



Contact:

Cathy Fisher, [cfisher@pov.org](mailto:cfisher@pov.org), 212-989-7425; Cynthia Lopez, [clopez@pov.org](mailto:clopez@pov.org), 212-989-7425

POV online pressroom: [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom)

## **One Adoptee Goes From Happy Childhood to Identity Crisis in POV's "Off and Running," Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010, on PBS**

African-American Athlete and Daughter of Jewish Lesbian Parents Risks a Promising Future  
To Find Her Place in Society

*A Co-production of ITVS in association with American Documentary/POV and the Diverse Voices Project*

"Packs an emotional wallop." — Joe Neumaier, *New York Daily News*

### ***MEDIA ALERT – FACT SHEET***

National Air

Date:

**Off and Running** has its national broadcast premiere on **Tuesday, Sept. 7, 2010**, at 10 p.m. on the **POV (Point of View)** documentary series on PBS. (Check local listings.) **Off and Running** will also stream in its entirety from Sept. 8 through Dec. 7, 2010 on the POV website, [www.pbs.org/pov/video](http://www.pbs.org/pov/video). Now in its 23rd year, POV is American television's longest-running independent documentary series and is the winner of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking and the International Documentary Association's IDA Award for Best Continuing Series.

The Film:

**Off and Running** is the story of Brooklyn teenager Avery, a track star with a bright future. She is the adopted African-American child of white Jewish lesbians. Her older brother is black and Puerto Rican, and her younger brother is Korean. Though it may not look typical, Avery's household is like most American homes — until Avery writes to her birth mother. The response throws her into crisis. She struggles over her "true" identity, the circumstances of her adoption and her estrangement from black culture. When it seems as if her life is unraveling, Avery decides to pick up the pieces and make sense of her identity, with inspiring results.

**Off and Running** was an Audience Favorite Finalist at the 2009 Tribeca Film Festival, winner of the Jury Award for Outstanding Documentary at Outfest, Best Documentary at the Milan International Women's Film Festival, Best Documentary at Philadelphia QFest, winner of the SILVERDOCS Writers Guild of America (WGA) Award for Best Documentary Screenplay and winner of the Audience Award at the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Watch the trailer and learn more at [www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning](http://www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning).

Filmmaker's

Statement:

"I have been teaching filmmaking to young people part-time for the last nine years, and Avery Klein-Cloud was a student in my very first class," says filmmaker Nicole Opper. "I saw a bright, mischievous young woman who had a smile and a warm embrace for everyone who crossed her path, and I wanted to know who she was. 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?"

"I wasn't prepared for the complete meltdown that Avery had halfway through our filming together," Opper continues. "But we made a pact. We had started this project together and we would finish it together. I began inviting her over to watch and respond to the scenes as we were cutting them. This was her story, and it was important that she feel ownership of the process."

**Filmmaker Bio: Nicole Opper, Director/Producer**

Nicole Opper's filmmaking credits include producing the Emmy-nominated "The Killer Within" (Toronto International Film Festival, Discovery Channel), "Sacco and Vanzetti" (Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, Winner of Best Historical Film by the American Historical Society) and the here! network's five-part documentary series *LSS*. She was selected for *Filmmaker* magazine's annual list of "25 New Faces of Independent Film" in 2009 and for *Heeb* magazine's list of "100 Jews You Need To Know About" in 2008.

Opper holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in film production from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and is pursuing a master's degree in media, culture and communication at New York University's school of education. A Brooklyn resident, she is currently a Fulbright Fellow in Mexico, where she is in production on "The Ipo Boys" (working title), a documentary about an innovative group home for abandoned youth.

**Avery Klein-Cloud:**

Avery Klein-Cloud was born in Austin, Texas, and was raised in Brooklyn. She has enjoyed running since she was a little girl; when she turned 6, she joined the Kenyan Runners Track Team. She has earned eight national titles, held two high-school records and has traveled all over the United States to run. She attended Hannah Senesh Community Day School until eighth grade, and went to Poly Prep Country Day School in New York for three years of high school. She then attended Erasmus Hall High School in New York for her senior year, which she couldn't complete; however she obtained a GED. Thanks to her successful track career, she was able to receive a full scholarship to Delaware State University.

**In the News:**

*Time*: "Study: Children of Lesbians May Do Better Than Their Peers," by Alice Park, June 7, 2010. <http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,1994480,00.html>

*New York Times* Motherlode blog: "When Mom Is Mistaken for the Nanny," by Lisa Belkin, Aug. 11, 2010. <http://parenting.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/08/11/when-mom-is-mistaken-for-the-nanny/>

*Dallas Morning News*: "Debra Monroe Writes About Being White and Having a Black Daughter," by Debra Monroe, Aug. 8, 2010. [http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/stories/DN-Nu\\_MonroeEssay\\_0808gd.ART.State.Bulldog.35bd796.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/ent/stories/DN-Nu_MonroeEssay_0808gd.ART.State.Bulldog.35bd796.html)

NPR: "A Daughter, 'Off And Running' in Pursuit of Herself," by Mark Jenkins, Jan. 28, 2010. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=122983756>

**Credits:**

Director/Producer:	Nicole Opper
Co-producers:	Sharese Bullock, Jacob Okada
Executive Producers:	Macky Alston, Sandra Itkoff
Cinematographer:	Jacob Okada
Editor:	Cheree Dillon
Original Music:	Daniel Bernard Roumain

**POV Series Credits:**

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President:	Cynthia López

Running Time: 86:46

## Festivals and

Awards: Top 10 Audience Favorite, Tribeca Film Festival, 2009  
WGA Documentary Screenplay Award, AFI-Discovery Channel SILVERDOCS Documentary Festival, 2009  
Best Documentary, Milan International Women's Film Festival, 2009  
Jury Prize, Best Documentary, Outfest, 2009  
Jury Award for Best Documentary, Philadelphia QFest, 2009  
Audience Award, Ann Arbor Film Festival, 2009  
Urbanworld Film Festival, 2009  
Seattle Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, 2009  
DocFest, 2009  
Boston Jewish Film Festival, 2009  
Denver Jewish Film Festival, 2010  
San Diego Jewish Film Festival, 2010

(For a complete list of festivals, go to [www.offandrunningthefilm.com](http://www.offandrunningthefilm.com).)

POV Website: POV's **Off and Running** companion website, <http://www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning/>, offers a streaming video trailer of the film, an extended interview with filmmaker Nicole Opper, a list of related websites, partner organizations and books, downloadable discussion and facilitator guides, classroom activities, a full update on all the characters in the film and these special features:

- Background information on adoption;
- This is My Family: For most of us, the classic family photo with matching sweaters and look-alike smiles doesn't quite capture our family. As part of POV's Adoption Stories project, we want to hear real stories about your family. Upload your photos and videos to our user-generated family album, and you may receive an iPad or iTouch!;
- Exclusive film update video with Avery;
- Additional video: Watch video not included in the final cut of the film;
- Production video: Watch Avery work with the composer of the film to create the soundtrack;
- Multimedia timeline: Trace the history of adoption in America through photos and video; and
- Live Chat: Avery Klein-Cloud and filmmaker Nicole Opper will be chatting with viewers on **Wednesday, September 8 at 2 p.m. ET**.  
<http://www.pbs.org/pov/offandrunning/chat.php>

Outreach: POV works with public television stations and national and community-based groups across the country to foster community dialogue around the issues presented in **Off and Running**. For a list of upcoming screenings and discussion events, go to: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/outreach>.

POV also works with nationally recognized media educator Dr. Faith Rogow to develop a discussion guide with background information to help event organizers carry out discussions around the film's content. Cari Ladd has created the lesson plan.

DVD: **Off and Running** has been released on DVD by [First Run Features](#).

Also airing: **Off and Running** will be shown with two short animations from StoryCorps:

- **The Human Voice:** The great oral historian Studs Terkel was an inspiration to StoryCorps and he was also an early participant in the project. He speaks out about what has been lost in modern life and where he sees hope for our future.
- **The Icing on the Cake:** Blanca Alvarez and her husband risked crossing the border to immigrate to the United States, and then struggled to make ends meet. They hoped to shelter their children from these harsh realities, but Blanca's daughter Connie reveals how much children can really see of their parents' lives — and the inspiration they draw from their struggles.

Since 2003, StoryCorps has been recording and preserving the voices of everyday people, one conversation at a time, and sharing one of these stories each week on NPR. Now, the StoryCorps team brings its Peabody Award-winning storytelling to public television in collaboration with POV with new animated shorts featuring some of the projects best-loved radio stories.

Pressroom: Visit POV's pressroom, [www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom](http://www.pbs.org/pov/pressroom), for press releases, downloadable art, filmmaker biographies, transcripts and special features.

POV: Produced by American Documentary, Inc. and now in its 23rd season on PBS, 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](http://www.pbs.org/pov).

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