

My name is Crystal McPheeters. I was born in Montrose, Colorado in 1984, but moved to Oregon in 1986. With the rise in DNA testing, the prevalence of fertility fraud is finally coming to light. This is no longer just an article in the paper for me, it is personal. My case is just one of many.

I have known my donor conceived status since I was a small child. For most of my life I didn't think much of it. In college I studied genetics and became truly curious about my paternal ancestry. This was years before the possibility of commercial DNA testing. There was not much I could do without a donor number, which the clinic never supplied. In June of 2016, I took an ancestry.com DNA test. It took almost 18 months before a close match appeared. By that time I had also submitted a 23andme test. Suddenly it was match after close match. We all had the same story, the same clinic, the same doctor, but over a 20 year age difference between the youngest and oldest.

Through genealogical sleuthing, my half sister was able to determine our father was the fertility doctor. It was like being punched in the stomach. Our parents did not agree to this. An anonymous donor should be someone you have never met, especially not someone who knew you intimately. Doctors are supposed to be people we can trust. Doctors are supposed to have their patient's best interest at heart. They take an oath to do no harm.

Once the shock wore off, I was met with anger and revulsion. Sperm donation is tied with sex. There is no way to unlink the two. While egg donation involves needles and medical procedures, sperm donation only requires a private room and ejaculation. While he may not have forced himself on my mother, he definitely received sexual pleasure from the experience. He HAD to. There was no other way. The whole ordeal feels like rape by deception and I was angry for my mother. I am still angry for my mother. She hadn't agreed to that. To find out he had also done this over and over again made me even more angry for all those other women and families.

If basic medical ethics do not deter doctors from using their own genetic material, I hope legal consequences will. There needs to be consequences for their actions. For the rest of my life, I will have a voice in the back of my mind asking me if I can trust my doctor. My trust in the medical profession has been permanently shattered. I will also have to live the rest of my life knowing I am the byproduct of deception.

Crystal McPheeters