

A NARCISSIST AND HIS CLONES

WHETHER or not he is truly the greatest footballer to have played the game, Cristiano Ronaldo is no longer a mere sportsman, he is a global brand.

This week, it was revealed that the player who calls himself CR7 (his initials and shirt number) boosts his colossal income by a staggering £310,000 through sponsorship every time he posts a picture or film on Instagram, where he has 106 million followers.

Invariably these images show the comically narcissistic star preening and posturing.

On Monday, June 5, he treated fans to a video showing him grinning from ear to diamond-studded ear as he danced in the aisle of his private Gulfstream jet. Dressed like a rapper, in skin-tight white jeans ripped at the knees, baseball cap, heavy gold chain and sunglasses, he whooped as his moves were mimicked by a male travelling companion.

Reclining, mini-skirted and tanned, in her plush leather seat, Ronaldo's girlfriend, Spanish model Georgina Rodriguez, 23, smiled nonchalantly at them.

To his legion of fans, the reason for Ronaldo's jubilation must have seemed obvious.

The previous day he had scored two goals in another man-of-the-match performance, as his team, Real Madrid, won the European Champions League final.

However, that wasn't his only cause for celebration. That day he'd received momentous news from California: he had become the father of twins.

Three weeks passed before Ronaldo announced the birth of his son, Mateo, and daughter, Eva — again via an Instagram picture, in which he cradled the pair in his sinewy arms.

Since then, they have become the most talked about twins since Romulus and Remus.

There has been endless speculation because Ronaldo, 32, remains unmarried, rumours surround his sexual orientation (despite all the glamorous women he has romanced) and he has not identified the twins' mother.

Were they carried by a surrogate, or perhaps a secret girlfriend?

HAD Ronaldo paid another woman to provide him with a ready-made, no-strings attached family, thus precluding the possibility of a costly future divorce?

No one even knew exactly when or where they were born.

Similar intrigue still surrounds the birth, seven years ago, of their older brother, Cristiano Junior.

Today, however, we can reveal the truth about Ronaldo's unconventional, motherless family.

The twins were conceived in a laboratory and born to a surrogate mother. This was ascertained from the publicly accessible case file in the Superior Court of California, San Diego, where part of Ronaldo's surname, dos Santos Aveiro, was misspelt.

Ronaldo is identified as the Petitioner in the case 'Intended Parent CA vs Confidential' (Ronaldo and, presumably, the birth mother), which was dated May 17 — three weeks before the twins' birth.

The court would not provide any further information, not even the names of the lawyers involved. However, the listed category of the case on the court register — 'surrogacy' — ends speculation about how the twins were conceived.

So where and when were

by David Jones and Hugo Daniel

IN MADEIRA AND CALIFORNIA

REVEALED: how the world's vainest, richest and prettiest footballer — who has a beautiful girlfriend — has used frozen embryos and a surrogate mum to create a brood of perfect mini-mes

they born? The answer lies on their birth certificates (public documents), filed using only part of Ronaldo's surname.

They led us to La Mesa, a sleepy Californian desert town, close to San Diego, and 20 miles from the Mexican border.

Here, twins Eva Maria Dos Santos (her hitherto-unknown full name) and her brother Mateo were born at the Sharp Grossmont Hospital.

Mateo arrived first, at 9.07am; sister Eva Maria came into the world one minute later.

This puts paid to another theory: that the twins might have been carried by two separate mothers.

The surrogate's name has been left blank on both birth certificates. However, Cristiano Ronaldo dos Santos Aveiro (spelt correctly this time) is named as the father.

The birth certificates show that the twins were delivered by a local obstetrician, Dr Maria Castillo, 59, whose passion for her work shines through in a video on her website. 'It's like hosting a party, and at the end you want your party-planner to show up,' she says, explaining why she stays with mothers from the beginning to the end of their pregnancy.

What, then, of Cristiano Junior, the elder son whom Ronaldo plainly adores, spending hours training him to emulate his footballing feats? His birth certificate lays to rest other myths.

In her authorised biography, Ronaldo's mother Dolores — who lives inside the same gated complex as her son so she can care for her grandson while the superstar plays football — says she collected Cristiano Jr from a private hospital in Florida and brought him back to Spain. Perhaps this was a deliberate attempt to mislead people, for the lad's birth certificate shows he was born in the same hospital as his siblings on June 17, 2010.

But, of course, it is possible she picked up the boy from Florida, even if he was born

in San Diego. According to leading California surrogacy lawyer Stephanie Caballero, this suggests Cristiano Jr may be the biological brother to the twins, and even originate from the same batch of embryos. For surrogacy clinics routinely fertilise several eggs at the same time, freezing unused

embryos and storing them — sometimes for years — in case a client wants more children.

Ms Caballero provided a fascinating insight into the process Ronaldo may have followed to acquire the three children.

The first step is to pick one of the many commercial agencies in California, where surrogacy has become a billion-dollar industry, not least because its surrogacy laws are 'very, very favourable' to prospective parents.

Single people are permitted to become parents via surrogates, whereas in Britain they are available only to married couples and civil partners. In Spain, surrogacy deals have been banned.

Surrogacy was unlawful in Ronaldo's homeland, Portugal, until last year when it was allowed in very limited circumstances. Even then, says Marta Costa, a Portuguese lawyer, it is not permitted for a single man. She says: 'No Portuguese court would recognise any agreement drawn up between Cristiano and a surrogate mother. The agreement would be invalid.'

In California, an agency can be paid about £125,000 to supply twins — with £35,000 going to the birth mother.

Ronaldo could have chosen an egg donor (who normally receives a £6,000 fee) from hundreds of women whose photos and biographical details are advertised on agency websites.

As he has repeatedly voiced his dream of fathering a son in his own

image with his 'footballing genes', perhaps this unashamedly self-worshipping man (who bagged the only locker facing the dressing-room mirror upon signing for Manchester United) picked a sporty woman with similar Latino features.

We must presume Ronaldo's own sperm was used to fertilise the eggs, particularly as Cristiano Jr looks so like him.

In California, a second woman is almost always hired as the surrogate who actually carries the baby, mainly because it lessens the risk that they will form an emotional attachment.

This could explain why, after Cristiano Jr's birth, Ronaldo's sister, Katia reportedly remarked that he had 'two mothers'. (She also allegedly said the women involved were Mexican, which is plausible, given La Mesa's proximity to the border.)

Before the embryo was implanted, Ronaldo and the 'gestational carrier', to use the legal jargon, would have agreed a contract giving him sole parenthood.

Once born, birth certificates and passports would have been fast-tracked, allowing the twins to be flown to Spain in less than three weeks. The footballer's mother brought them home late last month, while he played for Portugal in a tournament in Russia.

Ms Caballero, who has dealt with several high-level cases, told us the surrogate 'will never know to this day' for whom she gave birth.

For a man of Ronaldo's vast means, it all sounds so easy. Yet there are, as the lawyer points out,



Hat-trick: Ronaldo cradles his twins, Mateo (left) and Eva Maria, who joined their new big brother, Cristiano Jr (inset with dad)

potential pitfalls. There is a possibility the surrogate might guess the parentage of the child she has carried. 'You'd have to match him with a woman who's going to be confidential, and not call up the National Enquirer [America's favourite scandal-sheet],' said Ms Caballero.

For Ronaldo, another worry is that the surrogate might have a belated change of heart and fight to keep the twins.

If such a claim were lodged in California, it would almost certainly fail. It might be a different story if it came before Portugal's courts, however. They would not recognise

a U.S. surrogacy contract, according to Eurico Reis, a judge who chairs Portugal's national advisory council on assisted reproduction.

But why would a fabulously rich footballer who could have his pick of beautiful women (Ronaldo had a five-year relationship with the Russian model Irina Shayk) opt to have his family in this manner?

If it is true that his current belle, Georgina, is now pregnant — she recently appeared to be nurturing a bump in place of her usually washboard-flat stomach — his decision is more curious still.

It is certainly perplexing many people on the deeply conservative

and Catholic island of Madeira, where he was born and raised.

There, Ronaldo is so highly revered that criticising him is akin to blasphemy. The airport was recently renamed after him.

However, when a former neighbour, who knew him as a barefooted ragamuffin kicking a ball around the steep streets of Santo Antonio, was asked what she thought of his test-tube tribe, she gave a frank reply: 'It's not normal here. It's not part of our culture.'

Local priest Joao Rodrigues has dared to take Ronaldo to task, saying it goes 'against God, against the mystery of life' to deprive a

was so scared she wouldn't be able to provide for another child that she drank a home-made concoction in an attempt to abort him.

She has also spoken of her guilt for sending Ronaldo alone to Lisbon, to pursue his football career, when he was just 12.

It's suggested that Ronaldo wants to give his own children the upbringing he was denied, and believes he can best do it by raising them without interference. Excepting that of his mother — the one woman he trusts implicitly.

Ronaldo-watchers offer other reasons for his solo-parenting experiment. Maybe he fears being lured into fatherhood by a gold-digger. Perhaps this notoriously self-centred player needs to have his children to himself. Or maybe there is truth in the oft-repeated rumour that he is gay.

This latter claim gathered momentum several years ago when socialite Paris Hilton branded him a 'sissy' after they went on a date.

PHOTOGRAPHS of him posing ambiguously with male friends have also appeared on the internet, including a holiday snap of him being held aloft by the Moroccan kickboxer Badr Hari.

Hari fuelled the rumours with his caption: 'Just married hahahaha. Always there to pick you up, bro!'

It was later reported that Ronaldo frequently flew from Madrid to Morocco to meet his muscled pal.

The footballer appears unperturbed by such gossip, and even seems to stoke it up.

This week, he posted yet another Instagram picture in which he and his footballing friend, Jose Semedo, stood side by side, waist-deep in a pool, baring their rippling torsos.

Of course, this astute businessman might stage such images to crank up the PR hype.

If so, it is having the desired effect. His many off-field ventures boost his £15million-a-year Real Madrid earnings — with Forbes magazine saying his income this year will hit £72million. (The Spanish tax authorities currently accuse him of evading payments of €14.7million).

Perhaps the most interesting of the many theories was offered by the leading behavioural psychologist Dr Peter Collett, who studied Ronaldo closely for a biography published last year.

He posits that Ronaldo might have chosen to raise his family alone because he is at pains to prove he is not just the world's greatest footballer, but the 'sole author of his success' in every aspect of his life.

Given his poor background, the determination to flaunt his wealth might also be a factor, Dr Collett suggests. This might mean showing the world he can afford to buy anything, including a family.

It is an intriguing, if disquieting, thought. Then again, as the psychologist says, it is but one more unprovable theory.

We might have uncovered some of the mysteries surrounding Ronaldo's children, yet only their father knows why he chose to have them engineered in a sterile lab, and born in an anonymous clinic 6,000 miles from home.

And CR7 is not telling.



Baby, maybe? With girlfriend Georgina Rodriguez, sporting a bump

Picture: GOFFPHOTOS.COM