

# Cambiaso's Cuartetera Clones

Michael Edenborough KC

Arguably the world's best polo player, Adolfo Cambiaso, has had a notable win in the Southern District of Florida, USA, by securing the return of three cloned polo ponies: Cuartetera B10, B11 and B12. These clones were of his most successful polo pony Cuartetera, who died in May 2023, aged 22. Cuartetera has been cloned many times, and clones B06 and B09 are currently amongst his top mounts.

The first successful mammalian clone was Dolly the sheep in 1996. The process as applied to horses uses Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer whereby the nucleus from a normal cell is transferred into a de-nucleated ovum. Once that has developed into an embryo, it is implanted into a surrogate mare for gestation. (This, of course, ignores mitochondrial DNA as that is derived from the host ovum, and so the clone is not perfect.) The process is not cheap. However, the world of polo is not poor. In Argentina, the laws on such processes are lax and the money is plentiful, especially when concerned with the near-religious fervour attached to the sport of polo where the bond between horse and rider is paramount for peak performance.

The litigation involved a breach of contract and misappropriation of trade secrets by Cambiaso's former business partner, Alan Meeker, who had secretly sold some Cuartetera's clones to a Russian for \$800,000 each (where the normal price for a top polo pony is a mere \$200,000). The return of the

clones was an essential part of the litigation as that ensured that the genetic material was not in general circulation and so preserved Cambiaso's monopoly on Cuartetera and her clones. In the UK, the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023 has introduced a new regime that significantly deregulates this area of commerce. Further, anecdotally, there is a rise in the number of Plant Variety cases that are being litigated, i.e. from almost nothing to something. The ghola, Duncan Idaho (in the Dune series) and the cyborg, Seven of Nine (in Star Trek Voyager), here we come.

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