



Everybody Together Now: Shifting the Paradigm in Intersex Care

Before the 20th Century intersex people—those born without clearly defined sets of male or female genitalia and/or chromosomes that aren't typical for one's phenotype—were often referred to as hermaphrodites and viewed as unfortunate but weren't routinely subjected to cosmetic genital surgery and hormone replacement therapy. As time progressed, so too did medicine. The innovation of anesthesia allowed surgeons the new ability to practice advanced surgical techniques. This occurred alongside Medicine's gradual shift from being practiced in the privacy of homes and instead in public institutions. These simultaneous occurrences created a perfect storm that ostensibly led to a *rise* in the numbers of intersex people being reported by public health officials in population concerned nations like the United States and Great Britain.

By mid-century a young sexologist named Dr. Money was presented with his own perfect storm—a set of twin baby boy's whose mother brought them in after one of her sons experienced a botched circumcision that left him with only a remnant of his phallus. Dr. Money suggested that the family allow surgeons to create a vagina for their child and raise him as they would a girl. Years later, Money reported his experiment as nothing other than a success. Yet Money's findings have been heavily critiqued after his subject grew up and countered much of what he had published.

It was around this time that intersex patients who grew up in the same era and were subject to medical protocol derived from Money's recommendations—namely secrecy and surgery—began to organize as the Intersex Society of North America (ISNA). ISNA laid the groundwork for the multi-faceted activism witnessed today spanning everything from funded physician/patient collaborative research projects like the DSD-TRN to the youngest intersex activists to date, Inter/Act Youth, making waves as they work with MTV's *Faking It* and voice their experiences to a new generation of listeners on their blog. The presentation concludes on these exciting advancements in physician/patient relations and activism while exploring new possibilities for what *should* happen to intersex people moving forward.

Supplementary Film

Pidgeon's documentary, *The Son I Never Had: Growing Up Intersex*, is a digital storytelling project made for their Master's thesis project. It curates archival audio and video footage of their family from the past 10 years while weaving the *objective* Voice of Medicine and the *subjective* Voice of the Patient. [27 mins.]