

From Gattaca to Los Angeles

JOURNALIST:

Want to design the perfect baby? It's not as far-fetched as you may think. A new technology is helping couples manipulate Mother Nature in their favour. It's an embryo screening procedure invented for the purpose of identifying embryos that carry serious, often fatal, genetic diseases but increasingly, it's being used for something very different: to help couples choose the sex of their child. For the man who pioneered the procedure, this new direction is disturbing, he'll explain why in this story. But first, why for some people, selecting the sex of their baby is a dream come true, people like Sharla and Shane Miller?

SHARLA:

In the back of my mind I still had the wanting for a daughter. With every child I wanted a daughter.

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Every time you were hoping, this is my girl...

SHARLA:

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But every time, the Millers got a boy and ended up with three. Sharla Miller wanted a guarantee that the next child would be a girl. She was looking into adopting a girl, when she stumbled across the website of "The Fertility Institutes," offering the ad she was hoping for.

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Most doctors refuse to screen embryos just for sex selection. Dr. Mark Hughes, who helped pioneer the procedure a decade ago, says he developed it for one reason – to help root out disease.

DR. MARK HUGHES:

I went into medicine and to science to diagnose and treat and hopefully cure disease. Your gender is not a disease, the last time I checked. There's no pathology. There's no suffering. There's no illness. And I don't think doctors have any business being there.