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DC: I do. Actually one's in high school and one's in college.

LN: Which son is in high school?

DC: His name is Oscar and my older son is Noah.

LN: I bet you miss Noah a lot.

DC: Terribly, but I'm proud of him though, so I'm glad he's doing well in the world. But yes, it's really hard when your kid goes off to college.

LN: What is your typical day like?

DC: I wake up by hearing Oscar's alarm clock go off in the other room. I send him off to school and walk my dog, a chocolate lab that I'm madly in love with. His name is mole, as in chocolate mole sauce. Then I usually go to the office, to Groundspark and can do any number of things depending on where we are in the filmmaking schedule. Right now, what we're doing is organizing screenings all over the country to get people to see the film for the first time. Like the one we're doing in Los Angeles at the end of April. In the evenings, if I don't have to go outside the house to do something, I

usually make dinner with Nancy and Oscar and we check in on our days. Then I do a little more work before I go to bed. It's not all that thrilling and I do like to do other things but when I'm having a routine day, that's what it looks like.



LN: You serve on the advisory board for Frameline and with Jewish Voices for Peace. Are you involved in other organizations?

DC: I'm on the national advisory board for Power Up, down in LA, the lesbian Hollywood group, and I'm very active in New Day Films, the national network of documentary filmmakers.

LN: Do you have any general advice to lesbian and gay youth who look up to you

as a filmmaker and social activist?

DC: What I like to tell people is that, if you want to make a film, and want to be a filmmaker, the really important thing is to think about what the issue is you care the most deeply about. Start there. And don't get hung up on the technical parts. I mean you should get help or learn how to do them but the most important thing is the vision and the passion for what it is you want to communicate.

LN: Do you want to say a few words about *Straitlaced*?

DC: I'm really excited about it because it turned out, I think, not to be the film people were expecting. I've been delighted with the audience reaction so far, in that people seem to be incredibly moved and inspired by it. It ended up being uplifting, not depressing and it turned out to be a film for everyone. The audience it was designed for is high school students but it's really a film that seems to be speaking to everybody. Whether you're gay, straight, young or old, or whatever, it's a topic we can all relate to.

JUNO PARREÑAS

Family Matters

Some traditional family ties are better off broken. Take my own biological family, for instance. My parents have been married for about fifty years and are still together. Often, I think about their relationship as a guide on what not to do: Don't be deceptive. Don't sit and simmer in silence until you boil over in anger.

I haven't seen my father in years. I last saw my mother about a year ago and her visit ended in a dramatic fight over the complicated answer to the simple question of how do you care for a troubled one you love.

Don't get me wrong. I have a lot of respect for my parents. Every day, I am thankful of the opportunities and liberties I have enjoyed because of the sacrifices they have made.

They could have easily left me behind in the Philippines and who knows what kind of life I would have there. I certainly would not have been a feminist studies major in college and have had the luxury of thinking about sexuality on an intellectual and political level. I certainly would not have known the queer pleasures available to me in American and European cities. Beyond the consequences of them having given birth to me at all, my parents garner my respect because they are smart, ambitious people with their hearts and (slightly left of center) politics generally in the right place. Yet when I picture my family, my parents are not in the picture.

My family includes my sisters, nieces, nephews, cousins, sisters' heterosexual male partners, my partner, my ex-partner, my ex-partner's partner, my really close friends and lovers and my sisters' really close friends who are like sisters to me too. I do have a brother and I do have parents. Yet, I don't turn to them in moments of comfort, need, nor joy and respectively they do the same. Over the years, I have distanced myself from my parents and I felt it necessary to do so as a form of self-preservation.

When sharing my concept of family, a

Chinese-Malaysian friend of mine remarked, 'You're not very Asian!' She identifies as a lesbian, yet has had a very different life from me. She has spent most of her 40+ years living with her mother, as is expected for any unmarried child. Her family includes her mother, brother, his sons and his ex-wife. She has yet to have a romantic partner to include in that kinship. Only her best friend gets the honorary title of sister while her other friends are just friends.

I laughed at my friend's half-joke, even though I disagreed. By identifying family as the definitive feature of one's identity, you can never address the fact that families can be oppressive, abusive or simply not worth the trouble.

My friend believes that my strong sense of self comes from my Americanization. Yet, my sense of family isn't typically American either. My sense of family resulted from the hard work of being responsible to my loving relations and nurturing that love. I was not born into all of my loving relations, yet all of these relations were the result of mutual responsibility and willingness. I have found these connections between 'fictive kin' to be as strong and often stronger than blood ties.