

World/Nation

Possible baby switch leaves parents searching for proof

WAUCHULA, Fla. (AP) — In the festive season between Thanksgiving and Christmas of 1978, two little girls were born within three days of each other in Hardee Memorial Hospital.

One girl was an only child. She grew up strong, doing the things she loved like roller skating and swimming. But another side of her life was tragic. Her mother died of cancer when she was only 3, and five years later, her stepmother left after divorcing her father.

The other girl grew up with a faint heart, in and out of hospitals, unable to run like the rest of the kids, instead turning to the piano, dressing up and day-dreaming of becoming a model. She had seven sisters and brothers.

The sick girl, Arlena Twigg, died too young, at age 9, a smile on her face, fighting valiantly to survive the heart that was defective.

Now, a decade after the girls were born, comes a startling revelation, along with allegations and intrigue that have rained the lives of their families upside down.

Arlena Twigg's parents say they learned shortly before her death two months ago that she was not their daughter by birth. Blood and genetic testing required for surgery confirmed it.

They allege the hospital deliberately swapped babies on them, that their real child is healthy.

They think they know who she is.

At issue are the credibility and the motives of the two families, strangers to each other, the mystery of who the real Arlena Twigg is, and, on a broader scale, the ethics and morality of pursuing the search.

Arlena died without knowing the dark secret. The other girl lives in a apartment complex in Sarasota, Fla., sheltered from the turmoil swirling around her.

Her father lives in fear that someone will walk up to her and say something. He came outside and talked to an Associated Press reporter who knocked on his door; he asked that his daughter's name be withheld.

Regina and Ernest Twigg have filed a \$100 million lawsuit against the 50-bed hospital, three doctors and a nurse, charging they negligently and willfully switched their baby with the sick child and altered Arlena Twigg's medical birth records to cover their deception.

If the babies were deliberately switched, what was the motive?

"That's a good question," William Post, the couple's lawyer, said. "I don't know."

The defendants deny the charges, and one of their attorneys called the allegations groundless and irresponsible.

They're all too real for the Twiggs, who moved from Florida to Langhorne,

Pa., near Philadelphia, about a year ago to be closer to a hospital that specializes in the treatment of cases like Arlena's.

"When you lose one that you love as dearly as Arlena," said Mrs. Twigg, her voice breaking into sobs, "you look at a little girl and you see one with long dark hair and you grieve. You wonder about the birth baby and what she would look like. Does she have reddish blonde hair like one of my other children? Does she have brownish hair? What's her little personality like?"

Her obsession led investigators using public records to the 9-year-old blonde-haired, blue-eyed girl in Sarasota, who the Twiggs' attorneys suspect is the real daughter.

Mrs. Twigg is driven by memories of her own adoption when she was 9 that separated her from a younger sister she hasn't seen since.

The Twiggs lost another daughter, Vivian Grace, who died in 1975 when she was 7 weeks old, also of heart disease, and on the same date Arlena died three years later, Aug. 23.

"This little sister I'm talking about, it's like losing the original baby," Mrs.

Twigg said. "We grieve over having lost a child that belonged to us as I grieved as I grew up."

The Twiggs' attorneys are seeking to have the Sarasota girl and her father genetically tested at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions in Baltimore where Arlena underwent a battery of 25 tests that showed her not to be their biological daughter.

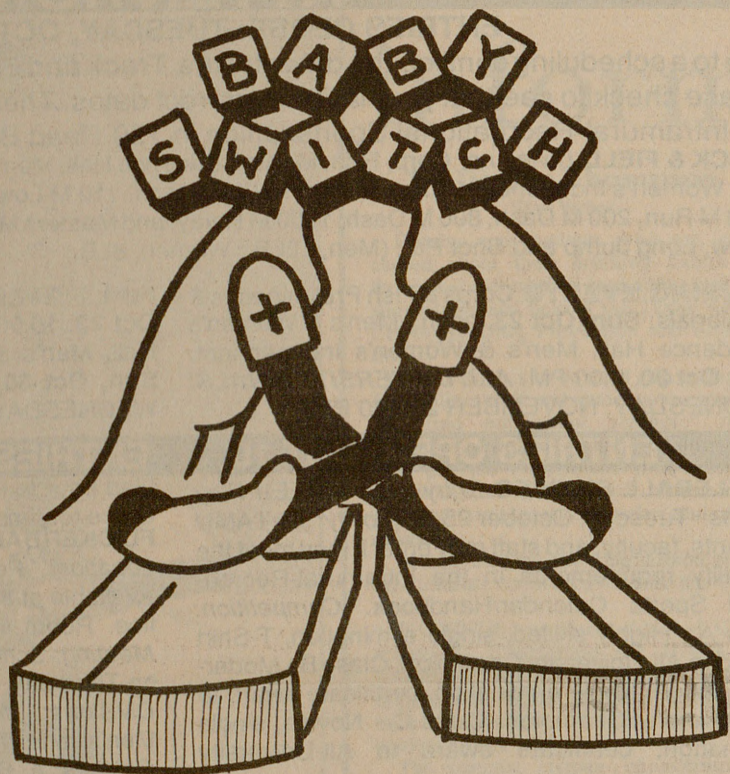
The odds that the tests were wrong are 300 million-to-1, Phil Kibak, a spokesman for Johns Hopkins said.

"Why should I?" asked the father in Sarasota, a 43-year-old salesman. "I am positive this is our daughter. I'm not going to put my daughter through something like this based on suspicion."

"She's happy and very well-adjusted. I do not intend to let anyone interfere in her life. All I'm doing is protecting her from finding out about this."

He said of the Twiggs: "They need to quit worrying about how they feel and start thinking about how the child feels."

Daniel Callahan, an expert on medical ethics who is director of the Hastings Center in Briarcliff Manor, N.Y., agrees.



Graphic by Kelly Morgan

Democrats see chance for Nov. 8 election win

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats found inspiration Sunday in the Los Angeles Dodgers' win in the first game of the World Series, saying that Michael Dukakis can still pull off a come-from-behind victory over Republican George

Bush in the remaining three weeks of the presidential campaign.

"I think we're going to be like the Dodgers last night," Dukakis running mate Lloyd Bentsen said. "It looked like they were down and out, and all of a sudden they hit a home run and won it. I think we can do that in the next 24 days."

Bush, alert to that possibility, said that despite polls that show him widening his lead over Dukakis, "we're going to keep on with our original game plan, keep working hard, keep traveling to key states... keep moving forward."

"All I know is to just drive down to the wire," the vice president said.

Dukakis acknowledged in Boston that he is entering the last leg of the long campaign as an underdog, but advised Republicans not to pop champagne corks too early because "we're going to be the ones celebrating on election night."

He said he will continue fighting for the values he believes in. He said Bush, as vice president, sat on the sidelines for eight years while America got beaten in world markets, while they mortgaged children's future to a mountain of debt, and a piece of America was being sold off every day at bargain basement prices.

The World Series analogy was used by several Democrats.

"It's an extremely close race," said Sen. Albert Gore, D-Tenn., on ABC's "This Week with David Brinkley."

"You're going to see Mike Dukakis come on like Kirk Gibson in the bottom of the ninth inning last night in that game with two outs... he could barely walk around the base path, but he knocked a home run to win the game," Gore said.

The Dodgers beat the Oakland Athletics, 5-4, in that first game of the Series.

Bush told reporters in Denver that he already has a team studying the transition to a Bush presidency and that he is ready to name his Cabinet quickly. Former Navy Undersecretary Chase Undermeyer heads the Bush transition team.

"He has drawn up wiring diagrams, what we should do if we win," Bush said. "You have to hit the ground running."

Bentsen, appearing on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation," said the Democratic ticket has been the target of character assassination by Bush and his running mate, Dan Quayle.

"We were subjected to what I think was the most demagogic attack that I've

ever seen at the presidential level," Bentsen said.

The Dukakis camp was trying to put the best face on what many perceived as a clear Bush victory in last Thursday's debate with Dukakis.

Dukakis adviser Robert Beckel said on the ABC program that "there's a lot of time left in this race, there's a lot of volatility in the electorate, and I find it amazing that all of these people are writing this race off."

But Ed Rollins, a Republican strategist, said that "over the last three months, George Bush has made the sale; he has convinced the American public that he has the strength and the ability to lead this country."

Said Rollins: "It's just a question now of getting the voters to the polls on Election Day."

According to a published report, Dukakis plans to concentrate in the three weeks left before the Nov. 8 election on 18 states with 272 electoral votes — two more than needed for election — to pound home basic economic themes and to make Bush's campaign style an issue itself.

The Dukakis campaign vehemently denied the account by the *Washington Post* in Sunday's editions.

"We are not writing off whole regions of the country," said campaign manager Susan Estrich. "We're very, very competitive in a large number of states."

Those 18 states, according to the *Post*, are New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and California; the New England states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont and Rhode Island; Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia in the mid-Atlantic region; Iowa and Wisconsin in the Midwest, and Oregon, Washington and Hawaii in the West.

In those states, the *Post* said, Dukakis managers believe the Democratic nominee is either favored or competitive with Bush. Their list gives priority attention to Montana, North and South Dakota, Colorado, New Mexico, Missouri and Kentucky, where they believe the Massachusetts governor is trailing but competitive.

The Bush campaign, according to the *New York Times*, will concentrate on California, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Michigan, regarded as close.

Earthquake hits Greece; 25 injured

KILLINI, Greece (AP) — An earthquake struck western Greece Sunday afternoon and government officials said at least 25 people were injured as buildings collapsed and landslides ripped down the mountain slopes.

The Environment Ministry advised people not to return to hundreds of damaged buildings.

State television said about 30 tremors of lesser magnitude rumbled through the same region throughout the afternoon.

"As far as we know a total of 25 people were slightly injured by the quake," government spokesman Sotiris Kostopoulos said. "The state apparatus is on full alert and all the necessary material, such as tents and drugs, have been sent to the area."

The quake measured 6 on the Richter scale, according to the Athens Seismological Institute.

It said the initial quake occurred at 2:34 p.m. and the center was 150 miles west of Athens in the Ionian sea between Killini and the resort island of Zakynthos.

"People panicked tremendously and rushed out into the streets as soon as it happened," local government official Aleka Markoyiannaki said.

"In some villages almost half of the buildings collapsed," she said. "It was really very disastrous and the damage is very extensive."

Almost 80 percent of the villages of Bartholomou and Kastro were destroyed, police in Killini reported.

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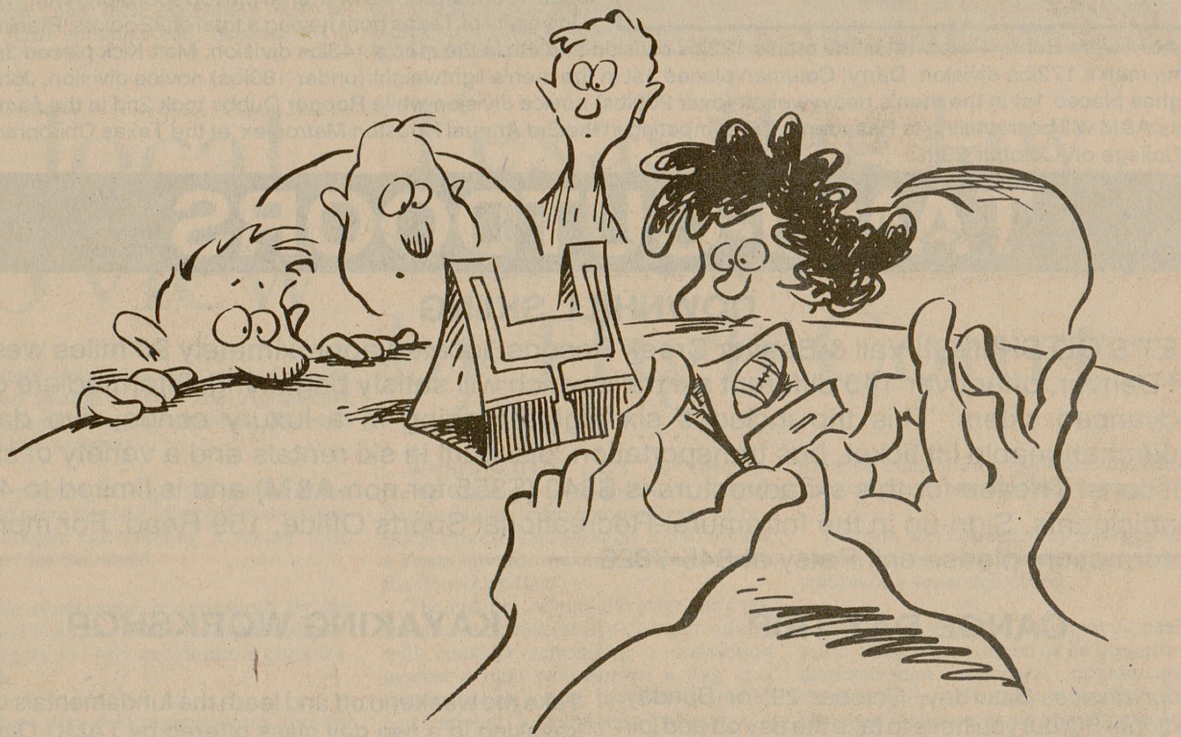
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