

Images of China Town
Several VOs saying I'm British-chinese, etc....

There are two...: "I'm Susan, I'm Chinese and I'm an adoptee (...)"

Title: ABANDONED ADOPTED HERE (over children singing "Chinese Japanese what are these dirty knees")

There are two...: "Did you adopt me? (...)" SLAP!

01:30 Narration: (over more China Town footage, then footage from the performance)

I AM JUST ONE OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIX HONG KONG FOUNDLINGS THAT WERE BROUGHT OVER TO THE UK AS TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEES IN THE LATE 50S THROUGH TO THE EARLY 60S. IT WAS CALLED THE HONG KONG PROJECT.

A WHITE FAMILY ADOPTED ME, LIKE MANY OF MY FELLOW FOUNDLINGS.

HOWEVER MY NAME ISN'T SUSAN, THAT'S A FICTITIOUS NAME GIVEN TO THE DRAMATISED CHARACTER THAT I PLAYED IN MY ONE WOMAN PLAY –

THERE ARE TWO PERFECTLY GOOD ME'S: ONE DEAD, THE OTHER UNBORN. MY NAME, WELL THE NAME THAT I WAS GIVEN BY THE PEOPLE WHO ADOPTED ME IS LUCY. MY REAL NAME, I DON'T THINK I WILL EVER KNOW.

THE NAME THAT THE ORPHANAGE GAVE ME IS CHAU LAI-TUEN IT MEANS BEAUTIFUL AND GRACEFUL AND WAS ONE OF THE TWO CONCRETE "THINGS" I BROUGHT WITH ME FROM HONG KONG THAT CONNECTED ME TO THE COUNTRY OF MY BIRTH.

MY CHINESE NAME WAS TAKEN AWAY FROM ME, WHEN I WAS RENAMED BY MY ADOPTIVE PARENTS.

ALL I WAS LEFT WITH WAS THE RED SILK HAPPY COAT THAT I WORE WHEN I WAS PLACED ON THE PLANE THAT FLEW ME TO THE UK AS AN ELEVEN MONTH OLD BABY.

THE EXPERIENCE OF BEING ADOPTED HAS BEEN A DOUBLE EDGED SWORD. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, ESPECIALLY IN MY FORMATIVE YEARS

There are two..: "being slapped across the face, apart from being painful, whacked me into being. Chinese but not really Chinese, it's a weird one."

02:15 Narration over footage of newspaper cutouts, shoes, etc. with Jo, Claire and Lucy chatting:

IN 2012 I MET UP WITH THREE OTHER HK FOUNDLINGS AND ADOPTEES
ONE OF THEM WAS
CLAIRE MARTIN, CLAIRE AND I DECIDED TO COMPARE OUR ADOPTION
RECORDS

Claire reading her baby description
Lucy and Claire exchange how they felt..

05:00 Narration over China Town footage:

Being transracially adopted is a weird position to be in because you have all the advantages and the disadvantages, you not, well in my experience, you're not well received on by your ancestral community and you're distrusted by the host community that you're adopted into. If they're aren't other people like you in the near vicinity who reflect back the possibilities of who you might be, you only have two choices you either fade into the background and try and fit in and do everything you can to become something that in some senses you're never going to be or like me you stick out like a sore thumb.

AS A TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEE YOU ARE PLACED INTO AN UNTENABLE POSITION.

I WAS BROUGHT UP BY A WHITE FAMILY WHO NATURALLY ENJOYED ALL THE PRIVILEGES THAT CAME FROM BEING RACIALLY AND CULTURALLY DOMINANT IN THE 50s AND 60s.

Q11AS A TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEE, AS A PERSON OF COLOUR I WAS NEVER EVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO "REAP" THE BENEFITS OF SUCH AN UPBRINGING BECAUSE I WAS NEVER EVER GOING TO BE ABLE TO CHANGE THE COLOUR OF MY SKIN, I WAS NEVER EVER GOING TO BECOME WHITE. I WAS CULTURALLY DISPLACED LINGUISTICALLY AND RACIALLY DISENFRANCHISED REJECTED BY THE COMMUNITY INTO WHICH I HAD BEEN ADOPTED AND SHUNNED BY MANY BRITISH EAST ASIANS BECAUSE I WAS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A REAL CHINESE PERSON. IF THERE AREN'T OTHER POPLE LIKE YOU, REFLECTING BACK TO YOU THE POSSIBILITIES OF WHO YOU MIGHT BE IN THE FUTURE - YOU ONLY HAVE TWO CHOICES. YOU EITHER FADE INTO THE BACKGROUND AND TRY TO FIT IN, DOING EVERYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF TO BEOME SOMETHING THAT YOU ARE NEVER GOING TO BE. OR LIKE ME YOU STICK OUT LIKE A SORE THUMB AND EMBRACE THE FACT THAT YOU ARE NEITHER ONE THING OR THE OTHER.

Lucy reads her baby description which fades out...

Sped up China Town footage, perhaps backward.

There are two..: "Children are supposed to love their parents unconditionally (...)"

Jo: "I've always known I'd been adopted (...) you are in a sense on you own"

Chris: " I don't think I ever fully felt that UK is my country (...)"

There are two..: "as chinese as a pot noodle and as english as the Brighton pavilion"

12:00 Narration:

It turned out I wasn't the only HK adoptee who had trouble adapting ...

I DISCOVERED THAT I WAS NOT THE ONLY HK ADOPTEE WHO HAD HAD TROUBLE ADAPTING

Chris: "wishing and praying (...) washing rigorously (...)"

Lucy to Claire: about the political situation and minorities of the time

There are two..: "I learnt very early on that Chinese engender laughter (...)"

14:15 Narration:

Racism, Adopted or not adopted, looking different from those around you ...

I spoke to other British East Asian actors/writers about their experiences (over archive HK footage)

RACISM - WHETHER YOU'RE ADOPTED OR NOT, LOOKING DIFFERENT FROM THOSE WHO SURROUND YOU CAN BE A CONSTANT SOURCE OF PAIN.

I SPOKE TO OTHER BRITISH EAST ASIAN ARTISTS ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF PREJUDICE AND RACISM

Su Lin: "I went to the airport the other day (...)"

Anna, starting with Lucy's question: "well it obviously has it's roots (...)"

16:46 Narration:

THE STEREOTYPICAL IDEA THAT EAST ASIANS ARE A MODEL MINORITY, IN OTHER WORDS, EAST ASIANS REMAIN SILENT, ACQUIESCENT AND 'PLIABLE' IS NO LONGER TRUE. TALKING TO ANTHONY LAU A YOUNG UP AND COMING THEATRE DIRECTOR; HE HAD THIS TO SAY:

Anthony: "I can understand my great grand parents being bitter about British imperialism (...)"

Su Lin: "People don't perceive us as being very active (...)"

More HK footage

18:35 Narration:

Telling our stories, telling the stories of what it means to us, to be both British and East Asian is vital. But we need more British East Asian playwrights, novelists and poets. East Asians need to step forward and society needs to acknowledge and recognise as part of the British landscape. David Yip - who will be more familiar to many as an actor, he talked to me about his Theatre production,

TELLING THE STORIES OF BRITISH EAST ASIANS, SHARING OUR HISTORY AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE BRITISH AND EAST ASIAN IS VITAL. YES WE NEED MORE BRITISH EAST ASIAN PLAYWRIGHTS, NOVELISTS AND POETS. BUT EAST ASIANS ALSO NEED TO STEP FORWARD, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY, OWNERSHIP AND NOT BE AFRAID TO STAND UP AND STAND OUT. SOCIETY NEEDS TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND RECOGNISE THAT WE ARE PART OF THE BRITISH LANDSCAPE. DAVID YIP, WHO FOR MANY WILL BE MORE FAMILIAR AS AN ACTOR, TALKED TO ME ABOUT HIS THEATRE PRODUCTION

David: "My play Golden Mountain is about a father and son (...)"

More HK footage

21:00 Narration: Listening to David Yip

Listening to David talking about the rich complexity of his familiar history was fascinating. But also made me feel slightly jealous. My history does start until 1962 when I was found on the stairwell of number 9 Austin Avenue in Kowloon. What I inherit and pass on is a broken identity. I grieve for the loss of my birth parents. I never knew my father or mother

LISTENING TO DAVID SPEAK ABOUT THE RICH COMPLEXITY OF HIS FAMILIAL HISTORY WAS FASCINATING. BUT IT ALSO MADE ME FEEL SLIGHTLY JEALOUS. I HAVE NO KNOWN HISTORY UNTIL 1962 WHEN I FOUND ON THE STAIRWELL OF NUMBER 9 AUSTIN AVENUE IN KOWLOON. WHAT I INHERIT AND PASS ON IS A BROKEN IDENTITY. A DISPLACED AND DISENFRANCHISED HISTORY. I GRIEVE NOW MORE AS AN ADULT FOR THE LOSS OF MY BIRTH PARENTS THAN I EVER DID AS A CHILD OR TEENAGER THE FACT THAT I CANNOT PUT A FACE TO THOSE WHO CREATED ME WILL HAUNT ME TO THE END.

David: "I think it was James Bold who said, if you don't know where you come from you don't know how far you've gone (...)"

Anthony: " When I walk down the street (...)"

There Are Two...: "Academically outstanding and at a four foot (...) Kung-Fu the TV series (...)"

Su Lin: "I think that who you are changes with time (...)"

Anna: "What's great now is a lot of Chinese are going into humanities (...)"

There Are Two...: "you even bruise differently (...) these 60s parents had no special skills (...)"

26:35 Narration:

Adoption is and always will be controversial, it's emotive, it is after all one of the most extreme forms of intervention. In the past removing a child from its immediate surroundings might have been the only way to safeguard that child and offer an alternative filled with possibilities. In the 21st century I personally have to question that. With all that we now know about child development,

identity and culture, I have to ask myself who are the real beneficiaries of transracial adoption?

ADOPTION IS EMOTIVE, IT CAN BE DIVISIVE AND IN MY OPINION IS ONE OF THE MOST EXTREME AND CONTROVERSIAL INTERVENTIONS THAT CAN EVER BE PERFORMED ON ANOTHER HUMAN BEING. HISTORICALLY THE REMOVING OF A CHILD FROM ITS IMMEDIATE SURROUNDS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE ONLY SOLUTION TO SAFEGUARD THAT CHILD, TO OFFER AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE WHICH WOULD BE FILLED WITH POSSIBILITIES INSTEAD OF THE REVERSE. HOWEVER IN THE 21ST CENTURY I PERSONALLY HAVE TO QUESTION, GIVEN ALL THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE NOW POSSESS ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT, IDENTITY AND CULTURE. I HAVE TO ASK WHO ARE THE REAL BENEFICIARIES OF TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION?

Chris: "having children anyway is not an altruistic act (...)"

Jo, starting with Lucy's question: "I'm at the grand old age of 52 now (...)"

Chris: "that was my first trip back to HK in my late 20s (...)"

Claire: "I rented a room from another chinese family (...) we are this very strange hybrid"

30:40

BAAF the British Association for Adoption and Fostering WERE the organisation that SPARKED the idea for the documentary. They reignited my curiosity AND interest when they contacted me back in 2008 asking if I would like to take part in their research study on the Hong Kong foundlings that were adopted in the 1950s-1960s. FROM THIS RESEARCH a group FORMED the Hong Kong Adoptees Network. THIS GROUP NOW HOLDS, WHAT THEY REFER TO AS REUNIONS ON A REGULAR BASIS SO THE HONG KONG FOUNDLINGS CAN MEET AND SOCIALISE

Jo: "that was the very nice thing about meeting everyone at the gathering"

Chris: "I think when I eventually got to the point (...) as long as they don't try to impose.. "

There Are Two...: "But for adoption I would not be here (...) I will have to work hard on that one"

34:00 Concluding narration "Identity is a strange beast; it is overlooked and taken for granted by those who do not have to question who or what they are in society. But for those of us who do not benefit from the reflection of society's mirror re-enforcing our physiognomy it is elusive. Making us wander the no man's land between two cultures, two lineages two distinct "what might have beens". I personally believe that we should do all that we can to ensure that children remain in their country of origin. This should always be the first choice To ensure that children remain in their country of origin. This should be the first choice."

IDENTITY IS A STRANGE AND CURIOUS BEAST. IT IS OVERLOOKED AND TAKEN FOR GRANTED BY THOSE WHO WILL NEVER HAVE TO QUESTION THEIR PLACE IN SOCIETY. WHILST AT THE SAME TIME TELLING THE TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEE THAT IDENTITY IS OVER-RATED AND SOMETHING OF LITTLE CONSEQUENCE. BUT FOR THOSE OF US WHO HAVE NEVER BENEFITED FROM SOCIETY REFLECTING AND RE-ENFORCING WHO AND WHAT THEY ARE, IT IS ELUSIVE. BEING WITHOUT A RECOGNISED IDENTITY, BEING STUCK BETWEEN TWO DISTINCT CULTURE, TWO DIFFERING LINEAGES, TWO DIFFERENT "WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEENS" CONDEMNED ME TO AN NO-MAN'S LAND EXISTENCE TO BEING A CULTURAL FRANKENSTEIN. SADLY THERE MAYNOT ALWAYS BE THE OPTION TO PLACE A CHILD IN A FAMILY IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. WITH A HEAVY HEART AS A TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEE I HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT AT THE MOMENT THIS IS TRUE. HOWEVER

I PERSONALLY BELIEVE THAT SOCIETY SHOULD DO ALL THAT IT CAN TO ENSURE CHILDREN REMAIN IN THE COUNTRY OF THEIR BIRTH. THIS SHOULD ALWAYS BE THE PRIME OBJECTIVE ONCE YOU REMOVE A CHILD FROM ITS COUNTRY OF ORIGIN THERE IS NO GOING BACK. THE CHILD LOOSES EVERYTHING, FAMILY, LANGUAGE, CULTURE, HISTORY, ROOTS. WE IRREVOCABLY SEVER THE DNA OF THAT CHILD'S IDENTITY FOR MANY ADOPTEES THIS LEADS TO A LIFETIME OF TRYING TO HEAL THE BREAK IN THEIR LIVES. TRANSRACIAL ADOPTEES ARE SURVIVORS, A FEW SADLY RESOLVE THEIR LOSS AND PAIN IN THE ONLY WAY THAT GIVES THEM PEACE BY TAKING THEIR OWN LIVES. FOR SOME THE ONLY WAY THAT THEY CAN SURVIVE IS TO BE IN A PERMANENT STATE OF DENIAL THERE FOR THE LOSS, THE PAIN, THE TRAUMA OF SEPARATION AND DISPLACEMENT IS BLOCKED OUT. OTHERS EMBARK UPON A JOURNEY OF RE-DISCOVERY. TO EMBRACE OUR FRACTURED, DISJOINTED AND DISLOCATED STORIES AND ACCEPT THAT WE HAVE THE BEST AND THE WORST OF TWO WORLDS, TWO IDENTITIES AND THAT THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOME THINGS THAT WE WILL NEVER EVER KNOW ABOUT OURSELVES OR OUR THE FAMILIES THAT WE CAME FROM