

THE SECRET LIFE OF LABOUR AGENCIES

THE ULTIMATE HUMAN PYRAMID SCHEME

WORK TODAY. GET PAID TODAY.

HUMANIZING THE EXPLOITED

A LOOK INSIDE

BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, business, events, and incidents are products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

PROLOGUE
ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ

Owners of Agencies are often lauded as astute business owners. *They are not.* They have not manufactured a product. They don't have to get a formal education. They, actually, don't own anything, except for a few computers and office supplies. Seriously.

By definition, Agencies are perpetuating modern-day slavery with a business model that relies on the suffering of others to succeed and rely on holding people down.

Why?

Because if their workers have even a modicum of success, Agencies would flounder and eventually fail. Labour Agencies rely on addiction, alcoholism, and mental health issues to produce revenue.

THAT. IS. A. COLD. HARD. FACT.

PROLOGUE

LIFE IN PIECES: COVID + AN ATMOSPHERIC APOCALYPSE (BRITISH COLUMBIA)

A weeklong deluge. An arc is needed. Communities are underwater. Bridges washed away. Store shelves barren. An atmospheric apocalypse slams into British Columbia, tragically washing away lives in massive unavoidable slides.

How are we going to survive?

The Atmospheric Apocalypse arrived after unscrupulous companies used the shade of a once-in-a-century pandemic to toss senior employees into the trash bin as if their contributions for decades were nothing more than an exploitable service. The unscrupulous owners of many of these companies have left precious people, who are later in their career lives, teetering on a precipice of disaster. They don't care. Why would they? The only thing mattering to them is ego and greed.

The number of people over the age of 55 participating in the workforce is down by 2 million, compared to pre-pandemic levels. The Great Recession of 2008 didn't even result in this massive loss of senior, experienced workers.

What's worse is "many older workers that lost jobs during the pandemic won't be back." During the dark, early months of the outbreak, over 20 million Americans lost their jobs in a few months. As the economy tortuously tried to claw back jobs over the last 10 months, the United States has added "2.7 million jobs for workers under the age of 55" since August and a meagre 28,000 people over 55 years of age and older.

(This quotation has been edited to remove egregious grammatical errors. Translation, I'm a better writer than the Forbes writer).

FORBES | OLDER WORKERS ARE BEING PUSHED OUT OF THE JOB MARKET |

For many of these workers, especially those who've faced years of exploitation from greed-addled owners, being kicked to the curb late in career life is a death sentence. If an older worker does not come from entitlement, many find their options for a future drying up, leaving them fearing for their lives as they find their meagre savings running dry. For a worker who needed a few more years to get his financial house to survive later in life – losing their career at 50... 55... or even 60... is like hammering nails into that person's coffin, filling their lives with stress and hopelessness.

**ECONOMIC POLICY INSTITUTE | OLDER WORKERS, WERE
DEVASTATED BY THE PANDEMIC DOWNTURN AND CONTINUE TO
FACE ADVERSE EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES |**

The economic devastation for older workers is not hyperbole; it is a harsh reality many valuable individuals face. In a perfect world, the companies that cast these individuals to the side would have implemented measures to ensure people don't fall through society's cracks as they find their lives unravelling, with depression knocking on the door, homelessness following closely behind. Homelessness walks lockstep with desperation and death.

This is not drama. This is a reality for many.

Many companies used the cover of Covid-19 to terminate older employees without discussion or thanking them for the decades of service. Instead, these companies cared only about their bottom lines and keeping the owner's wallets fat.

The senior workers, facing uncertainty, depression, and the terrifying reality they have been discarded without an ounce of compassion or empathy, have few, if any, options at their disposal. Many of these companies left their senior workers penniless + hopeless.

In essence, they are committing murder.

That may sound harsh, but how long can a sixty-plus-year-old man live without money?

This is a harsh reality facing many people.

ii You'd think the companies, well, they really don't care, and the once-in-a-century pandemic allowed them to fatten their wallets, with little regard for the human cost.

And, as a result, a lost demographic of hopelessness has been created. One person (who prefers to remain anonymous) told me he's hanging on, just barely. He's terrified if a lottery win doesn't come in or some other miracle; he'll be eating Instant Noodles. Next, he's afraid he'll be lining up for food stamps + fighting for dry spaces outside to live out the coming winter – he says if it comes to that, the company may as well just put a bullet in his head.

Another individual, named Jim, said he lost his work due to COVID. Jim is 66. He had worked his whole life. Jim desperately tried to see the silver lining and refused to be deterred. Jim sent out countless resumes, even landing a few interviews. Jim had no call-backs. Finally, at one of the interviews, the twenty-three-year-old interviewer asked him, *"What are you doing here? Nobody wants new hires your age."*

Jim said he walked out of the interview, collapsed to the ground, and started weeping. The humiliation was crushing him.

Jim managed to land a job working with seventeen-year-olds at a diner. He says the depression this has created is devastating, and he hopes the good lord comes for him soon.

Jim used to work for a company that is now expanding and profiting immensely from cutting senior employees and their hefty paycheques. Covid allowed his former boss to

cut Jim without paying him out a single dime.

Jim says it's not the humiliation of working for peanuts that lay him in depression the most. Jim says what's killing him is he cannot see how he'll ever afford a vacation, ride in a car, or new clothes, ever again.

Word on the street is his old boss started another company.

Is Jim bitter?

Sure, who wouldn't be, but more so, Jim is just sad.

A SOCIETY IN SHAMBLES

With Covid still raging, hopefully soon to be under control. And with a tsunami of water, mud, trees, destroying homes + fracturing lives + even ending the lives of many British Columbians – some are profiting greatly, while many are attempting to pick up the pieces of their lives.

I was *shamefully oblivious* to last week's devastation. I went for walks on Saturday + Sunday in downtown Vancouver. Sure, I got wet, but nothing more. On Monday, I headed out to do research and read. I'm one of the older workers who found themselves on the outside looking in. I'm scared like many others. *But I have this burning desire to make a difference*, and fortunately for me, I write. I create. And I have a desire to be the one sixty-plus-year-old who defies the odds and is discovered at this stage of life.

iii

Is this a pipe dream?

I don't have a pipe.

Anyway, back to Monday, when I left my home, the rain warning lifted, and the sky cleared. I barely got wet. After doing two hours of research, I ventured out again only to be greeted by a blast of wind. A friend texted me.

You should get down to Sunset Beach, a barge has washed ashore.

Another crisp blast slammed into me; I met a friend for a pop. We discussed the rain + wind. When I returned home, my building's door, message board, elevator, elevator entrance had all been plastered with photos of a middle-aged (55ish) woman who somehow got into the building and was found sleeping in a stairwell. The posters were littered with **ALLCAPS** highlighting the responsibility of every resident to be diligent and to stop the festering rot of desperation from leaking into our building. How could we allow such a disgusting person into our building? - may not have been written, but it was implied.

The following day, a notice expressing the same need for vigilantism was thrust under every door. Of course, mainly in **ALLCAPS**.

Although, I agree it is important to keep buildings secure and safe. And we can't just let people roam in off the street. At the same time, I looked at the lady's photo; she's no threat to anyone. *Perhaps, she's a Covid job loss casualty.* What I saw in the picture is a broken individual, suffering, barely holding on. You can't walk a block without seeing it,

addiction, mental health issues, hopelessness. I feel when buildings or companies dehumanize individuals, they play a substantial role in destroying the fabrics of society. Everyone is not lucky enough to come from privilege and entitlement. If you are, be grateful. But, as you are trying desperately to convince yourself, you worked hard for everything you have, disregarding your advantage with delusion. Wouldn't it be prudent to accept your role in creating the suffering and find a way to trip out of your ego and make a difference instead of just finding ways to pick the pockets of those in despair, stealing their last shreds of hope?

Maybe the entitlement for some is so great, they never have to worry about falling through the cracks. They're lucky. But for many, this once-in-a-century pandemic isn't going to kill them by contracting the virus. What's going to kill many is the disgusting diseases of greed and ego.

I looked at the picture of the terrified lady again. I felt a rush of compassion. It was quickly swallowed by depression once I realized if I do not find a way to crack open the right door of discovery, one day, in the not-too-distant future, I'll be eating Instant Noodles (dry) and looking for an open the door to find a dry place to sleep.

If that day arrives, RIP.

Oh yeah, back to being oblivious about the storm's destruction. While I wondrously looked at the barge washed ashore at Sunset beach, I gasped. It was only when I turned on the news that I realized how lucky I am to have a warm place to live (for now) and that Vancouver's only real upset was a barge washed ashore on Sunset Beach.

iv

The coming soon stories humanize individuals who some companies saw only as dollars, not human beings. They show these lost souls in all of their damaged glory. They highlight that these people deserve to be treated with respect instead of being treated like expendable garbage.

*A rich man came and raped the land
Nobody caught him
Put up a bunch of ugly boxes
And Jesus, people bought them.*

-THE EAGLES | THE LAST RESORT |

**TODD ~ DONNIE ~ MARK ~ HOWIE ~ ZACH ~ THE B OF A
WALTER ~ RM ~ AB ~ RAY ~ JODY G ~ QUINN ~ BRYCE ~ TJ**

STORIES SOON TO COME!

WHO IS LINDSAY WINCHERAUK?

Lindsay Wincherauk is a fearless writer. He has published two books and has had more than eighteen OPEDs appear in major commuter newspapers. Lindsay wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. His father (who wasn't his father) worked as a mechanic. His mother (who wasn't his mother) worked as an excellent chef in a diner. In fact, his birth was in a secret place where |society deemed| unfit mothers were sent to give birth in isolation – shading families from shame. If the babies survived being born, usually, they were sold to wealthy Americans or adopted out to farm families.

Lindsay's life began with a lie.

Despite Lindsay's perilous beginnings, starting with deception, Lindsay knew no better and went through life excelling at things, usually in two-year stints. Be that athletics (hall of fame, record holding, one-eyed quarterback), scholastically, career-wise (generating more than \$70 million in revenue for one company), socially, + without question: creatively!

Lindsay's challenging beginning instilled in Lindsay heaping doses of compassion and empathy. Lindsay's life starting out as a lie gave him a keen sense to spot BS from miles away. It also provided him with a dry sense of humour and an understanding those born with silver spoons in their mouths will never be self-aware enough to understand (or admit) their good fortune.

During Lindsay's work career, he was well-liked by all coworkers. Lindsay was also well respected by his diverse collection of clients, developing several fantastic friendships, primarily because Lindsay is known for his unflinching integrity and ability to hold conversations on most topics.

Lindsay's life mantra is:

The most valuable part of life is the fabulous people we meet during our journeys. If you treat people with respect (leaving judgment at the door), and more importantly, by opening doors for those less fortunate or who can't speak up for themselves, you are living a good, compassionate life. Making money at all costs is not the only thing mattering. Life can be difficult + devastatingly unfair.

Lindsay believes sharing vulnerability is what makes us human. Lindsay will never shy away from being honest about his pain.

Lindsay also believes we must stand up for ourselves, + more importantly, for those who are too burdened by the injustices of life, they can't find the strength to stand up for themselves.

SOME THINGS LINDSAY IS MOST PROUD OF ARE WHEN:

- A sixty-year-old employee of his, who had entered a point of life where life had become more struggle than joy (it happens to all of us as we age), said to Lindsay, *"I must thank you. I've listened to how you treat people, + by listening, I've learned so much about compassion and patience. Thank you. I consider you a great friend."*
- Another employee who was struggling with addiction thanked Lindsay for his kindness, presenting Lindsay with a Christmas card from him and his girlfriend. Tucked inside the card: lottery tickets.

LINDSAY WINCHERAUK, compassionate, empathetic, well-read, kind, blessed with unflinching integrity, humour in balance, loved by coworkers + friends alike.

Lindsay will always stick up for the underdog. Lindsay understands there are countless older people suffering job loss because COVID gave some companies an opportunity to – Lindsay thinks it is essential to draw attention to this life-threatening issue by being the voice for those too broken to speak up for themselves.

Lindsay is currently pitching four manuscripts to publishers and literary agencies. One of the manuscripts (he can't talk about) will blow the roof off the predatory practices of – Lindsay is writing relentlessly and is also pitching OPEDs and short stories, fiction, + non to literary magazines around the globe.

Lindsay has appeared on Breakfast Television, radio programs in Montreal, + several others in the Vancouver area. Lindsay has also been a featured guest on CKNW + CBC, both on several occasions. And Lindsay was a vital witness of a Hate Crime. This led to the first Hate Crime conviction in Canadian legal history, resulting in him being a speaker at an Enough is Enough Rally (anti-violence rally) with dignitaries, politicians, law enforcement, and community leaders in front of a crowd of approximately five thousand.

Lindsay was the **#1 MIXED-TAPE DJ** at the **UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN** for most of the nineteen-eighties, a fact bringing him joy.

Lindsay resides in Vancouver.
