taken aback. I didn't want to mail order a baby like a new pair of shoes! But

I didn't want to order a baby like a new pair of shoes



With Chloe's birth, my dreams came true

when I thought about it, I realised it wasn't that different to getting donor sperm from Australia.

'I'll look into it,' I agreed. So in January 2009, I logged onto an American donor website recommended by the clinic. Browsing through, my scepticism quickly turned to hope.

'I can choose the man's age, height, eye and hair colour,' I read. I could also find out his interests and family background. Suddenly the donor wasn't a complete stranger!

When I told my parents they were shocked at first. But in the end they were both delighted to finally see me happy.

'Of course we'll support you,' Mum told me, and my friends felt the same way.

Over the next few months I focused on finding a donor. I wanted someone with similar features to me, and I also wanted an open donor. It meant my child would have the option to

find out who their father was when they turned 18.

In April 2009 I finally found 'the one'.

'He's athletic, studied music and languages and has a close family,' I told Mum, showing her the guy's profile.

It did feel unnatural to be introducing the father of my child this way, but my situation wasn't exactly normal.

After final checks of his medical history, I put through the order for four vials of sperm. They cost \$US495 each.

A bargain for the baby of my dreams, I thought.

Three days later the clinic called to say the frozen sperm had arrived. They tested me to see when I was ovulating, and a week later, the nurse injected the sperm into my uterus in a procedure called intra-uterine insemination.



I've never regretted my decision

Getting dressed again, I felt a bit sad it had come to this, but still overjoyed to be finally creating a baby.

But two weeks later I got my period. 'It didn't work,' I sighed.

Determined not to give up, I tried three more times. It was only on my fourth and final attempt that I fell pregnant. 'This baby was meant to be,' I smiled.

During the pregnancy it did feel like something was missing. Going to the ultrasounds alone, I wished that I had a partner to hold my hand.

But with the support of my family and friends I got through it, and on May 4 this year I had a beautiful baby girl, Chloe.

Mum and Dad were by my side during the delivery.

Holding Chloe for the first time, all my worries disappeared. I knew my baby girl would give me the strength to face the challenges life might throw at us.

'She's perfect,' I sighed. Today, Chloe is five months old and I love being a mum. Even though my focus is her, I still hope one day I'll find a man to share our lives.

And although I'll unlikely to ever meet the man who gave me the most precious gift in the world, I'll be forever thankful. **m**

As told to Smila Mistry

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