



# Where Did HIV Come From?

December 1, 1999

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The August discovery that the frozen body of a 15-year-old male prostitute who died of Kaposi's sarcoma at St. Louis City Hospital in 1969 was infected with a strain of HIV pushed back the nation's first recorded AIDS case by a decade. St. Louis peer educator Tshepiso Matlapeng, 19, asked her contemporaries for their theories about HIV's origins.

## **Lachelle Petty**

18, student

*"It came from a small STD and was able to be cured. But it grew stronger and now can't be cured."*

## **Josh Stanley**

16, student

*"My fifth-grade teacher told us some African tribespeople ran around having sex with monkeys. It sounds like crap to me, but that's all I've ever heard about the origin."*

## **Miraida Riley**

17, student

*"Maybe it came from some wild plant."*

## **Kamechia May**

18, student

*"We first heard about it in the gay community. So where did they get it from?"*

## **Larry McDonald**

18, sales associate

*"The government."*

## **Miguel Candelaria**

18, student

*"From scientists having too much time on their hands—mixing chemicals and fucking up."*

## **Marttise Hill**

12, student

*"Monkeys. Wait...yeah, monkeys!"*

## **Sheila Hudson**

18, “student of life”

*“I don’t know, but it needs to be handled because I have friends suffering from it.”*

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