

**A Closer Look at Immigrant Work in the Global North: The Experiences of a Filipinx
Canadian Immigrant.**

Divine Reyes

University of British Columbia

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Dr. Benjamin Cheung

TA: Miranda Tsuyuki

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A Closer Look at Immigrant Work in the Global North: The Experiences of a Filipinx Canadian Immigrant.

In this paper, I will be exploring my mother's experience as a Filipinx immigrant, taking into consideration the jobs she has worked and the process of immigrating into Canada. I will be using the transcript from our interview, to understand why she took the jobs she did and why she had to undergo certain conditions. I will take into account the gendered and classist constructions of Filipinx migrant labour, in this context, as well as the underlying relations of the Asian diaspora and race.

In the interview, my mother explained her experiences in Hong King, before coming to Canada and what tasks and jobs she had to do.

Divine: But that family, what did you do with- for them?

Mom: Yeah. Like housekeeping. Everything, all around. From housekeeping, doing the laundry, everything. Cooking and babysitting. And sometimes taking care of the- uh to their piano lessons. And then, at the weekdays, like after school... we need to... do the groceries, I'm doing the cooking, and we need to bring the food downstairs, because there- the kids' parents have their shop after- because they're both teachers. The man is a principal and the lady is a high school teacher.

Divine: Oh.

Mom: So after- after school, they go straight to their shop. Like uh- atari game. They have a atari game. So we need to bring their food downstairs. So after, uh, cooking and everything, feeding the kids, we need to brought their food at the bottom. They have a shop at the bottom of the building.

A lot of the work that she was given was heavily focused on cleaning, housework, and childcare work. Being positioned as a Filipinx woman who was expected to do domesticized labour - of cooking, cleaning, buying the food, taking care of children when it is her turn, etc. - her work was significantly intertwined with the ways labour and care work becomes gendered and exploited. This is especially true in the context of the Global North where such jobs are rendered as less-skilled and commonly recognized as feminized labour, making society treat it as undervalued work. This shows how "women are relegated to certain subservient and submissive

functions... [and] are rendered generally inferior,” as many racialized immigrants seem to be pushed into occupations that involve seemingly ‘low-valued’ work.¹

Divine: How much did they pay you?

Mom: That was... I think - uh when I went there, was 1982, my first employer... it was like 1,200 Hong Kong dollars?

...Divine: But then what did you use that money for?

Mom: Sent it to- to *nanay* (means mother in Ilocano, but also the same word I use to refer to my grandmother) and *tatay* (means father, but I use it to refer to my grandfather).

Divine: Mm. But then how much did you have left for yourself?

Mom: Only my overtime. Like uh- because I’m working 6 days. I got only one day- one day off. So one- one par- one overtime, that’s my pocket money. One day overtime.

Alongside being expected to work impractical, long hours on domestic duties, she needed to ask for more hours to leave enough money for herself. This meant she did “face[d an] unfavourable...circumstance,” which likely caused a “stressful life [situation]” and, undoubtedly, engaged “in health-impairing behaviours.”² This is due to the unquestioned position of women or femme presenting individuals from countries in the Global South coming in and doing work that families - who can afford domestic workers - are willing to pay someone else to do, just low enough that it will not jeopardize their income.

We then talk about the process she underwent to be approved to come to Canada.

Divine: Okay. So then, after Hong Kong, and through the agency, you went to... you applied and then you came to Canada? Like you got approved to come to Canada? Or what...

Mom: Yeah. You need to apply. You need to apply and then, uhm, they process your paper, and then they will call you for interview. If it is everything okay. After your interview, you have your medical and everything. Then you’re ready to go.

Divine: What did they ask, do you remember?

Mom: They ask me, why do you... want to go to Canada?

¹ Nguyen, Naomee-Minh. "I Tweet Like a White Person Tbh! #whitewashed: Examining the Language of Internalized Racism and the Policing of Ethnic Identity on Twitter." *Social Semiotics* 26, no. 5 (2016): 507.

² Lin, Shen (Lamson). "Access to Health Care among Racialised Immigrants to Canada in Later Life: A Theoretical and Empirical Synthesis." *Ageing and Society* 42, no. 8 (2022): 1741.

Divine: Mm. And then?

Mom: I said, yeah, because I think people there are friendly and it's a nice place. Nice to explore And they ask me, 'do you have anybody there? Like family?' I said no. I don't have anybody. 'And why do you like to go there?' Yeah. because it's a nice- they- I heard that lot's of people there are nice and they're very kind. So I'm really interested to go there.

Divine: Mm. And then?

Mom: And then, as long- as long as they are satisfied with your answer, you're good to go.

Due to "race" and what home country people come from, societies have "create[d] distinctions between people based on... shared characteristics."³ So, my mother had to engage with the politics of respectability. She had to present herself in a proper way in front of Canadian officials; she needed to word her arguments and thoughts in a manner that was deemed acceptable for the Canadian nation-state; away from information or "statements that [were] grounded in stereotypical assumptions" that may show she will not be able to integrate well into Canadian society.⁴ This is largely due to homogenizing racialized people, assuming that they "supposedly [espouse] values incompatible with Western Civilization."⁵ Even if my mother believes what she says, there is still this underlying gatekeeping involved; that the Canadian nation-state has a say on who belongs and who does not. Even with the medical exam, Canada polices their borders and allows entry to those who are able to pass the test, as if to say 'only those who are healthy enough are worthy to come.'⁶

³ Browne, A., J. Johnson, and J. Bottorff. "Recognizing Discrimination in Nursing Practice." *Canadian Nurse* (1924) 98, no. 5 (2002): 24.

⁴ Poolokasingham, Gauthamie, Lisa B. Spanierman, Sela Kleiman, and Sara Houshmand. "'Fresh Off the Boat?'" Racial Microaggressions that Target South Asian Canadian Students." *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education* 7, no. 3 (2014): 196.

⁵ Jisrawi, Athir N. and Carrie Arnold. "Cultural Humility and Mental Health Care in Canadian Muslim Communities/L'Humilite Culturelle Et Les Soins De Sante Mentale Dans Les Communautés Musulmanes Canadiennes." *Canadian Journal of Counselling and Psychotherapy* 52, no. 1 (2018): 44.

⁶ It is important to note here, this whole process, including my mother, is all implicated in the project of settler colonialism. I want to acknowledge how the Canadian government, here,

Divine: Then once you came here, how did you find the job- how did you find your first job?

Mom: Oh, my first employer was in North Van. It was, like, East Indian family. ...

Divine: And like- is it because of the agency that they put you in that employer first?

Mom: Mhm.

Divine: Oh. What did you have to do for the-

Mom: Everything. Taking care of the two kids, cook for the family. Wash... doing the laundry, cooking- like everything! And then, as soon as they knew I have my diver's license, they enrolled the kids to the swimming pool. And then- so after school, I need to them to swim, and then go to the library. Something like that.

Divine: But how did- how did the family treat you?

Mom: Oh, they're nice. But the only thing is... they pay me low. The minimum.

Divine: Was it lower than Hong Kong? Or is it the same? Or?

Mom: Well, it's, um. If you basing the rate, it's a bit higher here. But still, I'm the lowest paid....My net is like \$400.

Similar to her job in Hong Kong, she still had the same domestic duties. She had to do a lot, yet earned very little. This displays that there are larger patterns "that [exist] between race and socioeconomic status."⁷

Divine: Oh. What did you use that money then?

Mom: I need to save! Because when you apply for your permanent residence, you need to show that you have savings.

Divine: But then... you didn't have to pay for rent? Or something?

Mom: Oh, when I go and stay at the weekend, I need to pay rent. Yeah, on the weekend. Like I go out Friday night and then go back to my employer at Sunday night.

Divine: But where did you live then?

Mom: In a friend's house. In an apartment.

This is, again, another example where her gendered labour is used to serve a greater political function, in this case, to prove that she is worthy to stay in Canada. Her body is used in order to fulfill the criteria of having a productive economy. It did not just end there. She needed to use her off hours to continue to prove she was a viable citizen of Canada:

Divine: I remember- wait, you told me on the weekend too that you had to go to school to do some-

ultimately had a say in who was and is allowed onto this land. They do not include nor recognize Indigenous people's histories and the implications of Canada's ongoing colonial projects.

⁷ Puzan, Elayne. "The Unbearable Whiteness of being (in Nursing)." *Nursing Inquiry* 10, no. 3 (2003): 195.

Mom: Oh yeah! Before- before, I did lots of short courses. Like cooking, cake decorating, everything. You name it.

Divine: Because, why?

Mom: Because when you apply your permanent residence, they want to know what you've been doing on the weekend. If you taking some courses to upgrade your skills. So, you need to show all certificates and everything. So I got tons.

Divine: And then you show it to like a government official?

Mom: Yeah, when you apply. When you apply your permanent residence then need to ask you- you need to bring that certificate. Proof. What did you do on the weekend, during your off. And you need to show your volunteer form 120 hours, *ata* (I believe). The volunteering- any kind of volunteering at the nursing home or anywhere, in the hospital...

Then, my mother tells me that after a few years, she began taking courses to be trained as a Care Aide, as she told me she was a midwife when she was in the Philippines, and being a Care Aide was similar and, according to her, was a "good job" with a "good pay." She then proceeds to tell me the jobs she took while being a Care Aide, and many of them overlapped with one another.

Divine: So you had to juggle the 2 jobs?

Mom: Yeah, home support and then Louis Brier. Home support, Drake Meddox before, it's just like. I start 9... 9 to 5. And then 11 to 7. It's good because *nanay* (grandma) is still capable of doing all the house work and doing the laundry, cooking. So as soon as I come home, she said 'you go eat, and then you go sleep.' Because she already finish cooking.

Divine: Were you still working for auntie Diane? Or were you already a care aide?

Mom: I was already a care aide, but they want me to go and clean their house once a week on one of my day off. And they pay me under the table.

Divine: Wait so you were working Drake Meddox, Louis Brier, and also- on the weekend or something?

Mom: No, sometimes my day off is like Monday. Or sometimes, if I got Tuesday. Because our day off, like alternate. Not only all weekend. And then I said 'I think Diane, I cannot make it anymore. I cannot do this anymore. It's too much for me.' She said, 'oh okay.'

Divine: What year was that?

Mom: Oh, that was when I had another job again.

Divine: What? So 4 jobs?

Mom: Yeah. Because one of my friends said, 'can you relieve me, because I'm going to the Philippines.' So after Louis Brier, I need to do there straight. So I need to bring my clothes and my food.

It did not seem like she had much time for herself. Such “power differentials”, especially in this context, “[were] the major driver of health inequities.”⁸ Hence, why, migrant labour has been feminized and marginalized. With regards to her care aide training, despite already having trained as a midwife, this was not taken into account, which speaks to the “apparent discrepancies between education and employment levels.”⁹ Positioned as a migrant woman, my mother felt the need to prove herself ‘worthy’ and contribute to the success of the Canadian economy; even if it meant working non-stop and leaving no space or time for herself.

She goes on to explain how my grandparents were working as blueberry pickers and babysitting the children in their apartment complex. It continues to showcase Filipinx bodies being gendered and racialized through the context of their labour. It is not just my mother who is expected and allotted to work these ‘low-levelled’ domesticated jobs, but even my grandparents. As racialized individuals, they are limited to these jobs. This is not to say that these jobs are not important, but that there is a correlation between being an immigrant and working jobs that are deemed ‘low-levelled’ in public discourses. They are forced into such “categories” to allow those in power to keep their “domination and control” over racialized groups.¹⁰

My mother ends with her experiences being a Care Aide during the pandemic.

Mom: Well, I quit because of the pandemic, *de ba?* (right?) I didn’t go back to my home support.

... Divine: But what about Covid, what if it is easily spread?

Mom: Not really. If they know one of the patient got covid, they contain the patient inside, and just permanent care aide there. *Nu casino dijay care aide na, iso lat ta haan na ag suksukat* (So whoever their care aide was, that’s who they will be with. They don’t change.) Then those care aide that work there, they stay there they don’t- in the same area. They need to gown themselves. Protect. And then gloves, like isolate and change every often - masks every often. As soon as they get it, get out, change, wash hand.

⁸ Lin, “Access to Health Care,” 1741.

⁹ Poolokasingham, “Fresh Off the Boat?,” 195.

¹⁰ Puzan, “The Unbearable Whiteness,” 194.

Here, even if my mom did not have to endure working at risk of COVID, it seems that her other co-workers had to be forced to come and work in very close proximity to those who have COVID. This shows how racialized femmes who have immigrated to the Global North are forced to perform feminized labour, and essentially expose themselves, more so than those who do not work in healthcare. She ends by talking about her experience with the compensation board.

Mom: Oh you know when the pandemic was really bad, I was on compensation, right? I hurt myself with a patient, because she bit me.

Divine: Where was that?

Mom: In Louis Brier. So they cannot force me because I was in pain. Then they got so many problem because they don't want to approve my compensation, blah blah blah.

Divine: Why?

Mom: I don't know. It takes a while before they approve. And then, after few weeks. The compensation board wants me to go back to work. And I cannot because my shoulder's bothering me. I cannot even lift. So what I did, I used my sickol (sick days).

Divine: How many did you have to use?

Mom: I didn't even use all of it. I think 4 months. Then November, I already said I'm going to retire in November.

Divine: But did you get the money for compensation?

Mom: Yeah, I got it from compensation board. And then when I apply my sickol, of course they need to pay me my sick time. Then I filed my retirement. They cannot force me to back once I retied. Because I already had enough. 30 years is enough, even it's just like early retirement because I'm only 62. The management wasn't good. Just like, lots of favouritism.

My mother was physically hurt, yet she still needed to push against the board to prove that she was qualified for a paid leave. In the end, she decided to use her paid time off and ignore what the board had decided for her. Instances like this demonstrate how healthcare systems “over-individualise responsibility for health services uptake,” barely taking into consideration of any “power differentials and (in)equitable access” that one encounters.¹¹ By the board not listening and wanting her to continue to work, they display how racialized and gendered bodies

¹¹ Lin, “Access to Health Care,” 1738.

are actually treated in the global economy. Similar to how they treated my mom, structures like a capitalist and exploitative nation-state will only see people, like them, as just bodies that need to contribute to empowering those in control even further, no matter the cost.

Ultimately, in analyzing my mother's story, I showcase specific examples of the ways that the labour of racialized migrants, in this case, Filipinx migrants, tend to be rendered as gendered and classed work in the public sphere. This means such work, like taking care of children or cleaning the house, is placed upon femmes and women of colour, especially from countries in the Global South, as they are seen as easily exploitable than most, and can be used to further the economy by using their positionality against them. So, those who want to stay in Canada and are willing to do what it takes, will tolerate the terrible conditions without complaining. My mother, despite going through this, is more than her experiences though. While she has been in situations that can render her racialized and exploitable, she cannot be boxed into 'just a victim' of exploitation; and I think this can be said for many others. It is important to recognize the systems in place and how they affected migrant workers; however, we must understand that these people also offer other experiences and positionalities than just 'migrant workers.' We must acknowledge people's narratives while approaching them with nuance and complexity in order to portray people, like Filipinx migrants, properly.

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Transcript

Divine: Okay, so can you tell me about, like, when you started working? Like, how did you get into the agency first? The one you told me-

Mom: Do I need to start from Hong Kong?

Divine: Maybe. Just a little bit of it. So that we can- so I know how you came form Hong Kong to Canada.

Mom: Well, I went to Hong Kong when I was 19 years old.

Divine: Mm

Mom: As a babysitter, and like a nanny all around. Doing the- cleaning the house, doing the babysitting. Everything

Divine: Okay.

Mom: And I stayed there until... I was 19, and that was 1982. I left Hong Kong - that was 1987, to come here to Canada.

Divine: But then you went through the agency or something?

Mom: Yeah, I- I apply Paragon agency.

Divine: What kind of agency is that?

Mom: Paragon. Like uh... those agency that helps looking after- looking for your employer and everything.

Divine: Oh, so then they just help-

Mom: Yeah they help me, yeah.

Divine: To come to Canada, you mean?

Mom: Yeah... they help me find the employer.

Divine: Mm. But then how - your employer in Hong Kong, what was that one?

Mom: Oh. Through agency again. From Philippines.

Divine: But that family, what did you do with- for them?

Mom: Yeah. Like housekeeping. Everything, all around. From housekeeping, doing the laundry, everything. Cooking and babysitting. And sometimes taking care of the- uh to their piano lessons.

Divine: You have to drive there too?

Mom: No, I don't drive. I just take them to the...skytrain? That- those underneath the water.

Divine: Mm. But then how many children?

Mom: Two.

Divine: And you had to do... what?

Mom: Well, we do the groceries. I'm doing the cooking. And then, at the weekdays, like after school... we need to... do the groceries, I'm doing the cooking, and we need to bring the food downstairs, because there- the kids' parents have their shop after- because they're both teachers. The man is a principal and the lady is a high school teacher.

Divine: Oh.

Mom: So after- after school, they go straight to their shop. Like uh- atari game. They have a atari game. So we need to bring their food downstairs. So after, uh, cooking and everything, feeding the kids, we need to brought their food at the bottom. They have a shop at the bottom of the building.

Divine: So like you had to take them there, from school, to the shop?

Mom: No. Their grandfa- their grandfather of the kids, is the one picking them up from school.

Divine: Okay.

Mom: And it's me who's been doing the groceries and cooking the food, for dinner.

Divine: And then- did you have to take the kids everywhere?

Mom: Oh just- no. The grandfather is the one bringing them to school. But, for bringing to the piano lesson, just with the- with the grandfather, I do with them. Because two kids. One is one years old and the other one is three.

Divine: And you had to- did you have to cook for the family?

Mom: Yeah, I need to cook for them.

Divine: And clean the house or something?

Mom: mhm

Divine: How much did they pay you?

Mom: That was... I think - uh when I went there, was 1982, my first employer... it was like 1,200 Hong Kong dollars?

Divine: Mm. Is that- how much-

Mom: I don't know. I can't remember how much in peso. Convert it to peso.

Divine: But then what did you use that money for?

Mom: Sent it to- to *nanay* (means mother in Ilocano, but also the same word I refer to my grandmother) and *tatay* (meaning father, but I use it to call my grandfather).

Divine: Mm. But then how much did you have left for yourself?

Mom: Only my overtime. Like uh- because I'm working 6 days. I got only one day- one day off. So one- one par- one overtime, that's my pocket money. One day overtime.

Divine: And- but how often did you need to be with the kids? Like all day?

Mom: Oh yeah. All day.

Divine: And you had to cook clean everything too.

Mom. Yeah.

Divine: Okay. So then, after Hong Kong, and through the agency, you went to... you applied and then you came to Canada? Like you got approved to come to Canada? Or what...

Mom: Yeah. You need to apply. You need to apply and then, uhm, they process your paper, and then they will call you for interview. If it is everything okay. After your interview, you have your medical and everything. Then you're ready to go.

Divine: Then what's the- so you have interview, then medical? What else for that process?

Mom: Yeah.

Divine: That's it?

Mom: Coming to- coming here to Canada?

Divine: Yeah, yeah.

Mom: From Hong Kong? Yeah. They need to make an interview.

Divine: What did they ask, do you remember?

Mom: They ask me, why do you- do I want to go- why- why do you want to go to Canada?

Divine: Mm. And then?

Mom: I said, yeah, because I think people there are friendly and it's a nice place. Nice to explore And they ask me, 'do you have anybody there? Like family?' I said no. I don't have anybody. 'And why do you like to go there?' Yeah. because it's a nice- they- I heard that lot's of people there are nice and they're very kind. So I'm really interested to go there.

Divine: Mm. And then?

Mom: And then, as long as long as they are satisfied with your answer, you're good to go.

Divine: So you had to, like, try and make the answer so that it's nice to hear.

Mom: Yeah. It's just like, because the first thing they ask, if I have a family here and if I have a friend. And I said no. So, 'oh, that's really- that's really strange.' I said, No! Because I- it was- I was reading the magazine and it's just like- encourage myself to go and meet these Canadian people that they're really- really really nice and very friendly and I want to know- mingle that kind of environment, I siad.

Divine: Wait, what magazine is that?

Mom: I don't know I cannot- because my employer before is just like they got tons of magazine. So, I just scan.

Divine: So, is it because you saw that magazine that you wanted to go to Canada? Or what made you want to go?

Mom: Well, I heard that there's lots of opportunity here.

Divine: Oh, okay.

Mom: You can get your, uh, permanent residency here. So that's one thing I- why I come here.

Divine: So the process to get into Canada...so, what else did they do after the interview? What happened?

Mom: After my interview, then I had my medical and then everything. As long as-

Divine: What did they look for in the medical?

Mom: Like x-ray. If you have something- serious sickness.

Divine: Then they won't let you in?

Mom: They do, but you need to have, like uh, go for medical.

Divine: Before the interview- how did you get to go to the interview? Like how did they- how did you get to go through the process? How did you start?

Mom: Well... how did I start to go to interview?

Divine: Yeah, like what was the process? Like, how did you get the interview?

Mom: Well, of course, when you apply, you need to process your papers. You need to go through the agency and you give all the requirements. Right? After giving all the requirements, and then the agency will let you know ahead of time, 'you have an interview like this- like this, at this time, this building.'

Divine: Oh, okay. What kind of agency was it? Like, who ran the agency?

Mom: The owner was Canadian I think...

Divine: And you found it through the ad? Or magazine or something?

Mom: Yeah, through the ad. Through the newspaper. Because most of the time, every three months, my employer, my last employer in Hong Kong. They travel. They had a business. They always travel- business travel because they have, um, what do you call that- uh... They have a hotel. Like branches of hotels.

Divine: But you said they're teachers...

Mom: No! They are not. They owned businesses. They have their own hotels.

Divine: Wait... who is this?

Mom: My last employer.

Divine: Is this after, or before the children?

Mom: Oh, after. That's my third employer already there. My last.

Divine: Before you move to Canada?

Mom: Yeah. So they said...when they interviewed me to go and work for them, they said when they're going for good, in the US, they're gonna bring me. I said yes.

Divine: But you didn't go, no?

Mom: No! Because I apply here.

Divine: Oh, okay okay. So after- after you finish like the medical, was there anything else? The medical exam?

Mom: Then you wait for your passport.

Divine: How long did that take?

Mom: Oh, it doesn't take long. When I applied coming here.

Divine: What year?

Mom: That was... I came here 1980- that was 87. 3 months! Or less than 3 months.

Divine: Then once you came here, how did you find the job- how did you find your first job?

Mom: Oh, my first employer was in North Van. It was, like, East Indian family. And they had two kids. The eldest one is a boy. He was, I think, 3 years old when I arrived. And the other one, the girl, was 1 year old.

Divine: And like- is it because of the agency that they put you in that employer first?

Mom: Mhm.

Divine: Oh. What did you have to do for the-

Mom: Everything. Taking care of the two kids, cook for the family. Wash... doing the laundry, cooking-like everything! And then, as soon as they knew I have my divers license, they enrolled the kids to the swimming pool. And then- so after school, I need to them to swim, and then go to the library. Something like that.

Divine: But how did- how did the family treat you?

Mom: Oh, they're nice. But the only thing is... they pay me low. The minimum.

Divine: Was it lower than Hong Kong? Or is it the same? Or?

Mom: Well, it's, um. If you basing the rate, it's a bit higher here. But still, I'm the lowest paid. Like how much did I... that one, for her... is like my net is like \$400.

Divine: Per month?

Mom: Yeah. That's my- 400. In 97.

Divine: And you had to send some money to nanay and tatay again? Or were they-

Mom: mm, not really. I don't send them every month before.

Divine: Oh. What did you use that money then?

Mom: I need to save! Because when you apply for your permanent residence, you need to show that you have savings.

Divine: But then... you didn't have to pay for rent? Or something?

Mom: Oh, when I go and stay at the weekend, I need to pay rent. Yeah, on the weekend. Like I go out Friday night and then go back to my employer at Sunday night.

Divine: But where did you live then?

Mom: In a friend's house. In a apartment.

Divine: Oh, so you share with them? And you pay your share?

Mom: mhm.

Divine: But then... for that employer, did they give you any breaks or anything?

Mom: What breaks?

Divine: Cause it sounds like drive their kids everywhere and they had a lot of extracurricular activities.

Mom: Well, they give you 2 weeks. That's it.

Divine: 2 weeks like-

Mom: 2 weeks holiday.

Divine: In one year?

Mom: Yeah.

Divine: And then, on the weekend you said- what did you do on the weekend?

Mom: I just go and- Friday night- Friday night I need to go out and then meet with my friend. Stay on the weekend with- at their apartment. So you need to pay.

Divine: Wait- you're not allowed to sleep at their house? During the weekend?

Mom: Yeah, I do. But, I want to- I want to get out. Because the kids doesn't leave you alone. They always come and bug you in your room.

Divine: Why, what about the parents? What did they do?

Mom: Upstairs. But if they know that you are in your room, they come and bugging you.

Divine: Wait, the children or the parents?

Mom: The children.

Divine: I remember- wait, you told me on the weekend too that you had to go to school to do some-

Mom: Oh yeah! Before- before, I did lots of short courses. Like cooking, cake decorating, everything. You name it.

Divine: Because, why?

Mom: Because when you apply your permanent residence, they want to know what you've been doing on the weekend. If you taking some courses to upgrade your skills. So, you need to show all certificates and everything. So I got tons.

Divine: Is this the- is this the agency you show? Or what?

Mom: Noo, when you apply your permanent residency here in Canada.

Divine: And then you show it to like a government official?

Mom: Yeah, when you apply. When you apply your permanent residence then need to ask you- you need to bring that certificate. Proof. What did you do on the weekend, during your off. And you need to show your volunteer form 120 hours, *ata* (I believe).

Divine: In a year?

Mom: No, the- the whole thing that you did. The volunteering- any kind of volunteering at the nursing home or anywhere, in the hospital...

Divine: Did you do nursing home or hospital?

Mom: I think I went to, uh, children's.

Divine: Children's hospital? What did you do?

Mom: Uh, mingle with the- those patients. For 120 hours.

Divine: Is that why you went into Care Aide?

Mom: No, because, uh, way back home, I was a registered midwife, right? So it's just like I have a background.

Divine: Do you remember anything else that you had to do for the children, for the Indian family?

Mom: That's it. Bring- going to the library, reading books. When I finish, like, giving them a bath, at night. And then after that, feed them, and then go to sleep. If the mom is coming home late, sometimes they come home, like 9. The kids are in bed when they come home.

Divine: But did the family ever let you hang out with them?

Mom: Oh yeah! They do. Uh, the lady said, if you don't wanna go out, you can stay in your room. But how could you rest? The kids are always there.

Divine: Haha, is that what she said?

Mom: Yeah. When I was sick, she come and pick me up in my boarding house. I was throwing up and she said if you don't feel good tomorrow, it's okay. You just watch the kids. You just lie down and watch them and I'll cook something and you just warm it up and give it to them. They can feed themselves *kunana* (she said). You can just rest in the house.

Divine: But how old were the kids?

Mom 3 *ngaroud* (I said). 3 and... I think 1 and a half *dijay* (was the) younger.

Divine: How old was the mom? Was she older than you?

Mom: Oh yeah, she was older than me. I was only 19. Ah no, I was only 26 when I come here.

Divine: Ah. How long did you work for that family?

Mom: Until I- uh... 3 years?

Divine: And then during that time, you still went to do the skills classes? How long did it take you?

Mom: 6 months. 6 months plus one month... what do you call that... uh, training?

Divine: Training for?

Mom: Like, training to become uh... what you gonna do. How you call it...

Divine: Like training...what do you mean training.

Mom: To become a Care Aide!

Divine: Oh okay. Is that- you already knew that you wanted to be a care aide then? When you came here?

Mom: No! But that's the only way that you could get a good pay. And if you don't have a certificate, they don't like to hire you.

Divine: So when you finish the process, was this for your PR? Or why did you have to go through school and get the skills?

Mom: So that I can get a good job.

Divine: What about your PR?

Mom: Oh, I already had my PR already when I went to school. Because they don't let you take your full time studies if you don't have your permanent residence.

Divine: How long did it take for you to get your PR?

Mom: I think... 3 years? When I left the first employer, I'm already- I got my PR.

Divine: Okay, so after the Indian family-

Mom: Yeah, I already got my PR. Then I went to aunty Diane.

Divine: So when did you go to the high school- then night school?

Mom: When I was working with them.

Divine: The Indian family?

Mom: Mhm. Summer. Summer so that I can have my alibi to get out every evening. So I going for swimming and I gong for boxing.

Divine: Heh. Wait what? Boxing?

Mom: Yeah, boxing. Oh yeah! I learned boxing a little bit and then swimming.

Divine: Did you do it with your friends? Or by yourself?

Mom: Well I- I have someone there close by me. So both of us going.

Divine: So then you had to finish all that to- to say that you can work?

Mom: Oh the night school is just like, for like the kicking and boxing. But I didn't tell her because she gonna be laughing at me. I just tell them I'm gonna go swimming.

Divine: Why she laugh at you?

Mom: Because why- why do you need to spend your money *kunana a* (she would say).

Divine: Was it expensive?

Mom: Not really. But it's okay. It's fun.

Divine: And then after. So you had to- that's your first family right?

Mom: Yeah.

Divine: And then after, you got your PR and you went to-

Mom: I went to auntie.

Divine: Oh, auntie Diane. Did you have to do anything else to talk to the government?

Mom: No.

Divine: But what was the agency that you had to go through for aunty?

Mom: Oh, I cannot remember the agency, it's a Filipino. The owner of that agency is a Filipino. And then I phone. 'Oh yeah, yeah! I have a new, nice family' they said. 'I'm gonna bring you there, when do you want?' when are you ready? *In bagak* (I said). 'Oh okay, I'll bring you there. There's a new Canadian family. They are nice. They have one daughter.' And then when I went there, aunty, Jessie and John were there... Oh Jessie was so cute. And she- I think I'm the third- I was the third they interviewed me. And then she said- after she interviewed me- because Jessie was very close to me and she wants to play with me. And then Diane was so smiley and then she said- she told the guy, the agency 'I'm gonna call you, whatever my decision is' *kunana* (she said). 'And then he will call you' *kunana*. And then the following day...the agency called me 'oh they hire you' *kunana met in* (what she said next). Yeah? 'Yeah, you can start tomorrow, or next week' *kunana*.

Divine: So what happened?

Mom: So, I phoned. I was so excited to phone because she hire me. And then she said, 'yeah, you have the criteria that we want. Because see? You are the only person that Jessie wants to play with. All those people that we interviewed, she never want to get nearby to them. Only you.'

Divine: Wait, who said that?

Mom: Auntie! Yeah, she was so close to me when she saw me. Oh my gosh! She's just like an angel.

Divine: Ha! But what about- how did you find that agency?

Mom: Oh someone, one of my friend. They said ' try this' because one of my friend, he helped. I try.

Divine: What did you have to do for aunty?

Mom: Oh, the main thing- the main thing is Jessie. She said 'I dont' care even the house is dirty, as long as Jessie doesn't have no accident at all. Just go with her.' Like going to bike, to the park.

Divine: How old was she? 3?

Mom: Mhm.

Divine: Oh okay, so she wasn't even in school yet. And then after, when auntie Diane, what did you do for the next job?

Mom: Oh, I went to school. That's the care aide.

Divine: Was there a lot of Filipino?

Mom: Oh yeah! Half were Filipino. And then when I have my practicum- practicum *gayam* (an expression, like 'oh yeah'). They want me to- they wanted me to go with them in Hawaii, but I said no I can't because I need to do my practicum. If I don't finish my practicum, that means I'm under graduate.

Divine: You can't graduate you mean?

Mom: Yeah, they dont- they don't give me my certificate. So... auntie siad, 'oh okay...' But that's what Jessie wants. ' I want Beth.'

Divine: But you didn't go.

Mom: No! Because I got my practicum

Divine: And then after the care aide what did you-

Mom: Oh, after the care aide, when I was graduating, 1991, I applied that Louis Brier. Finally, they hired me. So, I working there like, part time. And then after 3 months, full time as a graveyard. Like 11 to 7.

Divine: Graveyard? So they didn't- those are bad hours.

Mom: [shrugs] Well... I like it because I'm working during the day, as a home support.

Divine: So you had to juggle the 2 jobs?

Mom: Yeah, home support and then Louis Brier. Home support, Drake Meddox before, it's just like. I start 9... 9 to 5. And then 11 to 7. It's good because *nanay* is still capable of doing all the house work and doing the laundry, cooking. So as soon as I come home, she said 'you go eat, and then you go sleep.' Because she already finish cooking.

Divine: How did you apply for your citizenship?

Mom: After 3 years... after 3 years I got my PR, then I applied for my citizenship. So I got my PR, waited for 3 years. Then apply for my citizenship.

Divine: Were you still working for auntie Diane? Or were you already a care aide?

Mom: I was already a care aide, but they want me to go and clean their house once a week on one of my day off. And they pay me under the table.

Divine: Wait so you were working Drake Meddox, Louis Brier, and also- on the weekend or something?

Mom: No, sometimes my day of is like Monday. Or sometimes, if I got Tuesday. Because our day off, like alternate. Not only all weekend. And then I said 'I think Diane, I cannot make it anymore. I cannot do this anymore. It's too much for me.' She said, 'oh okay.'

Divine: What year was that?

Mom: Oh, that was when I had another job again.

Divine: What? So 4 jobs?

Mom: Yeah. Because one of my friends said, 'can you relieve me, because I'm going to the Philippines.' So after Louis Brier, I need to do there straight. So I need to bring my clothes and my food.

Divine: So when you started applying for your citizenship, what did they ask you?

Mom: I just fill up the- the form right? And then send it And then... if it is...

Divine: What were they looking for? The same thing? Oh like you have to do all these skills or something?

Mom: Yeah. You need to fill up and then everything. Fill up whatever in the form. And then, after my citizen- I got my citizenship, I went back home, to talk to *nanay* and *tatay* if they want to come here. They siad, 'yeah.' So I brought them here.

Divine: But then- What did you have to do to bring them here?

Mom: I need to show my income. So that I can support them. That time, it's not even hard when I brought them here.

Divine: But what did they need to do? Like interview or something?

Mom: Oh, when they come here, they chop their passport as a landed immigrant. They have their permanent residence already.

Divine: How did they get permanent residency already?

Mom: Because I sponsored them.

Divine: Oh okay. But what do you mean chop their passport?

Mom: They- when they got everything, all the papers in the Philippines, that means when they come here, already, they approve. That means they are landed immigrant. They're already permanent residence when they come.

Divine: So they didn't need interview or anything?

Mom: No.

Divine: But YOU had to prove.

Mom: Yeah, I had the proof. I had my income. I need to show my income. And then, how many rooms. 'Do they have rooms when you brought them in Canada? Do they have their own room?/' I said yeah. I go ttwo bedrooms apartment right now, I siad. And the one bedroom is for them. And they know, because they know my income. And then they ask me, 'do you plan to buy a house?' Well I said, someday. That's what my goal.

Divine: Was this before I was born?

Mom: Yeah.

Divine: Did they ask you anything else?

Mom: No. And- oh yeah! They ask me 'why do you wanna bring your parents?' I said, in the future, if I'm gonna get married, I'm gonna have someone to look after my child. That's my goal.

Divine: Oh, okay, and then what did they say?

Mom: 'oh smart.' Yeah, because, if I'm gonna hire a babysitter, then I need to pay. So, if I'm gonna bring them, my parents here, well, maybe I might be paying a little bit less, or what. 'Oh yeah, I got you' *kunana met dijay* (is what they said).

Divine: But what else did *nanay* and *tatay* do while they were here?

Mom: Oh yeah, they- *tatay* is going to the farm. Working the farm. And *nanay* is looking for the kids. So before- when *tatay* went to the farm, both of them were looking after 5 kids.

Divine: Before me?

Mom: Yeah. From the apartment.

Divine: And then they were getting paid for them?

Mom: Yeah!

Divine: At the same time?

Mom: Yeah, because all parents are working, and they're coming home late.

Divine: and then after, so then you would come home and just...

Mom: Come home and then *nanay* said 'you go and eat then sleep' *kunana ket awan-* (she said because there is no-) I don't have any sleep yet. When I come home at 7 something, I get changed, and then have my breakfast, pack my lunch and then go again.

Divine: Did you even sleep then?

Mom: I did sleep, like after- I finish at 5 so I come home like 5:30, at night. And then I eat, and then go sleep for few hours, then get up, have shower. Then go to Louis Brier again. See? I did that for 30 years. 30 years... that's enough I told your dad. I'm working for 30 years and that's it now.

Divine: What did you have to do at Louis Brier?

Mom: Well, take care of the patient. Usually I work permanent nights before.

Divine: But didn't you have a second job?

Mom: Yeah, home support during the day. That's why I keep my nights before, 11-7. And then come home, 7:30, eat breakfast. Get changed, dress. And then come and pick you up, drop to school. And then I go to

Divine: When was that?

Mom: *Idi elementary ka* (when you were in elementary). Start from preschool *kunamon a* (let's say), and then you going up to elementary.

Divine: So when did you get that job?

Mom: You mean the home support?

Divine: Yeah.

Mom: I started home support 1993. I start Louis Brier 1991. Louie Brier is my permanent nights and home support is my day time, like 8 to 5.

Divine: So you didn't have time at home?

Mom: Well, at that time nanay was the one taking care of the house, like vacuuming, doing the laundry, everything. So when I get home, I just come home and eat. Or, what I usually do before... I come and pick you up, because I adjust my time. I come and pick you up at 3 o'clock and drop you into your activity, if you have activity like gymnastic or something. Wait you there, and then come home. Then, give you a bath, and then reading you book. And then we go- both of us gonna have supper and then go to bed. That's what we usually do.

Divine: But that's a lot of work.

Mom: It does! But it's okay because nanay is still capable to doing the housework.

Divein: And then you had to do that for how long?

Mom: Well, 1993... 1991 I start Louis Brier and then I apply at home support 1993- Drake Meddow.

Divine: And then you were working both, for how long?

Mom: Well, I quit because of the pandemic, *de ba?* (right?) I didn't go back to my home support.

Divine: And then when you were working during COVID, what did you have to do? Like all the masking and stuff?

Mom: Well they need to do like the speed test, anti-gen. Everyday. *Tapos* (then), teperature.

Divine: And you were working quite close with them?

Mom: Oh, I was working in special care. Special care means those alzheimer patient and exclusive- they cannot get out. They lock, lock unit.

Divine: But what about Covid, what if it is easily spread?

Mom: Not really. If they know one of the patient got covid, they contain the patient inside, and just permanent care aide there. *Nu casino dijay care aide na, iso lat ta haan na ag suksukat* (So whoever their care aide was, that's who they will be with. They don't change.) Then those care aide that work there, they stay there they don't- in the same area. They need to gown themselves. Protect. And then gloves, like isolate and change every often - masks every often. As soon as they get it, get out, change, wash hand.

Divine: But what about when the pandemic started?

Mom: Oh you know when the pandemic was really bad, I was on compensation, right? I hurt myself with a patient, because she bit me.

Divine: Where was that?

Mom: In Louis Brier. So they cannot force me because I was in pain. Then they got so many problem because they don't want to approve my compensation, blah blah blah.

Divine: Why?

Mom: I don't know. It takes a while before they approve. And then, after few weeks. The compensation board wants me to go back to work. And I cannot because my shoulder's bothering me. I cannot even lift. So what I did, I used my sickol (sick days).

Divine: How many did you have to use?

Mom: I didn't even use all of it. I think 4 months. Then November, I already said I'm going to retire in November.

Divine: But did you get the money for compensation?

Mom: Yeah, I got it from compensation board. And then when I apply my sickol, of course they need to pay me my sick time. Then I filed my retirement. They cannot force me to back once I retied. Because I already had enough. 30 years is enough, even it's just like early retirement because I'm only 62. The management wasn't good. Just like, lots of favouritism.