

“Is There Another Me? How Online DNA Websites are Helping Adoptees Learn About Their History and Connect with Relatives”

April 4, 2023
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DNA testing, including through websites such as [23andme.com](https://www.23andme.com), has become increasingly popular in recent years for individuals to obtain comprehensive ancestry breakdown, personalized health insights and more. 23 and Me is one of the programs that offers DNA testing through collection of saliva, to test both health and ancestry. Results include insights into health predispositions, carrier status, wellness, and ancestry composition, including tools to enable an individual to connect with relatives who share similar DNA. These testing programs were not always available, and in prior years, adopted individuals had no means by which they could obtain essential information such as medical background and genetic history.

The documentary, *Three Identical Strangers* depicts the story of three identical triplets reuniting in 1980, simply by happenstance. Robert Shafran was beginning his sophomore year of college when students on campus began referring to him as “Eddy.” After lots of confusion and discussion with those referring to him as “Eddy,” Robert discovered he had an identical twin brother, Edward Galland. When local news outlets began publishing this story, photographs of Eddy and Bobby caught people’s attention, including a woman who recognized her friend David Kellman, identical brother number three.

However, what starts as a fairytale story quickly turns dark, depicting the struggle of adoptees and the lack of information they have as to their physical and psychological background.

In 1995, after a long struggle with mental illness (specifically, manic depression), Eddy committed suicide. As their story continues to unfold throughout this documentary, viewers learn that the triplets’ biological mother suffered immensely from mental health challenges, something that they would have been aware of had they received any information on their birth mother and their biological background.

Bobby and David have since pursued the unsealing of their adoption records, but, due to confidentiality laws, access to these records is extremely limited, with a high threshold showing required to obtain even the most minimal, basic information. This film, which was released nationwide on July 13, 2018, left a lot of lingering questions surrounding psychology, science, legislation, and adoptees’ rights.

Stay tuned in the coming weeks for more on state-specific laws and legislation for change. For more information on *Three Identical Strangers*, please visit [Three Identical Strangers Trailer - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3H0R3333333)