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Alana Semuels

Sperm Donor, Life Partner

Just because women can create and raise a baby alone doesn't mean they want to. An increasing number of women and lesbian couples are seeking an involved father for a donor.

Dawn Pieke's relationship imploded¹ just before she reached 40. Pieke had a miscarriage and shortly after, her boyfriend, whom she'd dated for almost a decade, met someone else on a business trip and had an affair. The two broke up and Pieke found herself in a tailspin²: She knew she wanted a family, but she also knew her biological clock was ticking, and she wasn't sure, after two separate, decades-long relationships, that she could go through it all again. [...]

Pieke, who works in sales, started diligently researching her options, but soon got discouraged. Adoption didn't seem like a good bet: She knew three separate couples trying to adopt, and it was taking forever for them to get approved – a potential single mother would have even more trouble, she figured. Pieke didn't love the idea of going to a sperm bank: She and her twin sister were raised by a single mom and they grew up always wanting to know more about their father. She wanted her child to know both parents, if possible.

"I always thought I would be married and have kids by the time I was 25, but it just didn't turn out that way," she said.

Then one day, she stumbled across something on the Internet that seemed like it might work: A website that connected people who wanted to have kids and raise them together, but without a romantic relationship. She paid a small fee and registered, and right away, a guy in Australia caught her eye. [...] "My family and friends thought I was nuts, they were like, 'chill out, you'll meet someone'," she said. "But I thought, 'wow, this could maybe be something'".

A few months later, Pieke was on the Facebook page of the co-parenting site and she got a message. It was from someone called Fabian Blue asking if she was looking for a co-parent, and it just happened to be from the very same man she'd seen on the website before, who was living in Australia.

He was gay, and from New York, and shared her beliefs about spirituality – she describes herself as spiritual, but not religious. The two struck up a correspondence. She liked that he was dark-haired, since she is blonde, and figured they might make a good-looking kid, and they agreed on lots of things. Most importantly, they had similar ideas about parenting: They would be gentle and nurturing³, with no yelling or spanking, and would not use baby talk, but would instead speak to the child as a "person already full of intelligence," Pieke said. [...]

¹ gik i stykker

² (her) negativ spiral

³ omsorgsfulde

They met in person for the first time in downtown Omaha⁴ on Thanksgiving 2011, when he pulled up in a horse-drawn Cinderella carriage, handed her a bouquet of red roses, and asked, “Will you be my baby mama?” When she said yes, they gave each other high-fives and got into the carriage.

After that, he didn’t go back to Australia. Instead, they started experimenting with an at-home insemination kit – basically a cup and a syringe. Two months and two tries later, Pieke got pregnant. Their daughter, Indigo, was born in October 2012. [...]

Dawn Pieke and Fabian Blue feel lucky that their daughter will know both of them, and have both of them involved in her life. They also feel that they’ve vetted⁵ each other more extensively than married couples do. They performed extensive background checks on each other and shared tough moments that they might have tried to hide from a potential romantic partner, like when Pieke called Blue sobbing, nearly incoherent, because her dog died. They did testing to see what their fertility chances would be, and got various medical tests to make sure a potential child wouldn’t have any genetic problems. Blue had come close to committing to other potential parenting partners, but something in his gut had told them that the other women weren’t the right fit, but Pieke was.

The two felt so comfortable with each other that they didn’t even create a co-parenting agreement⁶ – when couples get married, they don’t sign a co-parenting agreement, Pieke points out. They’re just trusting one another to stay involved. It’s challenging at times – Pieke needs to stay in Omaha to care for her mother, who has Alzheimer’s, and Blue needs to go where he can find a job. He works in high-end hotel management, and is currently based in Alabama⁷. But he flies back frequently, and they’re still on the same page⁸ about rearing⁹ Indigo. They split the costs 50-50.

They’re still both looking for romantic partners who will accept their alternative lifestyle. If they don’t find them, that’s okay too. [...] “I’m so thankful that everything did happen, because Indigo wouldn’t be who she is without her dad,” Pieke said.

(2014)

⁴ amerikansk by i delstaten Nebraska

⁵ undersøgt kritisk

⁶ *co-parenting agreement*: aftale om fælles forældremyndighed

⁷ delstat i det sydlige USA

⁸ *they’re still on the same page*: (her) de samarbejder stadig og er helt enige

⁹ opdrage