



Fork [↑]in the Road

IN PRODUCTION IN 2023 / 2024



Visionalist
Entertainment Productions



Fork in the Road

Fork in the Road will allow the audience to step into the lives of children who are thrust into the world of foster care through a series of life circumstances they had nothing to do with.

What happens when a child finds themselves in a home they are not familiar with, coexisting with people they do not know? How emotionally complicated is this for them as well as the ones who choose to care for a child that is not their own?

What are some of the amazing stories of those who have flourished because of foster care?

Who are those that choose to be the beacon of hope for children who have found themselves at a fork in the road?

In 2023, Director/Producer Keith Famie, an adoptee himself, will explore the lives who are impacted by foster care journeys.



Film Development

Issues to be addressed through a variety of interviews:

- What is a foster home?
- Where do foster children come from?
- How often do children move from home to home?
- What kind of couple chooses to become foster parents?
- How hard is it for these foster parents to say goodbye after developing a relationship?
- Is there a time limit on foster care?
- If no one adopts the children, where do they go?
- Do orphanages still exist?
- What happens when a child becomes attached to a family pet?
- How do foster care kids adapt to school?
- How hard is it for them to make friends & leave friends they have made in a school district?
- Are there more minorities in foster care? If so, why?
- Is foster care a source for children with special needs? Do they ever get adopted?
- What support is there for a foster care family?
- Who monitors the foster care homes & children's life?
- How do other family children handle a foster child moving out?
- What lessons can we learn about foster care in America?
- How is foster care handled in other countries?
- What well known people were part of the foster care world?
- Do foster children ever go back to their birth parents?

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

REASONS PEOPLE GIVE UP CHILDREN FOR ADOPTION OR FOSTER CARE

- Accident
- Too young
- Too old
- Low income
- Single parent
- Rape
- Mental incapability
- Infidelity
- Religious beliefs
- Lack of support
- Addiction
- Illness

REASONS PEOPLE ADOPT

- Infertility
- Population regulation
- Single parent and want to start a family
- Same-sex couple
- Choose the gender of their child
- Want to give child a better home
- To help a friend or family member who can't raise a child
- They want to give a child born in 3rd world country a different life
- The adoption process has more potential for success than infertility treatments
- Medical conditions too dangerous for childbearing
- Avoid passing down genetic disorder or disease
- They feel called to adopt, for religious or other reasons
- They were adopted and want to give the same experience to someone else
- They want to incorporate multiple races, cultures, or ethnicities into their family
- They just "want to"

GENERAL QUESTIONS

- When do you tell your child that they are adopted?
 - How and why?
 - What does this discovery do to a person?
- What internal conflict occurs in adopted children?
- How has the view on adoption evolved throughout history?
- Social stigmas of adoption
- What is it like growing up in a home only bonded by bonds, not blood? Is it different?
- How do foster care requirements compare and contrast nationally versus internationally?
- How long does it take?
- How many children need homes 2019? Nationally and globally.
 - On any given day, there are nearly 428,000 **children** in foster care in the United States. (<https://adoptionnetwork.com/adoption-statistics>)
 - Approximately 2.7 million **children** between the ages of 0 and 17 years are estimated to be living in residential **care globally**, or 120 **children** per 100,000. (<https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-protection/children-alternative-care/>)
- How many children are given up for adoption daily?
- How many children are adopted daily?
 - 135,000 adopted in the US each year
- How much does adoption cost?
 - United States \$43,000 average
- Do people typically adopt boys or girls? Why?
 - Girls
- Common ages that are adopted
 - Over half are 6 years old or older
- Why do adoption prices vary by country?
- Do adoption prices vary by age, race, capability, etc.?
- What countries are the most expensive for adoption?
- What countries are the least expensive for adoption? Why?
 - China
 - Jamaica
 - Ethiopia
 - Ukraine
 - Ecuador
 - Thailand
 - Kazakhstan

- What are popular countries people adopt from? Why?
 - Ukraine
 - South Korea
 - India
 - Uganda
 - Ethiopia
 - Haiti
 - Colombia
 - Taiwan
- What countries allow adoption?
- What countries don't allow adoption? Why not?
- How do you choose which adoptive family is right?
- What percentage of women decide not to go through with adoption last minute?
- What organizations allow same-sex adoption and which ones don't? Why not?
- How can adoption affect someone's overall life compared to someone not adopted?
- Are there common traits shared among those that are adopted?
- What is it like being an adopted child of a celebrity?
- What is it like to never know your biological parents?
- Relative adoption
- What is it like finding out you were adopted through someone other than your parents?
 - Why is there a stigma around adopted children through peers even though they have no choice? What is some of the common rhetoric that society has on adoption and "not belonging." (The Ugly Duckling)
- Why are there exponentially more women narratives on adoption than men?
 - How is this a reflection of society's view on parenting overall? Is this evolving? Can it evolve?
 - Why aren't more men telling their story? Are they not as emotionally involved or has society deterred men from speaking on emotional family matters?

ADOPTING PARENTS

- What qualifications must be met to adopt a child?
- What psychological evaluations are performed, if any?
- How do you choose which child to adopt?
- What is it like adopting a child and discovering they have a medical condition or disability?
- What is it like knowingly adopting a child with a disability or medical condition?

MENTAL HEALTH

- What does giving up a child do to the mother's mental state?
- Do some mothers handle it better than others? Why?
- What does giving up a child do to the father's mental state?
 - Do fathers experience the same emotional turmoil? If not, why not?
- What chemicals in the body are affected from mother-child separation?
 - <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/publications/observer/obsonline/how-mother-child-separation-causes-neurobiological-vulnerability-into-adulthood.html>
- How does adoption affect the child's mental state?
- How difficult is it to give up a child for adoption?
- What is it like raising an adopted child?
- What are common obstacles parents face when raising an adopted child?
- How does being a product of rape and an adoptive child affect someone's mental state?
 - As the adopting parents, do you tell the child this information? How and when?
- What is it like giving up a child that is a product of rape? Any different?
- How does an adopted person of rape view women who give up their child because of rape?

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

- What is it like adopting a child that is a different nationality?
 - How do Caucasian parents handle the adversities their minority, adopted child will face?
 - Are wealthy, Caucasian families naive to the adversity? If so, are they made aware when going through the adoptive process?
- What is it like having biological children & adoptive children?
 - What conflicts do they face, if any?
 - Why do these conflicts occur?
 - Do they occur in all bio/adoptive homes?

NATURE VS. NURTURE

- Are adoptees more like their biological family or their adopted family? In what ways? Why? Does this question compel more adoptees to find their real parents?
- Does discovering who your parents are help an adopted person to understand who they are?
- What are the common nurture and nature traits? Are we able to measure this?
- Twin stories - *Three Identical Strangers*: It examines a set of American identical triplets, born in 1961 and adopted as six-month-old infants by separate families, unaware that each child had brothers. The separations were done as part of an undisclosed scientific "nature versus nurture" twin study, to track the development of genetically identical siblings raised in differing circumstances. Combining archival footage, re-enacted scenes, and present-day interviews, the documentary reveals how the brothers discovered one another at age 19 and thereafter sought to understand the circumstances of their separation

SAME-SEX

- The Marriage (Definition of Marriage) Amendment Act 2013, which came into force on 19 August 2013, allowed **same-sex** marriage and permitted married **same-sex** couples to jointly **adopt** children. Previously, an LGBT individual **was** able to **adopt** children, but **same-sex** couples could not **adopt** jointly.
- On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court struck down all bans on same-sex marriage in the United States.
- On March 31, 2016, a Federal District Court struck down Mississippi's ban on same-sex couples from adoption.
- On June 26, 2017, the Supreme Court reversed an Arkansas Supreme Court ruling and ordered all states to treat same-sex couples equally to opposite-sex couples in the issuance of birth certificates. These court rulings have made adoption by same-sex couples legal in all 50 states.
- Why was it illegal before?
- Are parenting methods different or similar?
- How has the society's view on same-sex parents evolved? Where is it going?

ACTIVE BIOLOGICAL / INACTIVE

- What is it like knowing you were adopted, but still having active biological parents?
- Why do some biological families choose to stay involved?
- Why do most biological families choose not to be involved?

23 AND ME/ANCESTRY WEBSITES

- How many adopted people have found their family through these websites?
- Are these sites moral?
- Have these websites caused problems?

RECONCILIATION

- What is it like meeting biological parents for the first time?
- Why do adopted children choose to meet their biological family?
 - What can this do for the person?
 - Closure? Or down a rabbit hole?
- What are the differences between people who choose to know and choose not to?
- What happens if the person or the parents are much better off than the other?
 - What are the complications that can occur, if any? Why?
- Why do some parents choose not to be found and other say it's okay?
- How do the biological parents feel about their child finding them?
 - What emotions are different between the mother and father? What is the same?

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

- We will step back in history to better understand the significance of foster care and adoption.
- One powerful story we will cover is how a Christian nurse, Irena Sendler, during WWII would smuggle children out of the Warsaw Ghetto and place them into foster care homes. Over the course of the war, she is credited with saving 2,000 plus children from the perils of the Holocaust.



Fork [↑]in the Road

Letters of Support



January 3, 2023

Keith Famie
Visionalist Entertainment
28345 Beck Road
Wixom, MI 48393

Dear Keith,

It was great meeting to discuss your film "Fork in the Road" on the unique and complex experiences of those in foster care. Your vision to document the challenges and opportunities for those in the foster care system is a compelling one.

Detroit Public TV is committed to covering issues in the public interest, including displaced populations and minors in out-of-home care. Sharing stories of caregiving and the impact it has on society is an important part of our mission to our viewers and those we serve.

Public Television has a long track record of offering unique documentary programming like this, and it is our sincere hope that by working together, this program will become part of that storytelling tradition.

I look forward to speaking with you again soon about this film. In the meantime, let's continue to strategize on aligning the critical funding required for the production and engagement of the film!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred".

Fred Nahhat
Senior VP, Production
Detroit Public TV

Erica Schaefer

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January 17, 2023

Dear Mr. Famie and the Visionalist Team,

My name is Erica Schaefer. I am wife to Zach Schaefer and an adoptive mother of two beautiful girls named Hebsi and Shravani. I own and operate a counseling practice and I am also the founder of a nonprofit called One Less. One Less is a dream born from walking the streets of India, seeing the countless street children and realizing together we can make a difference. Through adoption advocacy and awareness, adoption grants and building homes for abandoned children we can make waves of hope until every orphan has a home.

I am incredibly grateful and excited to be a part of ***Fork in the Road a path they did not choose*** and the Visionalist team. My passion in life is to fight for every orphan to have a family, experience unconditional love and find purpose. I am grateful to be a part of a film that is raising awareness for adoption, the needs of orphans around the world and telling the story of families blessed by adoption.

Thank you for choosing to tell these stories! Thank you for letting myself and One Less be a part of it.

Sincerely,

Erica Schaefer

EMMY AWARD-WINNING VISIONALIST ENTERTAINMENT PRODUCTIONS

WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1997 BY PRODUCER / DIRECTOR KEITH FAMIE. SINCE THESE EARLY YEARS, FAMIE AND HIS TEAM HAVE PRODUCED A WIDE RANGE OF PRIMETIME PROGRAMS.

DOCUMENTARIES

- Ice Warriors (2005)** An action-packed journey with the Detroit Red Wings' Alumni team through Russia.
- Our Italian Story (2006)** Progress, passion and promise – Detroit's Italian heritage.
- Our Arab American Story (2007)** Reverence, resourcefulness and respect- Detroit's Arab American Heritage.
- Our Greek Story (2007)** Antiquity, modernity, and destiny- Detroit's Greek Heritage.
- Our Polish Story (2007)** Family, faith and fortitude- Detroit's Polish Heritage.
- Our India Story (2008)** Amity, diversity and sovereignty- Detroit's Indian Heritage.
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)** A tribute to our Michigan WWII veterans, both men and women, who fought for the freedom of our families and our country.
- Our Vietnam Generation (2011)** A long overdue welcome home to the men and women who served during Vietnam.
- Can You See How I See? (2011)** An inspiring look into the life of those who are without sight.
- One Soldier's Story (2011)** the profound story of Sgt. Michael Ingram, Jr. and his legacy.
- The Embrace of Aging: Men's Series (2012)** 13-part series on men and 7-part series on women.
- The Embrace of Aging: Women's Series (2014)** 13-part series on women and 7-part series on men.
- The Embrace of Dying (2015)** 8-part series on how we deal with the end of life.
- Maire's Journey (2016)** Follow Maire Kent as she sets sail on an epic journey to fulfill her dying wish.
- Death is NOT the Answer (2016)** A deep look into the complex world of depression and suicide.
- Enlisted (2017)** Choice. Adventure. Growth. Why would one enlist in the military?
- Those on the Front Lines of Alzheimer's & Dementia (2018)** What can be done to stop this truly devastating disease?
- Those on the Front Lines of Cancer (2019)** Can the uncommon journey that cancer patients undergo result in anything positive?
- Blessed Solanus Casey's Journey to Sainthood (2019)** How does a humble boy from Irish immigrant parents rise to the rare and distinguished honor of beautification?
- Shoah Ambassadors (2021)** Bridging the chasm of the younger generation of today with that of the Holocaust generation through the exploration journey that two young non-Jewish individuals go on.
- Hospice Care in America Today (2022)** Where did Hospice originate? Why is this service so important for end of life care?
- Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower? (2022)**
A story of those living and thriving with Down Syndrome.
- Detroit: The City of Churches (2022)** The significance the many Detroit churches played on some of the most iconic moments in Detroit's history.

MICHIGAN EMMY AWARD WINNERS

- Taste of Taiwan (2006)**
On-Camera Talent – Keith Famie
- Our Italian Story (2006)**
Best Human Interest Special, Best Director
- Our Polish Story (2007)**
Best Director: Post-Production
- Our Greek Story (2007)**
Best Cultural Documentary,
Best Human Interest Program Special
- Our Arab American Story (2007)**
Societal Concerns Program Special
- Our India Story (2008)**
Best Documentary Cultural
- Detroit: Our Greatest Generation (2009)**
Best Editor
- Our Vietnam Generation (2011)**
Best Documentary Historical
- The Embrace of Aging: The Female Perspective of Growing Old (2014)**
Best Director: Post-Production
- Shoah Ambassadors (2021)**
Best Director, Best Lighting, Best Editing

PRODUCTIONS IN 2023 / 2024

- Detroit: The City of Hot Rods & Muscle Cars -**
A celebration of the unique Detroit hot rod & muscle car community and how Motor City iron has circumnavigated the globe and shaped world culture.
- Detroit: The City by The River -** A journey up and down our beloved Detroit River, to uncover the richness of the past and gain a better understanding of where the river's meandering course will take us in the future.
- Fork in the Road -** Step into the lives of children who are thrust into the world of foster care through a series of life circumstances they had nothing to do with.
- The Razor's Edge -** A day in the lives of those that live on the razor's edge of society who face poverty and survival every day with many calling the streets their home.

AWARDS & HONORS

2016 - Maire's Journey-

- DOCUTAH 2016 – International Documentary Film Festival – Winner

2021 - Shoah Ambassadors-

- Toronto Indie Filmmakers Festival - Best Feature Documentary - Winner
- SR Socially Relevant Film Festival NY – Honorable Mention
- Tokyo International Short Film Festival – Honorable Mention
- Austin Lift-Off Film Festival – Official Selection
- LA Documentary Film Festival – Official Selection
- Miami Jewish Festival – Official Selection
- Santa Monica Film Festival – Official Selection
- Malibu Film Festival – Official Selection

2022 - Chromosomally Enhanced: What's Your Superpower?-

- Grand Rapids Film Festival - Award Winner





Keith Famie **Director/Producer/Author**

Director/Producer Keith Famie was, for many years, known as a celebrity chef and a metro Detroit restaurateur. He was selected as one of America's "Best New Chefs" in 1989 by Food and Wine magazine; Esquire Magazine chose his restaurants as "Best New Restaurant" in America on two separate occasions. Famie was also a finalist on the 2001 reality television series, "Survivor, the Australian Outback."

Keith hosted his own Food Network series, "Keith Famie's Adventures," traveling the world documenting cooking styles from the plains of Africa to monk monasteries of Taiwan, to the lifestyle of Key West. In 2004, the Adventure Chef embarked on a new journey - documentary filmmaking. "I didn't want to be the 'Adventure Chef' guy anymore. I wanted to help people tell their stories."

Since that life-changing decision, Famie has been awarded twelve Michigan Emmys and been nominated several other times for his rich, human-interest storytelling, from ethnic documentaries to military tribute films. He and his team at Visionalist Entertainment Productions create informative, entertaining films that touch a wide audience.

Along with documentary filmmaking, Famie has released several books throughout his career, *Famie's Adventures in Cooking* (2001), *You Really Haven't Been There Until You've Eaten the Food* (2003), *Living Through the Lens* (2019), and *Papa's Rules for Life* (2021).

Outside of documentary production, Keith is involved in charitable projects. In 2003, Keith finished the 25th anniversary Ironman Triathlon World Championship in Kona with Team In Training for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. In 2015, he was awarded the 2015 Diamond Award by the Association for Women in Communications Detroit Chapter. In 2017, Keith was presented the Media Award by the Gilda's Club of Metro Detroit. Over the years, Keith has been actively involved in several well-respected, Michigan-based 501(c)(3) organizations that support everything from children with cancer and hunger relief to veterans' issues.

Visionalist Entertainment Productions | www.v-prod.com

