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### **New Roots: A Transracial Adoption Story**

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# New Roots:

## A Transracial Adoption Story

Daniel and Lisa Conklins have 11 children. After giving birth to 6, the couple adopted another 5 children from 5 different countries.

Transracial adoption is becoming more and more common in America. In 2011, 4 out of 10 adopted children were raised by families of a different race or ethnicity. They live in Castile, a farm town in upstate New York. The then 6-year-old Ezra needs to adapt to a totally new environment and embrace his new family. For Elaina who was adopted as a baby, the challenge is to survive in a racially divided society when she knows nothing about being a Cambodian American.

### **Video:**

<https://vimeo.com/309043925>

### **Maps:**

Click The Map To See Where The Conklin Children Were Adopted From

Click The Map To See Where American Parents Adopted From Overseas In 2017

### **Reporter's Note:**

As a Chinese native, I'm both fascinated and bewildered by the great diversity of the United States. In my five years in North America, I found my Chinese background serving as my haven in a racially divided society. It's something I used to take for granted, but now it gives me strength and a sense of identity. I can't help but wonder how others cope with the challenges brought on by diversity, especially those transracially adopted children who don't have deep roots in their racial and ethnical backgrounds.

In June 2018, I was volunteering in a Food Bank in the Upper West Side, chopping vegetables with others. Standing next to me is a tall blonde girl with a big smile, Bethany Conklin Steffen. After learning my background, she told me her brother is also from China. In fact, she has ten siblings and five of them are adopted.

Having no idea what a transracial family, or a large family, is like, I hopped on a six-hour bus from New York City to Castile, N.Y. There I visited the loving and religiously devoted Conklins, a family of six countries. I'm eternally grateful that they shared their story with me and let me into their life.

New Roots is my first documentary and the capstone project for my master degree at the Newmark Graduate School of Journalism. The project is a true leap for me: I experienced anxiety. I encountered culture shock. I got my second breath shooting and editing individually. I received endless supports my professors, my colleagues and my husband.