

Hi. My name is Christopher. I'm seventeen years old. My immediate family and I have moved around a lot, so I've been fortunate enough to experience different cultures within the United States. Texas, Louisiana, and California. But I've also had to deal with many racial issues.

Before I was born, my mother was escaping from domestic violence. She won't tell my sister, brother, or me anything bad about our father. So we never knew that much. I knew at twelve years old that was trying to ram my mother with all of us. She was pregnant with me, my sister was one, and my two older cousins were in the back witnessing everything.

My sister was born in one of the cities by New Orleans. When my sister and I were toddlers, many people thought we were not our mother's children or our father was either white or Hispanic. And because of this, my biological father even denied the fact that we were his. He denied us because we were too light skinned. When she was born, my father said that she wasn't his daughter and he denied I was his son too. My sister, Christina, looked as if she were part Asian, Hispanic, or white. It was the same for me, minus the Asian part. I think I looked like me: beautiful! We ended up taking some DNA and blood tests even though he knew we were his.

Many people didn't think we were my mother's kids either. They thought we were adopted. Some people even said rude and prejudiced things about her. My mother also told me about how some people would say rude remarks about how they believed that we were adopted. If you're a beautiful, educated, black woman with pale children, you couldn't really fit into conventional black stereotypes. I can only imagine how this must have felt: someone telling you that your children were not yours because of the color of their skin.

Racial ambiguity can be seen as good or bad depending on where you lived. Wherever we went we would fit in pretty well because no one knew what we were. In some cases, people would randomly compare us to other races or biracial kids.

SAN ANTONIO

After my mother moved to San Antonio to escape the abuse, I was born. San Antonio is predominantly Mexican and Hispanic. This was pretty cool because we never really had to worry about our race unless someone said or did something. This community accepted us because they were not focused on genealogy or the color of one's skin. But by being adopted by this culture, I also lost a part of my own identity, my family's identity, and my heritage. We were adopted by a culture that wasn't our own. The culture of this city is heavily influenced by Mexican culture. Of course, there isn't anything wrong with that except we had never really been in our own culture. We were able to fit into society better because no one really knew what we "were;" my mother would just say, "black." But many people, including my mother's friend, thought that our father had to be Hispanic or white, even though she saw our father on previous occasions. Her reasoning for this was that her children were both Hispanic and black. The disbelief of some people is one of the reasons my family prefers to be labeled as black. But being black never really crossed my mind.

I never really paid attention to race; the only thing I noticed was how everyone's hair was different. People often tried to touch my hair, unless they were black. In the black community, however, I would overhear people saying, "He has *good* hair." I never understood this. How could anybody have *bad* hair?

NEW ORLEANS

Not long after my eighth birthday, my mother said we were moving to New Orleans, Louisiana so we could get to know our family a bit better. By this point, I had met my father multiple times. But I wanted to get to know him more. I also wanted to spend time with my grandparent. My mother started to save and look for ways to move. I thought it would be pretty cool for us to move, just like the movies. I could say “goodbyes” to the all the people I knew, pack up the car, and have a long drive to our new house. Unfortunately, this was the first time my birthday was forgotten. My mother said she would make it up to me. Even though a part of my family is from New Orleans, I couldn’t fit in at all. The majority of the kids tormented me about how different I was; they knew I wasn’t like them. I carried myself differently. And I thought it was because I didn’t understand the traditions, the society, or the weather.

A few months later, I started to notice the horrors of what being seen as black. It was everywhere: the mass extermination of the black communities of New Orleans. I wasn’t sad. I was confused as to why they would do this. There’s nothing wrong with the black communities. They’re not ugly. Then Katrina hit.

HOUSTON

My mother didn't want us to let anyone know that we were Katrina evacuees so we wouldn't be discriminated against in Houston, Texas. People who were relocated after Katrina were being attacked. My cousin was badly beaten because he's from New Orleans even though he wasn't even an evacuee; he had been living in Houston for some time.

Houston is the place that I found out that I have a mixed ancestry. I first found out that I am partially Native American, particularly, Alaskan Native. I always thought the Native American stuff was pretty cool. My mother told me about how some of my Native blood comes from one of my great-great-grandfathers. Apparently, he was an Indian Chief who came from a long line of chiefs.

I also found out that I am part German and Irish. This was pretty cool except that there wasn't a cool name for people of four different ethnicities. So over time I thought that it was a big deal because of how I thought they were small amounts. No matter how small or large of a percentage, I could never truly be just one race. It was as if I wasn't even pure. My mother had already explained to that I should really tell everyone about his because of how not that many people would believe me. They'd think I was joking or even lying. Most people just thought that I had no idea what I was talking about.

Now I had pride for all of the races that I'm comprised of. And If I were to identify with only one, then it would be as I were losing a part of myself in the process; because each of my ancestors, regardless of their races, had something to do with the making of me. I also thought about how this makes me different from everyone else and that there really is no one else just like me.

LETTER TO A FRIEND

I'm starting to think about not doing this anymore. No else really cares. They don't even try to stop any of this. They just say it's wrong and turn their heads. It's as if the victims of genocide, oppression, slavery, "illegal" immigration, economic insecurity, food insecurity, and terrorism don't matter. They don't even care about their neighbors, the people they interact with on a daily basis. Even the ones who have a voice in the matter complain, but don't even try to stop or prevent this from happening.

They don't care! They don't care! They're hypocrites! And they'd rather blame, prosecute, terrorize, dehumanize, kill, imprison, and hate the few who at least do care. The ones who try to prevent these crimes from happening. It's worse when even they do this to the people who are trying to spread awareness.

They even have the audacity to promote incorrect statistics, theories, lies, stereotypes, and prejudice acts and then say it's not real and it doesn't exist. But for the few who do realize and try to do something about it are quickly ostracized by the public, media, and or society as if it never happened.

It's almost as if the general population is within the peak of genocide. This is when the offenders say, "What are these people doing to themselves? They're killing themselves and each other."

And now, the education system is a joke. It's a sick joke that's the product of skewed thinking that was never really corrected to addressed. Because it doesn't matter about your grades, how "smart" you are, your IQ level, what school you go to, or what state you're in. The public even knows this, and they're doing this to take away the history of the public by erasing everyone's history; just so they can implant a new, fake history that is meaningless. There isn't much information about the genocidal acts that the United States and other countries performed on countless races, cultures, nations, tribes, and countries. The United States has even gone as far as stripping almost all history of genocide, slavery, and oppression from its schools' curricula. The history of genocide against Native Americans, Blacks, and Asian immigrants has been removed from the history books. This information is supposed to help us prevent this from ever happening again.

The general public would rather turn a blind eye or not pay any attention to the laws, bills, acts, policies, and elections that are being taken advantage of by the ones who work for this to continue (or even worsen it).

Even though there are some people who are trying to make a difference, they may not always live to continue their work. In many cases, they're murdered, assassinated, terrorized, kidnapped, or imprisoned.