

Translation of an article in El Mundo on Saturday, 15 May 2010, by Idoia Sota and Maria Eugenia Yague: 'Borja and the girls, an open secret' (copyright Caroline Litchfield Schmitz).

Tita Cervera has not said in public, but she has done in private, who gave the sperm to create Carmen and Sabina. According to sources available to El Mundo, Borja renounced his rights as a father in writing.

Baroness Thyssen always has a place on her lap for Carmen. They say the girl with the blond curls and the light blue eyes resembles Queen Victoria Eugenia as a child. Not so Sabina, her twin, whose brown eyes and big forehead reminds one of Borja when he was not a Thyssen yet. According to Tita Cervera (67), the little girl is more independent than her sister. Sabina is the line resulting from a story whose protagonists have not been keen to speak out. The Baroness was about to do so in her memoirs last July. The last chapter of that exceptional yellow press autobiography was announced to great fanfares. But the result was a maternal declaration: 'I am and will always be searching for the best for Borja and for my daughters'. The original chapter was very different. The Baroness was going to reveal the identity of the father of her twins, the sperm donor who was used to conceive them with a surrogate mother in Los Angeles. But Borja Thyssen (29) refused his permission for the data to be made public.

Although she has renounced the unveiling of the information in the media, the Baroness has no inhibitions to talk about it in private to whoever cares to listen. And the confession tends to leave any interlocutor with a strange expression on their face. According to statements by those who have been witnesses to this scene, the sperm that was used to conceive the twins was extracted from Borja Thyssen in a clinic in Barcelona. By this method, the girls came to possess the DNA of the former Miss Spain. But apart from that, this has led to a complex family structure, by which Borja would not only be the girls' brother, but also their father. Sacha, the first born son of Borja and Blanca Cuesta (37), would be at the same time a nephew and a brother of Carmen and Sabina. And the Baroness, their adoptive mother, would in reality be their biological grandmother. However, these circuitous parental circumstances would not affect the inheritance. According to sources available to El Mundo, Borja is said to have signed an irrevocable document renouncing the legal paternity of the girls. Which means that in succession terms, he and the twins will be considered as siblings and will have to share the inheritance.

According to Spanish laws, Carmen Cervera could not have adopted these girls. First of all because of the age difference. An unwritten norm orders that the mother must not be more than 43 years older than the child she wishes to adopt. Secondly, because in Spain the use of surrogate mothers is not permitted. And finally, because of the family relationship. As Elena Zarralugui, secretary of the Madrid College of Lawyers explains to El Mundo (*La Otra Cronica*): 'There is an express prohibition in the Civil Code which defends the adoption of descendants'.

However, the girls were born and were adopted in the state of California (USA), where the adoption laws are more lax. In total, Tita Titen, as the twins call her, is said to have invested 90,000 Euros to become a mother, plus a 18,000 Euros fee for the biological mother of the girls. And so, whether in line with Spanish legislation or not (which cannot act against an illegal step taken outside its sovereign territory) Carmen and Sabina are Carmen Cervera's children.

This is how the story was presented in May 2008 in the pages of a well-known yellow press magazine. The Baroness explained that she prepares breakfast, lunch and supper for the twins herself, that she bathes them without the help of the four nannies that she has engaged in order to care for them. The location where these declarations were made was 'Pink House', a huge pink house which features a pink piano.

These quarters of the twins, which Tita has replicated in her house in Madrid, so that the twins will not miss their surroundings when they travel to the capital, is in an independent house nearby, within the grounds of Mas Mananas, in Sant Feliu de Guixols. The inhabitants of the Baroness's residence call it 'The Downstairs House'. There is always a former guardia civil bodyguard present there to protect the girls. Carmen and Sabina have a work station in their little house, where their plastic skills are being developed by a teacher while they await the time when they can enroll in a school. A friend of the Baroness reveals: 'I think that these girls should already have riding lessons, for instance'. They will be four years old on 8 July.

When they reach the age of six, Tita Thyssen plans to send them to a college in Lugano. The Swiss education system is known for its excellent standards. There, she will be able to choose between at least five Italo-Swiss education facilities. But of course she could also opt to send the twins to Le Rosey, the elite school where Francesca Thyssen studied and which has two campuses in Switzerland. Therefore, although the Baroness had put the residence she inherited from Heini Thyssen in Lugano on the market, she maintains two furnished houses in view of the eventual move. Two caretakers, who live in a servants' annex, maintain the houses in good condition.

In the meantime, the biological father keeps a more than prudent distance from the life of the twins. The Baroness will protect his identity, at least towards the media. In the opinion of Jaime Penafiel, 'Carmen Cervera will never say it publicly. In private she says all the things that are making the public rounds....On top of this, she has been known to contradict herself more than on one occasion'. He won't speak about it either. This was obvious in an intense meeting with Eduardo Sanchez Junco last summer. As far as they are concerned, the secret will remain just that, an open secret.

(end of article).