

# MY MOTHER'S STORY: NORTH VANCOUVER

## TITLES ON SCREEN:

*The call went out to the women of North Vancouver...*

*Write your mother's story.*

*100 responded.*

*60 submitted.*

*8 were chosen.*

## VIDEO OF PERFORMERS

The cuts are quick and jagged in the following.

<p><b>SANDRA:</b> I'm Sandra Marie Crawford. Whatever. Everyone calls me Sandy. The only time anyone calls me Sandra is when I am in trouble. Born at VGH, raised in East Van, second of two girls, not married, been living in sin for 14 years, have a 19 year old son, a step-daughter who's 18 and a step-son who's 24. I moved to North Vancouver in 1997 but I've worked here for 22 years. Ta-dah!</p>	<p><b>WENDY:</b> My name is Wendy Noel. I was born in North Vancouver, as was my sister but not my brother. Yes. I think.... well, I am ... I'm a...mother. Mother of twins. Boys. Malcolm and Stewart, who are 22. Oh my God.</p>	<p><b>MEGHNA:</b> Meghna Haldar. I live with a partner. I'm a stepmom and a dog owner. Born in New Delhi, moved here in 2009. North Vancouver is my refuge, my shelter, my home.</p>
<p><b>BEATE:</b> Beate Sigriddaughter. I was born in Kipfenberg, a small town in southern Germany. I am married. For the 3rd time. I have no children of my own. Two stepsons: One 13, the other 32. I live in North Vancouver at the foot of Mt. Seymour, right across from the library where I am a relentless customer.</p>	<p><b>SUZ H:</b> My name is Suzanne Marie Humphreys. I was born at St. Paul's Hospital in downtown Vancouver... a little while ago. The fourth of six children, 5 boys and one girl (me). I am married (for 44 years). I have two daughters. I have lived in North Vancouver for 57 years. But even more than that: my father in law was born here, my husband was born here and my two daughters were born here... so there you go.</p>	<p><b>ESTHER:</b> Esther Chase/ nee Ehrenthal/ adopted Simonovic. I was born in Zichron Yaacov, Israel. I am an only child. (<i>Beat</i>) Married for thirty years. Now divorced. I have 3 grown children: Kiera, Maegan and Nathan. I came all the way from Melbourne, Australia to North Vancouver, in 1976.</p>
<p><b>SUZ R:</b> I'm Suzanne...Ristic. I was born in Toronto, the middle child of three. I'm married. I have two sons: Jean 19, Max 16. I moved to North Vancouver after Jean was born because North Vancouver is an excellent place to raise children. Did I forget something? No, that's it I guess.</p>	<p><b>JANICE:</b> My name is Janice George. I am the eldest of 6 girls. I was born here. I picked berries on this hill with my sisters. I'm a wife, a mother, a weaver, a teacher, and Chief.</p>	<p><b>ESTHER:</b> I am a Preschool teacher.</p>
<p><b>SUZ H:</b> A music educator. Retired now.</p>	<p><b>WENDY:</b> An actor and counselor.</p>	<p><b>SUZ R:</b> An actor and a housewife.</p>

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<b>BEATE:</b> A writer.	<b>MEGHNA:</b> I'm a filmmaker	<b>SANDRA:</b> I work for Allied Shipbuilders where I'm in charge of the payroll time cards for 130 men. I have the BEST job in the world!
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## SC 1: **WAITING ROOM:**

*The performers enter; find their seats around a table, one by one, on separate beats. Long uncomfortable pauses of extended DURATION.*

**SUZ R:** I didn't think it was going to be like this

*(Another pause of extended duration.. Awkward looks to one another. Someone shrugs, there is coughing, rearranging and so on.)*

**WENDY:** Does anyone else find it cold in here?

*(Pause)*

**SANDRA:** What are we supposed to be doing now?

*(Pause)*

**ALL:** *(in succession)* I don't know

**JANICE:** I don't know

*(Pause. Then Janice claps her hands together, catcher style.)*

*In the following section, the women speak in stream of consciousness. Overlapping and repeating. Each woman's dialogue should be highlighted at least once during the repeats. Gestures sequence shift on a count.*

*slashes indicate overlapping lines, highlights indicate words or phrases that are then periodically repeated...*

**MEGHNA** I wonder what she would think of this place? For the longest time, my mother wasn't taken with the West, unlike my father. She did not think South Asians were treated well. For 38 years she refused to leave India/

**SUZ R:** Her older sister, Alexandra, brought her to Canada/

**MEGHNA:** /not even to visit me.

**SUZ R:** /Her older brother Turpche, would be cut out of her life forever when she learned how he neglected and abused their mother/

**MEGHNA:** ...refused

**SUZ R:** /Her younger brother Yanni... well.... Yanni... yeah/  
*simultaneous with:*

# MY MOTHER'S STORY: NORTH VANCOUVER

- WENDY:** Up late ironing and watching tv, unable to get out of bed most mornings... kissing her goodbye for school at her bedside. She was given a diet for fatigue... no chocolate, no coffee, no alcohol... part of what made her life worth getting up for. So...  
**When I had my children.../**
- BEATE:** /Her fifteen page handwritten memoirs end with her school days. Why did she stop?
- ESTHER:** Our little house on Hoskins Road in North Vancouver...my mother jet-lagged after the long flight from Australia; holding my newborn daughter,  
*(simultaneous with)*
- WENDY:** **how difficult it was to be a mother.** Thought they would be better off without me./
- ESTHER:** cooing and **muttering blessings over** her grandchild. How many miles, how many lives, how many twists of fate to bring us to this place?/
- SUZH:** /When was it? 1955? Six of us spent 3 months in a 2 bedroom apartment waiting for the house Dad was building in West Vancouver to be completed.
- JANICE:** *sings Phrase from Squamish song (Aunt Sally)*
- SUZH:** She, who seldom got sick, contracted a severe skin disorder and was confined to bed for 2 weeks. **What would we do without her?/** Would we survive? To our amazement Dad took over and ran the household. Under her supervision of course.
- WENDY:** /Counseling./
- BEATE:** /In the memoir she wrote of a girlfriend stealing from her, then turning this friend in "for honor's sake." Yet, later...
- WENDY:** /My Mom didn't have that kind of support. **Alone** with her cesspool of emotions... in charge of three toddlers. No wonder she found it hard to get out of bed.
- BEATE:** At a mill the local farmers would bring in grain and get loaves of bread in exchange. She wasn't a farmer, had nothing to exchange.
- SANDRA:** When you say Chinese, I think people expect a certain kind of woman/  
**and then they'd meet her and it would be like...**
- BEATE:** *(describing Sigrid telling the story)* "The woman at the counter said, 'And how many do you get?' I said, 'Two.' Pause... pause... pause, she waits for the bread. The stern woman gives her the bread. 'Danke'."
- JANICE:** *repeats song*
- BEATE:** My mother loved telling that story. How readily our moral compass shifts.
- SANDRA:** *(Laughing)* totally not what they expected.

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*(The women perform repetitive gestures. Abstractions of looking in a mirror.)*

<b>MEGHNA:</b> I am like her more than any other person.	<b>JANICE:</b> I have her voice. Speaking voice. Me and my sisters, we all do.	<b>SUZ H:</b> I see her reflection staring back at me.	<b>SANDRA:</b> I think I'm like her in every way from: facial expressions...
<b>SUZ R:</b> I am an organized housekeeper.	<b>SANDRA:</b> Her attitude, uh huh.	<b>JANICE:</b> She was a pitcher; I was her catcher.	
<b>BEATE:</b> My obsequiousness to men.	<b>SUZ R:</b> I care too much what people think.		<b>SANDRA:</b> Getting good deals/ Arguing until I win/
<b>ESTHER:</b> I pretty well fought all my life not to be like her.	<b>SANDRA:</b> Telling the truth no matter how it may hurt or offend people's feelings/	<b>BEATE:</b> And its unfortunate flipside: disdain.	<b>WENDY:</b> It's like my life has been about proving HER wrong.
<b>SANDRA:</b> The way I think. What else?	<b>BEATE:</b> A nice younger man once privately called me out as "obsequious" at a business dinner, and I like the word.	<b>SUZ R:</b> I have her scowl.	<b>SUZ H:</b> As she did, I treat the man in my life with special care. Working on that.
<b>MEGHNA:</b> In public she is sweet and shy. In private she is wicked and irreverent.	<b>JANICE:</b> Someone wants to know me, really know me...	<b>ESTHER:</b> My grandmother's gold necklace...	<b>SANDRA:</b> Oh yeah, the way I cook.
<b>JANICE:</b> What was that thing called, that...?	<b>BEATE:</b> Elusive. She rarely, if ever, spoke her mind.	<b>WENDY:</b> There once was a farmer who took a young miss, in back of the barn where he gave her a...lecture on horses and chickens and eggs and told her that she had such beautiful...manners that suited a girl of her charms a girl that he wanted to take in his...washing and ironing and if she did, they could get married and raise lots of...sweet violets...	

**WENDY:** My Mum

# MY MOTHER'S STORY: NORTH VANCOUVER

**MEGHNA:** My Ma  
**BEATE:** Mein Mutti  
**ESTHER:** Mummyka  
**JANICE:** My Mother.  
**SANDRA:** My mom  
**SUZH:** Mother  
**SUZR:** Ma.

## Sc. 2 MISS CANADA

*(The women line up behind one another and in succession speak into a mic, like the question section for Miss Canada.)*

**SUZ H:** Born Marion Sweeney, Peterborough, Ontario - 1909.  
**ESTHER:** Rachel Lenke Moskovic, Turia-Pasika, Slovakia - 1911  
**BEATE:** Sigrid Herta Rausch, maiden name Pietrzyk, Gross Kessel, East Prussia - 1914.  
**SUZ R:** Vassilka Shikleff, Zeleniche, Macedonia - 1915.  
**WENDY:** Doris Elaine Gregory, Edmonton, Alberta - 1929  
**JANICE:** Molly Jacobs, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver 1940  
**SANDRA:** Mary Quon, St. Paul's Hospital, Vancouver, 1942  
**MEGHNA:** Born Madhuchhanda. Known as Puju. New Delhi, India 1944

*The women line up again and speak the following:*

**ESTHER:** First of 2 girls in a family of 9.  
**BEATE:** The fifth of nine but the first child of her mother's second marriage.  
**SUZ R:** The third of four born to Magda and Ristos Shikleff.  
**WENDY:** Youngest of three sisters.  
**JANICE:** The fourth of nine to Lena and Alfred Jacobs of the Squamish Nation.  
**SANDRA:** Eldest of two girls.  
**MEGHNA:** The eldest born to B.K. Bhaduri and Anjali Bhaduri. A brother was born two years later.

## MY MOTHER'S STORY: NORTH VANCOUVER

**SUZH:** The first girl and second of thirteen children born to Michael and Margaret Sweeney; Irish Catholics.

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