

Booklist

Advanced Review – Uncorrected Proof

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The White Bonus: Five Families and the Cash Value of Racism in America.

By Tracie McMillan

Apr. 2024. 464p. Holt, \$32.99 (9781250619426); e-book (9781250619402). 305.8

McMillan's (*The American Way of Eating*, 2012) family, like many white families, long told a tale of their own history that relied heavily on thrift, good sense, and self-determination. Race did not feature. In *The White Bonus*, McMillan uncovers the myriad ways in which she and her family benefited socially and financially from their whiteness. These benefits included access to credit, educational and job opportunities, and financial support from older generations. McMillan does not flinch from the uncomfortable elements of her family's history, including her grandparents' open racism, her father's physical abuse, and her years of financial precarity. She also shares the stories of other white Americans, whose suffering—while real and painful—is nonetheless alleviated by their whiteness. In an appendix, McMillan tallies up the dollars-and-cents value of the “white bonus” she and the others profiled in her book have received, emphasizing that these calculations represent the bare minimum amount of financial benefit she and her subjects received. It all results in a fresh, urgent new look at the mechanisms of racism in America.

— *Jenny Hamilton*