

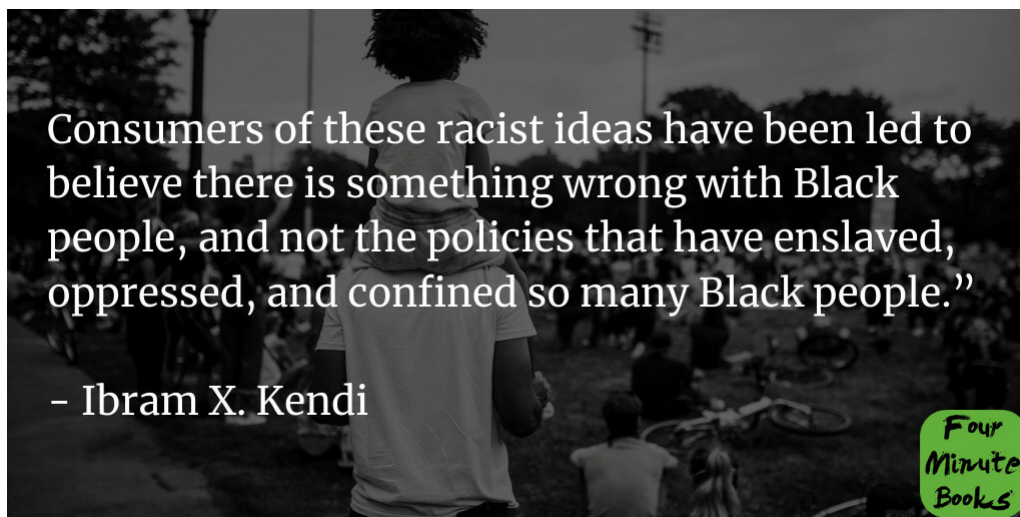
# Stamped From The Beginning Summary



**1-Sentence-Summary:** *Stamped From The Beginning* will open your mind to the true origins of racism by challenging your long-held beliefs about it that have been perpetrated by racists throughout history.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



When Barack Obama became president of the United States in 2008, many people excitedly speculated that it could be the end of racial discrimination in America. If only it were that easy. Racial discrimination didn't end with slavery or the civil rights movement. And it certainly wasn't over with the election of the first black president.

The truth is, racism is so deeply ingrained into American society that it will take more than a black president to solve hundreds of years of oppression.

Today we are seeing more progress as we put a spotlight on problems such as police brutality against black people and institutional racism. Movies like *I am Not Your Negro* and *The 13th* give a powerful look into what it is to be black in America.

In his book, *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*, scholar Ibram X. Kendi gives a compelling examination of the history of modern racism in the United States. He uncovers where the deeply ingrained racist ideas began and how they spread.

Here are the 3 of the most helpful lessons I got out of this book:

1. Racism is hard to beat in part because of past political candidates designing their campaigns and running their administrations to appeal to racists.
2. Most of the statistics around black people are incorrect.
3. The idea that black people need to take on more personal responsibility is racist.

Are you ready for a new look at this disgusting problem? Let's get right into it!

## **Lesson 1: Politicians of the past have sneakily designed their campaigns to appeal to racists.**

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When Richard Nixon ran for president in 1968, he faced an interesting question. How could he appeal to racist voters without sounding explicitly racist himself? He needed their vote, but certainly wouldn't be elected if he was openly racist. His campaign strategy was to appeal to racists in sneaky ways. And that included not using labels such as "black" and "white."

This way he could secure the vote of the large population of what he called "nonracist racists." These were the people who weren't obvious in their racist beliefs, such as people who considered black schools inferior to white ones. Usually, these people wouldn't see any problem with their ideas and not realize they had racist tendencies.

**He was able to appeal to these voters through ads displaying the Civil Rights protest and reassuring them by saying, "I pledge to you, we shall have order in the United States."** This strategy was extremely effective and soon won him the presidency.

In 1976, Ronald Reagan employed the same strategy to appeal to those who weren't blatantly racist. He used the story of Linda Taylor to link black people who received welfare to criminal activity. Taylor was a black Chicago woman who committed welfare fraud and received \$8,000. Though it was a rare crime, Reagan held her up as a typical example and often exaggerated the amount she was paid fraudulently.

## **Lesson 2: Don't trust every statistic you hear about black people or neighborhoods.**

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If you were to look into some of the statistics about the safety of black neighborhoods, you might believe they are more dangerous. But these statistics sadly do not come without bias.

For one, if you were just to look at police arrests, you would indeed see more in black neighborhoods. However, this may be the result of an increased police presence in the area due to perceived crime, resulting in more arrests.

This brings to light the ongoing problem of discrimination in the way we show certain statistics.

Take violent crime for comparison. **Drunk drivers kill far more people than “urban black violence.”** But for some reason, we don’t count drunk driving as violent crime. It might have to do with the fact that 78 percent of drunk driving arrests in 1990 were white.

In fact, drunk driving kills even more people a year than cocaine. The bottom line here is that you are far more likely to die on suburban American roads than in inner-city violence, even if statistics want you to think otherwise.

### **Lesson 3: You are a racist if you think that black people’s struggles are their own fault.**

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Sadly, blaming a victim was a far too often occurrence in the ’90s, and still happens today. People were frequently given the message that poor people are poor because they were lazy or unmotivated.

The author explains there were two main types of racists in the ’90s. The *assimilators* acknowledge that racism is a contributing factor in blacks’ problems, but believe they are still to blame for their struggles as well. The second group is the *segregationists*, who believe blacks are solely to blame for their troubles.

**Both of these would agree the disproportionate number of black moms who are single is the result of black women being more promiscuous.** Assimilators would add that they could learn to be more sexually disciplined like white women.

Segregationists, however, would say that the country should sterilize black women or that they should receive a long term contraceptive called Norplant.

This racist rationale was even used in the campaign of Louisiana governor David Duke. He said Norplant should be used to reduce the number of black welfare recipients. This thinking extended into congress, who labeled these racist ideas as “personal responsibility.”

Republican-led Congress made great efforts in the ’90s to limit welfare assistance. They believed that blacks should be more responsible for their socioeconomic situation. President Clinton showed his support for these ideas and signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), which set new limits on welfare. This was supposedly to give people more of an incentive to gain employment.

But just like we’ve talked about, it was just another way to promote racist ideas.

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## **Stamped From The Beginning Review**

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Wow, this book blew my mind. I had no idea that racism is so well hidden within so many aspects of our society! *Stamped From The Beginning* is an important eye-opener and a must-read for everyone if we want to end racism.

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## **Who would I recommend the Stamped From The Beginning summary to?**

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The 21-year-old who is studying political science in college, the 61-year-old white man who still thinks black people are inherently lazy, and anyone who wants to learn why racism is wrong and what we might do to stop it.

Our Rating:

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