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A 300 Millionth American. Don't Ask Who.

By **SAM ROBERTS**

Yesterday was the birthday of the daredevil Evel Knievel, the actress Margot Kidder and the columnist Jimmy Breslin, and also of Emanuel Plata in Queens, Zoë Emille Hudson in Manhattan, Kiyah Lanaé Boyd in Atlanta and any number of other newborns who just may be the 300 millionth American.

The babies were born at or about 7:46 a.m. Eastern time, when, the [Census Bureau](#) estimates, the nation's population reached that milestone.

Theoretically, the 300 millionth American may have arrived at an airport from overseas at that hour, or been smuggled before dawn across an unguarded section of the Southwestern border. Still, hospital publicists and proud new parents were left to stake their claims to the title.

In Queens, the nation's most diverse county, Emanuel Plata weighed in at 6 pounds 15 ounces at Elmhurst Hospital Center, where he was all but indistinguishable from the 4,400 other infants born there each year except for a tiny white cap, provided by hospital officials, that proclaimed in blue letters, "America's 300 millionth baby."

His mother, Gricelda Plata, 22, was draped in an oversized T-shirt that announced, "I delivered America's 300 millionth baby." She and the boy's father, Armando Jimenez, 25, a cook who works in Forest Hills, are immigrants from Puebla, Mexico, and live in East New York, Brooklyn.

Asked by reporters whether he considered himself lucky to be the father of a celebrity, Mr. Jimenez replied: "My baby is healthy. My wife is fine. What more luck do I want?"

At [New York-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell](#) Hospital in Manhattan, Zoë Hudson was born, the daughter of native New Yorkers. Zoë's father, Garvin, 29, an investment banker, is the son of a couple from Jamaica, and her mother, Maria Diaz, 28, a teacher in Harlem, is of Puerto Rican and Dominican heritage.

“We’re Hispanic, and we celebrate so many different holidays,” said Zoë’s maternal grandmother, Rosemary Garcia, “but also the American holidays. But how do you celebrate being the 300 millionth American born in a family of Hispanics, Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, Dominicans? It’s just so Americanized.”

Informed that Elmhurst Hospital Center was also laying claim to having the 300 millionth American, Dr. Herbert Pardes, the president of New York-Presbyterian, said, “We’ll get them together for a play date.”

Just as Life magazine did in 1967 with the 200 millionth American, local and national news outlets nominated their own 300 millionth. In Atlanta, Kiyah Boyd of Mableton, Ga., was welcomed by a crew from “Good Morning America.” Kiyah’s father, Kristopher Boyd, 28, is in the Navy and had been stationed in Bahrain, but came home on leave to join his wife, Keisha, also 28, whom he met in the service. Both are American-born.

In San Francisco, Kevin McCormack, a spokesman for California Pacific Medical Center, described an Asian-American baby born at 4:42 a.m. local time as in the running. “Well, we don’t know if it’s the 300 millionth,” Mr. McCormack acknowledged, “but we know it’s close, within four minutes.”

At the Census Bureau headquarters in Suitland, Md., a crowd broke into cheers at 7:46 when the digital population clock — calculating that an American is born every 7 seconds, one dies every 13 seconds and the nation gains an immigrant from abroad every 31 seconds — flashed 300,000,000.

The United States is now one of three countries with more than 300 million people, ranking behind China and India. (The Soviet Union had nearly 300 million before it dissolved.) In contrast to most other industrialized nations, America has a population that is still growing, propelled by [immigration](#) and higher fertility rates.

Statistically, demographers generally agreed, the person who pushed the national population to 300 million was most likely a Hispanic boy in the Southwest.

“I’m still going with the Latino baby boy in Los Angeles,” said William H. Frey, a demographer with the [Brookings Institution](#). “This is a symbol of where we’re heading: the new American melting pot.”

Strictly speaking, of course, the 300 millionth American arrived long ago. According to Carl Haub, a senior demographer with the nonprofit Population Reference Bureau, since 1790 as many as 550 million people have lived in the United States.

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