



## **Eben Kirksey**

### **Topics**

Culture and Society, Environment and Sustainability, Health and Wellness, Science and Technology

### **Travels From**

Maryland

### **Bio**

Eben has an insatiable curiosity about nature and culture. Investigating some of the most important stories of our time—related to biotechnology, the environment, and social justice—led him to Asia, the Pacific, and the Americas. His stories about science and justice have the power to shape the future. When controversy broke about the world's first genetically modified babies, Eben spoke about ethics from the main stage of the International Summit on Human Genome Editing in Hong Kong. Over 1.8 million people watched the news unfold from the Summit in real-time, as Dr. Jiankui He revealed the details of his CRISPR experiment. After the dust settled, Eben traveled to mainland China where he secured insider access to Dr. He's laboratory. Profit-driven medical enterprises were pushing CRISPR into reproductive clinics. Hope is a central theme that runs through Eben's stories. His latest book explores how the fragile hopes of patients—people who dream of curing chronic illnesses with gene editing—have inspired scientists and biotechnology companies to do better research. As elements of science fiction start to arrive in reality, we need to anticipate the near future by asking: What are the

creative and democratic potentials of gene editing with CRISPR? Eben Kirksey is an American anthropologist and Member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He has been published in *Wired*, *The Atlantic*, *The Guardian*, and *The Sunday Times* of London, as well as leading academic journals. He has written earlier books about human rights, the environment, and art. Professor Kirksey holds a long-term position at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia.

## SPEECHES

**Revisiting 8th Grade Civics** A new era of scientific inquiry has emerged with CRISPR gene editing. What does this mean for the future of the human species? Tour the scenes of recent genetic engineering misadventures—from a backyard shack in rural Mississippi to a cutting-edge laboratory in China. Find out about the future of genetic inequality and innovation.

**Hope for a Cure** Patients have become activists who are pushing the frontiers of genetic medicine. Moral pioneers, who volunteered to become the world's first genetically modified people, have opened up new horizons of hope for other patients. Cures for cancer and HIV are in sight. But, now a new struggle for science and justice is emerging: the price tag of approved gene therapies has ushered in a new era of medical inequality.

**Saving Frogs from a Pandemic** Decades before a coronavirus brought human activity to a standstill, a fungal disease swept across the planet—driving frogs extinct. Global commerce spread this deadly fungus around the world. As we reopen the economy, can we learn from past mistakes to safeguard endangered animals?

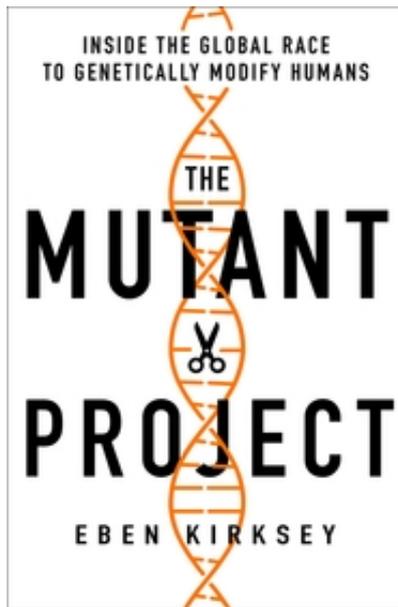
**Wild Monkeys in Florida?** Hundreds of monkeys are on the loose in Florida, rumored to have escaped from the filming of *Tarzan the Ape Man* in 1932. State officials tried to eradicate the rogue primates, while animal activists came to their defense. Tales about the wild antics of these fugitives speak to serious questions. Who belongs in ecological communities? When should animals be left to roam free? How much of the environment can we control?

## BOOKS

[The Mutant Project](#) Inside the Global Race to Genetically Modify Humans

St. Martin's Press

An anthropologist visits the frontiers of genetics, medicine, and technology to ask: Whose values are



guiding gene editing experiments? And what does this new era of scientific inquiry mean for the future of the human species?

Hardcover

REVIEWS: "[Eben Kirksey] will inspire, entertain, and challenge." - University of Cambridge

From Princeton University:

"Eben was incredible—one of the best professors that I have had at Princeton."

"HE IS AMAZING!"

"Eben is the best. Highest quality seminar in which I've ever participated."

**Praise for *The Mutant Project*** "Kirksey is not afraid to venture into the unknown. Whether it is the microscopic realm of CRISPR or the fast-mutating milieu that is Shenzhen, China, he plunges into it with courage, care, and most importantly, a sense of wonder. The biological, financial, legal, and ethical entanglements that bind scientists, entrepreneurs, investors, governments, hackers, artists, journalists, patients, and parents together are as unsettling as they are generative. Taking us through this deeply moving journey filled with unexpected twists and turns, Kirksey shows us that it is possible to imagine, even create, a world more livable than the one we inhabit. Such an inspiring book!"

—Fan Yang, author of *Faked in China*

"The issues currently raised by CRISPR and the potential genetic engineering of humans may seem incredibly new, but in fact they are the oldest of all - what it means to be human, and what our relationship is with technology. From the domestication of fire to the smartphone, humans as a species cannot exist without our technologies. In this thought-provoking and well-researched book, Eben Kirksey wrestles anew with this oldest of questions - there are no easy answers, but the journey could change your life."

—Mark Lynas, author of *Seeds of Science: We We Got it So Wrong on GMOs*

"*The Mutant Project* is an engaging, lively and well-written account of recent advances in gene editing

technologies in humans. Eben Kirksey provides a fascinating tour of the world behind the headlines, illuminating the science, politics, personalities, money and moral challenges involved."

—Robert Klitzman, MD, Director of Masters of Bioethics Program, Columbia University, and author of *Designing Babies: How Technology is Changing the Ways We Create Children*