# The emotional journey of pet cloning: Kelly Anderson's tribute to her cat Chai



The loss of a beloved pet can be profoundly heart-wrenching, and for many pet owners, the connection to their animal companions often extends beyond the physical realm. This sentiment is exemplified by Kelly Anderson, a 35-year-old pet owner from the United States, who made headlines for her decision to clone her deceased cat, Chai, a five-year-old Ragdoll. Anderson's journey into the realm of pet cloning has sparked discussions about the ethics, costs, and emotional implications associated with this controversial and emerging technology.

Anderson's ordeal began when Chai unexpectedly passed away after ingesting plastic. Although a surgery was performed successfully, complications related to anaesthesia ultimately led to Chai's death. The profound grief Anderson experienced prompted her to consider unconventional ways to carry on Chai's legacy. "When she died, I felt robbed of time with her," she told DailyMail.com, articulating her desire to preserve a piece of Chai through cloning. The process, facilitated by ViaGen Pets—a Texas-based organisation that specialises in pet cloning—came at the steep cost of $50,000.

As Anderson navigated the grieving process, she found herself deeply entrenched in a burgeoning debate surrounding the ethics and financial implications of cloning pets. The backlash against her decision has been multifaceted, with critics questioning why she did not opt for adoption instead or choose to donate the significant funds to animal welfare initiatives. Anderson, however, defends her stance. "It was a very personal choice for me, and I made it out of love for animals and my love of Chai. There's absolutely no need for hate," she said.

According to Anderson, the resulting clone, named Belle, exhibits traits reminiscent of Chai, sharing approximately 60 per cent of Chai's personality. While Belle possesses a distinct personality due to her different upbringing—Anderson explains that Belle was more socially exposed from an early age—she has begun to mirror aspects of Chai’s behaviour as she matures. "The bond with Belle was immediate and emotionally charged," Anderson noted.

Anderson, who is an active adopter and fosterer of animals, has clarified that she financed the cloning through a loan and continues to support animal welfare as much as she can. Her decision to share her cloning experience on social media, particularly through her Instagram account, attracted attention from a wide audience. "I went public because I had already formed a following around Chai while she was alive," she explained.

The cloning process itself involves storing the genetic material of the original pet through a simple biopsy, which allows for the creation of a genetic twin several weeks later. Lauren Asten, a representative from ViaGen, provided insight into how cloning works, stressing that the procedure is minimally invasive and aimed at producing an identical genetic copy without altering the animal’s original DNA. However, Asten emphasised that personality and behaviour may differ based on environmental influences and experiences, akin to the differing outcomes often seen in siblings raised in disparate circumstances.

Critically, Asten addressed concerns surrounding the health implications associated with cloned animals, noting that other than the potential for genetic illness, there is no evidence to suggest that cloned pets are inherently weaker or shorter-lived than their conventionally bred counterparts. The suggestion that clones face increased health risks is thought to be a misconception, further reinforced by studies indicating that cloned animals can live normal, healthy lives.

Anderson's experience with cloning reflects not only a response to personal grief but also an insight into the emotional and psychological landscape that many pet owners navigate after loss. As technologies advance, the practice of cloning pets has garnered attention from various quarters, including celebrities such as Barbra Streisand and Paris Hilton, both of whom have opted to clone their beloved animals. Their experiences underline the emotional weight that pet owners feel, amplifying discussions of what it means to maintain an enduring bond with a pet through groundbreaking scientific processes.

As the debate continues on the ethics and practicality of pet cloning, the personal narratives of individuals like Kelly Anderson and the intricate processes behind cloning illustrate the complexities of emotional loss and the lengths to which people may go to preserve the memory of their cherished companions.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.businessinsider.com/kelly-anderson-does-not-regret-cat-cloning-videos-2022-4> - This article supports Kelly Anderson's story of cloning her cat, Chai, using ViaGen Pets, despite facing criticism for the decision.
* <https://www.the-independent.com/life-style/pet-cloning-dead-cat-kelly-anderson-b2052784.html> - It provides additional details on Kelly Anderson's decision to clone Chai and the process involved with ViaGen Pets.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIUZJYKeAlo> - This video features Kelly Anderson discussing her decision to clone her cat, Chai, on ITV's This Morning, highlighting her emotional connection and the cloning process.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source would typically provide the original article about Kelly Anderson's journey with pet cloning, though the specific URL was not directly provided.
* <https://www.viagenpets.com> - ViaGen Pets' website would offer insights into their pet cloning services, including how the process works and the costs involved.