

Moon - Audio Transcript

AC: She was such a little lady, that her presence was so so radiant.

BC: Little Mountain Court is where she lived. Right on Main Street so she could just take the Number 3 Bus straight up to like towards Chinatown. Friends in the neighborhood-always tell us oh, we saw your grandma on the bus today. (laugh)

AC: She had this silk purple scarf she likes to wear that brings a brightness to her face.

BC: And she would look at you, and make eye contact and say hello. She says hello to strangers a lot. And then because she's so confident in her English people think she actually speaks with well. So they'll end up you know, trying to engage in conversation with her, (laugh) but she doesn't fully understand them, so she continues nodding smiling nodding and smiling and then just waves goodbye! (laughter)

BC: Our grandmother was born in Hong Kong in 1926. The older of a set of twins. They're very, very close and they also looked very, very alike. You could say they became refugees in a way because of the Japanese occupation. They had to walk from Hong Kong to interior of China. And that's where our grandmother met our grandfather. He was a civil servant, determined to be a good catch. (laugh)

AC: We're not entirely sure when they moved back to Hong Kong. It was in Hong Kong that our mom was born.

Because of the pending return of Hong Kong to Chinese power, our parents came to Vancouver and our grandma and grandpa as well. They would pick us up from school. Our grandma would even come on field trips with us. Our mom actually saw her almost every day. Their relationship was very very close.

BC: She loved Bingo. Her love of just games helped as her dementia got worse because mahjong was another thing that she was really (emphasis) good at.

So our grandmother's dementia set in around 2017 2018. It was definitely a difficult decision to put her into Little Mountain. We would go there and dance with her, it was really, it was really cute. (laugh)

BC: The Hong Kong culture, and expectation really, is for the children to take care of the parents through acts of service or physical touch or gifts.

Everything of her love came from her hands, because it was the food that she made. The clothes that she sewed. And, of course just holding her hand too. She's very much a physical touch person. And even when we were just sitting, we would just grab her hand, and hold on to it and she, like, would give it a squeeze.

AC: Transitioning to the story about COVID, one of the most upsetting things is that we had to be separated from her physically.

BC: I started to really worry about her mental health. They were all like, yeah, her health is great. There's no mention of how her mental health is and why isn't there?

We were still able to do zoom calls. It's nice for us. (emphasis) But is not a good solution for someone with dementia. For one of those zoom calls (emotion) she was kind of swatting the iPad away. And that was really sad. She was angry and frustrated and we couldn't help her. (emotion)

BC: My family was not even notified about the outbreak. I read about it on the PHSA website I saw oh my god Little Mountain is on that list.

AC: That lack of urgency was really appalling to us. The memos were light on details.

BC: I've never seen so little communication in a situation where there was so much that was actually going on. They weren't answering their phones-

First it was like around 50 infected. Already, it was 17 deaths. Every week that came, it was at least 20 that increased.

AC: We were notified. They were doing testing and my grandma, her test was inconclusive.

Another few days they ran another test. She was actually positive. So, I think our mom was still optimistic. But there's no way. There's no way she's going to make it through. She's in her 90s. She has dementia. She's quite bedridden. There's no way that she's going to survive this.

There was still a policy of no visitors unless end of life. We heard that Grannie, she may have fractured her hip. Like in my mind, it was like, she must be going through so much pain. I asked if we could go in to visit her. The policies were never clear. It felt like it was up to us to ask.

We were lucky to be enough to able to visit her. I brought her a little Hello Kitty. All of her usual self - she gave it a little kiss and she still knew my mom was.

Two days later our mom got a call. Grannie had taken a turn for the worse. I rushed there. She was in really bad shape at that point. I'm not entirely sure if she knew who we were or that we were there. I would like to think that she did. And All we could do really was just hold her hand. Sit there. I tried to just keep repeating that we're here. We're here. It's okay.