

Foreskins unite! Anti-circumcision group stages protest in Minneapolis today

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Cory Zurowski

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The immediate reason for the upcoming series of protests in the Midwest, according to spokesperson Guiremand, is to communicate to parents "that your son may grow up and resent what you've done."

Harry Guiremand was a teenager in southern California when he first suspected his body had been mutilated. The evidence appeared on his penis. He noticed a scar.

Guiremand grew concerned as the scar's color darkened. He'd been circumcised as an infant, according to a sex facts book he'd receive from a doctor. Then the curious patient's concerns turned to horror.

"There was this part of me that I learned was highly integrated and important for pleasurable sex, and it was stolen from me," he says. "The excuses they made for doing it made absolutely no sense to me and I knew there was something wrong.

"When I read about it more, I was horrified and depressed that somebody had violated my own body, the most private part of my body."

It would be decades later when Guiremand realized there were others who felt the same. The 70-year-old today serves as a spokesperson for

Bloodstained Men

(www.bloodstainedmen.com/),

a nonprofit that pushes for the end of circumcision.

This morning the group kicks off its 17-day protest tour in downtown Minneapolis because "the foreskin is a healthy, valuable part that belongs to the child" and removing it without one's consent is "unnecessary, cruel, damaging, and morally wrong."

Protest organizers will be

easy to spot

(www.facebook.com/events/1055775474550604/permalink/1201456223315861/).

They'll be sporting white outfits with red-stained crotches at the downtown intersection of Third Avenue S. and S. Fifth Street.

"The immediate reason is for parents and soon-to-be parents," says Guiremand. "To give them confrontation that your son may grow up and resent what you've done. A lot of people just go on autopilot, and think this is just what everybody does and I'll just do it to my boy too. This is about the parents' right and duty just to say no."

According to Guiremand, the procedure is grounded in archaic science. He calls it "crack medicine," a surgery that turned into standard practice over a century ago. Guiremand says the "anti-masturbation hysteria" of the times reasoned that self-pleasure might be curbed if "we just mutilate him and do it with as much pain as possible, and therefore correct the boy from the practice of masturbation."

The U.S. does remain in the Dark Ages when it comes to the subject. Circumcision became standard practice about 75 years ago. It was believed it reduced rates of venereal disease and other infections. In the post-World War II years, it's estimated that up to 80 percent of babies born in American hospitals were subjected to the procedure.

But skepticism of its health benefits have grown in recent decades. In 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics updated its position

(www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/newborn-male-circumcision.aspx)

, stating "the benefits are not great enough to recommend universal newborn circumcision."

According to the latest research, about half of American boys are circumcised as infants.

Bloodstained Men will be riding this momentum into Minneapolis.

Guiremand and the rest of Bloodstained Men's members want the public to know males are no longer okay with losing a part of their body that's engineered for sexual pleasure. Moreover, says Guiremand, baby boys want safety, trust, and nourishment, not "being attacked with a knife."

"When men grow up and understand what's happened to them, they aren't happy about it," he says. "It can only continue as long as ignorance continues...."

"And when men realize they've been harmed, they're not okay with it anymore. It's damaging for our whole society and masses of men growing up traumatized isn't good for America."