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**Korean-American Adoptee Untangles the Identity Switch
That Sent Her to the United States in POV's "In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee"
On Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2010, on PBS**

In Follow-up to Emmy Nominated "First Person Plural," Deann Borshay Liem's Personal Quest
Raises Questions About Identity, Memory and Paths Not Taken

*A co-production of ITVS in Association with the Center for Asian American Media
And American Documentary/POV*

"A masterful, moving and cathartic documentary, a near-perfect companion to, and completion of, the
brave journey begun in 'First Person Plural.'" – *CineSource*

In 1966, Cha Jung Hee was an 8-year-old girl at Sun Duck Orphanage who became one of the
thousands of Korean orphans adopted by Americans in the years following the Korean War. U.S.
military presence, Cold War politics and the realities of a war-torn society still struggling to climb out
of the ruins made Korea the primary source for international adoptions by Americans, and it would
remain so for many years.

All such adoptions can present daunting challenges to adoptees as they come of age and try to
understand their split heritage. But this story had a further twist.

Deann Borshay Liem's **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** has its national broadcast premiere on
Tuesday, Sept. 14, 2010, at 10 p.m. (check local listings) on PBS during the 23rd season of
POV (Point of View). The film concludes the three-part *POV Adoption Stories*, which include
Wo Ai Ni (I Love You) Mommy on Aug. 31 and **Off and Running** on Sept. 7. POV continues its
regular Tuesday primetime schedule through Sept. 21 and concludes with a special on Tuesday,
Oct. 5. American television's longest-running independent documentary series, POV is the recipient
of a Special Emmy for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking.

For Cha Jung Hee, the good fortune of being whisked away to an affluent country by loving new
parents masked even more troubling questions. For one thing, Deann Borshay, as little Cha Jung
Hee became known in America, wasn't an orphan. As related in Liem's earlier documentary **First
Person Plural** (POV 2000; encore presentation Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2010), lingering memories led
the filmmaker to discover that her birth family was still alive. And there was another buried memory.
Liem wasn't Cha Jung Hee at all. She was Kang Ok Jin, another 8-year-old girl at Sun Duck
Orphanage. Her identity had been switched with Cha Jung Hee's just before the latter was to be
adopted by the Borshay family in California. She'd been instructed to keep that secret even from her
adoptive parents. But why was the switch made? And what became of the real Cha Jung Hee?

Liem's quest to understand the act that determined the course of her life impels her to find the real
Cha Jung Hee. Armed with a tattered black and white photo of Cha Jung Hee and the shoes her
mother-to-be sent more than 40 years earlier for her journey to America, Liem returns to a bustling,

modern Seoul and a Korea vastly different from the devastated country she left in 1966. As **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** shows through old photos and newsreels, endemic poverty, lingering destruction from the war and a huge population of orphaned, lost and abandoned children set off humanitarian campaigns in a dozen Western countries to encourage adoption of Korean children. During Liem's visit, she attends the annual gathering of the International Korean Adoptee Associations and meditates on the randomness of fate that turned her into an American rather than one of the Swedes or Danes she meets. She also learns that the tide of Korean adoptees — some 200,000 — peaked as recently as 1985, well after the country had become developed, democratic and prosperous. **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** raises a troubling question: How and why did a humanitarian effort become an industry worth millions of dollars?

But Liem's first stop is the Sun Duck Orphanage. She reviews the orphanage's files with current director Kim Dae Jin and discovers another photo of the real Cha Jung Hee. A switch certainly was made, and the social worker who cared for the children reveals the reason: Cha Jung Hee was not an orphan. On a night shortly before she was due to leave for the United States, her father showed up and took her away. Rather than disappoint the Borshays, the orphanage substituted one 8-year-old girl for another, complete with a forged passport and brand new American shoes. Was this a purely humane decision or was there some financial motivation as well? In any case, the real Cha Jung Hee had disappeared with her father, and no one knew what had become of her.

Liem's quest leads her and her interpreter to make calls to more than 100 Cha Jung Hees in the phone book, and she meets several women named Cha Jung Hee who turn out not to be the one she seeks, but who give her a glimpse of who she might have become. Then Liem visits the Police Separated Families Bureau and encounters a policeman who specializes in reuniting families. The stories of Koreans who lived through the dark past, begin to accumulate, offering a rare and intimate recollection of a shared time of violence, social disintegration and difficult choices. But the Cha Jung Hee who haunts Liem's dreams remains elusive.

Ultimately, she does meet a woman who may be the Cha Jung Hee she is seeking. The photographic evidence is striking and the outlines of the two women's stories intersect. The little girl's shoes that Liem has saved even spark memories and tears in this Cha Jung Hee. But there is no way to be certain. **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** still manages to get inside the stories that determined the fate of so many Korean children and changed the lives of many American families.

Both a meditative quest and an historical whodunit, **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee** reveals that in today's world the search for identity — by Korean adoptees of the 1960s and '70s, or by any child displaced by history — may yield more questions than answers.

"For years, Cha Jung Hee was, paradoxically, both a stranger and also my official identity — someone unknown but always present, defining my life," says director Liem. "I felt I had to search for Cha Jung Hee finally to put my questions to rest by meeting her and finding out how she has fared. In the course of my journey, I met many women named Cha Jung Hee and through their stories imagine what my life would have been like had I stayed in Korea.

"Although I arrived in America walking in Cha Jung Hee's shoes, I can see now the path I've taken has always been my own. And if I look closely, I can see a glimpse of the girl I used to be and I can picture her stepping out of the past and into the present."

In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee is a co-production of Mu Films and the Independent Television Service (ITVS) in association with the Center for Asian American Media (CAAM), Katahdin Productions and American Documentary | POV.

About the Filmmaker:

Deann Borshay Liem (Director)

Deann Borshay Liem has over 20 years of experience working in the development, production and distribution of educational and public television programming. Her first film, **First Person Plural** (POV 2000; encore Aug. 10, 2010), was nominated for an Emmy. She was also co-executive producer for Spencer Nakasako's **Kelly Loves Tony** (POV 1998) and the Emmy-winning **a.k.a. Don Bonus** (POV 1996). She served as co-producer for Marianne Teleki's "Special Circumstances." Liem is the former director of the National Asian American Telecommunications Association (now the Center for Asian American Media), where she supervised the development, distribution and broadcast of new films for public television and worked with Congress to support minority representation in public media. She was a Sundance Institute Fellow and a recipient of a Rockefeller Film/Video Fellowship for **In the Matter of Cha Jung Hee**. She lives in the San Francisco Bay area with her husband, Paul, and her son, Nicholas.

Credits:

Director/Writer:	Deann Borshay Liem
Producers:	Deann Borshay Liem, Charlotte Lagarde
Editor/Co-writer:	Vivien Hillgrove
Cinematographers:	Michael Chin, Byung Ho Lee
Sound Recordist:	J.T. Takagi
Original Music:	Todd Boekelheide

Running Time: 56:46

POV Series Credits:

Executive Producer:	Simon Kilmurry
Executive Vice President:	Cynthia López

Awards & Festivals:

- Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, 2010 – *Best Director* (Deann Borshay Liem); *Best Editor* (Vivien Hillgrove)
- San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival, 2010 – *Comcast Audience Award, Best Documentary*
- Full Frame Documentary Film Festival, 2010
- Asian American International Film Festival, 2010
- Provincetown International Film Festival, 2010
- Rhode Island International Film Festival, 2010

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Independent Television Service (ITVS) funds and presents award-winning documentaries and dramas on public television, innovative new media projects on the Web and the Emmy Award-winning weekly series *Independent Lens* on PBS. ITVS was created by media activists, citizens and politicians seeking to foster plurality and diversity in public television. ITVS was established by a historic mandate of Congress to champion independently produced programs that take creative risks, spark public dialogue and serve underserved audiences. Since its inception in 1991, ITVS programs have revitalized the relationship between the public and public television. More information about ITVS can be obtained at www.itvs.org. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, a private corporation funded by the American people.

CENTER FOR
ASIAN AMERICAN MEDIA

The Center for Asian American Media (CAAM) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to presenting stories that convey the richness and diversity of Asian American experiences to the broadest audience possible. We do this by funding, producing, distributing and exhibiting works in film, television and digital media. For more information, visit www.asianamericanmedia.org.



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.

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.



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