

SKIN DEEP:  
THE SCIENCE  
OF RACE

DAWN OF  
THE WHITE  
MINORITY

US AND THEM:  
WHY WE  
DIVIDE

DRIVING  
WHILE  
BLACK

SPECIAL ISSUE

NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC



# Black and White

These twin sisters make us rethink  
everything we know about race

APRIL 2018

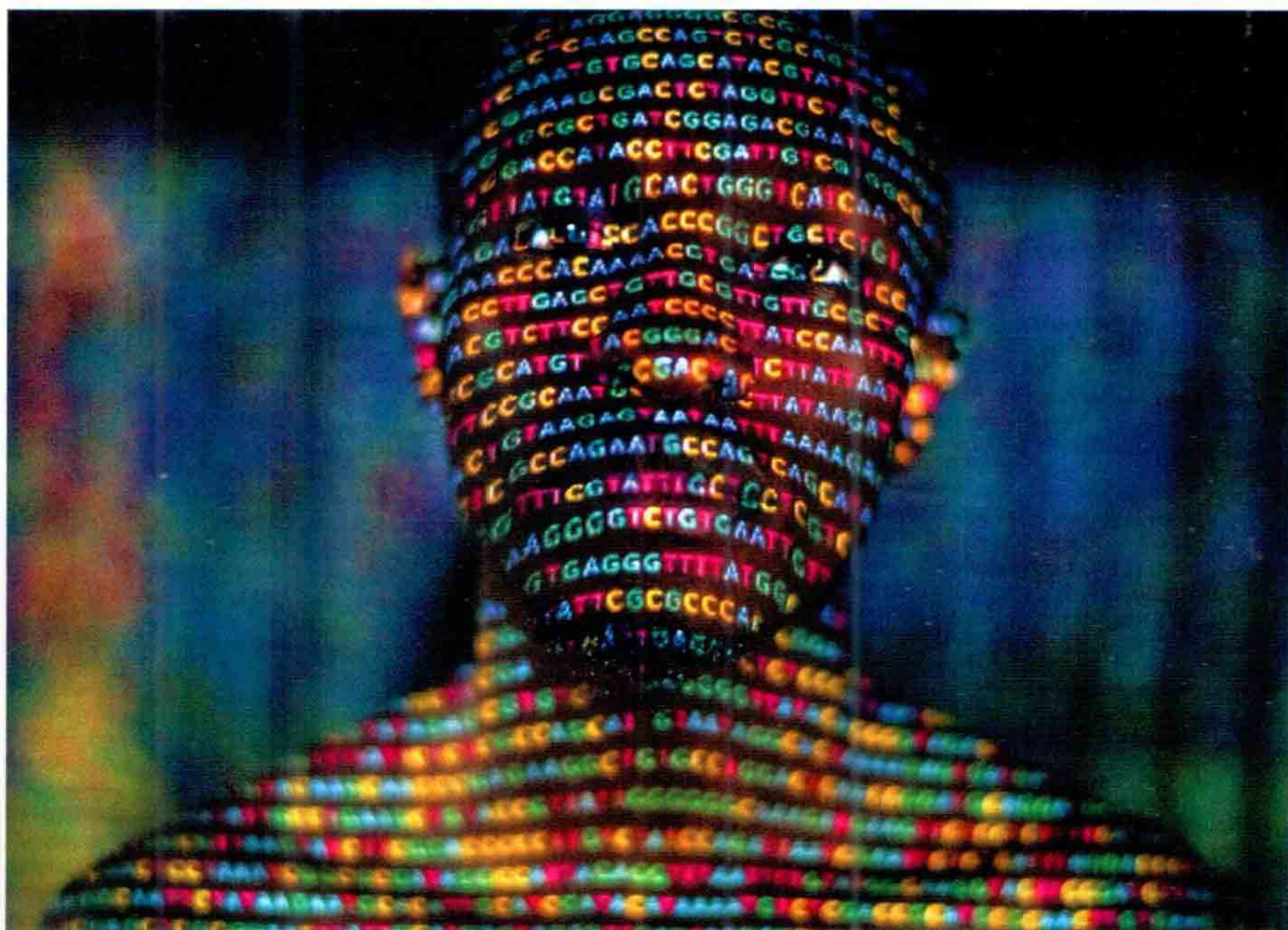
WHAT'S YOUR STORY? #IDefineMe

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## THE RACE ISSUE

To mark the 50th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, we explore what race means in the 21st century.



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Human beings are wired at birth to distinguish Us from Them and to favor our own group. Can science help us bridge the divides?

By David Berreby Photographs by John Stanmeyer

## ON THE COVER

**Marcia (left) and Millie Biggs**, both 11, say people are shocked to learn that they're fraternal twins. Marcia looks more like their mother, who's English, and Millie looks more like their father, who's of Jamaican descent. See more about the twins on page 12. Photo by Robin Hammond

**#IDefineMe** Science defines you by your DNA. Society defines you by the color of your skin. How do you define yourself?

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## COMING UP

### DIVERSITY IN AMERICA

This year *National Geographic* will offer multimedia coverage of racial, ethnic, and religious groups and examine their changing roles in 21st-century life.

#### THE SERIES WILL INCLUDE:

#### MUSLIMS

In the United States, nearly 3.5 million Muslims from some 75 countries are experiencing opportunity – and opposition.

#### LATINOS

Latinos in the United States come from many races. Now at about 18 percent of the population, they're the nation's largest minority group.

#### ASIAN AMERICANS

South Asians are a major force in medicine, technology, and business. Today they're playing increasingly prominent roles in mainstream American culture. Also: We revisit some of the 120,000 Japanese U.S. citizens incarcerated during World War II.

#### NATIVE AMERICANS

Their culture at times erased or appropriated, Native Americans are rising up to fight the marginalization they've endured.



**STREETS IN HIS NAME**

Wendi C. Thomas is editor and publisher of the website *MLK50: Justice Through Journalism*. She also writes for ESPN about racial and economic justice.



**SKIN DEEP**

Elizabeth Kolbert has been a staff writer at the *New Yorker* since 1999. Her most recent book is *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*.



**SKIN DEEP**

Robin Hammond took photos of nine-year-olds around the globe and asked them about gender for the *Geographic's* January 2017 issue on the topic.



**WHAT DIVIDES US**

David Berreby's award-winning latest book, *Us and Them: The Science of Identity*, explores the human instinct to separate into groups.



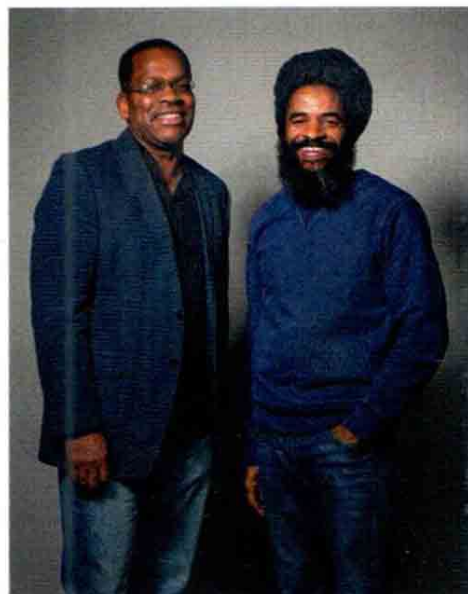
**WHAT DIVIDES US**

John Stanmeyer, who has worked for *National Geographic* since 2004, uses his photography, writing, and filmmaking to explore issues around the world.



**A PLACE OF THEIR OWN**

Nina Robinson's photography unites personal, documentary, and fine art styles. Her work spurs viewers to see past race, class, age, and gender.



**THE STOP**

For a report on drivers' experiences of racial profiling, *National Geographic* collaborated with the Undeclared, an ESPN website that explores the intersection of race, culture, and sports. "The Stop" is the work of (above, left to right) writer Michael Fletcher and photographer Wayne Lawrence. Fletcher, a senior writer at the Undeclared, previously was a reporter at the *Washington Post* covering education and race relations. He is co-author of the 2007 book *Supreme Discomfort: The Divided Soul of Clarence Thomas*. Lawrence is a widely published documentary photographer whose stated focus is "communities otherwise overlooked by mainstream media." His work has been exhibited at galleries and institutions including the Bronx Museum of the Arts. Lawrence also shot the photos for this month's story on intermarriage.



**A PLACE OF THEIR OWN**

Writer and educator Clint Smith focuses on racism and inequality in the United States. His first book of poetry, *Counting Descent*, was published in 2016.



**A PLACE OF THEIR OWN**

Brooklyn-based photographer Radcliffe "Ruddy" Roye uses portraiture and photojournalism to tell real stories of real people, especially fellow Jamaicans.



**WHITE AMERICA**

Journalist Michele Norris started NPR's Race Card Project to spark discussion about race. Her book, *The Grace of Silence*, is about her complex family.



**WHITE AMERICA**

Gillian Laub drew on more than a decade of photographing lingering racism in the U.S. South for her 2015 book and documentary, *Southern Rites*.



**RESISTANCE, REIMAGINED**

Omar Victor Diop produces fashion and advertising photography as well as fine art photo projects. He is based in Dakar, Senegal.



**RESISTANCE, REIMAGINED**

Maurice Berger is a cultural historian. He writes a series of essays, "Race Stories," that appears on the Lens Blog of the *New York Times*.



**HALLOWED EARTH**

In a *National Geographic* TV series, *America Inside Out With Katie Couric*, the journalist looks at the issues shaping our nation. Premieres April 11 at 10/9c.

PHOTOS (FROM TOP, LEFT TO RIGHT, BY ROW): MARCI LAMBERT; BARRY GOLDSTEIN; MADS NØRGAARD; SOPHIE LAIR-BERREBY; ROB BECKER; NINA ROBINSON; KENDAL THOMAS; SION FULLANA; STEPHEN VOSS; TAHL RAZ; OMAR VICTOR DIOP; MARVIN HEIFERMAN; VALERIE MACON; AFP/GETTY IMAGES; REBECCA HALE, NGM STAFF (ABOVE, "THE STOP")

# TO RISE ABOVE THE RACISM OF THE PAST, WE MUST ACKNOWLEDGE IT

It is November 2, 1930, and *National Geographic* has sent a reporter and a photographer to cover a magnificent occasion: the crowning of Haile Selassie, King of Kings of Ethiopia, Conquering Lion of the Tribe of Judah. There are trumpets, incense, priests, spear-wielding warriors. The story runs 14,000 words, with 83 images.

If a ceremony in 1930 honoring a black man had taken place in America, instead of Ethiopia, you can pretty much guarantee there wouldn't have been a story at all. Even worse, if Haile Selassie had lived in the United States, he would almost certainly have been denied entry to our lectures in segregated Washington, D.C., and he might not have been allowed to be a National Geographic member. According to Robert M. Poole, who wrote *Explorers House: National Geographic and the World It Made*, "African Americans were excluded from membership—at least in Washington—through the 1940s."

I'm the tenth editor of *National Geographic* since its founding in 1888. I'm the first woman and the first Jewish person—a member of two groups that also once faced discrimination here. It hurts to share the appalling stories from the magazine's past. But when we decided to devote our April magazine to the topic of race, we thought we should examine our own history before turning our reportorial gaze to others.

Race is not a biological construct, as writer Elizabeth Kolbert explains in this issue, but a social one that can have devastating effects. "So many of the horrors of the past few centuries can be traced to the idea that one race is inferior to another," she writes. "Racial distinctions continue to shape our politics, our neighborhoods, and our sense of self."

How we present race matters. I hear from readers that *National Geographic* provided their first look at the world.

Our explorers, scientists, photographers, and writers have taken people to places they'd never even imagined; it's a tradition that still drives our coverage and of which we're rightly proud. And it means we have a duty, in every story, to present accurate and authentic depictions—a duty heightened when we cover fraught issues such as race.

We asked John Edwin Mason to help with this examination. Mason is well positioned for the task: He's a University of Virginia professor specializing in the history of photography and the history of Africa, a frequent crossroads of our storytelling. He dived into our archives.

What Mason found in short was that until the 1970s *National Geographic* all but ignored people of color who lived in the United States, rarely acknowledging them beyond laborers or domestic workers. Meanwhile it pictured "natives" elsewhere as exotics, famously and frequently unclothed, happy hunters, noble savages—every type of cliché.

Unlike magazines such as *Life*, Mason said, *National Geographic* did little to push its readers beyond the stereotypes ingrained in white American culture.

"Americans got ideas about the world from Tarzan movies and crude racist caricatures," he said. "Segregation was the way it was. *National Geographic* wasn't teaching as much as reinforcing messages they already received and doing so in a magazine that had tremendous authority. *National Geographic* comes into existence at the height of colonialism, and the world was divided into the colonizers and the colonized. That was a color line, and *National Geographic* was reflecting that view of the world."

Some of what you find in our archives leaves you speechless, like a 1916 story about Australia. Underneath photos of two Aboriginal people, the caption reads: "South Australian Blackfellows: These

1. In a full-issue article on Australia that ran in 1916, aboriginal Australians were called "savages" who "rank lowest in intelligence of all human beings."

2. In 1941 *National Geographic* used a slavery-era slur to describe California cotton workers waiting to load a ship in California: "Pickaninny, banjos, and bales are like those you might see at New Orleans."

3. South African gold miners were "entranced by thundering drums" during "vigorous tribal dances," a 1962 issue reported.

4. An article reporting on apartheid South Africa in 1977 shows Winnie Mandela, a founder of the Black Parents' Association and wife of Nelson. She was one of some 150 people the government prohibited from leaving their towns, speaking to the press, and talking to more than two people at a time.

5. "Cards and clay pipes amuse guests in Fairfax House's 18th-century parlor," reads the caption in a 1956 article on Virginia history. Although slave labor built homes featured in the article, the writer contended that they "stand for a chapter of this country's history every American is proud to remember."

6. Photographer Frank Schreider shows men from Timor island his camera in a 1962 issue. The magazine often ran photos of "uncivilized" native people seemingly fascinated by "civilized" Westerners' technology.

# 'People Are Made How They Are'

For 11-year-old twins Marcia and Millie, the differences in their looks have never been an issue.

By Patricia Edmonds

When Amanda Wanklin and Michael Biggs fell in love, they "didn't give a toss" about the challenges they might face as a biracial couple, Amanda says. "What was more important was what we wanted together."

They settled down in Birmingham, England, eager to start a family. On July 3, 2006, Amanda gave birth to fraternal twin girls, and the ecstatic parents gave their daughters intertwined names: One would be Millie Marcia Madge Biggs, the other Marcia Millie Madge Biggs.

From a young age the girls had similar features but very different color schemes. Marcia had light brown hair and fair skin like her English-born mother. Millie had black hair and brown skin like her father, who's of Jamaican descent. "We never worried about it; we just accepted it," Michael says.

"When they were first born," Amanda recalls, "I would be pushing them in the pram, and people would look at me and then look at my one daughter and then look at my other daughter. And then I'd get asked the question: 'Are they twins?'"

"Yes."

"But one's white and one's black."

"Yes. It's genes."

People who commented on the girls weren't openly hostile or judgmental—just very curious, Amanda says. And then "as time went on, people just saw the beauty in them."

The twins know what racism is. "Racism is where somebody judges you by your color and not by your actual self," Millie says. Marcia describes racism as "a negative thing, because it can hurt people's feelings." Both say that they haven't perceived racism when people note the contrast in their looks.

Amanda, who works as a home-care aide, calls Millie and Marcia her "one

in a million" miracle. But it's not that rare that a biracial couple would have fraternal twins who each look more like one parent than the other, says statistical geneticist Alicia Martin. The probability would be different for each couple, depending on their genetics, says Martin, a postdoctoral research fellow at the Broad Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Fraternal twins account for about one in 100 births. When a biracial couple has fraternal twins, the traits that emerge in each child depend on numerous variables, including "where the parents' ancestors are from and complex pigment genetics," Martin says. In addition, research on skin color is further complicated by a history of "study biases that mean we know more about what makes lighter skin light than what makes darker skin dark."

Skin color, she notes, "is not a binary trait" that has only two possibilities. "It's a quantitative trait, and everyone has some gradient on this spectrum."

Michael, who owns an auto-repair business, says he's faced hostility at times because of the color of his skin. He vividly recalls an episode from his youth when a car full of men sped by and shouted slurs at him and his brothers.

"But it's a different time now," Michael says. Neither he nor Amanda has ever witnessed racist behavior toward the girls.

"When people see us, they think that we're just best friends," Marcia says. "When they learn that we're twins, they're kind of shocked because one's black and one's white." But when the twins are asked about their differences, they mention something else entirely. "Millie likes things that are girlie. She likes pink and all of that," Marcia says. "I don't like the color pink; I'm a tomboy. People are made how they are."



Opposite: Michael Biggs sees a clear family resemblance in his twin daughters, Marcia (left) and Millie. "They both have my nose." Above: Even when the twins' mother, Amanda Wanklin (center photo), dressed them alike, there was no mistaking one for the other.

# LIFETIME OF INEQUALITY

Race and ethnicity can shape a person's life from beginning to end. In the U.S., disparities in health, wealth, and access to education among the four major demographic groups—Asian, white, Hispanic, and black—persist and can be compounded over time. For example, blacks and Hispanics earn less than whites and Asians. Low wages often make it harder to finance a child's education. For people without a college degree, upward mobility can be particularly difficult to achieve.

## ○ FINANCES

The child poverty rate for blacks and Hispanics is more than double the rate for whites and Asians. Higher unemployment rates and lower earnings contribute to the gap.

## □ EDUCATION

Hispanics and blacks are less likely than Asians and whites to graduate from high school and attend college. Asians significantly outpace all other groups in college enrollment.

## + HEALTH CARE

Blacks have higher infant mortality and lower life expectancy than the other groups. Yet compared with Hispanics, who have similar diabetes rates, blacks have more health insurance coverage.

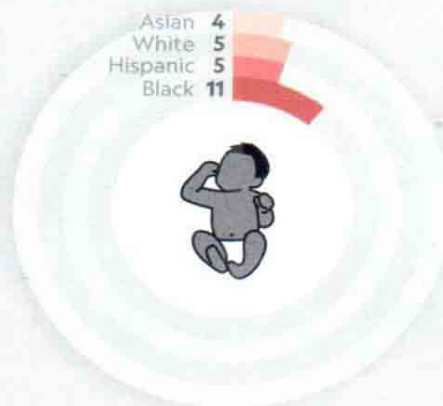
Race categories (white, black, and Asian) exclude people of Hispanic ethnicity. The Hispanic category includes Hispanics of all races.

FIGURES ARE PERCENTAGES UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED.  
MONICA SERRANO, NGM STAFF; KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI

SOURCES: NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS; NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS; U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS; U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; NATIONAL CENTER FOR CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND HEALTH PROMOTION; PEW RESEARCH CENTER; AARP; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

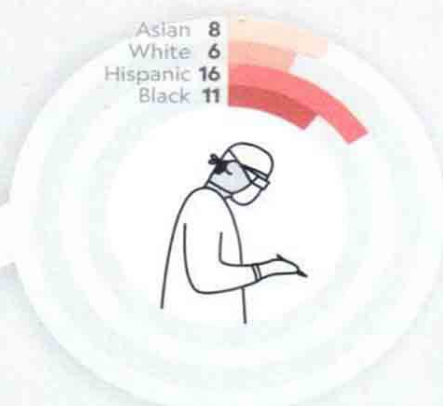
### + RISKY INFANCY

Infant deaths per thousand live births, 2014<sup>1</sup>



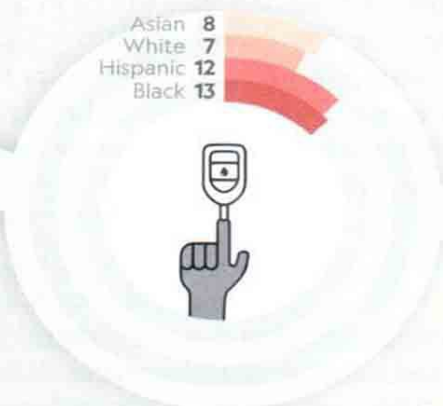
### + LIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE

Uninsured rate, 2016



### + HEALTH STRUGGLES

Prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in adults, 2013-15





## In the first half of the 19th century, one of America's most prominent scientists was a doctor named Samuel Morton. Morton lived in Philadelphia, and he collected skulls.

He wasn't choosy about his suppliers. He accepted skulls scavenged from battlefields and snatched from catacombs. One of his most famous craniums belonged to an Irishman who'd been sent as a convict to Tasmania (and ultimately hanged for killing and eating other convicts). With each skull Morton performed the same procedure: He stuffed it with pepper seeds—later he switched to lead shot—which he then decanted to ascertain the volume of the braincase.

Morton believed that people could be divided into five races and that these represented separate

acts of creation. The races had distinct characters, which corresponded to their place in a divinely determined hierarchy. Morton's "craniometry" showed, he claimed, that whites, or "Caucasians," were the most intelligent of the races. East Asians—Morton used the term "Mongolian"—though "ingenious" and "susceptible of cultivation," were one step down. Next came Southeast Asians, followed by Native Americans. Blacks, or "Ethiopians," were at the bottom. In the decades before the Civil War, Morton's ideas were quickly taken up by the defenders of slavery.



## DNA TESTING

# Forget race. Ancestry is the real story—and it's much more interesting.

32%

Northern  
European

28%

Southern  
European

21%

Sub-Saharan  
African

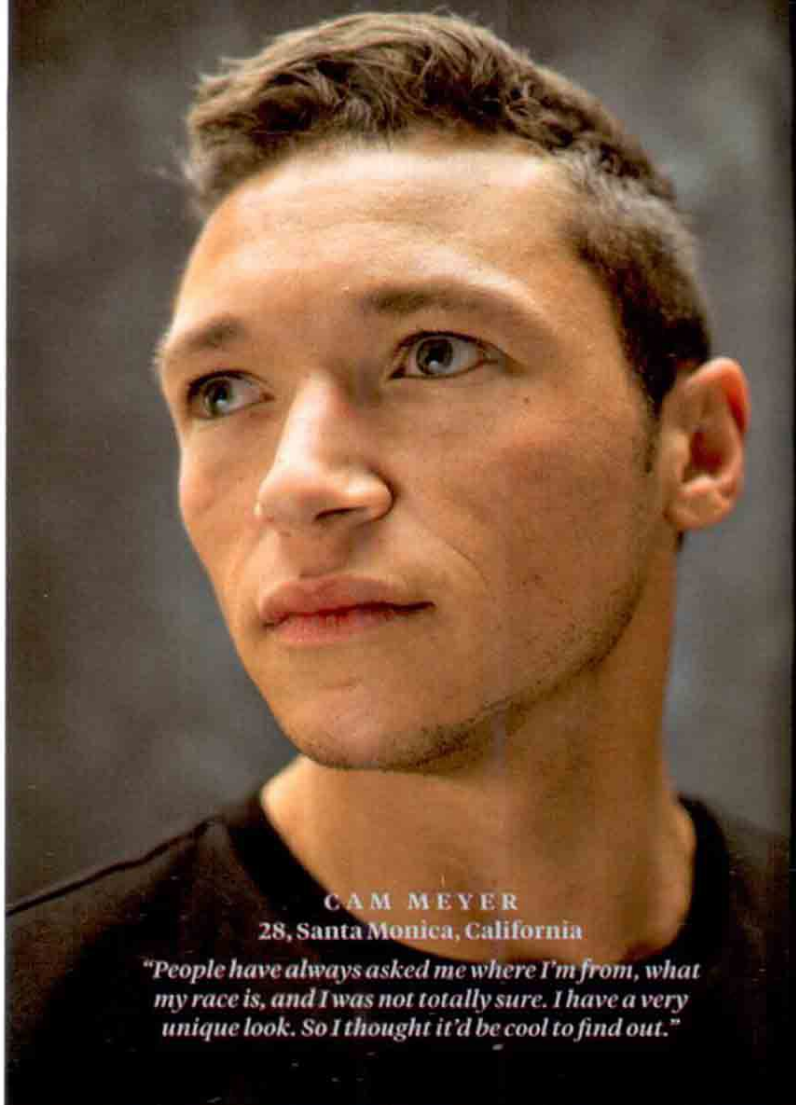
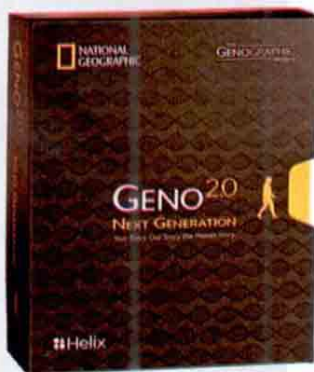
14%

Southwest  
Asian/North  
African

An interest in who begat us goes back at least to the Bible. These days the genealogical impulse is buttressed by modern genetics, which weaves individual stories into the grand migration of humankind. These six people had their DNA tested with National Geographic's kit (see below). The results indicate essentially the same "racial" heritage, in the percentages shown above. But their experiences are unique. Brenda Yurkoski (lower left) knew before the test—which names ancestral populations, not individuals—that her list of ancestors includes Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings, Jefferson's slave and mistress. "It was my fourth great-grandfather who came up with the formula to determine whether you were black or whether you were white in America," she says. "I'm what you would have called a quadroon."

## WHAT'S YOUR ANCESTRY?

The Geno 2.0 DNA Ancestry Kit breaks down a person's ancestry by region, going back to the time when all our ancestors were in Africa. More than 830,000 people have sent in saliva samples. Learn more at [natgeo.com/GenoDNA](http://natgeo.com/GenoDNA).



CAM MEYER

28, Santa Monica, California

*"People have always asked me where I'm from, what my race is, and I was not totally sure. I have a very unique look. So I thought it'd be cool to find out."*



BRENDA YURKOSKI

50, Mineral, Virginia

*"We still identify as African-American. By law, in early America, I would have had to. I could have tried to pass as white. But if anybody knew any different..."*