



The Clonaid Human Cloning Controversy

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Brigitte Boisselier, Ph.D., Chemist, and Chief Executive Officer, Clonaid, sitting next to Rael, leader of the worldwide Raelian Movement. Photograph © 2003 by Associated Press.

January 3, 2003 - When the first alleged human clone birth was announced on December 26 without any hard evidence to back up the claim, chemist Brigitte Boisselier said her company, Clonaid, had arranged for an independent team of scientists to gather DNA from the child in order to confirm that the baby girl is a clone of her mother. Some people wondered if the announcement was pressured by the work of Dr. Severino Antinori in Italy. He is an Italian gynecologist who says that he is also expecting cloned human babies from his research efforts to be born soon.

Now, Dr. Boisselier and Clonaid have announced that their DNA test is on hold. In addition to her Clonaid company, Dr. Boisselier is also a member of the worldwide religious Raelian movement that believes the Elohim mentioned in the Bible are extraterrestrials who genetically manipulated life on this planet to produce humans. Cloning is extraterrestrial technology that the non-humans want our planet to use, according to Rael, leader of the Raelian movement. But in the past couple of days, Rael asked Dr. Boisselier to not let the mother of the allegedly cloned baby girl return to the United States for the DNA testing.

The reason appears to be a lawsuit filed on December 31st in Broward County, Florida, by attorney Bernard Siegel. Mr. Siegel told me today that he thinks a cloned human is an abused child in danger of being exploited.

Bernard Siegel, Attorney, Aronfeld & Associates, Coral Gables, Florida:

"When this was announced, no governmental entity took any action that I could see. There was a lot of debate. There was theological debate, medical ethics, but no one seemed focused on this individual child. Now, if this child exists, this child could have serious medical problems. Animal cloning generally ends unsuccessfully. So, it occurred to me with a child in grave risk it was the same as an abused child. Anyone who knows about an abused child has a legal and moral obligation to take action.

Under Florida law, if an individual becomes aware of an abused child, they have a right to file a dependency petition for a motion to appoint a guardian. That's the point of this legal action. I can't think of any child in the planet that needs a guardian more than this one.

DID ANYBODY APPROACH YOU ABOUT BRINGING THIS LAWSUIT?

No, I thought of it on my own. I was reflecting on the fact of how unique this is.

It's a very intriguing legal issue. I had the ability, because I'm a lawyer, to file this. So, on December 31, I chose to do so.

The Clonaid people, out of the entire world for some reason, selected Broward County, Florida, to announce this. They are involved in money-making businesses there. They are participating in money conferences there. They have at their conferences, some of their principals vacation and live part time in south Florida. So, I felt there was a nexus, enough there, to bring this action in Broward County.

DO YOU THINK YOUR FILING THIS LAW SUIT HAS HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH IN THE LAST 24 HOURS TODAY WE ARE SPEAKING ON JANUARY 3, THERE SEEMS TO BE NOW TO BE BACK PEDDLING ON THE PART OF DR. BOISSELIER AND CLONAIID ABOUT THE MOTHER BEING WILLING TO DO THE DNA ANALYSIS.

I don't think the testing they are talking about is going to settle any kind of issue, really, unless it's a legitimate DNA test at an appropriate facility that is guaranteed accurate with safeguards so it's just not a publicity stunt of some kind. I don't know if we could rely on any DNA test that they would provide us.

But if this happened, if this actually happened, wouldn't they present the child to Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York, or some serious medical center, given the fact that Dolly, for instance, is aging too rapidly and has genetic defects. Do we want what happened to Dolly to happen to this child?

They are presenting the picture that this child is a bouncing baby girl and everything is fine and the couple is so happy. Well, what if a month from now, the child develops terrible genetic defects. There is no body of medical research to safeguard the child. So, that's the point. The child is in danger and needs a legal guardian.

IF YOU ARE SUCCESSFUL ON JANUARY 22 IN THE FIRST ARRAIGNMENT, WHAT WOULD BE THE PROCEDURES AND STEPS AFTER THAT?

Well, this is really uncharted territory. This is the first legal action that is trying to establish legal rights for a cloned person. So, again, assuming the child exists and I'm more and more skeptical as this goes on that the child does exist but the science is out there, so it's a possibility. We really don't know. Under the law, in 30 days after the arraignment, the court can set a final hearing and so the issues discussed in the legal action can be resolved."

Rael

This evening, I talked with the head of the Raelian Movement. Originally his name was Claude Vorilhon, a former French race car journalist in the early 1970s. For the past several years, he has called himself Rael, head of the worldwide Raelian movement that was granted official religious status by Quebec, Canada in the 1990s. The Raelian membership is said to be 55,000 and the biggest concentration is in Japan. In the second half-hour, we will hear Rael describe his encounter with an extraterrestrial in France in 1973, who communicated that the French man's mission would be to bring cloning to the earth.

I asked Rael if Florida Attorney Bernard Siegel's lawsuit in Broward County is why Rael has recommended to chemist Brigitte Boisselier, head of Clonaid, that the parents not come forward and have the DNA testing done on the allegedly cloned baby girl.

Rael, Leader of the worldwide Raelian Movement, Montreal, Canada:

"Exactly. You have described it perfectly the truth. When I learn about this, I think he (lawyer) is trying to get some huge publicity for his own career. I am so shocked to say the mere reason is the cloning process, which of course disturbs some people, but I cannot accept the idea of giving custody of a guardian

(because someone says it is a) handicapped children. I think all the handicapped people of the world should be extremely revolted this very idea.

I called Dr. Boisselier and said you have to choose now between your credibility and the future of this child and my opinion, the future of the child is more important. And that was my advice to her and I think she agree with her.

COULD YOU NOT PROCEED WITH GETTING THE DNA ANALYSIS DONE ON THE BABY AND PRESENTING IT AS OFTEN LABS DO IN WHICH THE PARENTS, THE CHILD, COULD REMAIN ANONYMOUS AND NOT IDENTIFIED, BUT INFORMATION COULD BE PRESENTED TO INDEPENDENT MEDICAL PEOPLE TO LOOK AT IT AND SAY ONE WAY OR THE OTHER IF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT IS TRUE THAT THIS IS A CLONED BABY BECAUSE THIS IS BECOMING SUCH A CONTROVERSY?

I think it will be possible at the time, but right now, I think for me there is a big dangerous for the removal of the child. The future and happiness and psychological balance of the child and mother are of the utmost importance. I think in the future it will be possible, but we have to wait until all danger of separating this family is finished.

Even through an independent team of scientists, the more you put people in a secret, the more the identity of the family could be revealed. So, these people don't want to be in a circus exhibition and they want to have their private life protected and I agree with that.

TODAY, THERE WAS A HEADLINE THAT CLONAIID SAYS THERE WILL BE A SECOND BIRTH BY THIS COMING SUNDAY IN EUROPE?

Yes, I learned about that and when we talk about Dr. Boisselier a long time ago and she started the company, I said what would be great is if one day if you can have a lesbian or gay couple to have a child among the first people, you will help. I understand this next child will be the child of a European lesbian couple and I think this is beautiful.

WILL YOU THEN BE ABLE TO MORE IMMEDIATELY PRESENT DNA ANALYSIS THAT THAT CHILD IS CLONED?

I hope so. Not me, but Dr. Boisselier. I think she would like to have it happen because she created this company for profit and the more she can give credibility to her company and the more money she will make and good for her.

DO YOU THINK SHE FELT UNDER SOME TIME URGENCY PRESSURE TO MAKE THIS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON DECEMBER 26 WITHOUT DNA RESULTS BECAUSE DR. ANTONARI IN ITALY IS SAYING HE IS CLOSE TO ANNOUNCING CLONED BIRTHS?

I think there was a competition from the beginning between them and a few other things. I remember when we were testifying in front of the American Congress, already I could feel this competition between them and I am not surprised that they tried to do it as fast and as safe but at the same time.

BUT IT DOES APPEAR NOW SINCE DECEMBER 26 THAT CONTROVERSY IS GROWING IN WASHINGTON AND THERE IS MORE AND MORE TALK THAT THE CONGRESS IN THE UNITED STATES WILL MOVE TOWARD BANNING ALTOGETHER OR PUT A MORATORIUM ON ANY CLONING IN THE UNITED STATES.

Yes, but we are going through one more time what happened 22 years ago I don't know if you remember the first test tube baby, Liz Brown, was born. There was a kind of same headlines in newspapers 'They are playing God. They are playing Frankenstein. They will create monsters. Handicap children.' The same thing. Liz Brown is a person now, she is healthy. In the world now, you have more than 200,000 babies born through in vitro fertilization who are most of them in perfect health. In vitro fertilization is happening every day and well accepted. I

am sure that 20 years from now, it will be the same for human cloning. We are the beginning and, of course, all the conservative people must live by religious prejudice against it (cloning).

They will try like it was done 22 years ago there was a law banning in vitro fertilization. Then the families went to the Supreme Court and the Court said they have a right to have a baby the way they want. And many people say that if this case goes to the Supreme Court, human cloning will win."

Robert Lanza, M. D., Advanced Cell Technology

One of the world's experts on cloning research is Dr. Robert Lanza, Vice President of Medical and Scientific Development at Advanced Cell Technology in Worcester, Massachusetts. Dr. Lanza received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1983 and then worked with Dr. Christian Bernard on heart transplants, worked with Dr. Jonas Salk at the Salk Institute and published papers with B. F. Skinner at Harvard University. Dr. Lanza has been a co-author on the book, *Principals of Cloning and Principals of Tissue Engineering*. He and his colleagues cloned the world's first embryo and cloned the first endangered animal.

I asked Dr. Lanza today why he thinks Clonaid held a major press conference to announce a cloned baby without having the DNA verification first?

Robert Lanza, M. D., Vice President of Medical and Scientific Development, Advanced Cell Technology, Worcester, Massachusetts: "You don't make such an important announcement without any scientific data to substantiate your claims. So, one would have to wonder whether or not this was to generate publicity perhaps to raise funding or whatever, but certainly this is not the way we do things in science.

WHAT IS YOUR MEDICAL OPINION SINCE YOU HAVE SUCH A DEEP BACKGROUND HAVING TO DO WITH ISSUES OF CLONING AND GENETIC WORK WHAT IS YOUR REACTION AS A PROFESSIONAL TO THEIR EFFORTS TO CLONE A HUMAN BEING?

Well, we are appalled. It is scientifically irresponsible and we're in particular concerned about the backlash that this could cause. It could cripple an important area of medical research that has the potential to eliminate a range of serious diseases.

HOW COULD IT CRIPPLE IT?

We are concerned there is going to be tremendous pressure now on the U. S. Congress to ban all forms of cloning. Of course, all of society from scientists to politicians are against human reproductive cloning. No one wants to see 100 copies of Madonna or Michael Jordan. But it would be tragic if this outrage spills over into the legitimate medical research which could cure millions of patients.

YOU MEAN, I THINK, STEM CELL RESEARCH?

Yes. The use of therapeutic cloning to generate stem cells that could then be used to fix a damaged heart if you had heart disease or to generate insulin-producing cells if you had diabetes, or neurons if you had Parkinson's disease.

According to the most recent data, about 3,000 Americans die every day from diseases that stem cells could be used to treat. We know, for instance, that this technology already in animals can be used to treat a damaged heart. We've actually used this technology to generate miniature kidneys. It has been used to reverse diabetes in mice and even rats that have been paralyzed have had their movement partially restored. So, I think the promise here is enormous and I think it would be really tragic if we were to eliminate the possibility of developing this technology to help these patients who are desperately in need.

IF SOME PARENTS WHO ARE DESPERATE FOR A CHILD AND HAD TRIED OTHER FERTILITY APPROACHES WENT TO YOUR GROUP AND SAID, 'WE REALLY WANT A CHILD AND IF CLONING IS THE ONLY WAY TO HAVE IT, THIS IS WHAT WE WANT.' WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO THEM?

Absolutely not! It would be very much like sending the mom and the baby up in a rocket with a 20 to 30% chance it was going to blow up. You simply do not do that in medicine. It's just not acceptable.

BECAUSE THE TERRITORY IS TOO UNKNOWN AND YOU CAN'T GIVE ANY GUARANTEES?

Yes, oh absolutely! The procedure is highly variable. Also, too, there are very severe ethical and moral issues here, that many of us don't find acceptable, aside from the safety issues.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IN EXPLAINING WHAT THE ETHICAL AND MORAL ISSUES ARE TO YOU?

Well, I think it poses very serious psychological questions and I think most of society finds it abhorrent that you would be creating identical copies of an individual. I don't think anyone wants to go down that slope.

AND IN FACT, IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT THE MOTHER IN THIS CASE, IF IT WERE A CLONED BABY AND IF SHE WERE MARRIED AND HAD A HUSBAND, AT SOME POINT THE FATHER WOULD BE LOOKING AT AN IDENTICAL MATCH TO WHO HE HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH AT SOME TEENAGE OR YOUNG YEAR.

Oh, certainly, there are all sorts of problems you can foresee if this technology were to be abused to generate children. That's just one.

IF YOU HAD A CHANCE TODAY RIGHT NOW TO TALK WITH DR. BOISSELIER, WHAT WOULD YOU WANT TO ASK HER?

Give us some evidence! Obviously at this point here, we are getting concerned that this is just a hoax."

Rael's Alleged Encounter With An Extraterrestrial in 1973

What happened to Claude Vorilhon, also known as Rael, in France 30 years ago that inspired his obsession with cloning humans and creating the Raelian movement?

Rael, Leader of the worldwide Raelian Movement, Montreal, Canada: "In 1973, I was a race car journalist and race car driver myself in France and publisher of a number one company of race cars in France. I was on my way to my office. It was about 9 a.m. Something guided me with my car to a volcano, a dead volcano, which is close to the city of Clermont-Ferrand, not so far from Lyons in the center of France.

I went to this volcano in my car and then in this volcano I stopped my car and went by foot to the center of the crater. And then I saw in the sky a very strong flashing light and without any noise, a huge craft appeared which was shaped like a flattened bell made of a very shiny silver metal and this object came slowly down. And I have to summarize because it took a long time, but a small human being came outside looking a little bit more like Asian people than Europeans. He came to me and that was the beginning of it and he started to give me the message he wanted me to spread on the earth. And I can summarize this message if you like.

YES.

OK, these people are the Elohim the Bible talks about. As you may know, the Bible doesn't talk about gods, but the first word you have is Elohim and Elohim in Hebrew means 'those who came from the sky.' It doesn't mean at all, 'god.' That was a wrong translation.

In fact, the Bible describes the creation of life on earth by the advanced civilization, the Elohim, using DNA mastering genetic engineering. They were exactly at the same level of science that we are about to be today. We start to do cloning, we start to create artificial life. A few months ago, the scientists created on earth the first synthetic virus and they will create soon some small synthetic animals. So, they did all these things, exactly like it is happening on the earth now.

WAS THERE CONCERN THEN IN 1973 THAT CLONING SHOULD BECOME A PART OF THE REPRODUCTIVE EVOLUTION OF OUR PLANET?

Yes, more than that. They explained to me that on their planet, they have reached the level of eternal life with a different body using cloning. And they said this would come soon on the earth. 'You have to prepare humanity to be ready for that because it is a key to reach eternal life' like we are doing on our planet, we will be soon able to do the same.

AND IF I UNDERSTAND CORRECTLY, THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT AN ETERNAL LIFE IN WHICH THE CONTAINERS OF THE BODIES COULD BE MADE FROM CLONING AN INDIVIDUAL OVER AND OVER AGAIN AND TRANSFERRING THE LIFE FORCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL FROM CLONE TO CLONE?

Yes, when you are about to die, you just clone yourself younger and you transfer all the data in your brain which makes you who you are memory, personality, everything in this new body and you can do it again and again and again and that is the secret of eternal life through different bodies."

More Information:

For more about the transfer of life force from dying human bodies to cloned human bodies under the control of non-human entities, please see *Glimpses of Other Realities, Volume II: High Strangeness* in the **Earthfiles Shop**.

Websites:

<http://www.clonaid.com>

<http://www.rael.org>

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