

Article Details

MOVIE REVIEW – GOOGLE BABY

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GOOGLE BABY – POWERFUL, MOVING AND SHOCKING

In the world of globalization, who knew that babies would also become commodities! Israeli director, Zippi Brand Frank's feature documentary Google Baby takes a stark and shocking look at this new commercial trend. It is an offspring of global economics that a baby production business based in Israel sends embryos from USA for surrogate implant to a clinic in Gujarat, India for delivery and pickup. Opening with a statement of how reproduction has become an act independent of sex, Frank moves across three continents like an investigative journalist. However at no point is she judgemental.

Google Baby was screened as part of the Reel to Reel program at the Toronto International Film Festival 2009. The film begins with real life footage of a baby being delivered at Dr. Nayna Patel's infertility clinic in Gujarat and immediately puts the surrogate mother in focus. The procedure which is extremely expensive in the States is quite affordable in India. As a result, couples from all across the globe are rushing to the clinic with the hope of fulfilling their parenting dreams. However instead of focusing on the joy of the parents, Frank turns the camera on the agony of the surrogates who must part with the child they have carried for nine months soon after it is born.

Through interviews and conversations it becomes evident that the surrogates take on the job for the sake of a house or a better life for their kids and family. Dr. Patel who runs the clinic practically explains the risks to both the surrogates and the couples who come to her seeking help. She affirms that both parties are doing a good deed for the other, the surrogate by helping out and the couples by paying the surrogate. However this apparent win-win situation raises many questions on the moral, ethical, social, economic and scientific level.

The absurdity of the situation especially comes out full bloom when a 57 year old woman calls up the Israeli entrepreneur in the baby business asking for help in obtaining both an egg and a sperm for a surrogate implant. A gay couple screen potential egg donors online trying to find the perfect looking donor for a baby. Meanwhile the motivation of the egg donor is simply to renovate her home and pursue her hobbies with the extra money.

On the other side of the globe, a surrogate's husband in India is already planning to send his wife back to the clinic where her recent delivery helped finance the family's new home. It is for the sake of their son's education and career he proclaims. Isn't that just brutal? Frank's attempt is sure to get Google Baby the attention it truly deserves.