

28th February, 2009 / **PATRICK FONG**

It had not rained in Hong Kong for a very long time.

There were no signs that today would be any different; but in that half an hour when I was to meet Patrick on Lyndhurst Terrace, the rain fell.
Raindrops keep falling on my head

The melody of the song began in my head. The streets were full of shoppers and cars. At last I saw a “cute, white car” as described by Patrick on the phone. There was no one inside the car. Where was he?

*Here's one thing I know
The blues they send to meet me won't defeat me*

It was eight this morning when the mobile rang. I was up early as Alan was to embark on yet another of his business trips. "Linda? Are you Linda?" a slightly anxious voice asked on the phone. Within five minutes of seeing our advertisement in HK Magazine, Patrick decided to call us. Patrick would be driving from Yuen Long. What an Odyssey to the unknown.

It won't be long till happiness steps up to greet me

I wondered what Patrick looked like. Had he abandoned the car because of the rain? I turned and a man was waving at me. He gestured that we should get in the car. Patrick introduced himself; he then offered me a Hong Kong style milk tea which he just bought. Heavenly.

When we arrived at the studio (I decided not to start our afternoon in Antique because of the rain), the rain stopped. Patrick watched the video and I invited him to have a drink afterwards. Patrick seemed to like the wine that I poured him and said, “There were different ways to savor the moments. You lived it first, then you filmed it and then you played it back to enjoy the moment one more time. It was to satisfy oneself. If the viewer happened to identify with Linda's life, then it would be enjoyable. It was tempting to beautify one's memory.” Patrick is now retired and his biggest dilemma now is how to archive and enjoy his memories. He had hired an assistant to organize and archive all his stories and adventures. And he wanted to savor them.

I learned that Patrick was a creative director at several advertising agencies before he retired. The conversation turned to the current financial crisis. One of my all time favorite advert, I said, was by Hamlet the cigar. It was October 1987 when the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 22% in one day. I was living in London at the time. Within 4-5 days of the Black Monday, the TV advertisement came out. It was a simple animation of an arrow signifying movements of the stock market: the arrow moved slightly up and down and then suddenly in one day, plunged and then moved horizontally. The arrow stopped and lit up like a cigar. The music then started, a man's voice quipped “Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet, the mild cigar”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0SbVFxl64A&feature=related> (the exact was not found, this is another classic Hamlet ad.)

It was the speed of which the ad came out as much as its concept that made it a classic. And Patrick remembered the ad too. How thrilling it was to find someone who remembered the ad, especially in Hong Kong.

A rainy day made sunny by a most unexpected visitor indeed.

(Gina Wong / LiTA)