

Fighting for a full package: Anti-circumcision group calls for end to practice outside Atlantic Terminal



Photo by Ben Verde

Men in red: Members of anti-circumcision group the Bloodstained Men took over the sidewalk outside Atlantic Terminal to protest the medical procedure common among some newborn boys.

By Ben Verde
for Brooklyn Paper

They want to stop the snip!

Costumed protestors in all-white getups with red-stained crotches on Monday took to the streets outside Atlantic Terminal, where they preached what they claimed are the dangers of circumcising baby boys to passersby, slamming the medical procedure as unnecessary, painful, and a form of child abuse.

"It's a basic human-rights issue that everyone has a right to their own body," said Harry Guiremand, an anti-circumcision advocate with the Bloodstained Men, a group that stages

demonstrations against the practice nationwide. “It’s a crime against humanity when you think about it, a mass genital mutilation.”

Guiremand joined roughly 10 other men and one woman at the corner of Atlantic and Flatbush avenues to decry the surgical procedure that removes skin from the tip of a male child’s genitals — a custom referenced in the Bible’s Old Testament that is required in the Jewish faith, and commonly practiced by Muslims and other parents in the United States, whether to follow tradition or for what some professionals say are health benefits including a decreased risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

But Americans are in the minority when it comes performing the procedure on newborns, according to the group, which pointed out how several foreign nations moved away from the practice despite a 2012 statement from the American Academy of Pediatrics that claimed its benefits outweighed its risks, which can include prolonged infection.

“The Australians stopped doing it, the New Zealanders stopped doing it, the British stopped doing it.” Guiremand said. “It’s way past due that Americans stop doing this.”

Of course, not all who encountered the demonstrators — who also wore white cowboy hats, which Guiremand said nodded to the classic American image of manhood — agreed with their cutting critique, with one woman pointing out how the procedure was no skin off the teeth of some of her circumcised acquaintances.

“I know some men are happy it was done, they’re having a good sex life,” said Joan Goburne.

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