

Surrogate Mom Given \$10K to Abort “Imperfect Baby,” Rejects Offer

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When it comes to babies who are diagnosed with some sort of fetal abnormality in the womb, the pressure is high from doctors, family members and society to have an abortion. That’s why approximately 90 percent of babies with Down syndrome, for example, become victims of abortion.

When a surrogacy pregnancy is involved, the pressure brought to bear is only intensified.

But one surrogate mother has rejected that pressure — and an offer of \$10,000 to have an abortion. Crystal Kelley was offered \$10,000 to have an abortion after ultrasounds showed the baby she was carrying for another couple had severe medical problems. Click through the gallery to see how Kelley’s gut-wrenching surrogacy story played out.

[From CNN:](#)



About 10 days later, a blood test showed she was pregnant — one of the embryos had taken.

Kelley and the parents were thrilled, and over the next few weeks, the mother was attentive and caring. When Kelley had morning sickness the mother called every day to see how she was feeling. She gave Kelley and Kelley’s daughters Christmas presents. When Kelley couldn’t make rent, the mother made sure she got her monthly surrogate fee a few days early.

“She said, ‘I want you to come to us with anything because you’re going to be part of our lives forever,’ ”

Kelley remembers.

With the parents standing behind her, the ultrasound technician at the hospital put the wand on Kelley’s stomach. The test confirmed her worst fears: It showed the baby did have a cleft lip and palate, a cyst in the brain, and a complex heart abnormality.

The doctors explained the baby would need several heart surgeries after she was born. She would likely survive the pregnancy, but had only about a 25% chance of having a “normal life,” Kelley remembers the doctors saying.

In a letter to Kelley’s midwife, Dr. Elisa Gianferrari, a maternal fetal medicine specialist at Hartford Hospital, and Leslie Ciarleglio, a genetic counselor, described what happened next.

"Given the ultrasound findings, (the parents) feel that the interventions required to manage (the baby's medical problems) are overwhelming for an infant, and that it is a more humane option to consider pregnancy termination," they wrote.

Kelley disagreed.

"Ms. Kelley feels that all efforts should be made to 'give the baby a chance' and seems adamantly opposed to termination," they wrote.

The letter describes how the parents tried to convince Kelley to change her mind. Their three children were born prematurely, and two of them had to spend months in the hospital and still had medical problems. They wanted something better for this child.

"The (parents) feel strongly that they pursued surrogacy in order to minimize the risk of pain and suffering for their baby," Gianferrari and Ciarleglio wrote. They "explained their feelings in detail to Ms. Kelley in hopes of coming to an agreement."

"I told them that they had chosen me to carry and protect this child, and that was exactly what I was going to do," Kelley said. "I told them it wasn't their decision to play God."

Then she walked out of the room.

"I couldn't look at them anymore," she said.

Kelley didn't want to be the baby's mother — she'd gotten pregnant to help another family, not to have a child of her own. Kron gave her an option: the parents would pay her \$10,000 to have an abortion.

The offer tested Kelley's convictions. She'd always been against abortion for religious and moral reasons, but she really needed the money. Just before getting pregnant, she'd lost her job as a nanny, and the only income she had coming in was child support from her daughters' father and her monthly surrogacy fee of \$2,222, which was about to end because of the dispute with the parents.

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Kelley knows some people hate her.

She's [blogged about Baby S.](#), and many readers, especially other surrogates, have attacked her.

"I can't tell you how many people told me that I was bad, that I was wrong, that I should go have an abortion, that I would be damned to hell," she said.

In the end, she feels like she did the right thing.

"No one else was feeling this pregnancy the way that I was. No one else could feel her kicking and moving around inside," she said. "I knew from the beginning that this little girl had an amazing fighting spirit, and whatever challenges were thrown at her, she would go at them with every ounce

of spirit that she could possibly have.”

“No matter what anybody told me, I became her mother.”