

UNCOVERING THE FRAUD: THE RESHUFFLING OF GENETIC TIES

Insemination fraud is the deliberate substitution of the sperm sample chosen by the parents with that of another donor (or the doctor's) during artificial insemination. For the families concerned, the discovery of fraud means a **reshuffling of genetic ties**. This means that some ties that were thought to be genetic are not, and others - that were never suspected to exist - are discovered unexpectedly.

A SHRINKING OF GENETIC TIES

Insemination fraud implies the **loss of genetic ties** with one's **father** (when he was supposed to be the progenitor), one's **paternal family** and even one's siblings. Even if it doesn't change the affection we feel for them, there's nothing trivial about this discovery.

PENDING GENETIC TIES

When the donor cannot be traced, those involved claim that they are deprived of the **right to know their genetic origins**. They deplore the fact that fraud prevents them from accessing important information, such as their medical history and details of their genetic ties.

AN EXPANSION OF GENETIC TIES

People who know their progenitor, either because it's the doctor or because they've managed to trace the donor used, discover **new genetic ties**, with their **progenitor** (even if they don't want to have a relationship with him) or with **other people conceived with his gametes**. These new ties can disrupt the family balance, if only temporarily.

Even though the discovery of fraud comes as a shock to the family, the reshuffling of family ties is not based solely on genetic ties. The ties that people born of fraud have forged with their family members are not replaced:

"Two things can be true at the same time. So, I'm choosing to say that yes, these are my half-siblings because we have this genetic connection that we're kind of building on. I'm also choosing to say the lack of genetic relationship with my dad doesn't affect that relationship. And the fact of the genetic relationship with the doctor doesn't force me to have a relationship... Genetics gives you the excuse, it gives the relatedness, **but you create the relationship** by investing in it, and by making a choice to embrace people."

Emily, 31 years old, father-doctor swap

In summary, the reorganization of family ties can be upsetting for those concerned: on the one hand, because their genetic origins are different from those they thought they had; and on the other, because they may discover genetic links with new people.