



# BIRTH INC.

This documentary series investigates the most groundbreaking, provocative and scandalous practices in the business of childbirth.

## OVERVIEW

One of our most fundamental human desires is to give birth to a child. To carry on our legacy. In the past, this has been a challenge for millions. But today, that reality is shifting. Scientific breakthroughs, and international ventures, are creating innovative—and lucrative—new industries.

## WHY NOW?

Cutting-edge technologies and international start-ups are changing the very nature of childbirth. In many cases, public policy lags behind. To regulate these new technologies and trends, we must understand them. This documentary series aims to do just that.

## FORMAT

In each one-hour episode, we explore a different aspect of birth, from surrogates to genetic modifications. We then dive into multiple sub-topics that are creating waves around the world. We interview the leading experts in the field, as well as those impacted most.



### **SURROGATES FOR SALE**

Surrogacy is a global industry worth over \$5 billion per year. International surrogates are becoming increasingly common. But while providing a much-needed solution to many couples, the practice is creating public crises in places like India, where “baby factories” are emerging; and in Thailand, where a Japanese billionaire is accused of “serial surrogacy” in order to propagate a family dynasty. In the United States, surrogacy is completely unregulated, while other countries, like Germany and Italy, have banned surrogacy all-together.

### **BIRTH TOURISM**

Birth tourism, or the practice of entering a foreign country to give birth, is a global phenomenon. Rich and poor alike do this for varied reasons. In some cases, parents are hoping for a better life for their kids. In others, they’re using babies as collateral for citizenship. In China, this practice has been employed to circumvent the restrictive policies. In California, “maternity hotels” are selling all-inclusive packages online. Miami is experiencing a Russian “baby boom.” Americans are also engaging in the practice, with many mothers crossing into Canada to take advantage of cheaper medical costs.

### **THE CUSTOMIZED BABY MARKET - INDUSTRY OF GENES**

Perhaps the most controversial breakthrough in modern healthcare involves altering the genes of babies in utero. The technology poses many questions, including the debate over “designer babies,” the process of choosing the characteristics of a child. Other sub-topics include: the first baby born with three parents; Artificial Intelligence (AI) that increases the success rate of IVF; Parents aborting babies based on early-term DNA testing; Sperm made from skin cells; and the billionaires capitalizing on these new technologies.



## **MODERN MIRACLES**

Research companies around the world are pouring millions of dollars into advances in childbirth. In the next 2-3 years, scientists are likely to develop the first artificial womb, which will allow the growth of a baby outside a woman's body. Surgeons are now able to perform C-sections earlier than ever, and keep babies alive on high tech life support. Hormones treatments are allowing women to get pregnant later in life, including into their 50's.

## **PREGNANCIES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS**

Navigating childbirth is not easy. And for the wealthiest mothers, no expense is spared. This episode dives inside the worlds of high-end pregnancy services, such as birthing retreats in exotic locations, meant to cleanse the mind and body; New age gurus who are changing the face of Western medicine; and the planet's most expensive doulas, who make millions of dollars a year guiding celebrities through pregnancy.

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND THE BIRTH TRADE**

The horrific business of child trafficking is on the rise. In fact, it's one of the fastest growing criminal industries. In some cases, poor mothers sell their children to pay for food, or drugs. In others, the babies are stolen from the parents. These children are then forced into a lifetime of slavery, and often times, sex. This episode will follow the efforts of the people trying to put an end to this horrendous industry.

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**BACKROADS**

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PICTURES