



Morgen White (left) and her sperm donor, Ryan Johnson, in eastern Washington.  
CREDIT: COURTESY OF LIZA WHITE

## My mom found a sperm donor. 16 years later, he accidentally found us

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BY MORGEN WHITE

All my life, the only thing I knew about my biological father was his number: sperm donor 893.

Recently, we found each other through a genetic testing site, making me wonder if a stranger could become family.

After years of wanting a baby, my mom made the decision to have a child alone, using a sperm donor.

She had hundreds of donors to choose from. She wanted to choose someone who would be open to meeting me when I was older. She finally selected Donor 893.

She liked the way he answered the essay questions.

“It was the type of thing I could hand to you later on in life, even if you never met your donor,” my mom told me, “and still have you feel good about the fact that that’s where half of you came from.”



Liza White, Morgen's mother, holds the ultrasound from her pregnancy with Morgen.

**CREDIT: KUOW PHOTO/MORGEN WHITE**

As a little kid growing up in a single-parent household, I didn't understand why my family was different from everyone else's.

"I remember you came home one time saying that somebody couldn't have a baby because she needed to have a man," my mom said. "And it blew my mind that you would come home with such a standard, heteronormative view on the world."

As I grew older, other kids would ask me why I didn't have a dad. I didn't feel like I was missing out on anything, but sometimes I made up stories to avoid their questions.

One time I told a friend my dad was captured and killed by pirates.

I didn't grow up with a dad, but I did grow up with half siblings.

The Donor Sibling Registry connects families who use the same donor, so I've known about most of my half siblings since I was two.

We all live in different places, but we keep in touch over social media and in a group chat called, "Club 893."

Last January, things changed for our group. The genetic testing site 23andMe matched some of us with Donor 893.

Casey Duncan, the mom of one of my half brothers, remembers the day they found out. Donor 893 messaged my half brother on 23andMe and introduced himself as his biological father.

"He got the email," Casey said, "and he's like, 'Look at this, what do I do?' We just stared at each other. What do you do? I don't know! Do we answer him, do we not answer him?"

"We went ahead and answered him."

Technically, the sperm bank prohibits this kind of contact. But 23andMe let the cat out of the bag.

Eventually, our whole group of half siblings got connected with Donor 893, who we now know as Ryan Johnson.

A few months ago, Ryan asked all of us kids and our parents if we wanted to meet in person. We said yes.



Morgen White (second from left) with her half sisters. They stood in a line as their parents gawked at the similarities.

**CREDIT: KUOW PHOTO/LIZA WHITE**

On the day we met each other, my half siblings and I walked into Ryan's family's cabin.

Ryan walked down the stairs slowly with a big grin on his face.

I was shocked, and I didn't know what to do with myself. We hugged, and he introduced me to his wife and their kids.

Meeting Ryan was a surreal experience. I had been playing this moment out in my head for almost my whole life. I was afraid he wouldn't like me, or I wouldn't like him.

But when I walked in, I saw a big guy with dark brown hair and blue eyes.

He gave me a bear hug, and I felt an overwhelming sense of warmth and love. We played air hockey and realized we have the same goofy competitive streak. It was a better experience than I ever imagined.

I asked Ryan to read me the essay question answers he wrote nineteen years ago, the ones that convinced my mom to choose him.

“Children are the greatest gift any of us could receive, and/or give,” Ryan read. “I hope you cherish every moment, good or bad. Best wishes to your journey through life, and congratulations.”

I’m excited to continue a relationship with my bio dad and my new family.

But that doesn’t change the fact that I am the person I am today because of my mom, the parent who raised me.

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