

ON THE COVER: In every corner of America, we are redefining race as we know it. The old labels of black and white can't begin to capture the subtleties of blood and identity. In a Special Report, NEWSWEEK tells the stories of the people on the front lines, from the suburbs of the South to the plants of the Midwest to the start-ups of Silicon Valley. INSIDE THE TIRE WARS: As tensions mount between Firestone and Ford, documents obtained by NEWSWEEK suggest the tiremaker may have known about the flaws in 1998. Plus: Bill Ford Jr. says his company's taken 'a heck of a hit.' PLUNGING AHEAD FOR THE GOLD: Get ready for the 'Thorpedo'—Ian Thorpe, Australia's bright hope in the pools of Sydney.

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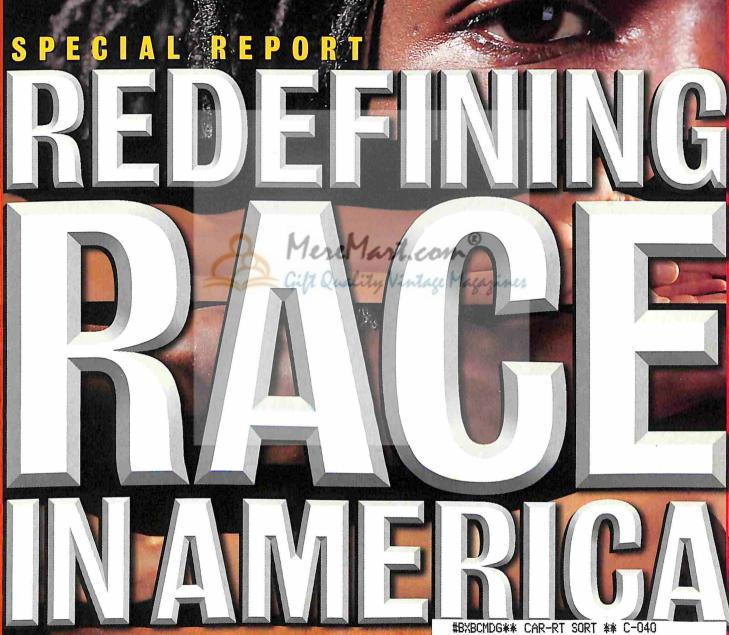
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