(San Francisco, CA) - What if we suddenly discovered that our most basic assumption about race - for instance, that the world's people can be divided biologically along racial lines - was false? And if race is a biological "myth," where did the idea come from? How do our institutions give race social meaning and power by advantaging white people?

These are just a few of the questions raised by Race - The Power of an Illusion, California Newsreel's provocative new PBS series produced in association with ITVS. It is the first documentary series to scrutinize the very idea of race through the distinct lenses of science, history and our social institutions. The series is narrated by CCH Pounder (The Shield). By asking, "What is this thing called 'race'?" a question so basic it is rarely raised, Race - The Power of an Illusion challenges some of our most deeply held beliefs.

Ethnic cleansing, affirmative action battles, immigration restrictions - all place race at center stage in contemporary life. Race is so fundamental to discussions of poverty, education, crime, music, and sports that, whether we are racist or anti-racist, we rarely question its reality.

Yet recent scientific evidence suggests that the idea of race is a biological myth, as outdated as the widely held medieval belief that the sun revolved around the earth. Anthropologists, biologists and geneticists have increasingly found that, biologically speaking; there is no such thing as "race." Modern science is decoding the genetic puzzle of DNA and human variation - and finding that skin color really is only skin deep.

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However invalid race is biologically, it has been deeply woven into the fabric of American life. Race - The Power of an Illusion examines why and how in three one-hour installments. Episode 1: "The Difference Between Us," surveys the scientific findings - including genetics - that suggest that the concept of race has no biological basis. Episode 2: "The Story We Tell," provides the historical context for race in North America, including when and how the idea got started and why it took such a hold over our minds. Episode 3: "The House We Live In," spotlights how our social institutions "make" race by providing different groups vastly different life chances even today, 40 years after the Civil Rights Act.

For additional information or to order a copy, please visit the California Newsreel website at http://www.newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0149