

SCIENCE

Clone Alone Two

House-hunting for world-famous mice.

YOU PROBABLY SAW ON TV or in the papers that researchers in Hawaii cloned 50 mice, spanning three generations. Four of the mice were flown to New York for a triumphant, press-packed debut at the Science, Industry and Business Library on Madison Avenue. I went to see them. Once the astonishing news of their existence had been delivered, the reporters ran off to file their stories, leaving me—a lowly editorial intern at a biotechnology magazine—to peacefully survey the now-famous rodents. “Bringing the mice was a nice touch,” I said to another journalist. “What happens to them now?”

He told me they couldn't return to their Hawaiian lab, for fear of contamination by New York germs. “You can probably take them home,” he said with a grin.

He was casually offering me a bit of biological history. They didn't look extraordinary, and they sure stank like regular mice. But they were *genetically*

identical. The sequence of their DNA's 2.7 billion building blocks was exactly the same. “These mice should be in a museum,” I said, “where children can see them.”

Hearing this rather obvious suggestion, the people who'd organized the press conference practically hoisted me to their shoulders. “This woman is going to find a home for the mice,” a publicist eagerly told the scientists, who by contrast had merely *created* the mice.

After agreeing to return the next day to pick them up, I rushed home feeling important and instantly started calling the major museums and universities in New York. “You're who?” they asked me. “Why are you involved?” “Why would we want the mice?” “We don't have an animal facility.” (The “animal facility” required to house mice is a fifteen-gallon fish tank.)



The world's first cloned mice (above) and their new home (left), the Liberty Science Center.



“Didn't someone already do that?”

“What's a clone?”

Finally I reached a receptive voice at Jersey City's Liberty Science Center. Carol Giuriceo, the “thematic director of invention,” said they'd love to have them.

The next day, dressed in my best power suit, I went to the Fifth Avenue P.R. firm where they had spent the night, and picked up two coffee-colored clones, a chocolate-colored egg donor, and a fat, white surrogate mother. Keeping an eye out for a maniacal anti-cloning guerrilla, I carried them out in a plain brown paper shopping bag and

hopped a cab to the Science Center, Exit 14B off the Jersey Turnpike. All four mice, thank God, survived the ride.

At the information counter, a severe older woman looked at me. “You have the mice?” she asked.

“I have the mice,” I said. Just like a spy movie, except I was handing over furry mammals instead of secret documents.

I was escorted through swarms of children up to the top floor, where the animals are kept. Standing next to a wall of glass aquariums that housed various reptiles, my contact opened the shopping bag and placed the mice, still in their cage, on the counter. In full view of their mortal enemies—most notably an eighteen-inch Savannah monitor lizard with a Mona Lisa smile and a flickering tongue—they must have thought they'd been FedEx'd to hell.

But away from the media's prying eyes, the mice quickly resumed their routine of meticulous grooming. Licking their front paws and slicking the fur behind their ear. Grabbing their tail and drawing it through their paws, aligning the tail hairs.

I felt inexplicably moved, and wanted to say something memorable. Or something about these superstars' strange interlude of homelessness. But nothing came to mind. Here in their new home, they didn't look like one giant leap for mankind; they just looked like little brown mice. Notwithstanding their genetic anomalies, they seemed happy. And so was I. **BIJAL TRIVEDI**

SPORTS

Mighty Krishna Has Struck Out

IN RETROSPECT, IT WAS REMARKABLE THAT EITHER team made it to the softball game between Blackout Books and the Hare Krishnas. It's always tough to organize such events, even when they don't involve a matchup between anarchists and spiritualists. Still, as Team Anarchy gathered in Tompkins Square Park one recent Saturday, waiting in vain for their opponents to show, they could be excused for losing some of their revolutionary zeal. “Damn,” said Alia Habib. “This could have been great publicity.”

The contest had been in the works for weeks. Even Kapindra Swami had described the plan as “a very loving thought,” and though he couldn't allow his disciples to play—“Sporting games are against the science of Krishna,” he explained—he did authorize the Cro-Mags, a Krishna-friendly former punk band, to serve as stand-ins. What had started as an in-joke be-

tween neighbors became the talk of Avenue B.

But an hour after the game was scheduled to start, there was still no sign of the Cro-Mags. Everyone offered a theory—they'd snuck out of town, or had been running a hoax—but no one took action. “We're anarchists,” they kept saying. “We don't have leaders.”

Louis Colombo, who'd organized the event (but skipped it to visit his grandmother), called his teammates to say, “Can't you just pretend that the game really happened?”

As it later turned out, the Swami had been rushed to an ashram upstate for a homeopathic cure; his stand-ins, admitted captain John Joseph, had “totally spaced out on the game.”

Until the game is restaged, Kapindra Swami has been doing his best to psych out the challengers. “The real revolution,” he has been reminding them, “is in the soul.” **ADAM FISHER**

