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**Family, Race, Class and the Triumph of the Human Spirit Examined in 'QUEST,'
Airing June 18 on POV**

Jonathan Olshefski's documentary paints an intimate portrait of a black family in North Philadelphia



For his debut documentary, **QUEST**, director Jonathan Olshefski spent nearly a decade chronicling the daily triumphs and tragedies of the Raineys, a working class African-American family in North Philadelphia. The father, Christopher “Quest” Rainey, is a local music producer and promoter who hosts a popular freestyle session for aspiring rappers in his home basement studio; the mother, Christine’a “Ma Quest” Rainey, works night shifts at a homeless shelter; and their spirited adolescent daughter, Patricia “PJ” Rainey, is a daddy’s girl who loves to play basketball.

QUEST, directed by Olshefski and produced by Sabrina Schmidt Gordon, features original music by Christopher “Quest” Rainey. **QUEST** has its national broadcast and streaming debut on the PBS documentary series POV and pov.org **on Monday, June 18, 2018 at 10 p.m.** (check local listings). POV is American television’s longest-running independent documentary series now in its 31st season.

The vérité film opens with a shot inside the family’s modest North Philadelphia row home. It’s Election Day 2008, and while frying bacon for breakfast Christine’a is recalling that someone in the neighborhood yelled out, “Vote for McCain!”

“You know he didn’t say that around the polls,” she observes. Later, Christopher returns from the polls and has exciting news to report: “There was a line for the first time in umpteen years down here.”

“The number one goal of this film was to gather material that would allow the viewer to connect to the Rainey family. The number two goal was to tell the story artfully and capture images that would convey the beauty of the family and the neighborhood,” Olshefski told *Filmmaker Magazine*.

“I spent a lot of time over the years just hanging out, watching movies, playing cards. The result of this long-term commitment was that I was able to fade into the background and record natural scenes where the camera was not intrusive.”

The award-winning independent film offers an intimate portrait of a black American family. Both Christopher and Christine have children from previous relationships, and we witness the committed couple making their union official with a simple church ceremony. As Christine braids Christopher's hair, he muses about their relationship, saying, "In our minds we were already married, you know. Just being together throughout the years and knowing that we both wanted the same things in life."

Another tender scene shows Christopher taking PJ to school on a tandem bike. "I'll be here when you get out," he says as drops her off.

For producer Sabrina Schmidt Gordon, these moments speak to the importance of disrupting prevailing narratives. In an interview she told *Vogue*, "I've often felt frustrated about the way in which stories about black people and black life are told, that they feel reductive and perpetuate a lot of negative stereotypes about who we are... I wanted to tell a story about a black family with more nuance, that did not define people strictly by their circumstances but amplified their humanity and complexity. Their thoughtfulness, humor, intellect, love, as well as their contradictions and challenges... It means a lot to see our own stories being told, in a way that we recognize ourselves in them. There's power in that. There's power in representation."

The viewer also witnesses tough moments, such as when Christine comforts her older son, William, after he is diagnosed with brain cancer at the same time he is expecting his first child.

And because their neighborhood is riddled with violence, young PJ has a 6 p.m. curfew. "A lot of people say their neighborhoods are tough, but North Philly is definitely a tough neighborhood. PJ, you know, has a curfew. She has to be in at a reasonable time—she's rebellious about it, but doesn't disobey me," Christopher says.

Christopher's care and attention make an ensuing accident all the more tragic. In heart-stopping scenes, the Rainey's reveal what it's like to experience terrible luck and face it with courage and resolve.

"Scene after scene, we see the Rainey's show generosity to all those around them. They face obstacles together with unmatched grace, poise and love," said Justine Nagan, executive producer/executive director of POV/American Documentary. "**QUEST** is the portrait of a family immensely invested in their community. It follows them as they face odds that are unimaginable for some, and all too familiar for others. **QUEST** is not only a resonant story to follow Father's Day, but also a perfect season opener, highlighting as it does the creative and daring among us."

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About the Filmmakers:

Jonathan Olshefski, Director/Cinematographer

Jonathan Olshefski is an artist and documentary filmmaker. In 2017, he was named one of the "25 New Faces of Independent Film" by *Filmmaker Magazine* and was listed in *The New York Times* as one of "The 9 New Directors You Need to Watch." **QUEST** is his debut feature documentary and premiered in competition at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival. Olshefski strives to tell intimate and nuanced stories that honor his subjects' complexity. He has an M.F.A. in film and media arts from Temple University and is an associate professor of radio, TV and film at Rowan University. He lives in Philadelphia with his wife and two sons.

Sabrina Schmidt Gordon, Producer

Sabrina Schmidt Gordon is an award-winning documentary producer, editor and director. She is the co-producer and editor of *Documented* (2013), about Pulitzer Prize-winning undocumented journalist Jose Antonio Vargas, and of *Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes*, which premiered at the 2006 Sundance Film Festival. Gordon's directorial debut, *BaddDDD Sonia Sanchez* (2015), for which she also served as editor, was nominated for an Emmy and won Best Film Directed by a Woman of Color at the African Diaspora International Film Festival. She is a Women at Sundance Fellow and is on the faculty at Columbia University and the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism.

Credits:**About the Filmmakers:**

Director:	Jonathan Olshefski
Producer:	Sabrina Schmidt Gordon
Editor:	Lindsay Utz
Music by:	Christopher Rainey, T. Griffin
Executive Producers for POV:	Justine Nagan, Chris White
Executive Producer for ITVS:	Sally Jo Fifer

QUEST is a co-production of ITVS, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization that has, for over 25 years, funded and partnered with a diverse range of documentary filmmakers to produce and distribute untold stories. ITVS incubates and co-produces these award-winning films and then airs them for free on public television through weekly series and stand-alone specials and through its digital platform, OVEE. ITVS is funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. For more information, visit itvs.org.

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Produced by American Documentary, Inc., POV is public television's premier showcase for nonfiction films. Since 1988, POV has been the home for the world's boldest contemporary filmmakers, celebrating intriguing personal stories that spark conversation and inspire action.

Always an innovator, POV discovers fresh new voices and creates interactive experiences that shine a light on social issues and elevate the art of storytelling. With our documentary broadcasts, original online programming and dynamic community engagement campaigns, we are committed to supporting films that capture the imagination and present diverse perspectives.

POV films have won 37 Emmy® Awards, 21 George Foster Peabody Awards, 12 Alfred I. duPont-Columbia University Awards, three Academy Awards®, the first-ever George Polk Documentary Film Award and the Prix Italia. The POV series has been honored with a Special News & Documentary Emmy Award for Excellence in Television Documentary Filmmaking, three IDA Awards for Best Curated Series and the National Association of Latino Independent Producers Award for Corporate Commitment to Diversity. Learn more at www.pbs.org/pov/.

POV Engage (www.pbs.org/pov/engage/)

POV's Community Engagement and Education team works with educators, community organizations and PBS stations to present more than 800 free screenings every year. In addition, we distribute free discussion guides and standards-aligned lesson plans for each of our films. With our community partners, we inspire dialogue around the most important social issues of our time.

POV Digital (www.pbs.org/pov/)

Since 1994, POV Digital has driven new storytelling initiatives and interactive production for POV. The department created PBS's first program website and its first web-based documentary (*POV's Borders*) and has won major awards, including a Webby Award (and six nominations) and an Online News Association Award. POV Digital continues to explore the future of independent nonfiction media through its digital productions and the POV Hackathon lab, where media makers and technologists collaborate to reinvent storytelling forms. @povdocs on Twitter.

American Documentary, Inc. (www.amdoc.org)

American Documentary, Inc. (AmDoc) is a multimedia company dedicated to creating, identifying and presenting contemporary stories that express opinions and perspectives rarely featured in mainstream media outlets. AmDoc is a catalyst for public culture, developing collaborative strategic engagement activities around socially relevant content on television, online and in community settings. These activities are designed to trigger action, from dialogue and feedback to educational opportunities and community participation.

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