

Caroline and Joy - Audio Transcript

CAROLINE: I don't know where he managed to find all those phones he collected.

JOY: He had a lot of phones.

CAROLINE: I have three. Martin has three and Brian has three. He bought everything in threes and I have the hot pink ball wall phone.

JOY: Oh yeah Carrie has that. (laughter)

CAROLINE: My dad was born in a little town in the prairies. The town was basically a block long. It was a farming community.

JOY: Bob didn't have it easy either.

CAROLINE: No he grew up with his birth father until he was five.

JOY: He thought his Auntie Irene was his mother for quite a while.

CAROLINE: But my grandmother on the coast was his birth mother. So he was ripped from the family he thought was his on the prairies, dropped off with complete strangers on the west coast and nobody ever explained a thing.

CAROLINE: When I would talk to my dad about his childhood he couldn't remember the slightest detail. And I always thought there was trauma involved. He was fairly unwanted. I think he tried to fix that for everybody else. Any kid that was around they were always welcome because that was not something he experienced in his life.

JOY: I met Dad because my Bob I guess was friends with this Bob Jenson and it was sort of through him that I met my Bob. He was cute really cute. Tall six foot two. Slim.

CAROLINE: And Dad always said, he knew right away

JOY: Yeah that's what he said hmm.

CAROLINE: Yeah, he knew right away that he was gonna marry you. Yep. He said that consistently through his life.

JOY: Yeah he did. I was 20 in April and May we got married. (laugh)

CAROLINE: Our friends were always at our house.

JOY: They were always at the Paulson house. (laugh)

CAROLINE: Always at the Paulson... (laugh) There was like 13 little boys. My brothers and I were young, and it was just chaos.

JOY: Yeah.

CAROLINE: In a good way. And there was the cookie jar. (Joy laughs) Every kid that came through that House, no asking involved, hand in the cookie jar.

JOY: I bake cookies a lot.

JOY: Bob worked for BC Tel for a long time. Repair and installations. He got transferred to North Van and then he got a truck which he just loved having his own truck.

CAROLINE: But he became interested in sports when we were young.

JOY: He coached like um...

CAROLINE: He watched every game we ever played in. He was either driving kids to

whatever sports activity we were involved in, or he was watching or coaching or ref'ing.

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JOY: Just after we both retired well, he had a shed in the garden. His workshop, and there was a window and he could see the house and dinner was ready or something I'd bang on the window. (laugh)

CAROLINE: But the grandkids children liked it too.

JOY: Oh, they did. They loved it too.

CAROLINE: All the nurturing that he never received, when he was growing.

CAROLINE: In the last couple years of his life, every six weeks roughly he was in and out of emergency. This is all happening on a fellow you know close to 80 at this point.

JOY: Wasn't much to him.

CAROLINE: The dementia was setting in and my dad had at least one minor stroke. When my dad took his fall and he couldn't take care of himself - lift himself up and walk - so he needed help getting up and down. You know our options were basically, you had to take the first one - the place that was available at the time was Lynn Valley Care Lodge. If he went there it would give us time to find a place that was maybe...

JOY: A little better.

CAROLINE: He went in at the end of January. And, by the end of February, the lodge is closed because of COVID.

CAROLINE: They were just trying to do damage control... I have sympathy for the people who were there because I can't imagine what it was like. But getting consistent information was really, really difficult. I remember calling like three and four times a day until I could actually talk to a person that knew something about my dad.

JOY: I think they were probably short staffed - so many people in dire situations.

CAROLINE: it was a disaster.

JOY: it was.

CAROLINE: How we saw my dad was through an iPhone. But the screen was so small. My dad didn't see very well. He didn't hear very well. I don't think he really understood.

CAROLINE: We were hoping they would have contained it. We got confirmation he had it around March 17 18th and he died April 9th. So initially his symptoms weren't too bad. But he took a turn and when we saw him his breathing was so ragged that we knew that he was going.

JOY: He was in such a weakened condition too there's no way he could have bounced back from. No.

CAROLINE: No.

JOY: Yeah. (emotion) They did, let us come in at the very end, didn't they Carrie? That's when we had to be gowned up.

CAROLINE: Him dying the way he did. That's what haunts me about my dad. His start in life was not a great one. Being on the outer edge of any sense of belonging in his life, for my dad to be kept from the people who love him the most to die alone. It was very very

cruel. I just hope that he knew that we were there.

CAROLINE: And you wonder what happened to some of the people that you got to know like when we went for lunch. What happened to that nice man from West Van? Some of the families were really angry and upset like I think there's been lawsuits.

CAROLINE: A lot of things have to change with long term care. Locking the doors that's not really an option. No person I love will ever be not accessible to me again

JOY: A lot of these places, ~~-~~they need a complete overhaul, you know, the way things are managed and maybe there's something else they should be trying.

CAROLINE: I still don't watch the news. Stats and numbers and graphs every night. I'm like, my dad is in there (laugh). To me it wasn't about the numbers and stats, it was the loving man that we lost in these very impersonal numbers and statistics.
