

# Multiracial Interview #2 (Nathan)

Male Vietnamese/Black Adoptee - *Nathan*

I interviewed J, a biracial adoptee. J was born in Vietnam, his birthfather was Black and his birthmother was Vietnamese; however, J was adopted into and raised by a white American family. J grew up around, and still lives in, Los Angeles, California.

During my interview with J we discussed his understanding of race, identity, and adoption. J's perception of race is that race is a social construct – a way to categorize people. J chooses to identify as Black-Vietnamese, however, he does not always disclose the fact that he is adopted. When I discussed this type of situational identity with him further I learned that it is not a matter of being ashamed or embarrassed. For J it is more a matter of whether the conversation broaches the topic of race, adoption or identity. I found it interesting, however, when J mentioned that when he is in a space with other adoptees he is more apt to mention the fact that he is adopted. In terms of being biracial and adopted I asked J, “being that you are not only adopted, but multiracial as well, do you feel that trying to find a space to which you belong is even more confounded? Do you think that you go through the cultural marginalization that transracial adoptees experience at times, in addition to the racial marginalization that multiracial people encounter?” J told me that unlike some people who are adopted, multiracial, or multiracial adopted, he never had a strong desire to explore and find acceptance within a specific culture or race.

Discussing the issues of race, identity, and adoption with J was extremely informative. I learned that attitudes towards how multiracial adoptees choose to identify if often situational. More importantly, however, it was fascinating to learn, that in the case of J and the people he associates with, race holds very little significance. He told me that in his community, race is not as significant an issue as it is in other communities. J lives in L.A. where there are a lot of people of different races, both monoracial and multiracial, so he feels that the boundaries of race are more blurred than they would be in an area that is more racially homogeneous. That is not to say that every racially diverse community that is “accepting” as J's, but it was interesting to find a community that sincerely upholds the belief to be “judged by the content of their character, and not by the color of their skin.” I will admit that the disparity in the way J and I view the race made the interview challenging, due to the fact that I wanted to be sensitive to his views and not try to impose any beliefs on him.