



\$1.5K Filly Molecules' Improbable Story Could Continue in Indiana Oaks at Indiana Grand Racing & Casino

Story by Jennie Rees, Eclipse Award winning turf writer

SHELBYVILLE, Ind. (July 13, 2018) — Molecules will be the longest shot in Saturday night's \$200,000, Grade 3 Indiana Oaks at Indiana Grand, but a victory by the locally-based 3-year-old filly would be in keeping with her remarkable story.

Edward "Bow" Boerjan already was fighting cancer when he purchased Molecules for \$1,500 at Keeneland's 2016 January sale. He had the daughter of Einstein in training last year with his good friend Dawn Fontenot and realized he'd probably never see Molecules make the races.

Fontenot tears up at the memory, telling how Boerjan said Molecules would be hers upon his death, which happened last November.

"I was really good friends with Bow," she said. "I had trained for him before — then he came down with cancer and he wanted me to take the filly. He said, 'This horse is going to take you far. She'll buy you a farm, because you're good.' He said, 'I'm going to be watching from heaven.'"

Fontenot took her time with the massive filly, and as her first race approached April 17 at Indiana Grand, she in turn gave Molecules to her daughter, Morgan Thilo, a 24-year-old mother of two. Fontenot, however, did not give up her hands-on approach, as she remains Molecules' groom while working for trainer Scott Mullins.

Of course, everyone in the family is hands-on with Molecules — or Molly as the barn calls the filly. Her jockey, Samuel Bermudez, is married to Thilo and also serves as the filly's exercise rider.

"My mom gave me the horse at the beginning of the meet and said to have the horse for her grandkids, my kids," said Thilo, who works on the Indiana Grand backside as a gap attendant to tell the clockers when horses are going to have timed workouts. "Keep it in the family. My mom told me the horse could run. She said it was for my kids, to save the money. I didn't really think much of it, but I knew my mom knew what she was talking about."

Guess so.

Molly won her debut at 27-1, then lost an allowance race against older fillies by a nose, the only time she's had a horse in front of her. She returned in a straight 3-year-old allowance race to win by 2 3/4 lengths on May 30.

"All of us as a family agreed to run in this race," Thilo said. "She has a lot of heart, so I think she'll be OK. I know she'll run as hard as she can, and I think she has a chance. We're pretty thrilled, nervous, excited. It's my first horse, and I'm in a stakes race. We're just blessed to have her in there, to be able to have that chance. She's paid her way for sure, so far."

Thilo looked a bit stunned when asked what she'd do if Molecules won.

"Probably cry," she said after a pause. "Probably put a lot of money back, save for my kids. It hasn't really ramped through my mind yet what would happen. But I think she has a shot."

Bermudez said he was really impressed with Molecules' nose defeat, because the winner was a 6-year-old mare who already had won six races against claiming company, making her eligible for the race.

"I think she can go far," he said, adding he means not just in distance but class.

Fontenot said Molecules is "like a family's horse. My grandkids have even ridden her. She's that calm with the kids.

"I knew she was a nice horse. I knew the first time she ran, when she just opened up, that she loves to run. And she's always been a long shot."

And if Molecules would beat the odds and win?

"I hope she gets her a nice place, puts some money down on it and puts some money in for college for my grandkids," Fontenot said of Thilo. "Because that's what I wanted it for, what (Molecules) makes. We've never had much money. We've always worked hard. She's worked hard; Sammy's worked hard.

"This filly has brought us somewhere. I hope she can bring us farther."

The 16th season of Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing continues through Wednesday, Nov. 7. Racing is conducted Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at 2:05 p.m. EST with Saturday racing beginning at 6:05 p.m. EST. Two special Thursday racing dates will be held July 19 and Sept. 6 with a 2:05 p.m. EST post time.

About Indiana Grand Racing & Casino: Indiana Grand Racing & Casino holds multiple awards for customer service, entertainment, gaming, dining, and diversity. Located in Shelbyville, Ind., Indiana Grand features 2,200 of the latest slots and electronic table games in addition to a one-mile dirt race course and a seven-eighths mile turf course offering live Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse racing each year. Simulcast wagering is also offered year-round at Winner's Circle Brewpub & OTB located on the casino floor as well as a Winner's Circle OTB located in Clarksville, Ind.

Photo at top by Jennie Rees - Jockey Sammy Bermudez, Owner Morgan Thilo and groom Dawn Fontenot