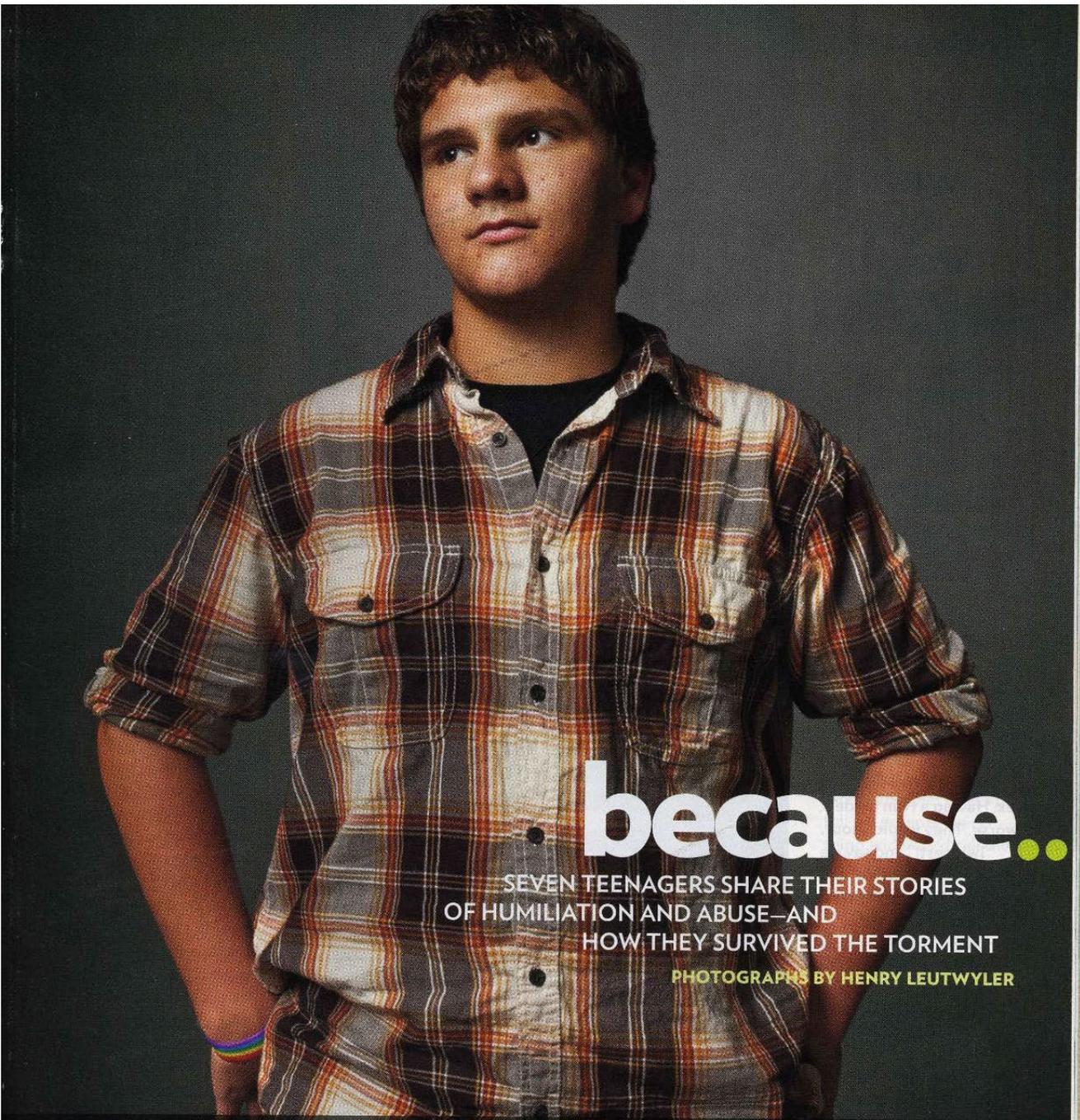


“I Was Bullied Because...”

Read the following article from People Magazine about students who were bullied for a variety of reasons. Then complete the “I Was Bullied Because...” worksheet.





because..

SEVEN TEENAGERS SHARE THEIR STORIES
OF HUMILIATION AND ABUSE—AND
HOW THEY SURVIVED THE TORMENT

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY LEUTWYLER

...I am gay

JOEY KEMMERLING, 16

New Year's Eve of eighth grade, a friend told me his uncle was gay. I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "He has relationships with men." I was just, like, "Well, that's who I am." The next day I got to school and everyone knew. Kids were snickering and pointing at me. In the locker room everyone turned and looked at me. The boy who changed

next to me grabbed his stuff and said, "I don't want you checking me out." I began to dread school. One school staffer said to me, "Could you be a little less gay?" In high school the next year, a kid with a knife told me, "Your life is in my hands." I started having nightmares, gained weight, thought of taking my life. Instead, I decided to change schools and help other kids who are gay. This is not a crazy story; this happens all the time.

...we are overweight

ALEX AND PHILIPPE HAUSSMANN, 15

Alex: It started in kindergarten with one or two people. I'd be playing with blocks and they'd knock down the tower, or they wouldn't share their blocks.

Then it spread to whole groups of people who make sure you're left out. In middle school, one teacher always assigned me to sit with a group of kids she knew hated me. They moved my desk into the corner and said, "Nobody wants to be with you, Alex."

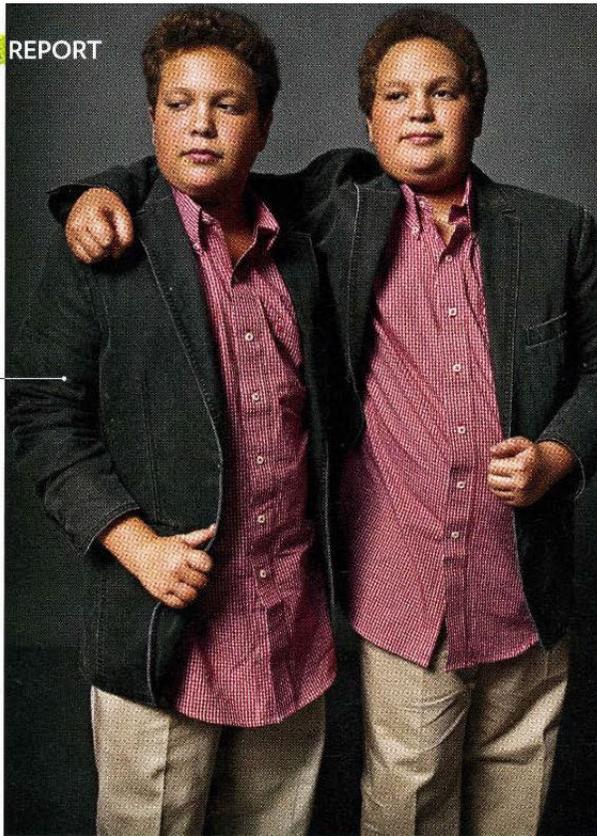
Philippe: When I was 13, a kid tripped me in gym class. It broke my foot.

Alex: Having a twin made it worse. They would shout, "Twincest!" and say we have sex with each other.

Philippe: You can't show a reaction, even a waver in your voice. They'll feed off that. You have to kind of feel bad for them.

They need to feed off your sadness to be happy.

"I used to have a thin skin. You get over it in time, and just grow a thicker one" —ALEX



...I am biracial

MORIAH KILGORE, 15

When I was about 7, I told some girls that my mom was white and my father was black. One girl said, "You do know that is illegal, and your parents are going to jail." It made me confused and sad. At the time, I lived in rural Minnesota. Most of the kids had straight blond hair. My hair was brown and very curly. A boy nicknamed me Miss Black. In fourth grade we moved to Roseville, where there are all different kinds of people. I made friends right away. But then there was girl-drama that made me feel I was ugly and a loser. I wanted to fit in with the white people but couldn't because I was black, and I wanted to fit in with the black people but couldn't because I was white. In eighth grade, black girls would say, "Oh, she has nappy hair," and laugh. Now I have more confidence. I got dreadlocks, and I like them. And I am comfortable in my own skin. I'd rather be my own person than be like 400 people who are all the same.

...I am Muslim

KHOSHNOOR PARACHA, 17

The year I moved to the United States, the kids in my eighth grade class called me a terrorist and told me to go back to Pakistan. In the locker room, they treated me like I would blow up at any minute. When they would say, "You're Pakistani, they are really, really bad," I'd say, like, "Okay, that's what I am, but when you call me a terrorist, it hurts."

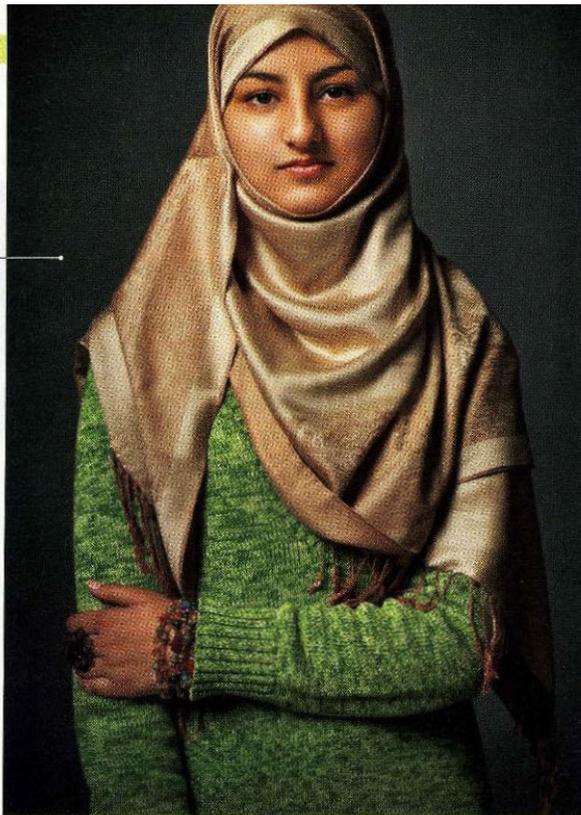
That whole year, I sat alone during lunch. People threw paper balls at me, pushed me, took my food. The teachers didn't pay attention.

High school is much better. My school is very diverse, and I'm more confident. No one calls me a terrorist. Still, things happen. At the bus stop, a scary-looking man pushed me down.

No one stopped him. And a few weeks ago a woman walked by me in a store and said, "Oh my God, it smells."

"I thought if my mom went to the school it would get worse. I was new here"

Jill Smolowe. Reported by Steve Helling, Daniel S. Levy and Diane Herbst



...just because

JAMIE ISAACS, 14

Not long after my eighth birthday, a close friend who used to come over to my house almost every day started saying, "Oh, you're rich, you're rich." That same girl stabbed me with pencils, tripped me, hit me in the face with her backpack. She recruited other girls. I'd tell my parents everything and they'd call the principal. When it got really bad, the school decided to remove me from the bus. In fifth grade a clique of girls IM'd me death threats. Later that same ring-leader started an "I Hate Jamie" club. Kids threw food at me, yelled things at me, broke into my locker 14 times and ripped my stuff. I ended up speaking at a public hearing in Suffolk County about bullying because I thought that enough is enough. The private school I go to now doesn't tolerate bullying. I am extremely happy.

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