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WHILE MENTIONING THE potential for exploitation of egg donors, "New Paths to Parenthood" fails to explore the larger picture. The statement that the egg-retrieval procedure "has a treasure-hunt quality" is, in fact, an understatement: With the "short supply and strong demand," eggs are like gold.

The country's leading in vitro fertilization experts stated before the 1994 National Institutes of Health's human-embryo-research panel hearings that there is much profit to be made in embryo research: "Therapeutic agents, vaccines, hormones, proteins, stem cells, gene therapy, cell lines, chimeras, patents" — all are potential products of embryo research that cannot begin without eggs. Embryonic kidney cells have been used to make recombinant DNA fertility drugs. Human embryos are being grown in human ovarian-cancer cells, among other substances, for research. In the last decade, shipments of embryos were seized in both Romania and California; their destinations were manufacturers of cosmetic and beauty products. The

list does not end here.

In 1992, the first year that the Massachusetts Health Care Committee held a hearing for the still pending House Bill 1833 (a 'first in the nation' measure to regulate fertility clinics), I testified that "right now, eggs and embryos could be sold out the back door of a fertility clinic onto the black market for \$10,000 a whack... and no one would know." Three years later, some 40-plus couples are suing several prominent in vitro fertilization doctors on both coasts for theft and resale of their eggs and/or embryos, with the allegation that several of these fertility doctors left clinics daily with briefcases stuffed with tens of thousands of dollars in cash.

Laura Pappano's article states that the "gasps of horror have subsided." I believe that they have yet to start.

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