

My LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE



A story about finding yourself after accidentally discovering your life started with a lie.

Not every day do you meet someone who watched both of his parents die from The Big C and laid them to rest, only to discover sixteen years later that they weren't his parents after all!

It's like being reborn as a whole different person.

ABOUT A BOY



*A boy is born in a secret place. A dark place. A sad place.
His Mother is his Sister. Making her his Sister + his Mother.
His Father is his Grandfather.*

His Grandmother is just his Grandmother.

His Brothers used to be just Brothers. But then it is discovered they might be Uncles as well.

That turned them into Brunkles.

His Sisters used to be just Sisters. But then it is discovered they might be Aunts as well.

That turned them into Sisaunts.

The boy is never meant to know the truth because his birth brings with it, shame.

How could any of them be, okay?

Especially, the boy and his Grandmother?

TV TRAYS

1968

Time to eat. Son, if you can't feed yourself, surviving what life throws ⁽¹⁾ at you will be far more than unnerving. Far more.

How much further?

The circumference of the earth is a whack of miles. If you can't feed yourself, it will be a whack to the infinity.

What does that even mean?

It means you will starve with your body eventually consuming itself one morsel at a time.

Imagine sitting there minding your business, and you feel a sharp pain; you look down, and your left hand is being swallowed by your wrist. Eventually, there will be another acute pain, and your elbow will be consuming your wrist. The estimated time for full self-consumption: one or two weeks.

Gross. What part of me will eat me last, my brain?

I must say, if you believe what I'm telling you, you won't have to worry about your brain-eating anything because you're likely suffering from brain damage.

Okay.

Anyway, let's feed you; it's a parents' responsibility to children the tools to have a nutrition-filled life.

Where to begin. Oh my, McDonald's just opened. So, let's hop into the Lincoln and blast away to the drive-thru for this once-in-a-while ⁽²⁾ treat.



McDONALD'S
McDONALD'S



Yum. Yum. Yum. Surgery fries. Cola. Cola. Cola. I want a larger size. ⁽³⁾ I could eat this almost every day ⁽⁴⁾. It must be good for you; there's a happy clown + a thief ⁽⁵⁾ teaching us valuable life lessons. Mummy. Daddy. Can we make it more than once in a while?

When you get older, do what you will; all we can do is provide you with the tools.

TV TRAYS
TV TRAYS



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Dinner time. Mum is spent from work. Dad's nightly tirade is complete. Turn on the tube. "Boy, can you break out the TV Trays?"

I do.

Gone were the days of sitting at the table and eating together.

On this day, we ate off mountain vistas. Yesterday, it was flowers. Tomorrow, it will be a combination.

"What's for dinner, Mum?"

Swanson, delicious. Please remember to keep the foil covering the desert.

"I'm sorry, mummy, your life must be tedious."

"Is it too much to have dinner ready when I get home from work?"

Dad, you walked all of, I don't know, ten steps from the garage, now, shut it.

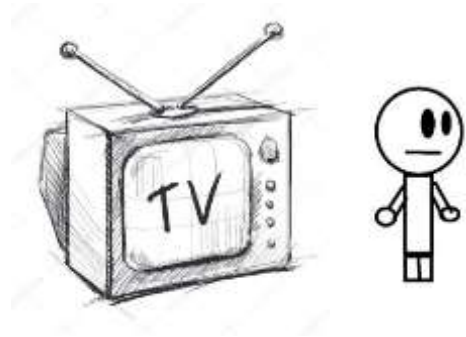
TV Trays
TV TRAYS

Did I say that out loud? I hope not. If I did, it would be bad for mum.

"Boy, turn on the TV."

"I already did, papa."

"Go stand by the set and wiggle the antenna." Wiggle. Wiggle. Wiggle. "There. Hold it. There. Great."



"Nicholas, his dinner will get cold."

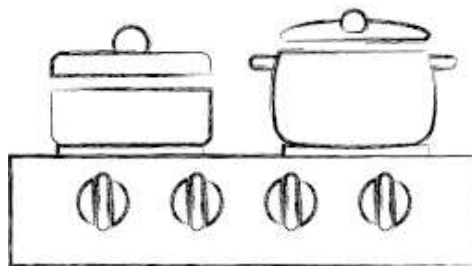
"Wiggle. There."

A gory story comes on.

32 "Damn it, kid. Turn the channel. I. WILL. NOT. WATCH. THIS. SHIT. DURING. DINNER. That's better: Bobby + Sissy."

"Mummy, my dinner is cold."

TWO TYPES OF MACARONI



It's Wednesday, yippee, Macaroni Night - two kinds, 1) Homemade: Macaroni + Cheese Whiz ⁽⁶⁾ + 2) Macaroni and Canned tomatoes. Both loaded with pepper. Boil. Boil. Stir. Slop onto a plate. Eat.

Satiated.

I will be a brilliant chef.

CINNAMON TOAST + CHEESE TOAST

Treat time.

"Mum, can you make me a treat."

"Sweetie, what are you doing with the Wonder Bread?"



"Mummy, I like pulling it away from the crust. Rolling it around in my fingers until it is a perfect ball. Then, I pop it into my mouth and let the lusciousness melt."

"Lusciousness. Interesting choice of words. Sweetie, grab me a couple of slices. I will show you how to make the easiest, best-est treat imaginable."

Pop. Golden brown.

"Grab a spoon. Spread a generous helping of butter onto the toast. Rub it in with the back of a teaspoon. Sprinkle it with surgery goodness. Sprinkle on a ton of cinnamon. Grab the spoon and spread the sugar and cinnamon around until it turns a golden brown. Now eat."

"Mum. I could eat this every day!"

"Sweetie, grab me two more slices. Thanks. Load them with butter. Grab the Kraft cheese slices. Plop one or two slices on both slices of bread. Pop them into the oven at high heat. Grab a chair. Watch through the window for the cheese to start bubbling. Great. Let's pull it out. Look at the gooey goodness. Grab the pepper shaker. Shake. Shake. Shake. Be careful it is hot. Delectable!"

"I love you, mommy."

CHICKEN BURGERS



"Sweetie, one last food trick that will equip you well for your entire life."

"What is it, mummy?"

"Grab the box in the freezer, the one with four chicken burgers in it. Great."

"Looks good, mommy."

"Honey, you can get creative with this one."

"How, mommy? How?"

"Toss a burger or two on the cookie sheet. Slap on a Kraft slice or two. Toast a bun. Lather

it in butter + mustard. Load on the pepper. Slice up a tomato. Layer the bun with a tomato. Add crisp bacon if you'd like. A little lettuce. Pull the burgers out of the oven. Place them on the waiting bun. Dollop ketchup on the side. Wella, gourmet! Even add fries if you'd like!"

"Mummy. Mummy. Mummy. McDonald's. Macaroni. TV Dinners. Toast + Sugar + Butter + Cinnamon + Cheese Slices. Chicken Burgers. I'm set. I will most certainly, make nutritious dining choices throughout my life.

FLASH FORWARD: 1982

"Corrie. I prepared you dinner tonight. Gourmet. Minute steaks + potatoes stuffed with broccoli + cheese. I spent hours drooling, I mean duelling ⁽⁷⁾ in the kitchen. Take a bite! Take a bite! Take a bite!"

"Yum. The steak is chewy, just the way I like it. Sweetie, the potato is cold. Did you bake the potatoes before scooping out the insides?"

"What?"

REBEKAH (MUM)

Mum was an incredible cook, no, chef. Like many a mother, she cared for a large brood with little or no support. Mum was doing her absolute best despite trying circumstances. I, we, were lucky. In no way do I blame her for the survival tools she provided me with. The previous examples are not a reflection of her but a 'reflection of the times' for all families without the means to flaunt wealth. Lower middle-class realities. A reality which just might be the fertilizer for perpetuating racism. *Deep. I know.* But, if the struggling factions of society struggle, it becomes abundantly easy to divide the struggling and point at others as the root of their problems.

It's easy to say, look we know your life is hard, but look over there, those people, the ones who don't share your pigment, they are coming for your way of life, and if you shun them, you will never fall to the bottom of the heap.

Rebekah kept us alive. She worked assiduously at it. If only I had paid attention ⁽⁸⁾, I would have picked up on her expertise. Mum made world-famous cinnamon buns, the most delectable fried chicken ever. A succulent roast, every Sunday, except for once a month where she'd make a full turkey dinner. Her pies. Oh my. And OMG, butter + lemon tarts to die for!

Every dish she prepared was cookbook worthy. Mum's life wasn't easy. But she never complained. She did often cry because Dad's nightly outbursts were inescapable. He loved her. But he, too, was broken, struggling, and desperately trying to learn how to be a man during confusing, challenging times. I, unfortunately, exacerbated their challenges. Something I will carry with me forever.

1. *Duck. Duck. Duck. I'm friggen tired of ducking. Quit throwing things at me. Don't you have someone else to harass?*
2. *Today will be the last time I eat fast food. I'm weak. Today will be the last time I eat fast food. "Cam, do you want to go to the cafeteria?" Yes. Burger + fries? Yes. McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, A & W, Kentucky Fried Chicken? Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Any others? Yes. I don't want to go. I won't go. Pizza? Yes. Being an adult is great. Sugary fries. Yum. I can't eat this anymore. *What, a burger meal is almost free?* How much are vegetables? More \$\$\$? Fast-food it is. *Am I poor?* A little. Well, the choice is being made for me. I, we're, weak. The rich people don't seem to be.*
3. *Thank you! Finally, larger sizes! **Super!** Is there another option? *Sir, the citizens seem to be getting fatter; it may be our fault. No. It's called freedom. Let's just hope the government doesn't get involved and pretend to care. What, we can no longer offer super-size? That's okay; we had enough time to create "heavy users." Addicts' sir? No, "heavy users." I know. We can't have super-size anymore; let's allow our borderline "heavy users" to fill their own sodas. Hmm... I don't know why I'm stopping my car, but I need a coke for some reason. Slurp. Funny, I don't even want this. Three miles later, another cola. Am I a "heavy user" now?**
4. *I could eat this almost every day.*
5. *I'm an adult now, and I'm eating at a place with a clown and a hamburger thief. I'm an adult now? Is thieving, okay?*
6. *In the future, I will reminisce with a friend suggesting we need to try the comforting Mac + Cheese Whiz. My memories were wrong; Mum made Mac + Real Cheese - Whiz was never part of the recipe; whiz and celery sticks, most definitely, was!*
7. *No duelling in the kitchen, Drooling, yes.*
8. *I was always paying attention. In the future, I will host thirty-consecutive Orphan Christmases + several Thanksgivings + barbeques, preparing most of the menus myself. I thank Rebekah for providing me with the tools to do so. The food choices I made lacking nutritional value were my own - they may have been a product of habit and financial means - but like many, fries, or an apple? Guess which one wins most of the time, for many of us? *Apples.**

You suck at guessing.

TV TRAYS: 1968



Sweetie, it is time to teach you—
—how to take care of yourself.
How to eat nutritiously.
Really, mommy!



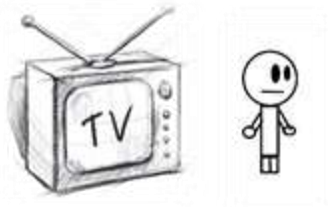
Yes. If you don't eat well—
—your body will start eating itself.
You're scaring me mommy.
CHOMP. CHOMP. CHOMP.



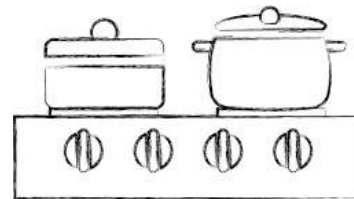
Forget the lesson. Something called—
—McDonald's opened. Let's hop into the Buick.
Burgers. Fries. Soda. Soda. Burgers.
A Clown + a Thief.



I'm tired. TV Tray Time!
No more table. Let's watch TV.
Swanson is in the oven. Foiled dessert
Mountain vistas + flowers. Poor people.



Boy, wiggle the antenna. There.
His dinner is getting cold.
GROSS. SWITCH CHANNELS.
I can't watch this during dinner.



Wednesday Night.
Home made Mac + Cheese.
And a second pot: Mac + Canned tomatoes
Pepper. Pepper. Pepper.

TV TRAYS: 1968



Treat time.
 Wonder Bread. Balls melt in your mouth.
 Cinnamon Toast + Cheese Bread!
 Every day, please!



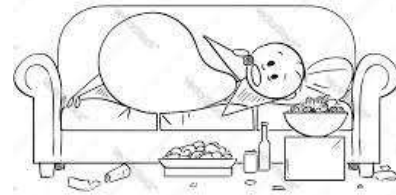
Sweetie, creative time.
 Frozen chicken burgers.
 A slice a tomato. Cheese slices.
 Bacon. Lettuce. Mustard. Ketchup. Yum.



Mom was a chef and pastry expert.
 Cinnamon Buns. Pies. Chicken. Roasts.
 Turkey. Butter + Lemon Tarts.
 Pay attention. Learn. Learn. Learn.



I'm an adult?
 Burgers. Fries. Burgers Fries.
 And Coke. I don't want it. Have another.
 Am I an addict? No, "heavy user."



Money says burger.
 Living says apple.
 Food desert says burger.
 Poverty says: We're all getting fat.

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.

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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.

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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.