Family Values: Some Context

1965  Moynihan Report released characterizes Black families as “tangle of pathology”

1991  Anita Hill/Clarence Thomas Controversy
During Senate Confirmation Hearing of Supreme Court nominee Thomas
Hill testifies that she was sexually harassed by Thomas
Nationally televised; mobilizes feminists and anti-feminists
National discussions about sexism, racism, discrimination in workplace
Thomas is confirmed

1992  Rodney King (who is black) is beaten by police (who are all white)
Jury (which is all white) acquits the officers
Result: LA Riots last for 6 days

1992  Dan Quayle criticizes Murphy Brown for her lack of family values
As part of larger speech, blames LA Riots on crisis in families

1992  Year of the Woman
4 Woman Senators are elected in the same year
Barbara Boxer, Dianne Feinstein, Carol Mosley Braun, Patty Murray

1995  Personal Responsibility Act is introduced

1995  Losing Isaiah is released

1996  Bill Clinton is elected to his second term
Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act becomes law.
Welfare reform: 5 Year limit on benefits, Requires “able-bodied” adults to work
after 2 years, unwed mothers to cooperate in identifying paternity. No benefits for those convicted of a felony drug charge, Substantial tax
deduction to couple who adopt and bars adoption agencies from considering race in adoption

1998  Drucilla Cornell writes “Adoption and its Progeny”

2008  Sarah Palin runs for Vice President
Palin’s daughter Bristol is a pregnant teenager
Palin is glorified by some as good mother

2009  Nadya Suleman gives birth to 8 children
Vilified in the media as the ultimate “unfit” mother