



Off And Running

A film by Nicole Oppen



POV

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LETTER FROM THE FILMMAKER

For the last nine years, I have been teaching filmmaking to young people part-time, and Avery was a student in my very first class. Back then she was an impossible student and I was a terrible teacher, yet she charmed me immediately. I wanted to know more about this bright, mischievous young woman who had a smile and a warm embrace for everyone who crossed her path. I also wondered what it was like for her to be one of the only African-American students at school. Was she proud to be unique, as her brother Rafi had once said he was? Or was she, at such a tender age, pressured to be the ambassador for her race?

My curiosity only grew when I finally met her family — two white Jewish moms — and, in addition to Rafi — who is Puerto Rican and black — a younger Korean brother named Zay-Zay. As a gay woman who has always been interested in adoption, I saw myself in this family, and I knew that with increasing numbers of Americans identifying as multiracial or multicultural, this family's story was more relevant than ever. Six years later — when I felt up to the task and Avery was old enough to express the nuanced and complex experience that is her life — we began the work of making this film together.

I wasn't prepared for the complete meltdown that Avery had halfway through filming. She moved out of her parents' house and stopped returning calls, and I feared for her safety. When I did manage to reconnect with her, we made a pact: We had started this project together and we would finish it together. I started inviting Avery over to watch and respond to scenes as we were cutting them. This was her story, and it was important that she feel ownership of the process. When nothing seemed to make sense, we began writing exercises to give us both perspective, and much of the resulting material ended up in the film. We were back to our relationship in its root form — teacher and student — but this time we shared both roles; they became interchangeable and will remain so, long after this film is out in the world. Young people are no longer simply consumers of media; they are its creators. And Avery, with incredible honesty and grace, has given us a perfect example of how we can all influence the direction media culture takes tomorrow.



Filmmaker Nicole Opper.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

Nicole Opper

Filmmaker, **Off and Running**



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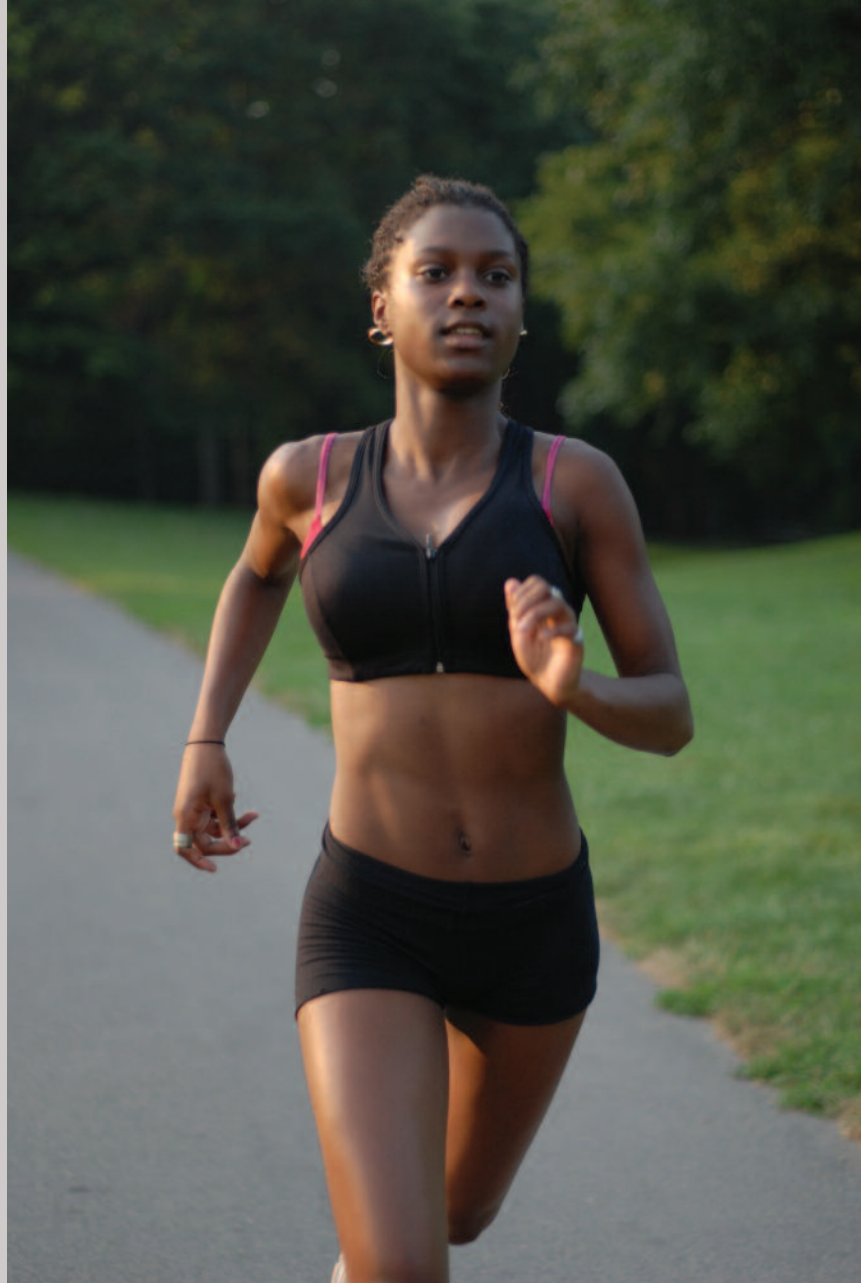
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INTRODUCTION

Storytellers have long been attracted to coming-of-age stories — stories that describe the emergence from childhood, when identity is defined largely by others, into adulthood, when people claim the right to declare their own identities. This life stage is often rich with drama and has the potential to offer deep insights into the human condition. For many, this time between adolescence and adulthood can be confusing and difficult. The challenges of soul-searching and growth are magnified when one's personal story includes multiple heritages. **Off and Running**, a feature-length (76-minute) film, documents one such story.

With white Jewish lesbians for parents and two adopted brothers — one mixed-race and one Korean — Brooklyn track star Avery grew up in a unique and loving household. But when, as a teenager, she becomes increasingly curious about her African-American roots, she decides to contact her birth mother. This choice propels Avery into a complicated exploration of race, identity and family that threatens to distance her from her parents. She starts skipping school and staying away from home, risking her shot at the college track career that had long been her dream. But when Avery decides to pick up the pieces of her life and make sense of her identity, the results are inspiring.

Off and Running follows Avery to the brink of adulthood, exploring the strength of family bonds and the lengths some people must go to become themselves. As an outreach tool, the film personalizes the debate over transracial adoption and provides a compelling springboard for viewers to examine which facets of their own identities have played key roles in shaping who they are.



Avery Klein-Cloud.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS****KEY ISSUES**

Off And Running is well suited for use in a variety of settings and is especially recommended for use with:

- **Your local PBS station**
- **Groups that have discussed previous PBS and POV films relating to adoption or LGBT families, including *In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee*, *First Person Plural*, *Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy*, *Discovering Dominga*, *The Double Life of Ernesto Gomez Gomez***
- **Groups focused on any of the issues listed in the Key Issues section**
- **High school students**
- **Faith-based organizations and institutions**
- **Chapters of COLAGE; people with a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or queer parent**
- **Cultural, art and historical organizations, institutions and museums**
- **Civic, fraternal and community groups**
- **Academic departments and student groups at colleges, universities and high schools**
- **Community organizations with a mission to promote education and learning, such as your local library**

Off And Running is an excellent tool for outreach and will be of special interest to people interested in the following topics:

- **Adolescence**
- **Adoption (especially transracial and intercultural adoption)**
- **African-American culture**
- **Biography**
- **Child development**
- **Coming of age**
- **Diversity**
- **Education**
- **Family dynamics**
- **Gay/lesbian parents**
- **Identity formation**
- **Jewish identity/Jewish culture**
- **Parenting/childrearing**
- **Psychology**
- **Race**
- **Same-sex marriage**
- **Stereotyping**

USING THIS GUIDE

This guide is an invitation to dialogue. It is based on a belief in the power of human connection, designed for people who want to use **Off And Running** to engage family, friends, classmates, colleagues and communities. In contrast to initiatives that foster debates in which participants try to convince others that they are right, this document envisions conversations undertaken in a spirit of openness in which people try to understand one another and expand their thinking by sharing viewpoints and listening actively.

The discussion prompts are intentionally crafted to help a very wide range of audiences think more deeply about the issues in the film. Rather than attempting to address them all, choose one or two that best meet your needs and interests. And be sure to leave time to consider taking action. Planning next steps can help people leave the room feeling energized and optimistic, even in instances when conversations have been difficult.

For more detailed event planning and facilitation tips, visit www.pbs.org/pov/outreach

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Klein-Cloud family.
Photo courtesy of The Klein-Cloud family

Transracial Adoption

Transracial adoption — most often white families adopting children of color — has a charged history in the United States.

The practice flourished in the aftermath of major conflicts such as World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War, when widespread death and destruction left thousands of children without parents or adequate resources. It was in the 1940s when American families first became aware of the plights of such children and began adopting from abroad. Specific programs developed that sought to facilitate international adoption. One such program, Operation Babylift, brought more than 2,000 children from Vietnam to the United States. Such adoptions marked a shift in U.S. practices, which historically had aimed to place children with parents of similar races.

Gradually, children of color began to be placed in white homes, with mixed results: While some families suffered harassment and even violence, others had few issues. Between 1968 and 1972, approximately 50,000 black and biracial children were adopted by white parents. At the time, the adoption of black children by white families was motivated largely by the increasing number of black children in foster care and the seeming lack of black adoptive families. In the early 1970s, the number of transracial adoptions rose as white infants became less available and the number of prospective adoptive parents continued to grow.

The adoption of black children by white families has long generated controversy in the United States, sparking criti-

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cism from both blacks and whites, as well as from some adoption professionals. In 1972, the practice of transracial adoption was publicly challenged. At the national conference of the North American Council on Adoptable Children, the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) issued a formal statement opposing transracial adoption, citing concerns that such placements compromised children's racial and cultural identities and amounted to a form of cultural genocide. The NABSW worried that black children raised in white homes would fail to develop effective coping strategies to deal with racism and discrimination and would experience identity conflicts as they grew older. The NABSW also challenged traditional adoption practices, raising questions about institutionalized racism within the adoption profession. The organization pointed to existing evaluation criteria for prospective adoptive couples that routinely prevented black families from qualifying and claimed that agencies were failing to recruit prospective black adoptive families and were, in fact, even passing them over in favor of white couples. By 1994, however, the NABSW released a new statement supporting transracial adoption in the case of a documented failure to find a home with black parents.

In the same year, Senator Howard Metzenbaum authored The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act of 1994 (MEPA), which mandated that adoption agencies receiving federal funds could not deny or delay adoptions based solely on racial difference. This was written partly in response to the growing number of children in foster care. Because the language of that first act was open to interpretation, in 1996 Congress enacted the Inter-Ethnic Adoption Provisions (IEP), which specifically prohibited federally funded agencies from denying or delaying adoptions solely on the basis of race or national origin. These laws are designed both to decrease the length of time a child has to wait before being adopted and to eliminate racial discrimination. These laws have been controversial, however, and the debate surrounding transracial adoption has not diminished. Many people feel that transracial adoptees are emotionally scarred by their experience; others strongly disagree and suggest that the long-term outcome for transracial adoptees is very positive. Some suggest that the number of children in a particular racial group in need of foster care or adoption will always exceed the num-



Rafi, Zay Zay and Avery Klein-Cloud.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

ber of available families in that racial group. Others believe that current adoption practices are rife with racial discrimination and other barriers, and that greater efforts should be made to remove them. Still others advocate for more systemic support of economically and socially disadvantaged families in order to keep these families together and decrease the need for foster and adoptive placements. And finally, there are those who think that for children, of color adoption into a white family is preferable to the impermanence and instability of foster care.

A report issued in 2008 by the nonprofit Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute and endorsed by the Child Welfare League of America, the Adoption Exchange Association, the NABSW, Voice for Adoption and the Foster Care Alumni of

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Rafi Klein-Cloud.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

America (among others) stated, however, that the act downplays race and culture too much.

The report stated that although transracial adoption itself does not produce psychological or other social problems in children, multicultural adoptive families do face some special challenges. Some public agencies have become hesitant to discuss race at all with adopting couples, however, for fear of being sued for discrimination. As a result, many new families go without the counseling and preparation they need to help them navigate the realities of living in a race-conscious society.

In its position statement on transracial adoptions, the North American Council on Adoptable Children, a group representing more than 400 American and Canadian child advocacy organizations, contends that adoptive parents of the same race as the child are best equipped to provide him or her with the skills and strength to combat racism. The council also states, though, that if an appropriate family of the same race cannot be found, transracial adoption is a better alternative for a child than long-term foster care.

One provision of MEPA calls for the diligent recruitment of adoptive parents of color. However, the 2008 report found that the provision has not been well implemented and is not being enforced adequately. The report called for better enforcement of the provision through greater resources and funding for recruitment.

Many studies show that about three quarters of transracially adopted children adjust well to their new homes, but experts agree that there are steps multicultural families can and should take to promote children's well-being, self-esteem and sense of cultural identity, including celebrating cultures of all kinds, forming friendships with other interracial families, talking about cultural issues and adopting a no-tolerance policy on bias.

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Avery Klein-Cloud and her moms.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

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Development of Racial Identity

Racial identity might be defined as one's self-perception and sense of belonging to a particular group including not only how one describes oneself, but also how one distinguishes one's self from other ethnic groups. Racial identity in children develops in two stages: First, a child distinguishes race at a conceptual level, and then he or she begins to assess his or her own membership in a racial group. This second stage usually occurs between the ages of 3 and 7. Children's attitudes toward race are greatly influenced by their interactions with and observations of those around them. A child who is of a race different from the race of his or her parents may magnify mentally the physical differences and feel especially isolated as a result.



Beverly Daniel Tatum, psychology professor and president of Spelman College in Atlanta, found that one reason young people of color tend to build their identities around their racial backgrounds is that they see themselves as differing from the dominant images in American society. And the white majority, which tends to see itself as colorless, encourages this further with questions and observations about those perceived differences. White adolescents, in contrast, are more likely to see themselves as "normal" in terms of ethnic background.

There are conflicting thoughts about how explicit race conversations should be between parents and young children. On the one hand, in families where the issue of race is not addressed, children get the message that it is inappropriate to express their feelings and that the topic is taboo and perhaps even shameful or embarrassing. On the other hand, in homes where parents dwell on the issue extensively, children may attach too much significance to it, causing self-consciousness and anxiety.

Avery Klein-Cloud.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

Adjustment Outcomes of Transracial Adoption

Considerable research has been conducted around the outcomes of transracial adoptions. A 12-year longitudinal study of 204 families and 366 children whose families included transracially adopted children, adopted white children and white birth children found that the transracial adoptees were as integrated into their families as the biological children. No significant difference in self-esteem was evident. After 12 years, with approximately half of the families still in the study, 18 adoptees had serious problems. However, in only one case was race a significant factor. In all other cases, the problems could be traced to the children having been adopted at an older age (4 or older), learning disabilities, developmental delays or abuse before adoption. Another review study found that the majority of transracially adopted children (75 to 80 percent) functioned well and demon-

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strated no more behavioral or educational problems at home or school than non-adopted children.

A Canadian study tracking families from Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec that had adopted internationally found that the self-esteem of inter-country adoptees when they reached adolescence was higher than that of the general population but lower than that of their siblings. A large majority of the adoptees reported being comfortable with their ethnic backgrounds, although 10 percent identified themselves as white despite coming from Korea, Bangladesh or Haiti.

In 2009, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute, an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research and education organization, published an extensive examination of adult adoptive identity based on input from 468 adults who were adopted as children. Specifically, the study compared the experiences of white adoptees to those of adoptees from South Korea. The 112-page report is entitled “Beyond Culture Camp: Promoting Positive Identity Formation in Adoption.” Central findings include:

While the majority of Korean-born survey respondents reported experiencing race-based discrimination from strangers and classmates (and 39 percent from teachers), white respondents were more likely to feel discriminated against simply for being adopted, particularly within their extended families.

A significant majority of transracially adopted adults reported considering themselves to be or wanting to be white as children. By adulthood, however, the majority had reconciled their racial identities, whether through increased interaction with a “like” community, reconsidering their roots after experiences with discrimination or simply maturing.



Zay-Zay.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

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LGBT Adoption

In the early 2000s, a number of state legislatures considered (but did not enact) measures to prohibit adoption and foster parenting by gay men and lesbians. Until recently, Florida was the only remaining state to explicitly prohibit gay adoption. In September 2010, however, Florida's Third District Court of Appeal lifted the three-decade ban on gay adoption and faced no appeal from the Florida Department of Children and Families.

Though gay adoption is now legal in every state, many states erect high hurdles that effectively prevent or impede the practice. Mississippi, for instance, allows a man or woman to adopt alone but bars second-parent adoptions by same-gender partners. Utah prevents all unmarried couples from adopting. Meanwhile, the District of Columbia and a number of states — including California, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Vermont — have policies that deter discrimination against sexual orientation in adoption cases. The Urban Institute/Williams Institute estimates that, as of 2007, approximately 65,500 adopted children were being raised by gay or lesbian parents. There is little research on adoptions by gay and lesbian parents, but studies, including one by the American Psychological Association, show that children reared in adoptive gay and lesbian families fare just as well as their counterparts. Other research shows that children of LGBT partnerships fare better than those of single parents of any sexual orientation and may outperform children of heterosexual couples in some areas, such as school involvement.

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Diversity in the Jewish Community

Be'chol Lashon, an advocacy group that aims to strengthen the world's Jewish population by promoting ethnic, cultural and racial inclusiveness (be'chol lashon means "in every tongue"), reports that "the politics of race and the suspicion and closed nature of the Jewish community" can complicate integration and acceptance of those of different cultural backgrounds.

While there are Jewish sub-cultures among Africans and African-Americans, many of today's Jews of color — including those with Asian and Hispanic lineage — come to the faith either as adopted children of Jewish parents, as biracial children of mixed-race parents or as converts from other faiths. These Jews may have difficulty sorting out their identities — deciding where they fit in — and Be'chol Lashon warns they may turn away from the Jewish community and toward racially based groups if they do not find more acceptance.

There is no official figure indicating how many American Jews are black, but Be'chol Lashon estimates that 20 percent of the 6 million Jews in the United States are racially and ethnically diverse, including African American, Latino/Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Sephardic (Spanish/Portuguese descent), Mizrahi (North African and Middle Eastern descent) and mixed-race.

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The Klein-Cloud family lights a menorah on Hanukkah.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

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Selected People Featured in **Off And Running**



Avery



Tova



Travis



Rafi

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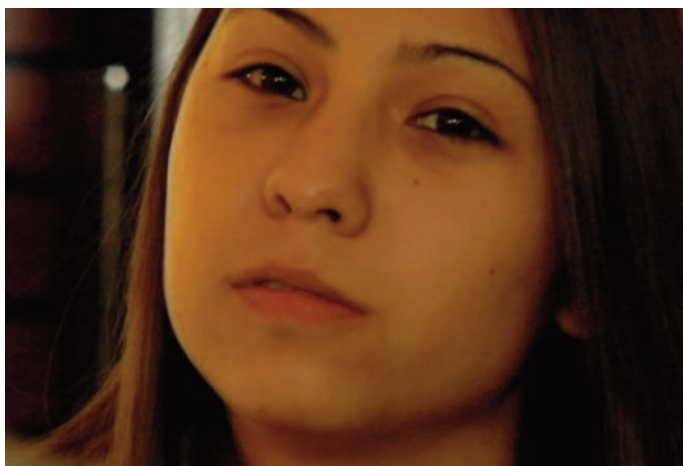
Selected People Featured in **Off And Running**



Zay-Zay (Samuel Isaiah)



Prince



Jenna

**GENERAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Immediately after the film, you may want to give people a few quiet moments to reflect on what they have seen. If the mood seems tense, you can pose a general question and give people some time to themselves to jot down or think about their answers before opening the discussion.

Unless you think participants are so uncomfortable that they can't engage until they have had a break, don't encourage people to leave the room between the film and the discussion. If you save your break for an appropriate moment during the discussion, you won't lose the feeling of the film as you begin your dialogue.

One way to get a discussion going is to pose a general question, such as:

- **If you could ask anyone in the film a single question, who would it be and what would you ask him or her?**
- **What did you learn from this film? What insights did it provide?**
- **If a friend asked you what this film was about, what would you say?**
- **Did anything in the film surprise you?**
- **Describe a moment or scene in the film that you found particularly disturbing or moving. What was it about that scene that was especially compelling for you?**
- **What is the significance of the film's title?**

DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Darren.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

Identity and Race

- Avery describes her family as “the United Nations.” What are the benefits and pitfalls of having multiple ethnicities and/or races in a single family?
- Avery’s counselor asks her if she feels black. Avery responds, “Do I feel black? I don’t know what that means.” In your view, what does it mean to identify as black or African American? Does that differ from identifying as Jewish or identifying as white (or any other race or ethnicity)? If so, how? If not, why not?
- Avery finds out that her birth name was Mycole Antwonisha. What is the significance of a name? What does your name reveal about you, your family story or your heritage?
- Avery says, “I feel Jewish because I was raised Jewish ... but when people first meet me they don’t see me as being

Jewish ...” What is the effect on personal identity when others in the group or culture to which someone belongs do not readily identify that person as one of their own or, conversely, when others assume that a person is part of a group or culture with which he or she does not identify?

- Avery recalls being the only black kid in class, saying, “And they always look to you. ‘How do you feel about that?’ And I’m like, ‘You’re asking the wrong person. I’m just like the rest of you.’ ” Have you ever witnessed or experienced anything similar? What did it feel like? What did you do? Why might Avery’s classmates assume that her experience in the world is different from theirs, even though, like them, she is being raised in a Jewish family?

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

- Avery isn't sure that it is possible for her white mothers to understand her identity as a black woman. What do you think? Is it ever possible for a person to really know what it is like to walk in another's shoes? Can you think of differences other than race that might be difficult for people to transcend (e.g., a biological child trying to understand what it is like to be adopted or a wealthy child trying to understand what it is like to be a working-class child)?
- At one point in the film, Rafi states, "A big difference between me and my sister is that I feel that my identity is amorphous. She feels like she was born into something, and I feel like I can create what I want to be." How do you think identity is formed? What role is played by factors such as race, religion, or genetics and what role is played by people independently "creating what they want to be" (as Rafi suggests)? What do you think accounts for Avery's and Rafi's differing viewpoints?
- One of the factors that affect the identity development of people entering adolescence is that they often begin to date at that age. In Avery's case, this means dating black, non-Jewish boys. What kinds of conflicts might this pose for her family? Imagine the conversation in your home if a child chose to date outside the family's race, religion or ethnicity. To whom might it matter and why?
- Why do Avery's friends teasingly call her "an Oreo"? What do they mean? How would you characterize the impact of that label? What kinds of attitudes about racial identity does it reflect, reinforce or challenge?
- Avery grew up in Brooklyn, surrounded by people from many different cultures and races, including African Americans, but she still needs to be "schooled" by her friends at Erasmus about fitting in to black culture. What is the difference between being raised in a culture and simply growing up in close proximity to it?
- Not all of Avery's friends seem to understand that she straddles two very different worlds. For example, a Hebrew day school peer asks if she feels safe attending Erasmus (which is nearly all black), and her black friends end a grace over dinner with "in Jesus' name," ignoring the fact that Avery is Jewish. What did you think of Avery's responses to



Director Nicole Oppel filming Avery and Rafi Klein-Cloud.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

these situations? What is the potential for people like Avery to bridge worlds or increase understanding? What burden does it place on Avery to bridge those worlds?

DISCUSSION PROMPTS



Behind the Scenes.
Photo courtesy of Robert Y. Chang

Adoption

- What did you learn about transracial adoption from this family's story?
- What did you learn about adoption by gay or lesbian parents?
- What did you learn from this film about the role of transracial or transcultural adoption in cultural preservation efforts by minority communities?
- Avery says, "I don't feel like [my mothers] understand who I am, how I feel or anything about the world that I'm in right now. I think I'm growing into my own person and I am beginning to identify with the African-American side of me. And they don't really seem to fit into that part of my life."

How is this different from and/or typical of normal adolescent separation from parents? What unique challenges does transracial adoption add to the mix?

- Avery says, "When you're adopted by a white family, you see things so differently. The whole world is completely different. I can't say that I'd want to see it any other way, but for many years I felt so out of place around black people." What light does this comment shed on the debate over the advisability of white parents adopting black children? Imagine the opposite situation (i.e., a white girl raised by black parents saying that she feels out of place around whites).

DISCUSSION PROMPTS

A scene from the filming of **Off And Running**.

Photo courtesy of Darren Lee

Does considering a role reversal change your position in any way? (Take this opportunity to talk about ways to improve this dilemma so that people aren't encouraged to decide whether transracial adoption is good or bad but instead are encouraged to think about how it might be improved and what might have lessened Avery's burden in this instance, such as more black people who might have served as role models coming over for family dinners.)

- Avery comments on how much money it takes to adopt a child. In your view, what is the appropriate role of money in the adoption process? What should the relationship be between socioeconomic status and the capacity to parent?
- Why do you think it is important to Avery that she contact and receive a response from her birth mother, especially given the contrasting views of her older brother, Rafi? In your view, is Avery's birth mother obligated to respond to her? Why or why not?

- In your view, how did Avery's life experience influence her relationship with Prince and how she responded to her own pregnancy?
- Joy Lieberthal, Avery's counselor, reminds her that it has been the love and support of her adoptive parents that "empowers you to be able to stand here . . . and say you are entitled to search for the answers to your life." How do Tova and Travis remain true to their own feelings and also supportive of Avery finding her birth family and developing an identity that isn't based around them? In what ways are their experiences common to all parents of teenagers, and in what ways is their situation unusual?

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



Avery Klein-Cloud.

Photo courtesy of Robert Y. Chang

Family and Parenting Issues

- Avery says, “I am very much for gay marriage . . . Nobody should dictate who people should get married to, who they should love and how.” Do you agree? As she tries to understand why Avery won’t attend her mothers’ wedding, Travis comments, “It’s like something really traumatic happened to her, but I don’t think anything did.” Why might something seem like a “trauma” to Avery but not be perceived that way by her mothers? What do Avery’s mothers try to do to help her work through what they perceive as her “downward spiral”? What strategies are effective? Is there anything different that you might have done in their shoes?
- During dinner with her friends, Avery tells a friend that he must accept the fact that she has two lesbian mothers or he can “walk right out that door.” In what ways does Avery advocate for her family as being unique and special through-

out the film? Have you ever had to describe your family to someone or had someone not understand what makes you and the other members a family? How did you address this?

- Imagine that you are each of the people listed below and describe in concrete terms what support for Avery would look like from your perspective: Avery, her friends, her siblings, her mothers, her birth mother, her teachers and her coaches. What do you learn from this exercise about how to support someone who is going through a difficult time?
- Avery says, “It’s really hard to focus on school with everything that’s going on right now.” Is there anything that her school could or should be doing to help her?

TAKING ACTION

- Provide a public forum for adoptive families to share their stories, perhaps as a way of interesting other families in adoption or helping prospective adoptive families realistically prepare for the challenges of transracial or transcultural adoption.
- Conduct an adoption needs assessment to determine which communities in the United States have children in urgent need of homes. Ask local media outlets to help you share the results of your assessment with your community. Consider hosting an information fair or other event where adoption agencies can provide information to those interested in adopting.
- Publicize the efforts of support groups for members of families that have adopted across racial or cultural lines. Encourage adoptive parents and their children to share with their peers the unique successes and frustrations that arise from adopting children whose cultural or racial identities differ from their own identities.
- In the film, Avery writes some very open and moving letters to her birth mother. Use these as a model and write a letter to someone important in your life, letting that person know how you feel and perhaps asking questions you want answered.
- Ask members of your family to define what they think makes a family. Together, share and create your family story. Ask friends to talk about their families and what makes their families special or unique. Share your stories with others at the “This is my Family” website, <http://www.pbs.org/pov/adoption/myfamily.php>.



Travis.
Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada



RESOURCES

FILM-RELATED WEB SITES**Original Online Content on POV Interactive (www.pbs.org/pov)**

POV's *Off And Running* companion website
www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning

The companion website to **Off And Running** offers exclusive streaming video clips from the film and a wealth of additional resources, including a Q-and-A with filmmaker Nicole Opper (also available via podcast), ample opportunities for viewers to “talk back” and talk to each other about the film and the following special features::

Live event: Chat with Avery Klein-Cloud and filmmaker Nicole Opper on Wednesday, September 8 at 2:00 p.m. EST.

Additional video: Watch additional clips not seen in the film.

Composing **Off And Running**: Watch as the composer of the film works with Avery to create the film's soundtrack.

Video Update: Avery talks about school, running, reception for the film and her family.

What's Your POV?

*Share your thoughts about **Off And Running** by posting a comment on the POV Blog*

www.pbs.org/pov/blog or send an email to pbs@pov.org.

Adoption**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. “CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION GATEWAY.”**

www.childwelfare.gov/adoption

This site, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, offers a great deal of information about both domestic and international adoption. Included are sections on laws governing adoption, how to put a child up for adoption, how to adopt, post-adoption services and reunifying families.

ADOPTION NATION: HOW THE ADOPTION REVOLUTION IS TRANSFORMING AMERICA
(NEW YORK: BASIC BOOKS, 2000)

This book, centered on a Pulitzer Prize-nominated series of articles author Adam Pertman wrote for *The Boston Globe*, explores the history of adoption in the United States, from the orphanages of the 19th century to the wider acceptance today of adoption by single, gay and older parents and by parents of races different from those of their children.

PACT

www.pactadopt.org

Pact is a nonprofit organization that provides the highest quality adoption services to children of color. Pact's goal is for every child to feel wanted, honored and loved, a cherished member of a strong family with proud connections to the rich cultural heritage that is his or her birthright. Services include placement, education, support and advocacy. Pact also provides informative articles on transracial and international adoption, a reference guide to adoption-related books and a transracial adoption hotline for adoptive parents.

RESOURCES

American Jewish Life and Culture**HANNAH SENESH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL****www.hannahsenesh.org**

This is the website for the Jewish school that Avery attended.

JUDAISM 101**www.jewfaq.org**

The work of one Orthodox Jewish individual, this site provides a fair picture of Jewish religious practice, including its diversity. It is a good starting place for those with little knowledge of Judaism.

CENTER FOR JEWISH HISTORY**www.jewsinamerica.org**

A collaboration of five major organizations and supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, this project provides a comprehensive portrait of Jewish life in the United States.

Support for Adoptive Families**THE ADOPTION GUIDE.****“ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS.”****www.theadoptionguide.com**

The Adoption Guide website offers a search function that allows parents to find support groups based on their own geographical locations or children's countries of origin. These groups offer support and guidance in person, online and over the telephone; newsletters highlighting local issues and activities; “adopt chats,” featuring living-room dialogue with other parents and professionals; educational workshops on topics for prospective and experienced adoptive parents; information and referrals regarding agencies, attorneys and one-on-one support; and social activities.

HOLT INTERNATIONAL. “POST ADOPTION SERVICES.”**www.holtinternational.org/adoptees**

Holt International, a children's services organization, seeks to respond to the needs of all three groups involved in adoption — birth parents, adoptees and adoptive parents — throughout their lives, regardless of agency affiliation. Serv-

ices include camps for adoptees, tours to countries of origin and adult adoptee outreach. The website provides post-adoption FAQs and reading lists.

CENTER FOR ADOPTION STUDIES. “CURRENT PROJECTS.”**<http://adoptionresearch.illinoisstate.edu>**

The Center for Adoption Studies at the School of Social Work at Illinois State University aims to promote the adoption of children from the child welfare system and improve adoption policy and practice by conducting research. Current research topics include stress and coping in struggling adoptive families and promoting healthy marriages in adoptive families.

BENEATH THE MASK:**UNDERSTANDING ADOPTED TEENS****(BURTONSVILLE, MD.: C.A.S.E. PUBLICATIONS, 2005)**

In this book, Debbie Riley, a therapist and mother of adopted children, writes about six issues she believes both parents and teens must deal with, including loyalty to adoptive parents, abandonment issues and personal identity. Riley also outlines how therapists can help teens grieve over their losses and work through these issues.

AMETZ ADOPTION PROGRAM/**JEWISH CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION****www.jccany.org/ametz**

Ametz Adoption Program of JCCA offers pre and post-adoption counseling, support groups, adoptive family programs, educational workshops, adoption homestudies and post placement supervision to singles and couples of all religious and cultural backgrounds, in every stage of *domestic, international, step and second parent adoptions*. Ametz also offers a professional training institute regarding adoption. JCCA is a not-for-profit, comprehensive, multicultural agency serving children and families since 1822. JCCA's programs include: group and family day care, mental health and preventive services, education programs, a residential diagnostic center, foster homes, group homes and residential services for children and adolescents, preventive services, independent living skills training, adoption programs, and services to the Jewish community.

RESOURCES

STARS OF DAVID INTERNATIONAL**www.starsofdavid.org**

Stars of David International, Inc. is a nonprofit information and support network for Jewish and interfaith adoptive families of all sizes, ages, and origins. Stars of David serves every stream of Judaism through its local chapter activities, international mailings, and the Internet. It provides help for all members of the triad including Jewish birth parents, adoptees, adoptive parents, prospective parents, single parents, grandparents, interfaith couples, transracial and transcultural families, and those with children by birth and adoption.

Support for Adoptees**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.
“IMPACT OF ADOPTION ON ADOPTED PERSONS.”****www.childwelfare.gov**

This fact sheet examines the impact of adoption on adult adoptees. It addresses feelings of loss, the development of identity and self-esteem and the issue of awareness of genetic information and provides information on related books, support groups and other resources.

THE BARKER FOUNDATION.**www.barkerfoundation.org**

An agency turned comprehensive adoption center, the Maryland-based Barker Foundation offers pregnancy services, domestic and international adoption services, counseling and education. For adoptees, it offers support groups, lists of helpful books and other resources and opportunities to discuss feelings and concerns.

**BEING ADOPTED: THE LIFELONG SEARCH FOR SELF
(NEW YORK: DOUBLEDAY, 1992)**

Building on Erik Erikson's stages of development, this book, written by David M. Brodzinsky, Marshall D. Schechter and Robin Marantz Henig, outlines the development of adopted persons and the feelings of loss that many of them experience, from mourning their original caretakers as children to feeling an absence of family history as they start their own families.

**TWENTY LIFE TRANSFORMING CHOICES ADOPTEES
NEED TO MAKE (COLORADO SPRINGS: PIÑON PRESS,
2003)**

This practically oriented book by Sherrie Eldridge addresses some of the questions that plague adoptees: Does my birth mother still think about me? Was I unworthy for some reason? It then frames these questions as opportunities for growth. Eldridge, herself an adoptee, bases her insights on interviews with dozens of adoptees.

**LOST AND FOUND: THE ADOPTION EXPERIENCE
(NEW YORK: DIAL PRESS, 1979)**

Author Betty Jean Lifton speaks from her own experience as an adopted person who has worked with adoptive families to explore the harm that can come from keeping secrets about children's birth families and the liberation that can result from openness.

**THE FAMILY OF ADOPTION
(BOSTON: BEACON PRESS, 1998)**

Author Joyce Maguire Pavao, an adoptee and an adoption therapist with three decades of experience, describes the developmental stages and challenges adopted people and their families can expect, using real-life examples to illustrate them.

**THE ADOPTION LIFE CYCLE: THE CHILDREN AND
THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH THE YEARS (NEW YORK:
FREE PRESS, 1992)**

Elinor B. Rosenberg, a professor of clinical psychiatry, examines the experiences of the different members of the adoption triad — the birth and adoptive parents and the child — candidly addressing seldom-discussed issues.

RESOURCES

Adoption Blogs Written by Adopted and Fostered Adults

A BIRTH PROJECT

<http://birthproject.wordpress.com>

Lisa Marie Rollins, a former adoption education specialist for Pact and founder of Adopted and Fostered Adults of the African Diaspora, writes, “[T]his blog began with a two-pronged focus: 1) a place to share the dynamics of my personal search for my birth family and 2) as a place to consider my experiences as a Black girl adopted by white parents, ‘my life as a TRA’ — a transracial adoptee. It’s been a wild ride — if you read this blog from the beginning you’ll find my birth parents WITH me and see my continued struggles as I go through this crazy process of search and reunion.”

ETHNICALLY INCORRECT DAUGHTER

<http://ethnicallyincorrect.wordpress.com>

Sumeia Williams, a Vietnamese adoptee, blogs about how her experiences and perspective were shaped by growing up in a segregated white town: “As the only Vietnamese, only Asian in the entire town, I wouldn’t see another live Vietnamese face until I was around 11 years old. I grew up feeling as if I’d been cut and pasted onto a painting with too many pieces left behind.”

HEART, MIND AND SEOUL

<http://heartmindandseoul.typepad.com/weblog>

This blog offers reflections of a Korean adoptee and adoptive parent.

JOHN RAIBLE ONLINE

<http://johnraible.wordpress.com/>

John Raible, an analyst of transracial adoption issues, often explores his own experience as an African-American transracial adoptee and as an adoptive parent. “In order to support today’s transracial families, adoption professionals, educators and others must renew their commitment to the lofty ideals of racial integration. However, instead of a limited and outdated color-blind approach, an explicitly race-con-

scious yet postmodern (i.e., non-essentializing) anti-racism that acknowledges the enduring significance of race (and the durability of racism) offers transracial families a way to participate actively and effectively in the discourses of race and adoption.”

MAY I HAVE A WORD?

<http://writingforliberty.blogspot.com>

Liberty uses hair as a springboard for exploring her experiences growing up biracial and adopted in a white world and coming into her racial identity as an adult.

SUNSHINE GIRL ON A RAINY DAY

<http://sunshinegirlonarainyday.blogspot.com>

As a former foster child, Lisa advocates for foster children, publicizing the challenges that they face and addressing their developmental and emotional needs. “My mother died when I was 10 years old. My father remarried the following year. When his new wife asked my father to choose between the two of us, his choice was to abandon me. . . . From the moment that I entered foster care placement, I crossed the threshold into a dark, new world. I was no longer my father’s child; I had taken on a new identity. I was a ‘group home girl,’ and group home girls were reportedly ‘easy.’ ”

HOW TO BUY THE FILM

To order **Off And Running** for home use, go to <http://firstrunfeatures.com/offandrunningdvd.html>;
to order it for educational use, go to http://www.firstrunfeatures.com/offandrunning_educational.html



Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and beginning its 23rd season on PBS in 2010, the award-winning POV series is the longest-running showcase on American television to feature the work of today's best independent documentary filmmakers. Airing June through September, with primetime specials during the year, POV has brought more than 300 acclaimed documentaries to millions nationwide and has a Webby Award-winning online series, *POV's Borders*. Since 1988, POV has pioneered the art of presentation and outreach using independent nonfiction media to build new communities in conversation about today's most pressing social issues. More information is available at www.pbs.org/pov.

POV Interactive www.pbs.org/pov

POV's award-winning Web department produces special features for every POV presentation, extending the life of our films through filmmaker interviews, story updates, podcasts, streaming video and community-based and educational content that involves viewers in activities and feedback. POV Interactive also produces our Web-only showcase for interactive storytelling, *POV's Borders*. In addition, the *POV Blog* is a gathering place for documentary fans and filmmakers to discuss and debate their favorite films, get the latest news and link to further resources. The POV website, blog and film archives form a unique and extensive online resource for documentary storytelling.

POV Community Engagement and Education

POV works with local PBS stations, educators and community organizations to present free screenings and discussion events to inspire and engage communities in vital conversations about our world. As a leading provider of quality nonfiction programming for use in public life, POV offers an extensive menu of resources, including free discussion guides and curriculum-based lesson plans. In addition, *POV's Youth Views* works with youth organizers and students to provide them with resources and training so they may use independent documentaries as a catalyst for social change.

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American Documentary, Inc. www.amdoc.org

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation. *Simon Kilmurphy is executive director of American Documentary | POV; Cynthia Lopez is executive vice president.*

Front cover: Klein-Cloud family.

Insert right: Avery Klein-Cloud.

Photo courtesy of Jacob Okada

