LEGISLATION:

The federal foster care program, created in 1980, is offering incentive for states to shorten the time children are in foster care. They are offering $4,000 to $6,000 for every child adopted over baseline. The results have been dramatic: In Illinois, adoption in fiscal 1998 were double the average of the three previous years; the increase was 76% in Texas and 57% in Florida; in DC, adoption rose by 53%; in Maryland, by 30% and Virgina by 11%.

Texas state law gives caseworkers just 12 months from the time they take custody to determine whether the child should be returned to the biological parents or put up for adoption. In El Paso county, the wait once the children are available for adoption dropped from 56 months in 1995 to 7 months in 1997.

The federal government is also planning on creating a web site with photos of children awaiting adoption. The number of children needing homes is expected to double or triple by 2001 when the site is expected to be up and operating.

TRADITIONAL ADOPTION

In this hi-tech world, simply getting a child from a woman who gave birth to the child is the old-fashioned way. Increasing in popularity is private adoption.

**Bill and Christine Pace** went through great pains and many rounds of IVF treatment to conceive their first child, but they want another child, and Christine does not want to go through the grueling medical procedure again.

**Dr. Janet Baum**, already had two children from a previous marriage, when she and her husband, **Eric Malander**, decided to have another child. This time, she did not conceive naturally. So she also chose to go hi-tech. After 10 unsuccessful rounds of IVF treatments, she and her husband decided to adopt.

Both couples decided to go through private adoption agencies. Janet and Eric adopted a baby boy. The child, now 6, knows he is adopted, and if he so choose, he can find his birth mother, when he grows up. He is adopted through an open adoption, meaning the names of the child’s parents are not confidential.

Bill and Christine also adopted through and open adoption. Their little girl not only knows she is adopted, but sees her birth mother and step brother regularly. Bill and Christine believes this way, their child will know that she is wanted not only by her adoptive parents, but also loved by her birth mother.

HI-TECH ADOPTION

With six million Americans of child-bearing age suffering from infertility, a company in Denver has created the first embryo adoption program through the Internet. **Creating Families Inc.**
matches surrogate mothers with egg donors. Using this interactive site, couples enter characteristics like race, height and physical build to find a matching donor.

**Leonard and Frarencessa Bull** have spent 3 years trying every know method to have a baby, without success, and they feel the process of adoption is too long and have no guarantees. The Bulls are now looking for an embryo to adopt. The hope is that an embryo can be implanted into Francesca that will produce a child with traits similar to her own, and they are using the Web site on the Internet to find a donor.

**SURROGATE**

**CASE #1**

Surrogacy is becoming an increasingly popular means to conceive a child when a mother is no able to bear a child herself. But consider the story of **Jaycee Louise Buzzanca** in California. The baby technically has 3 mothers but no father. A donor embryo was implanted into a surrogate’s womb, the surrogate gave birth and was to hand the child over to **John and Luanne Buzzanca**. Unfortunately, the couple divorced before the child was born, now the father claims that without any biological ties to the child, he should not be legally responsible for the child’s upbringing.

But Luanne firmly believes that she is the mother and demands custody of the child and child support from her ex-husband. To complicate matters, the surrogate mother also wants custody, claiming that she agreed to deliver a child to a happy two parent home, not the warring Buzzancas.

California Supreme court finally ruled that the Buzzancas are the legal parents of the girl. Citing a law that makes a husband who consents to his’s wife’s artificial insemination responsible for the child. John Buzzanca will have to pay $380 a month in child support, until the child turns 18.

**CASE #2**

A woman in New York gave birth to twin boys, using embryo implant. Not news, except that one baby is black and one is white. The fertility clinic that performed the procedure apparently implanted her with the embryo from a black couple. Though the birth mother feels both are her babies, she is going to give the balck baby back to the child’s biological parents.

This case illustrates the expanding definition of parenthood. A child can have many different parents; donor parents, birth parents, step parents, surrogate parents, foster parents, adoptive parents, single parents and co-parents. In the New York embryo mix-up case, the terms used to describe the child’s relationship to these women are genetic parent and birth parent, rather than natural and adoptive parent.

**ADOPTION FROM ABROAD**

With the collapse of communism in Russia and the opening of the gates in China, more and more children are being adopted from abroad. Most are happy stories. **Lynn Twinning and Alan**
Mass are considered too old by state agencies in New York to adopt an infant. After much searching, they decided to adopt from abroad. Three years after applying, they have a 13 month old little girl from China. Allegra is the joy of their lives, Alan says that after spending 52 years indulging himself, he is ready to indulge someone else.

Lauie Holtz, from Seattle WA, was not so lucky. Her little girl Tania was adopted from Russia. The girl suffers from severe attached disorder, she have no feelings of compassion or love for her adoptive mother. Tania would sit in her room with a large object in her hand and pretend to throw it at her mother, then laugh if she flinches. She would also tell horrifying stories of participating on animal torture and killings with her birth parents in Russia, and relates it in such a nonchalant way that it sends chills through Laurie Holtz.

Still more tragic is the story of David Polreis, the little boy from Russia who was beaten to death by his adoptive mother. At the age of 2, the little boy was already so damaged by his experience in a Russian orphanage that he his parents and step brother have come to fear him. He would pretend to stab his parents with a knife and laugh when they back away, he would throw dozens of temper tantrums a day that lasts up to 30 minutes. Renee Polreis was at her wits end, she admitted to a friend that if she started hitting him, she would not be able to stop.

Finally, one night, when Renee was left alone with the boy while her husband was on a business trip, David Poleris was beaten to death by his adoptive mother. Renee Poleris claims the boy died of self-inflicted injuries, but the circumstances of his death indicates otherwise.

Still people who have adopted problem children from Russia are compassionate about her demise. They say people have no idea what little monsters these children can be, they are totally ammoral, demonstrating love to complete strangers while lashing out violently at those close to them. As in the case of Richard and Mary Thorne and the four year old girls they adopted from a Moscow orphanage.

The Thorne were appalled when one of their two newly adopted daughters tucked her doll under the covers, whacked it on the head with a shoe, then claml straightened the covers. It seemed like a routine good-night kiss, only this was a good night whack.

On their way back to America, the little blond would not stop screaming, the only time she calmed down was when the girl stuck her hand through the airline seats and an anonymous stranger held her hand. But when the girl started screaming again, Karen and Richard lost it, they admitted to hitting the girls, other passengers claim it was much more. In any case, the Thornes were arrested when the plane landed in the United States. The girls are in foster care, and the Thornes are fighting to get them back.
GAY ADOPTION
John Galluccio and his partner successfully overthrew a New Jersey law that limited joint adoption to married, and therefore heterosexual couples. In January of this year they became the legal parents of an HIV-positive crack baby to whom they had been foster parents. Now, they are seeking to adopt two other needy children.

INTER-RACIAL ADOPTION
Nine year old Stacey has a little half sister, Sara, that is bi-racial. When the issue of adoption came up for them, Regina Bush, who is black, easily adopted Sara. But the courts loath to approve inter-racial adoption. After filing a discrimination suite against Oakland Family Services in Michigan, Regina won the battle, and the court finally allowed the adoption process to go forward with interference.

The Cooney family began to take in foster children when their two eldest natural children reached their teens. But saying goodbye to their foster kids became intolerable and so they began to adopt. Now, the Cooneys, who are white, have adopted six ethnically diverse children with disabilities who require special attention.

SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION
John and Suzanne Graf of Pennsylvania gave birth to a son with achondroplasia, or dwarfism. Seeking a way to help Simon feel comfortable with his condition normal they began a search to adopt another child with the same condition. After enduring months of searching and an adoption process that involved international pressure from a Pennsylvania State senator, the Grafs finally got Max, a diminutive little boy from Korea.

HI-TECH ADOPTION
Frustrated by years of infertility and wary of traditional adoption, Leonard and Francesca Bull are planning to adopt an embryo through the Creating Families Internet website. By inputing their personal data, the couple hope to find an embryo that can be implanted into Francesca with physical traits similar to their own.

ADOPTION NIGHTMARE
Six months after 2 year old David Polreis was adopted from an orphanage in Russia, he was rushed to the hospital with internal bleeding, bruises and cuts covered his tiny swollen body. His mother Renee is charged with beating him to death with a wooden spoon. But the Polreis’ contends that David’s injuries are self-inflicted, because he has Reactive Attachment Disorder, a psychological condition that was caused by severe neglect the boy suffered in the Russian orphanage.

ADOPTION NIGHTMARE
Frank and Jayne Gibbs’ adopted 8 year old son, Micael, was placed in a mental institution after he attempted to amputate the arm of another cuild and suffocate a cousin. The Gibbs discovered
that the agency failed to disclosed that he had been in 10 foster home after his birth mother had tried to cut off his penis. The couple are sueing the adoption agency for non-disclosure of medical condition.

ADOPTION CRIMES

An adoption agency based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana has been paying pregnant Russian women since 1987 to come to the United States to give birth. The children, considered US citizens, are then put up for adoption. The Russian recruiters, thought to be connected to the Russian mob, collect up to $15,000 for each pregnant woman. The women themselves, are paid $1,000 and given a round-trip ticket.

A Hungarian woman, Attilane Torok, and her lawyer are charged with selling her 10 week old baby for $60,000 to a Mid-Western couple whom they lured over the Internet. The hopeful couple was given a chance to spend the night with the baby before the subject of payment was brought up.

ADOPTION FROM ABROAD

A couple from North Carolina adopted a little girl in China they thought was only 3 years old. But after a routine dental visit, they discovered that she is between 6 and 8 and is developmentally delayed. The girl has since been readopted by another family.

Joseph and Julie Ferenc were concerned when they met their son in Russia for the first time. They thought he looked odd and strangely out of proportion, but the orphanage assured them their son is healthy. Once in the United States, they learned that their son is microcephalic, his head is abnormally small, and unlikely to lead a normal life. They sue the agency responsible for arranging the adoption, but their case is dismissed by Washington, D.C.’s appeals court.

ADOPTION OUTRAGE

In a high-profile Maryland case, the lower courts returned a 3 year old boy to his birth mother, Latrena Pixley, who was convicted of murdering his baby sister. The boy’s foster mother, Laura Blankman, was an intern in the law office that handled Latrena’s case. Laura is appealing the lower court’s decision and seeks to adopt the little boy.

When David and Marie Reeder seek to adopt the little girl they’ve had since she was 24 hours old, they were told that the child would be better off living with her biological siblings who have been adopted by Roberto and Shirley Acosta. Six months later, the police found her and her siblings locked in a basement suffering from severe abuse and malnutrition. The Reeders are seeking for the girl’s return.
**WHOSE CHILD IS IT ANYWAY?**
Potential Storylines

**GAY ADOPTION** *
John Galluccio and his partner successfully overturned a New Jersey law that limited joint adoption to married, and therefore heterosexual couples. In January of this year they became the legal parents of an HIV-positive crack baby to whom they had been foster parents. Now, they are seeking to adopt two other needy children.

**INTERRACIAL ADOPTION** *
Regina Bush, an African-American single woman, adopted Sara, a bi-racial foster child in her care. But Sara’s half-sister, Stacey, is white, and when Regina wanted to adopt her to keep the girls together, the family courts in Pontiac, Michigan rejected her request. Regina filed a discrimination suit against Oakland County Family Services and forced the state to allow the adoption to proceed.

**INTERRACIAL ADOPTION 2**
The Cooney family began to take in foster children when their two eldest natural children reached their teens. But saying goodbye to their foster kids became intolerable and so they began to adopt. Now, the Cooneys, who are white, have adopted six ethnically diverse children with disabilities who require special attention.

**SPECIAL NEEDS ADOPTION** *
John and Suzanne Graf of Pennsylvania gave birth to a child with achondroplasia, or dwarfism. Hoping to help their son accept his condition they began a worldwide search to adopt another dwarf child. With phenomenal tenacity and help from their U.S. senator, the Grafs finally found Max, a diminutive little boy from Korea to bring into their family.

**HI-TECH ADOPTION** *
Frustrated by years of infertility, and wary of traditional adoption, Leonard and Francesca Bull plan to adopt an embryo through an Internet website called Creating Families. The couple will input detailed personal information in the hope they can find an embryo with physical traits similar to their own to be implanted into Francesca.

**ADOPTION NIGHTMARE** *
Six months after his adoption in Denver, two-year old David Poleris was rushed to the emergency room with severe internal bleeding. He died in the hospital, and his adoptive mother, Renee, was charged with beating him to death with a wooden spoon. But the Poleris’ tell a tale of a wild child so scarred by the neglect he suffered in the Russian orphanage that his injuries were a result of a psychological condition called Reactive Attachment Disorder.

**ADOPTION NIGHTMARE 2** *
After his attempt to amputate a child’s arm and to suffocate his cousin, Michael Gibbs, 8, adopted son of Frank and Jayne Gibbs, was placed in a mental institution. The Gibbs subsequently learned that the boy had been in ten foster homes, and that his birth mother had tried to sever his penis. The information had been hidden from them by their adoption agency.

**ADOPTION CRIMES**
In Baton Rouge, Louisiana federal authorities have uncovered a baby selling scam. Russian nationals, thought to be affiliated with Russian organized crime, have recruited pregnant women to travel to the U.S. to give birth and turn the children over for adoption. The recruiters collect as much as $15,000 for each successful adoption.

ADOPTION CRIMES 2
A Hungarian woman, Attilane Torok, and her lawyer are charged with selling her ten-week old baby for $60,000 to a midwestern couple whom they lured over the Internet. The hopeful couple was given a chance to spend the night with the baby before the subject of payment was brought up.

FOREIGN ADOPTION
A North Carolina couple adopted a little girl from China whom they believed to be three years old. However, a routine dental visit revealed her to be, in fact, between six and eight and developmentally delayed. The girl has since been readopted by another family.

FOREIGN ADOPTION 2 *
At the Russian orphanage where they went to pick up their adopted son, Joseph and Julie Ferenc expressed concern that the boy’s body seemed out of proportion. Still, orphanage officials assured them of his good health. Upon their return to the U.S., doctors confirmed that the boy is microcephalic; his unusually small head will restrict his ability to lead a normal life. The Ferenc’s suit against the adoption agency has been dismissed by a Washington DC court of appeals.

ADOPTION OUTRAGE *
In a controversial Maryland case, the courts returned a three year old boy to the birth mother who was convicted of murdering his baby sister. The decision took the boy from the home of his foster mother, Laura Blankman, an intern in the law firm that defended his mother. Ms. Blankman is appealing the decision and seeks to adopt the boy.

ADOPTION OUTRAGE 2
David and Maire Reeder became foster parents to a baby girl within a day of her birth. Two years later, Family Services authorities removed the girl from their care and reunited her with her siblings in the home of Roberto and Shirley Acosta. To the Reeder’s horror, six months later the police found the girl and her siblings suffering from abuse and extreme malnutrition in the Acosta home.
WHOSE CHILD IS IT ANYWAY?
Possible Storylines

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