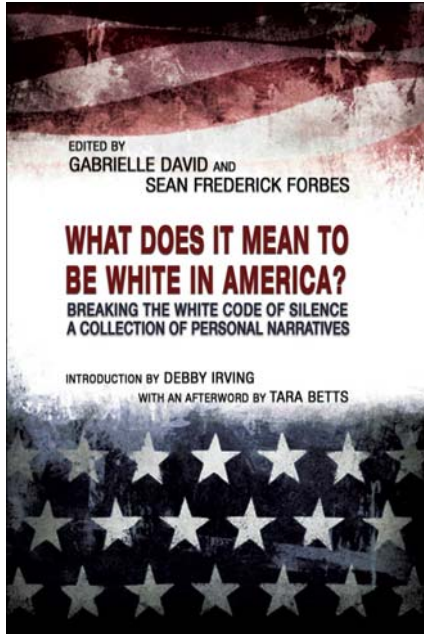


## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WHITE IN AMERICA? Breaking the White Code of Silence A Collection of Personal Narratives



Edited by  
Gabrielle David and  
Sean Frederick Forbes

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Introduction by Debby Irving  
with an Afterword by Tara Betts

Find out more information about  
the contributors at  
[www.whiteinamerica.org](http://www.whiteinamerica.org)  
and join in the conversation about race.

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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WHITE IN AMERICA? BREAKING THE WHITE CODE OF SILENCE, A COLLECTION OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES, is a collection that asks just that. While the literature on “whiteness” has long been dominated by an academic point of view, editors Gabrielle David and Sean Frederick Forbes came to the realization that there was an unmet need for an anthology of personal narratives about race and culture from the perspective of white Americans. In this conception process, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WHITE IN AMERICA? was born.

The first of its kind, this collection of 82 personal narratives reflects a vibrant range of stories from white Americans who speak frankly and openly about race, not only as it applies to people of color, but as it applies to themselves. The stories cover a wide gamut of American history from contributors around the United States; from reminiscing about segregation and Jim Crow, to today’s headlines of police brutality, politics and #BlackLivesMatter. The variety in style and subject is enormous from people of different class and employment backgrounds, but all of these stories have one point in common—they create an absorbing and thought-provoking collection that explores race from a very personal perspective. In the telling, not only do contributors discuss their discomfort in talking about race, they also share big and small moments in their lives that have shaped what it means to be white in America, and how it affects the way they see themselves and others. In answering the question, some may offer viewpoints one may not necessarily agree with, but nevertheless, it is clear that each contributor is committed to answering it as honestly as possible.

With an introduction by racial justice educator and writer, Debby Irving, and an afterword by award-winning poet, author and scholar, Tara Betts, the purpose of WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WHITE IN AMERICA? is to, as Irving points out in her introduction, “break the code of silence” so that we can engage in frank conversations about race. An invaluable starting point that includes a glossary and a bibliography of suggested reading, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE WHITE IN AMERICA? is highly recommended for students, teachers and anyone else interested in seeking a deeper and richer understanding of race in America.

### About the Editors

GABRIELLE DAVID is a multidisciplinary artist who is a musician, photographer, digital designer, poet and writer. She is the executive director of the Intercultural Alliance of Artists & Scholars, Inc. (IAAS), a NY-based nonprofit which she co-founded in 2000, and has served as its Executive Director since its inception. She is also the publisher of the organization’s imprint, 2Leaf Press.

SEAN FREDERICK FORBES is a professor, scholar and the author of *PROVIDENCIA: A BOOK OF POEMS* (2013). His work has appeared in numerous journals and publications. Forbes is the director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Connecticut, and teaches creative writing and poetry.

DEBBY IRVING is a racial justice educator and the author of the acclaimed book, *Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race* (2014). She has participated at conferences such as The White Privilege Conference, NCORE, the National Summit for Courageous Conversation, and the People of Color Conference, and has appeared on numerous television and radio programs throughout the country, notably MSNBC and TEDx Talk.

TARA BETTS, an award-winning poet, author and scholar, is currently a professor at University of Illinois. Her work has appeared in numerous publications, journals and anthologies, and she is the author of *Arc and Hue* (2009) and the libretto *The Greatest: An Homage To Muhammad Ali* (2010).

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