Script: (Un)Ethical Human Cloning

Imagine a world where a woman could bring back her deceased husband by giving birth to him. Or a man could bring back his mother and raise her as his daughter.

"If we have a living cell of a dead person, certainly we could in theory, clone that individual. We published a paper about a year or two ago were we show we could actually now create human embryos that are genetically identical to a normal embryo. The only way you would really know whether you could clone a human being is to actually plant that embryo into the uterus of a surrogate mother. Of course we cannot implant those, that would be considered unethical so it's unclear whether or not they would give rise to a human being."

Society has vehemently rejected reproductive human cloning. In this climate it is extremely difficult for geneticists to obtain funding for their research. There is also a shortage of material.

"So one of the problems with human cloning is the supply of eggs. So with a mouse or a cow we can get literally hundreds if not thousands of eggs. We can go to the slaughterhouse for instance and get them for a dollar each and get thousands of these cow eggs. With the humans it took us over a year just to get five eggs."

Even if you had the eggs, it could take hundreds of pregnancies to perfect human cloning; a process that could result in scores of babies with horrific genetic damage.

"It would be very much like if you wanted to clone your child, it would be like sending them up in a rocket with a 50/50 chance it could blow up."

In most of the world cloning humans is not illegal. One day a rouge scientist will pull it off. But cloning a person is not the same as duplicating a person.

"A lot of people, you know, who have their pets, they want to clone them and they want to clone them and they want Fluffy back and what I tell them is you're not going to get Fluffy back. As a matter of fact, we actually cloned entire herds of cows from a single cell from the same animal and they develop a whole hierarchy just like we do in humans. So you have timid cows and aggressive cows and they're all clones. So they develop their own behavioral patterns, so the environment has a very profound impact on your development."

Let's say we decide to take DNA from Einstein's hair and grow some new Einsteins. Those clones would not be the man who wrote $E=MC^2$. Each would have a unique personality shaped by his environment. Clones are like identical twins born years apart. They may be similar but they will not be the same. Perhaps the key to life after death is not to grow an entirely new body but to resurrect the one you have.