

## **Press Conference from the Hospital**

**by Christy Noel**

When I was five years old, some people from the Department of Social Services came and took me away from my family. Why, you ask? Was my mother an alcoholic or a drug addict? Was my father abusive? Not in the least. My parents, Beth and Alex Page, were delightful, ordinary people, who happened to be in an extraordinary situation.

You see, I just happen to be the 364<sup>th</sup> twin in a rather large family. Make that number 365, if you count my mother. My life sometimes sounds like one of those silly convoluted riddles. My mother is also my sister, and technically I don't have a father, but you could probably say my grandfather is my father.

I'm the world's first successful human clone.

I don't actually have 363 sisters. The first 363 attempts were failures, in one way or another.

In 2001, an Italian doctor named Dr. Severino Antinori announced he wanted to clone a human being in spite of the widespread ban on human cloning instituted in many countries. With the aid of a colleague, Dr. Antinori proceeded anyway, and they soon began trials at an undisclosed location in Europe.

After many failures, not to mention severe criticism from the world community, they finally succeeded. My mother—and genetic twin—carried me to term and gave birth to me on April 23, 2004, in New York City. My parents named me Evelyn Anne Page. Contrary to popular belief, my first name is not derived from the Garden of Eden's Eve, but rather it was the name of my paternal grandmother.

I don't ordinarily explain my strange background, but this evening, at the dedication of the new Giuliani Memorial Gallery that I designed, an individual proclaimed that I was an aberration on nature and tried to assassinate me. We should have been celebrating the memory of a great New York leader. Instead, this cowardly act has shifted everyone's attention to old matters that I had thought forgotten.

I've never spent much time judging the nature of my unusual birth. I try to leave such complicated questions of ethics to the philosophers. I don't despise the responsible scientists. When I met them in my youth, they seemed ordinary—kind, proud, thirsty for knowledge, but neither diabolical nor insane.

Unfortunately for me, their actions were blasted by the scientific and religious community. When my birth was announced, it stirred up worldwide controversy. My parents did their best to shield me from the paparazzi and the media, until the debate came to a head in 2009. That year, Congress passed the Genetic Ownership and Control Act, and the immediate result was that my parents lost custody of me. While my parents turned to the courts for help, DSS placed me with a foster family, the Grants.

Though kind-hearted, the Grants had no idea how to handle the onslaught of publicity. They regularly allowed the media into our house under the notion that the public discussion benefited society, while they remained blind to the impact on me. They never explained anything properly, believing I was too young to comprehend. You can barely imagine my confusion, insecurity, and desolation. I believed I had done something terrible to cause so much trouble.

Meanwhile, a provision in the new law sent the first case, mine, straight to the Supreme Court. Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of my parents and returned custody to them. The chaos of that period still gives me nightmares.

My life continued its roller-coaster ride. A few years after the landmark case, we moved out to San Jose, California, where my parents hoped to recover some of the privacy they had lost. They partly succeeded, but every year something new and bizarre would happen. Once, a crazy woman broke into our house and tried to stab me with a wooden stake, of all things. She was convinced I didn't have a soul because of my

unusual birth. On the brighter side, my fame has helped me make lots of new friends over the years. Being the world's first clone was a definite conversation starter. "You aren't *the* Evelyn Page, are you?" In fact, I met my husband, Colin Mercer, through one of these conversations.

The bizarre incidents started to subside when I reached my twenties. I obtained my B.A and Master of Science in Architecture at UC Berkeley, and after college, my life became almost normal. The world seemed to forget about me, as a clone, and I thought of myself only as an architect. However, today's incident has shown me that some fools remember and still think of me as inhuman. I am grateful that my friends and family know better.