

## NEWS // CONNECTICUT

# Anti-circumcision supporters stage demonstration in downtown New Haven

Oct. 3, 2015



Left to right, Clyde Ramos, of New York City, jumped out of a car on Chapel Street in New Haven to take pictures, Saturday afternoon, October 3, 2015, of Brother K, of California, Nancy Farr, a midwife, and Robin Graves, of South Hadley, Massachusetts, a birth companion and mental health counselor, all members of the organization Bloodstained Men protesting circumcision. Brother K said, "American doctors don't tell parents that the European medical community has condemned baby circumcision and 80 percent of the world's men are not circumcised."

Catherine Avalone — New Haven Register

NEW HAVEN >> During demonstrations, Brother K wears white pants with a strategically placed fake blood stain that alludes to the name of the nonprofit organization he established.

The organization is called Bloodstained Men and it aims to call attention to what Brother K refers to as a cruel and barbaric medical procedure: male circumcision. The fake blood stain is located in the crotch region, which Brother K said is a kind of “shock treatment” for people who are in denial about the seriousness of the practice.

“It’s destructive, harmful and unnecessary,” Brother K said. “The blood stain on my pants is the wound that I wear under my pants, it’s scarred on my body.”

On Saturday morning, Brother K was joined by a handful of supporters on the corner of Chapel Street and College Street, holding up signs and handing out cards with information on the organization and the reasons why it opposes circumcision. But don’t call Brother K an activist; he prefers the term “intactivist,” a combination of “intact” and “activist”.

“We’re determined to reach parents,” Brother K said. “They think it’s like the baby getting its toe nails trimmed or something. They don’t understand.”

The procedure itself is harmful, Brother K said, as he said it usually involves strapping down an infant. The procedure is destructive because removing the foreskin eliminates some pleasure sensors; it also removes tissue meant to function for protective purposes, Brother K said.

“When you amputate that off of a man’s body, the head of the penis, the gland, turns into an external structure that dries out ... circumcision essentially destroys the normal penis,” Brother K said.

According to Centers for Disease Control (CDC), large studies of infant circumcisions in the U.S. have reported low levels of complications during the procedure, including bleeding and infection, though these are usually minor and

easily treated. The CDC has inclusive evidence regarding the effect circumcision has on a man's sensitivity and sexual function.

Organization members also feel that since female circumcision is illegal in the United States, this law should also apply to men.

"What I would like to see happen is for the United States Supreme Court ... to find that under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, the female genital mutilation law also applies to male genital mutilation,"

Brother K acknowledged that the procedure, which is ritual common in Judaism, can be part of a person's religious practice. He said that he does have Jewish friends who have told him that they would have preferred to have some input on whether or not they were circumcised.

The group has held several demonstrations across the East. Spokesperson Harry Guiremand said the organization has visited Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island.

Reach Esteban L. Hernandez at 203-680-9901