

Intact America

Children's Rights

<https://www.intactamerica.org/category/voices-2/>

Campaign and Advocacy

Sep 26, 2022



During my Obstetrics and Gynecology Residency, I had the opportunity to learn newborn circumcision. Because of the frequency of the procedure, I agreed to the training. Yes, the Siren on the rocks of cultural normalcy called me.

Immediately prior to the training, I remember a blond-haired resident giddy with excitement at being able to learn the procedure, and vividly recall her saying: Have the nursing staff line the boys up. Go Chop! Chop! Chop! Think of all the RVUs you can make?? RVU stands for Relative Value Unit, which is a figure used for compensation. Obviously, her main concern was the amount of money that could be generated by sexually maiming newborn boys in the name of profit.

The white Circumstraint board was on a procedure table. The baby was brought into the room. The mother's written consent had been verified.

There were three of us. My assigned job was to put the safety pin through the foreskin.

The naked baby was then placed in four-point restraint and immediately began crying uncontrollably. Someone prepped the skin. Another Resident placed the local anesthetic which resulted in further crying. Those who have children or work with newborns know that babies do talk in their own ways. There are cries of hunger. Cries of frustration, and cries of absolute fear and pain. Perhaps I am blocking out the other parts of the procedure that the other two doctor trainees performed.

It came time for me to place the safety pin, so I was standing directly over the baby. The screaming was just awful. I can remember starting to place the safety pin in the foreskin and a small dot of blood appeared where the pin would be placed. At this point, I almost walked out of the room. Seeing a naked restrained human screaming in pain, with his head rocking back, spittle flying from his little mouth was too much. I wondered, Now why are we doing this? Why are we violating this human being? I finished my part and stepped aside. As the shrieks of the restrained baby intensified, the third resident severed the baby's foreskin along the edge of the clamp and placed the circular bloody specimen on side of the Circumstraint.

I will never forget the shrieks of that baby.

The episode left me with the knowledge that I had violated my own morals as well as the code of medical ethics. Indisputably, we had done harm to the baby that day. The baby's normal genital anatomy at birth had been forever changed, leaving him physically altered as well as neurologically ruined. Unquestionably, it is impossible for a newborn baby to give consent for such a procedure. I still hear the screams from time-to-time.

And we call ourselves healers?

I have never performed or taken part in another circumcision.

James F. Verrees, M.D., FACOG
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Jul 26, 2022



I think a lot about friendship these days. Becoming an intactivist eight years ago really changed how I interact with the world not because I fear rejection, but because I know what I believe is sound and resolute and this has had a profound impact on my friendships.

First, a little background. I became an intactivist after my first son, Paxton, was born. Despite knowing in my gut I didn't want to have him circumcised, I let the advice and opinions of those around me convince me that it was the right thing to do. But right from the start Paxton was in a lot of pain from wounds that wouldn't heal. He developed a painful ulcer, adhesions and other complications in the first few years of his life. It broke my heart that he shrank from any touch.

I was full of guilt and regret. I sank into a depression so deep I thought about killing myself. I pulled away from everyone. At the same time, even my husband wasn't hearing me. In those days he didn't understand the intensity of my grief, and I was really low.

It wasn't until I joined a Facebook group for moms with similar experiences that I started channeling my grief into action to help other babies and their families. I attended rallies and met my Facebook community in real life. We formed a bond of support while speaking out and shining a spotlight on this atrocity.

I noticed that some moms would join the cause for a while and then drop off, eager to get back to a more normal life rhythm. It was a little sad to see those friendships drop off one by one, but I pressed on. Fighting to end circumcision was just a hill I was willing to die on. That's when I started sharing what I had learned about circumcision with friends on Facebook. I had to be heard, so I was posting pretty regularly. Every time I came across new information, I'd put it up there. Some of my long-time friends were there for me and supported me all the way.

But staying with the cause dropped a bomb on my friendships. Right away, friends I had known for years pushed back. Some shot off angry replies. Others complained I was pushing my views on them or posting inappropriate material. Many unfriended me or stopped responding to calls and texts.

I used to think I didn't care what others around me thought, and then I climbed on that hill and stood on it. It hurt for a while. Sharing what I knew was part of my healing and my journey, and my whole village around me was walking away. It took a very long time to allow myself not to be individually invested and angry.

I can see now that fear drives anger; my posts probably made them question their own decisions, and there was nothing they could do about it. I've also come to realize that there are people who just don't want to understand. When it comes to friendship, it's more important than ever to nurture mutual respect with folks who don't agree with us.

To move through regret and grief, we don't ever get over it. We learn to grow a life around it. If we don't, we'll sit in the pain forever. I'm still as passionate as ever to save baby boys from mutilation, but I'm learning to let go of the outcome. I offer my best and keep going.

Elise Wicklund

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Jun 13, 2022

I was circumcised twice—first when I was born and again as a revision when I was about 5 years old. This has haunted me ever since.

I clearly remember the second circumcision surrounded by doctors all looking at me. I was scared and cold, and my mom had left the room. This was not a pleasant experience. I remember that day like it was yesterday. Looking back at my teenage years, I noticed that I had a few experiences that were not normal. I did not know that without the foreskin, the glans and shaft can become dry, which results in small painful tears and chafing.



Fortunately, I've learned to do some of what a missing part of my body (the foreskin) is supposed to do: keep things moisturized. But the scar is a daily reminder that I was robbed. I have never had any complaints from partners in the past, but that is not the point. Even in a world where this is considered the norm, I have always been conscious that something wasn't quite right.

I wanted to know why circumcision was considered necessary, so I started to do more research. I found out how common circumcision and mutilation are for children and young adults all over the world, and how hospitals sell foreskin to tissue banks, and somehow this ultimately becomes facial creams and cosmetics. I was shocked and felt sick when I read this. I got so angry, a friend told me to look for organizations that are fighting against it, so I could find people who share my anger and aren't afraid to speak out about it.

That's when I found Intact America online and saw what they are doing to change things. I want to make a difference any way I can. I want people to recognize that this is a business. Tell me why the hell a single foreskin can sell for upwards of \$100,000? In fact, I think they owe me \$200,000 since they did it twice. They did it twice and I still have part of my frenulum, a sensitive band of tissue that helps contract the foreskin over the glans. Medical professionals learn to perform circumcision by actually doing it. There is no infant penis model for them to practice on. Was I a test subject? The whole thing is absurd.

What hits me the hardest is knowing I will never have the full experience of being intact. My solution is tissue expansion. It's a non-surgical method that, when done properly, can yield many benefits. Essentially it creates a neo-foreskin through gentle stretching exercises over a year or two. It won't have the same nerve endings as the original foreskin, which is still sad, but it will provide every other function, including improved sensation, a more moist and supple glans surface, and protection. This is a permanent and long-term investment for me. I am even considering a tattoo to symbolize the journey my body and I have been through.

There are things I have experienced that I just do not want to share. This, however, is something I am brave enough to fight for. All of these negative experiences imbued my aura with an eternal flame of darkness. A dark flame sounds very contradicting, like an oxymoron, and that's because it is. It's still fire. It's still fuel. Is it light? Nope. But I will use it to propel me throughout the rest of my life. If I can fight for myself, I can fight for others. If I can love myself, I can love others.

I am only 20 years old. I feel like I have been through too much already. But I am still breathing. I am still standing. I am still here. I grieved the person I was as a child full of innocence. I have shed my skin many times. Nothing really fazes me anymore; I am often disappointed by things most people think are scary. I have no fear because I know I can face anyone or anything. This little journey I've been on with my body has been horrible yet liberating. I am conquering one thing at a time. Deconstruction and reconstruction. Death and rebirth. This is my story.

Vance Rocco

Interested in lending your voice? [Send us an email](#), giving us a brief summary of what you would like to write about, and we will get back to you.

Mar 31, 2022

I was born in 1944 in a small town in central Ohio. I learned early on that my penis was different than most boys. In elementary school, going to the bathroom for No. 1 was like show all, tell all. I was still too young to have retracted my foreskin naturally to get the cut look. My Dad was uncut so I thought I was normal, but I got teased by other boys standing in the next stall over for having a ding dong with a point on the end. The guy who did most of the teasing had a bigger one. I felt embarrassed about the size difference but also about being uncut.

I can still remember that guy's name. I felt kind of sorry for him. He was tall, the playground bully, and he lived at the Children's Home in my hometown. When we got to be 5th or 6th graders, he could hit that softball for miles on the playground. I lost track of him. Someone said later he might have gotten killed in Vietnam.

In Junior High School, still feeling self-conscious about looking different from other boys, I hid my penis when taking showers after gym class by keeping a towel around my waist. My parents told me I wasn't circumcised when I was born in 1944, because I was premature and wouldn't have survived the procedure.

My baby brother was born in 1948, and I was forced to watch his circumcision. Our family doctor came over one April morning, and they laid my brother out on the kitchen table and the doctor cut him. He screamed with pain, and that memory shakes me to this day. I can remember my Mother saying, If you are not a good boy, this will happen to you. To me, that meant that my penis would be cut off;

at age 4, I had no idea what a foreskin was.

So, I was a very good boy, but scared my whole life until I got big enough to fend for myself. My Mom also had told me I was ugly down there so I never thought I would be able to attract any woman and one day have children. It wasn't until I went to college that I heard that the Europeans didn't do routine circumcision. I found a French girl, and she took a chance on me.

Even though I am not circumcised, I've been haunted by circumcision trauma my entire life. First, being different; then being forced to witness my brother being cut and threatened with the same fate; then my mother telling me how ugly my penis was; and much later, when I was beginning my professional career in a hospital, having to pass by the newborn nursery where there was a circumcision room, and hear the screams.

I truly do not know how anyone can think this is something that is alright to do to a baby.

RHF, Youngstown, Ohio

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Feb 23, 2022

Editorial note: This insightful letter from a self-identified prostitute (sex worker) was sent to the Editor of Penthouse magazine in June 1985, apparently in response to discussion in a prior issue about circumcision. It is still relevant today. Note that frenum is an alternate word for the more commonly used word frenulum. Also, the author repeatedly uses the terms uncut and uncircumcised; the term intact had not yet become part of the vernacular. The letter, reproduced in its entirety below, had been preserved by Marilyn Milos, founder of the National Organization of Circumcision Information Centers (NOCIRC, later renamed Genital Autonomy America, which merged with Intact America in 2021).

Dear Penthouse,

I'm a prostitute. It paid for my education, provides a good lifestyle, and I enjoy the work. I'm surprised and dismayed by the many misconceptions printed regarding circumcision, in letters by both men and women. My wide experience gives me a perspective to contribute to the discussion.

I didn't grow up, as many women do, regarding the circumcised penis as normal. Helping my mother bathe my two uncircumcised younger brothers showed me that washing the penis is no more of a chore than washing the female genitals, and even simpler, because of fewer folds of skin.

Few uncircumcised penises are dirty. It's far more common to encounter a man with bad breath, from lack of brushing or a mouthful of cavities, than one with a dirty penis. Yet, nobody suggests that the teeth be routinely extracted for hygiene.

Uncut men enjoy sex more because the penis is more sensitive. Uncircumcised males secrete more pre-coital mucus, and it starts flowing sooner, than with circumcised ones. The uncircumcised penis offers more opportunities for foreplay. Stroking the foreskin back and forth, retracting it to touch the corona or pluck the frenum lightly, is very stimulating. Inserting the tongue under the foreskin, or retracting it for easy access to the glans, frenum, and inverted inner lining, are stimulating variants to pumping the foreskin. Many men enjoy a good hand job, and the uncut ones can enjoy the full stroke, retracting the foreskin fully, then running it up over the end of the glans. The flow of clear mucus gives lubrication, enhancing the sensations and preventing irritation from dry friction.

The denuded organ requires special manipulation. There's no foreskin to serve as a natural stimulator, and sometimes the frenum has been removed too, limiting the possibilities. If there's enough slack, pulling the rest of the skin up over the corona works, although many don't enjoy dry friction. More often, I have to use lubrication. The cut ones are handicapped from the start.

Some circumcised men are so insensitive that they can't come to orgasm even after fifteen minutes of a blow job, and need to be finished off by hand. This has never, in my experience, happened with an uncircumcised man.

I've never noticed a difference in the time required for coital climax between cut and uncut men. Although it seems that circumcision, by removing sensitive tissue, would delay the climax, this isn't so. Premature ejaculation is common, in our mostly circumcised males. I feel that there are two reasons for this:

The first is that sexual stimulation is not only physical, but mental. Circumcision does not affect this.

The second is that the skin of the uncircumcised penis, more slack during thrusting and withdrawal, tends to give with the friction, gliding up and over the corona. This partly shields the glans from excessive stimulation. It also avoids putting tension on the frenum. This happens with a tight circumcision, speeding the man's climax.

I hope that this is helpful.



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Jan 21, 2022

The first time I realized there was something wrong with me was in October 1970, I had turned 5 years old and was in kindergarten. I asked the teacher for permission to go to the bathroom.

After I finished urinating, alone in this large and lit bathroom, I looked at my penis and felt it looked odd. Something was telling me I was not right.

My parents did not raise me. I am the result of a mixed marriage; my father is white and my mother is black.

The same year for Christmas day my parents sent for me to spend Christmas with them. At some point in the afternoon I was ordered to bathe. I recall going into the bathroom and seeing my father stepping out of the shower. I was amazed at his athletic body and the fact that his penis was so big, and very different looking from mine. He was not circumcised. At that moment I thought, being just 5, well thats how my penis will be when Im grown up!

I heard my father was quite disappointed he didnt have a girl. He wanted to have black daughters who looked just like his wife, my mother. But I was born a boy and just as white as him, and as I grew up, I looked like a mini-him.



Apparently, after my birth, he was approached by some quack doctor in the hospital who convinced him to have me circumcised. My grand-aunt, who was present at the time the mutilation took place was against it, but my father did not listen to her or anyone else.

As a result, I was scared and deformed for life.

Years later I learned no older male member of the family was cut.

Because I wasnt the baby my parents expected, my paternal grandparents and my grand-aunt took me in and raised me. My father had hardly any involvement in my life after that, except for playing taxi driver and taking me from point A to point B. Essentially, I grew up fatherless.

A year after my birth, my parents had another child, I another boy. And eight later, hoping for a daughter, they tried again and yet another baby boy was born.

Father had them both cut as well.

I did not grow up with my siblings, but my middle brother spent most summer vacations with my grandparents. As children, we sometimes took showers together, and because my brothers penis was like mine I thought that was how all males were supposed to look and be. But he did not have the same scars and deformity I had below the glans.

It wasnt until I was in my late 30s that I came to terms and realized what has been done to me.

I never got to confront my father about it, as he died suddenly from a heart condition.

I got all the love and care a child could ask for from my grand-aunt and my grandparents. But I will NEVER forgive my father for having my body mutilated the day after I was born. As a result, I feel and look sexually inferior to other males.

I read somewhere that all male mammals have foreskin from the tiniest mouse to the largest whale. If cutting off the foreskin is so important, then why it isnt being done on all male house pets and farm animals? Because it is NOT a birth defect. It is a natural part of being male, and I wish it had never been taken from me. I find the whole circumcision act disgusting, almost like a perverted form of cannibalism.

I curse the hands of all surgeons who do this to all baby boys everywhere, especially the one who mutilated me.

Eugene Ocasio, resident of Puerto Rico

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