

Cows and Tigers and Clones? OH MY!

BY DEAN LEONARD, FEATURE WRITER

Researchers at The University of Tennessee have successfully cloned a dairy cow. According to the associated press, Millie, a jersey, was born August 23, weighing in at 62 pounds. What a HEIFER!

It seems that ever since "Dolly" the cloned sheep was born in Scotland four years ago, cloning has become something of an adventurous avenue for scientists.

I have just one question. When are they going to clone humans? I'm in serious need of some help around this house, and you know what they say, "nobody does it like YOU do!" So, I need another me. No, wait... make that twins. Little "mini-me's" if you will. One for work, one for play, and one for thinking; which would be the FIRST me. Wouldn't life be grand? Every morning, my clone could get the kids up, dress them, and pack their lunches, while the other one makes breakfast! Where would I - the original version - be? Snoozing, baby. And while I'm doing that, one "me" could drive those kids to school and get some grocery shopping done while the other "me" gets the vacuum cleaner running. Where would I be? Sitting in a whirlpool bath, neck deep in bubbles. (*Hmmm...I'm liking this.*) I could get a lot done while I'm doing nothing! I could finally be in three places at one time! By 7 o'clock every night, my kids would be properly fed, bathed, and put to bed! And where would I be? Lost. As much as I like to harp about my responsibilities, I would really miss that.

Cloning yourself could cause problems, too. One clone may decide that the other clone is goofing off on the job, which could be you...or the other you. A scuffle could break out, and the three of YOU could end up fighting amongst yourselves, literally. Or the two clones could decide they didn't need YOU anymore. Uh oh, shades of "Survivor", except there's no cash involved.

In another part of the world, Australian scientists are trying to figure out if they can clone the now extinct "Tasmanian Tiger". Biologists are working 'round' the clock extracting DNA samples from a preserved specimen in hopes of bringing it back. The last of that species, which isn't actually a cat, but a striped wolf, died in 1936. If this proves successful, do you think it will be possible to clone dinosaurs? Is it only a matter of time and money? Think of the possibilities; if we trained those reptiles right, we could have a heck of a military. What third world wacko would stand a chance against the United States T-Rex Battalion?



Believe it or not, in 1998, scientists at Advanced Cell Technology claimed to have fused human cells with a cow egg. I'm seeing some really weird images here, are you? The reason given in an MSNBC article was that "the breakthrough could potentially be used someday to sprout replacement body parts..." Replacement parts? Does this mean that sometime in the future, I may have to show a valid receipt and a part number at the barn door if

I happen to lose an arm? Don't get me wrong, helping folks who have missing limbs or diseased organs is admirable; but in this case, aren't they playing a role known as, well...GOD? The article goes on to mention that these scientists are primarily supported by a private company. You know what that means don't you? They may not be required to disclose any results until they have a finished 'product'. Remember the horror movie "The Island of Dr. Moreau?" The island of half-human, half-beast misfits who revolt against their creator? Somebody please send them a copy before it's too late! I'm afraid if these guys are left in charge, and they get bored with the spawning of human cows...we could suddenly become inundated with Pamela Anderson Lee clones! Now, *that's* scary.

If the cloning of people should actually succeed, what will happen to individuality? Uniqueness? Imagine a world where everyone looks the same; indistinguishable from one another in thought and feeling - no inventors, no dreamers, no free thinkers...no diversity. A world without deliberation and conjecture. In essence, a perfectly performing and expressionless society. Will there be "camps" for non-conformists...i.e. non-clones?

News stories such as these are reminiscent of an old television show known as "The Twilight Zone". Think about it...clones could quite possibly take over the world one day and we may find ourselves "repeating" history. In that case, I hope those clones are able to experience a strong sense of *deja vu*.

"Picture this, if you will...it's a bright, sunshiny day...you're traveling along Pennsylvania Avenue...your name is William...you have no idea you're a clone...you round the corner and a big, white house looms large in front of you...you feel like you've been there before...you reach into an ordinary McDonald's bag to retrieve an ordinary Big Mac and...Oh Noooooo!"

Don't fool yourself if you think human cloning is only a futuristic possibility - a far-reaching tale of science fiction. That's what they said about that "little chip" from California's Silicon Valley...