Tongue in Cheek: Ova the Rainbow

kevin isom

Lately, I've been hearing a very strange sound. No, it's not the creaking of my rebellious joints when I do lunges at the gym. It's the tick-tock sound of gay male biological clocks sounding off across the country. Yes, it appears some of us have them, too. Think "surrogate," the next wave – or should I say "labor pain" – in gay child-bearing. And lately, I'm seeing an awful lot about it in the press, too. Who SAYS we can't reproduce?

As it happens, a few months ago, I did my own research on the subject. Yes, adoption is always an option – and a great one for both kids and parents, let me be clear – but I wondered about the prospective dad or dads – who might want a biological connection to the child. What about them? The options, it seems, they are a-growin'!

I started my research by typing in the word "surrogate" into an Internet search engine (my thinking being that typing in "how to knock up your best female friend" might not get the right responses), and I was shocked by the response: hundreds and hundreds of agencies, clinics, lawyers, and message boards for prospective surrogate moms and dads. My favorite name for a service? "Ova the Rainbow." You think I'm kidding, but trust me, it's there. In California, of course.

With a surrogate, you are essentially paying a woman to carry your child. And this nine month ride comes with two options: either you can use her egg (this is garden-variety surrogacy), or you can use her to carry the child but use a donor egg, which is fertilized in a Petri dish somewhere and then implanted in the surrogate (this is called gestational surrogacy). I don't want to think too hard about the mechanics in any of this, but it's there. The Petri dish option is, understandably, more expensive. And I noticed that the highest priced agencies seemed to be in Beverly Hills. I guess all those Hollywood actresses want to avoid stretch marks, and the law of supply and demand applies. So avoid Hollywood, if you're surrogate shopping.

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There are actually surrogate and egg-donor profiles, some with photos (of the surrogates and donors, I mean, not the eggs), on the web sites. It's virtually point-and-click parenthood. The screening process is straightforward, the arrangements are made for you, and then a child is on his or her way. Signed, sealed, and delivered. (If only long-term relationships could be so easy.)

Of course, as I began to ponder the surrogacy option (and for me, pondering is a dangerous sport), I wondered about unexpected offshoot industries from the surrogacy option. Take music, for example. Maybe it would be helpful to have music to get the donors and surrogates in the right mental state, the right mood, if you will. There would be classic songs, like "For Your Thighs Only" and "I Only Have Ice For You." For the '80s retro set, there would be the Olivia Newton John classic, "Let's Get Cervical." And with the most emotional times of the year in mind, there would be the Thanksgiving classic, "Gobble, Gobble, I'm Basting in Your Love."

But I digress. Seriously, more and more guys are shelling out the bucks for the surrogacy option. Just last year, in fact, the Lexington Herald-Leader in Lexington, Kentucky, reported on the birth of quadruplets there. Now, while the birth of quadruplets IS news in Kentucky, the interesting part was that the quads were born to a surrogate mother and a local attorney, who will be raising them with his male domestic partner. In Lexington, KY. Not San Francisco (the Homeland of our People) or New York City or L.A. Right smack in the middle of America. The men, both in their 30s, are about to have their hands full for, oh, about the next 21 years or so. (Clearly, their bun in the oven came with plenty of yeast.)

The great part about their experience is that this couple had another relatively new choice about how to create their family and how to live their lives. A whole new possibility is out there for gay men.

It's just somewhere ova the rainbow. ▼

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