

**DISSEMINATION**  
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## HOT LEGS



THE FOLLOWING TAKES PLACE: 5 SEPTEMBER 2013-JULY 16, 2017

2013

I have ridiculously hot legs. I really do. I have been told so on countless occasions by friends, lovers, and strangers on the street.

A SAMPLING

"Hey, you-you have sexy hot legs."

I kid you not. I blushed.

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THE CITY OF VANCOUVER PASSED A BYLAW ABOUT MY LEGS.

BYLAW 9583

LINDSAY W must wear shorts from 15 March-15 October (every year)

Fine for non-compliance = \$183.50

So, there you have it. I must don shorts. It would be a disservice to others if I didn't, don't you think?

Summer was beginning to fizzle out. There was a little more than a month left to feast on my legs.

That sentence sounded funny.

My legs, although probably edible, are primarily for viewing pleasure.

Anyway, today is sweltering. I can't remember the actual temperature – shall we say: + 26 Celsius. Time to sport my favourite black shorts; not only do they make my legs look scorching – but they also cling to my gluteus maximus, making me desirable to all.

FULL STOP

I do believe what I'm spewing here, but only a teensy-weensy bit.

Regardless of my belief system, I just caught a glimpse – wow!

Now, where are those dapper shorts?

Closet: no.

Drawer: no.

Shelving: no.

Dryer: no.

Oven: no.

Fuck.

## WHAT TO DO?

I wept.

I'm sorry, Vancouver. Not today. No black-on-tan for you. Instead, tan-on-tan – I strutted out into the world.

Joy overtook every passerby.

Wonton glances smothered me from all sides.

The heat intensified.

I stopped for a bite at a Chinese restaurant.

I ordered a bowl of Wonton.

I spilt some on my quads.

A stranger licked it off.

This story is becoming stranger by the word.

The stranger's tongue must've contained the same chemicals of lickable toads.

Three licks in, I woke on a desert island.

The soundtrack from Xanadu was playing on a continuous loop.

I screamed in silence.

When I woke from waking on the island, I realized: I had misused Wonton. The sweltering intensified. A beautiful young \_\_\_\_ encouraged me to remove the tan-from-my-tan. I obliged. Passion was next –

– heatstroke came in passion's place. I snapped out of whatever fantasy I was living in. I returned home, took off my shorts – there was a knock on my door. My "special" service had arrived (three-times per day – something about prostate health – I'll tell you more about the service later).

After they cleaned up with a towel, they went merrily on their way. Satisfaction guaranteed. Sleep came easy!

The following day, gym time was upon me. To my dismay, when I packed my gym bag: my black shorts were hiding inside.

To punish, I put them in the freezer.

That'll undoubtedly teach them.

The moral of the story: LOOK!

I'm confused.

After the gym, I went back to the Chinese restaurant, donning red shorts this time.

"With three wontons, please!"

Xanadu blared from the restaurant's stereo.

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2017



I can't walk, verging on literally.

I tweaked my knee yesterday, Sunday – actually, on Saturday.

I ignored the pain, thinking it would subside. I hadn't worked out for a month – and then I did three relatively intense days in a row. It's been four-hours since I finished workout three – POOF – not happy – hobble, hobble.

Not to worry, I've had seven-knee surgeries; this is just a tweak. It will calm down in a day or two. Not only have I endured seven-knee, but I also collected more than five other various surgeries – not the best adult hobby to take up.

Bedtime – things will be better in the morning.

Things weren't. The pain intensified, scary, not only my knee but the heels of both feet.

Fuck. I don't want to whine. I want to cry. I know pain thresholds. My hobby schooled me on the subject. I'm at 7.5. I wince in agony with every step. Work is going to be hell.

## PAIN = WALKING IN CHOPPY STEPS - AN INCH AT A TIME AT MOST

Fuck, sitting doesn't help. The pain is constant. I suggest putting your arm in a vice-grip squeeze –>more –>more –>more –>once the initial shock subsides, you will be left writhing in a constant pinch. Any more of a squeeze, passing out would be a wise choice.

At 5:30, we open the doors to our work world.

## BACK UP THE TRAIN

Before I continue, I feel the need to back up a bit on the pain train.

Walter's girlfriend died of an overdose a few weeks back, we were told by Walter.

He held her as she passed. A few hours later, he was in our office looking for work.

"I need work," he exclaimed.

Walter, when not fucking up, is a good worker. He's fucking up. Hours after her passing, he's looking for work – I have trouble comprehending.

He claims he's clean.

I want to believe his stories, but I have trouble with him looking for work mere hours after her passing.

Walter's anger grows.

He disappears for a few days.

He returns.

He's oblivious of the other workers in the room. He blames us for his hardships.

"You don't pay enough. I need the work."

He doesn't seem to care about anything but his situation.

He drops more of his frustration on us.

He layers it on thick.

I don't believe him.

I stop him mid-sentence.

"Walter, it isn't fair for you to place everything in your life on our shoulders. You have no idea what is happening in our lives, yet; you keep dumping and dumping your traumas on us. I feel for you. I do. Get help. I don't have the credentials. I can't carry your weight."

He storms out the door, not before shouting:

"What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you: did your neighbour cheat on you?"

I haven't seen Walter since.

I must confront my neighbour.

## BACK TO APRIL 24

Step – wince – step – wince – wince – wince – I wonder if anyone will notice.

Much like my cheating neighbour doesn't cheat, I know the answer: NO.

That makes me a little sad.

**RM**

Lindsay, do you think we are going to war with North Korea?

I take a moment to think before answering.

**ME**

No, I don't. I couldn't imagine the evil that would need to be present for anyone to make a decision that could wipe out millions upon millions of lives. And besides, if North Korea did anything, it would be suicidal. So, I don't think, regardless of how crazy the leader might be, he's suicidal.

A measured answer, *I think it was.*

**RM**

We should wipe them all out, both North and South.

I wince more.

**ME**

Fucking really, wipe them all out.

Why?

So, the world could be full of RMs?

110      Wouldn't it be glorious if everyone was just like you?

I have words to describe what I think of RM's vulgar, disgusting statement. I'll choose not to use them now. I don't want to stoop.

**MR** serenades the room with:

They, they, they —

**MR** is equally disgusting.

We're sending him to a job in Richmond.

Richmond has a sizeable Chinese population: his THEY.

He asks me what I think of "THEY" — buying things in Canada.

I'm tired.

**ME**

MR, first off, my take on humanity is different than yours; I don't refer to anyone as they.

**FROM THE BACKGROUND:**

I spoke to a Chinese person. He told me gibberish, gibberish, gibberish. See —

**MR**

See, I'm right. He spoke to a Chinese person.

**ME**

So, your sources to prove whatever the fuck point you are trying to make is one person in a fucking temp agency. Dude, you need to change your sources.

**MR**

I know they can't drive.

**ME**

What do you drive?

That's what I thought.

This ignorance of thought has been added pain every day for almost twelve-years.

I'm sad. Nobody noticed I was struggling to walk (especially my coworkers), but somehow: they knew about my neighbour.

Compassion is difficult to maintain when people are damaged and looking to blame. At least, much of my sample is, damaged and looking to blame

I sit down.

The agony is still registering at 7.5.

I'm scared.

I feel alone.

I don't want to whine.

Tomorrow will bring light.



TRANSITIONING TO FILIPINO  
TRANSITIONING TO FILIPINO

TUESDAY  
TUESDAY

**B**efore I meander my way to Tuesday – it was time to soothe the unrelenting pain with sleep. Rest will undoubtedly bring calm.  
*Wrong.*

I lay down.

What's happening?

Instead of resting, the pain intensified: 7.75 – 8 – 8.25 –> 8.5. I cringe, squeezing my eyelids so hard I can feel permanent indentations forming around my eyes.

I shift from side-to-side, rolling in anguish.

Sleep is going to elude me.

My clock taunts me.

I calculate: if I fall asleep right now, I'll get –

Fifteen minutes before the alarm wakes me, I dose off with pain slamming through me.

The screeching wake-up call kills me.

I get up. I rise. I take a step, I can't, fucking walk. Tears roll down my cheek. I look at what was once my feet; they're now balloons.

I can't go to work.

I have no choice.

Pain is shattering my life.

My mind spins.

I never miss work.

Am I stupid?

The past year begins to race as the revolutions in my head become critical. I never miss a day.

Am I invisible?

Do I have to cloak my pain?

Three family members passed in eight-months in 2016. I haven't dealt with the losses. Walter said his girlfriend died, he showed up for work hours later, whereas my family

dramatically shrunk in numbers, and I show up—I don't know who to talk to, I don't want to appear weak.

When I find the courage to share my upset, "Work probably keeps your mind off things," is common—why would I want to forget loss?

Clipping family to my newfound pain isn't helping.

Three friends passed in 2016—although life took us to a place where we lost touch—two of them, for a time, considered me: BEST—I feign strength by not talking about the heartache.

#### 4 WORKERS

JJ was twenty-three, was.

He overdosed.

He was a bright light.

The slippery after-work path he was on took him away.

CM was 50, was.

Pleasant always, respectful, appreciative of the work we provided him. He died just before Christmas.

Cause: unknown.

WF was 47, was.

I drove him to several jobs. Pleasant like Clarence, list of demons: undefined, maybe living.

Cause: unknown.

TZ was 55, was.

Gregarious, funny; touching the edge of comedy limits, rarely crossing; at times unpredictable, in a challenging way.

Cause: a high gone wrong.

Four workers—four months—lost—drifting into the shadows—known for years—backstories vacant.

Too much loss, I hide my feelings. I'm not the only one facing loss. I don't think ten—I mean: I know ten deaths are—

## WEDNESDAY

I make it past the morning rush, and I need to go to Emergency.

The phone rings.

One of our workers, a twenty-eight-year-old, is Jonesing at a workplace.

Sometimes I feel as if the whole world is floating in a fog where we've forgotten how to just care. Ten is a large number, and by no means do I take the weight of all of them on; survival depends on balancing life struggles. My family brings with it a mystery. Over several years, my friends disappeared into their lives. Workers are a daily challenge – but when they leave us – my heart sinks – I wonder how others cope.

On the phone is a Safety Officer; our worker was capable before lunch –> after –> motor functions were failing him.

The site wants him gone.

I'm forty-five minutes away.

I figure: the tweaking will end before I can make it.

They slide him into a cab, sending him on his way. He becomes the driver's burden. He comes down; he's, okay?

Four others weren't so fortunate, for two of them destiny found: in a poor choice.

## HOSPITAL TIME

A ten-minute walk takes forty-five. I have a problem: I like to pretend I'm stronger than I am. I also don't want to be diagnosed with anything serious, so; I'm not sure if I am honest with the medical professionals.

I hide the pain with a smile.

I'm fast-tracked.

The doctor examines me.

She says I have Plantar Fasciitis.

I'm instructed to load up on pain meds and be on my way.

I pop two pills.

The lingering pain begins to slip away.

I'm now at a manageable 4.5 on the agony scale; it's sad when 4.5 becomes manageable.

I push my mental anguish into a back corner. Hiding the number 10 from being dealt with—having dealt with years of workers dropping their issues on us—strangely, I tend to keep my book CLOSED as a memoirist.

A young guy, YG, enters the office.

He's desperate for work.

His work history is looked up.

It's not good.

Three shifts: first, the super phoned to say he was useless; second, didn't make it to the job, "I sprained my ankle on the way" —*I can't fucking-walk, I'm here*; third, it doesn't matter, it wasn't a favourable review.

As his performance review is being explained to him, the look on his face is not new; I've seen it a thousand times. The words fall on deaf ears; his reality skewed—by his very existence.

And besides, you overdosed in front of our office. So, we had to slam needles in you to resuscitate you. So, we can't employ you.

His face turned flush; something was finally registering.

**YG**

I know, it was embarrassing.

I had been sitting at my desk silently wincing. With him uttering *embarrassment*, I needed to pipe in.

**ME**

Embarrassing, it was embarrassing—a funny choice of words? What were you going for: tweaking, twitching, chasing hallucinations, foaming, frothing—?

It's only embarrassing when it reaches overdose?

We didn't send him to work.

I want him to get help.

I care.

But really, how does one care for something so prevalent?

Do I flip a coin to decide who's worthy of caring?

**ALL:** This is the answer regardless of heads or tails. But I can't; all are too many.

Several years ago, Vancouver City Council proposed removing the dumpsters from back laneways. They figured the removal would eliminate drug usage. The logic was stupid. Hey Johnny, do you want to go into the alley and bang needles in your arm with me? Well, I would, but they've removed the trash bins. So, I've decided to get a job instead. But we could crouch over there by that car — hey, where did you go? Problem solved: much cheaper than a WALL.

## ENTER AB

AB is entertaining; maybe awkward would be a better descriptor.  
AB is six-foot, shaved head, white-washed to the point of opaque; affably enjoyable. After trimming his hair, he once came in; he had missed three or four patches. He didn't care.  
He is also attempting to transition from pasty to Filipino.  
He knows eleven-words of Tagalog.  
He chirps them often.  
It sounds dumb.  
I know about eleven-words of Korean.  
I don't have much chance to warble.

AB has found love twice on Christian Filipino (grifting) Dating Sites. The first was pure love: costing thousands until pure, ended. I pulled up a web search: 99% of these sites are scams. I printed a copy and gave it to AB. It angered him. I thought I was thoughtful.

In reality: I was being an asshole who was trying to be correct.

I looked over at his head. The patches brought a smile to my face.  
He now has a new bride and several children; they'll meet, at least that's the plan one day.

JY is a co-worker. He is Filipino. AB will soon be more Filipino than JY.

JY

AB, why were you forty-minutes late for your job yesterday?

AB

I missed my stop, thinking about the *Philippines*, and I fell asleep.

Internally, I fell into a state of hysteria.

AB exits; JY approaches and drops some insight on me upon his departure.

I need to have a cigarette.

My breakfast was greasy.

The cig will wipe away the greasiness.

My hysteria turns critical.

On my way home, hmm Jamaica – snore – SMASH, light-standard no more.

I chase my pain with a beer and pills at a local watering hole. On my way home, I encounter an aggressive panhandler. He barks. “Give me money for food.”

I politely decline.

The panhandler raises his voice.

“Nobody has given me money in four-hours.”

The words spray from his lips.

I queue up a lecture. Some career advice, perhaps. But just before I’m to drop the mic, I catch my words and think lecturing would turn me into a huge asshole. I remain silent.

I don’t believe anyone has ever, when they’ve dreamt of their futures at a young age, dreamt of sitting on the sidewalk begging for –

I glanced down the laneway – dumpsters.

## PENIS COOKIES

Sleep came easy. Well, with the help of painkillers + three melatonin.

Pain check = 3. Fasciitis: healing.

It's going to be a good day.

At work, the phone rings thousands of times. I hate the phone. It's a big part of our morning duties. We rarely allow it to ring twice. We do a stellar job.

"Your worker sucks," delivered in a harsh tone; it included several fucks and idiots. After minute-five of the verbal undressing, the caller paused.

Good morning ABC Enterprises, Lindsay speaking, how may I help you?

Fuck, fuck, fuck—idiots.

Not a problem, how about I replace the worker for you. Timmy must be having a bad day. ABC apologizes—We'll have the replacement there in twenty minutes.

The calls grow tiresome—twelve years into my career.

### CW ENTERS

If you recall, we fired him a month ago.

We gave him a final chance.

He did okay—and then disappeared.

Overdose sprang to mind.

It's sad: overdose is a reality of the working poor.

I repeat we do a stellar job. Most of our workers do as well. Many of our workers are struggling to make it through their days. I appreciate their efforts. I know too many people who refuse to work because I get the impression, they feel they are better than most jobs—or perhaps: they suffer from a mental infliction—Nah—mentally entitled.

Maybe I only know one—and the one I know; I don't really know.

CW

I've been in the hospital for the last month, pneumonia. Have you ever have had that garbage?

He's not believable.

ME

What hospital?

CW

Saint Paul's.

I still don't believe him, more on that in the future.

I think he's twenty. He has a propensity for alternative facts.

I make it through the day, mostly unscathed. My coworkers are great, a pleasure to work with; we have a non-toxic work environment amongst our team – a blessing.



## FRIDAY NIGHT

Okay, 4:30 PM, day shrinks rapidly into the night when you are up at 4 AM most days.

Time to visit the local watering hole –> I'm feeling beaten down; I will pretend otherwise.

Two drinks in, the regular Friday crew arrive. Some of the crew, vent their weekly challenges to anyone within earshot for twenty minutes.

*How was your week?*

Preacher Boy *asked*.

I say little.

My pain is bearable.

TIME TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD

I pull up a picture on my phone.

**ME**

"PREACHER BOY, 2G, Big in Japan, GJ: look at this, JL made penis cookies."

PICTURE VIEWED – COMEDY COMPLETE

PREACHER BOY *takes a closer look*.

**PREACHER BOY**

Are those sugar cookies?

I laugh. PREACHER BOY doesn't appreciate the laughter.

**ME**

Aren't all cookies sugar cookies?



I smirk.

**PREACHER BOY** doesn't appreciate smirks.

**PREACHER BOY** goes off.

Cookies aren't all sugar. You do this all the time — I will never hear the end of this. Blah, blah, blah — fucking blah — I'm sick and tired. You think — fucking, bullshit, tired — unrelenting — blah —

**ME**

Is everything okay at home?

*It would've been funnier if you had asked if they were gluten-free.*

**PREACHER BOY** apologized — sort of — he didn't have to.

Fast forward to yesterday and yesterday. **PREACHER BOY** approached 2G and me and asked us a question.

HOW Y' ALL DOING?  
HOW I VEE DOING?

I laughed.

**PREACHER BOY** doesn't appreciate the laughter.

2G looks at me and asks if I want to answer first.

I was thinking the same thing.

**PREACHER BOY** doesn't enjoy the comedy.

I suggest that we are individuals; **PREACHER BOY** goes off.

Minutes later, he apologizes.

I think I may be a bully. I laugh.

SCRATCH + SNIFF  
SCRATCH + SNIFF

THE WEEKEND  
THE WEEKEND

Saturday morning slaps me awake at 5:30.

Good morning, Lindsay; I'm back.

I hope you enjoy my stay.

Excuse me?

**PAIN**  
PAIN

I'm PAIN. I'm here to torment you.

PAIN was right. I don't think I'm suffering from Plantar Fasciitis. Imagine a giant rolling pin rolling over your body in a wave-like fashion—pressure nearing unbearable—stopping at each joint for an hour or two—then waving to the next joint and repeating the pause. The pain is no longer on my heels and knees. The tide starts at my ankles, moves to my knees – hips – elbows – wrists – shoulders – affecting my brain as I am scared by the storm raging through me. I kid you not.

The thing is: it's more like a steamroller.



After a painful stop on my shoulders, the tide washes out over my body back down to my feet. PAIN is skilled in its quest. My feet resemble Reebok sneakers requiring a pump.

I sit down to write.

I work on my website.

I love my site.

But much like anyone creative, as soon as I create, I feel a sense of loss. There is a moment where accomplishment is followed by what's next?

I don't think I'm the only one who feels this way. If I am: I'm troubled. I know I'm not. I'm okay. I feel frustrated with the slug-like pace of the production process of my memoir. The final proofreading phase seems to be taking an eternity. I have dropped hints on the release date to as many people as possible. However, I don't want to promote too much. Some people are starting to think: the book doesn't exist.

Am I delusional thinking anyone is waiting?

Yes.

Back to the pain: I limp my way through the day. The most potent over-the-counter pain medicine is not working. Mid-afternoon, I decide beer might help. I feel like crap. I need to escape my agony.

The weeks are never all bad. I meet a traveller from San Diego, LM, for story's sake as I sip my beer. An acquaintance is schooling LM on the history of pretty much everything.

The acquaintance could be called GOOGLE – everyone knows one. LM seems to be enjoying the lesson. I am a background character, not a participant in the conversation except for "Enjoy Vancouver."

It is time for LM to depart.

He hugs me and asks for my Facebook.

LM leaves.

Within fifteen-minutes, I start receiving messages.

Apparently, I'm smoking hot.

And –

The next time in Vancouver: I want to get "really" to know you.

I'm flattered.

I blush.

I'm super hot.

I laugh.

2G plops down on the stool next to me. The laughter is about to increase, and my pain is about to be crushed – for a few minutes.

An attractive young lady settles beside me, to my right.

I love your shaved head, and you are a hot man.

I have several pictures of myself which prove otherwise.

Thank you.

She continues.

You smell amazing. What are you wearing? You don't know? Was it a gift? Oh my, your jacket is fantastic. Was it also a gift? Your glasses case – your legs – your –

As much as pain can take a relaxation break, the pain is resting. I'm blushing. But I can't escape the way I'm feeling.

She waves her boyfriend over; they are from San Diego.

She whispers in his ear.

He presses his nose against my neck.

He scratches.

He sniffs.

"You smell exquisite."

My skin crawls, I blush more.

I rolled to the washroom, and when I returned, the lovely San Diego couple have already exited the pub—I felt relief.

## 2G SAYS

You do know they were trying to pick you up?

You don't say.

I flashback to Wednesday: I'm driving a worker to a worksite. He's from Saipan, on the continent of Oceania, close to the Philippines.

Our conversation during the drive was pleasant.

Halfway to the site, he states —

You have a fantastic voice—absolutely fabulous.

I blush.

I'm thankful for the kind words of San Diego, Saipan, and the flirtatious advances of the San Diego couple. If the pain wasn't unrelenting —

## SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2017

Sunday, April 30<sup>th</sup>—sucks—I'm hitting 7.5. The steamroller has stalled at my ankles, wrists, and hips. Walking is not enjoyable.

I'm becoming grumpy.

## MONDAY

I was going to stop this chapter at the weekend but have decided to press on.

Elbows - wrists - ankles = 7.5.

Work sucks because I'm struggling.

I tell my co-worker SK that it's almost as if I'm working out different body parts with the pain shifting daily. So, tomorrow's shoulders day, I tell him.

He laughs.

Shoulders – knees – elbows – wrists = 7.5 Feet filled with helium.

Bedtime arrives.

I pop painkillers and melatonin.

They don't help.

The pain had moved to my elbows.

The pain had reached 9.

Sleep was not to be.

The pain was shooting from my left elbow to my wrist.

I was trying not to freak out.

I tell my friend JL: I think I need to go to the hospital. JL offers to come with me. I pack gear for an overnight stay.

Something is wrong. I'm scared.

We arrive at St Paul's at 10:30 PM. No line-up. I'm fast-tracked. I get to the fast-track waiting area. Immediately, I understood why CW blurted out St Paul's when challenged about his hospital stay.

In the waiting area is a collection of the living dead.

1

An incredibly drunk and otherwise altered man who happened to be native.

He reeks of alcohol and the sewer.

He's zooming.

He eats a banana throwing the peel on the floor.

2

Another man with a massive burn or birthmark on his face. Is standing in front of the nurse's station. His eyes are fixated straight ahead, staring into the souls of the nurses. He perpetually rocks back and forth. I'm confident he will still be standing in the same spot – weeks later.

3

There's this enormous woman who's pacing back and forth. Her pacing is annoying. Every few minutes, she pauses next to the rocker and glares into the station – every few minutes.

A man in a scooter offers everyone in the waiting area bottled water. He has breathing apparatus in his nostrils. The altered native accepts, guzzles the water, and begins squeezing the bottle repeatedly until it makes a cracking sound.

He likes the crackling of the plastic.

He keeps crunching.

He lies down on my feet.

The large lady gets the attention of the nurse. She explains that she matters more than everyone else in the waiting area. It doesn't work. She paces away. A few minutes later, she tells the nurse she is more important than everyone else. It takes three times — the nurse tires — the large lady is allowed to skip the queue — angering me.

Mr. Birth Mark is still rocking.

Mr. Altered is drooling.

Mr. Scooter is engaged in a conversation with another patient about the glory days of crack cocaine, "It's not as good as it used to be —" he says, " —I stopped doing the shit." His audience agrees.

JL brings me a mask.

It's my turn.

In the examination area, I take a chair. The inebriated native is in the chair beside me. I've come prepared: medical history, symptoms, previous operations, nutrition +++

They give the native man a needle, and the Doctor explains that this should bring him back to life.

He drops another needle out of his pocket.

It falls at my feet.

My mask won't save me.

The Doctor administers something called Dilaudid and sends him on his way. He's replaced by someone higher than he was.

St Paul's

I think I understand.

Doctor, I'm scared. These are my symptoms.

I've prepared —

You're not interested —

I took pictures of my feet.

Here —

*That's normal. My feet swell at the end of most days, the Doctor says.*

## MINE DON'T

I sometimes feel as if my throat is closing. There have even been a few occasions where I can't eat and begin vomiting. Sometimes my neck stiffens.

DOC

My neck gets stiff sometimes as well. It's nothing to worry about.

## WHY AM I WORRYING THEN?

Frustration has made my pain take a break.

The Doctor wiggles my arms.

I don't wince.

A nurse cranks a needle into Mr. High.

You have Plantar Fasciitis.

It seems to be getting better.

You should go home.

I kid you not.

What is a good reason to go to the hospital; apparently, LEVEL 9 is not?

**TOTAL HOSPITAL TIME = THREE HOURS**

**DIAGNOSIS = GO HOME**

**JL fumes.**

I don't sleep. I go to work. After work, I make an appointment for the following day to see my Doctor.

## HUMPDAY

Doc, I prepared my medical history. Okay, these are my symptoms and pain level. I'm worried.

Dr. Montgomery is fantastic and asks me if the pain is on both heels.

You don't have Plantar Fasciitis. The pain never (rarely) happens in both feet simultaneously. And the pain wouldn't be coursing through your body.

He orders a battery of tests for the following day.

He schedules another appointment for Saturday.

I feel better — like he cares.

## SATURDAY, MAY 6

Lindsay, everything is good: cholesterol, kidney, heart, liver, no osteoporosis — but one of the blood tests came back bad. Normal is less than three. You scored eighty-five. What's going on is your immune system thinks something is attacking your joints — so it is fighting something that isn't there. The pain will continue to be symmetrically moving from joint to joint. So, you need to see a specialist. It can take up to six-months, but I will try to get you in faster with your high number.

Is my Plantar Fasciitis cured? Is there anything I could've done to avoid this?

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He chuckled before saying —

No, it's just the luck of the cards. I could be inflicted with the same thing tomorrow.

Later, I went out for a few pops. Friends asked me about the Doctor. I told them what he said. Then, as only friends who don't realize their means of caring aren't comforting, they tried to pinpoint my infliction. I'd like them to shut up.

It may just be me, but medical information is a private matter. Sure, I shared, my joints are being ravaged by a phantom ailment — much like the cookies were the end of the joke — a bar diagnosis of my condition wasn't warranted, nor did the attempt--make me feel better.

So, when a friend is upset about health, it's okay just to listen!

Now, would you like a little sniff?

I booked The Specialist: In less than a month — I'm not sure if that brings with it comfort.

## SCRATCH





## DEMON CHASER



FRIDAY, MAY 26, 2017

**O** MG, **JIM**, that's your argument: 'they're racist right back at us?' Please, for centuries, the USA has been plagued with systemic racism. Ghettos became home for most blacks, by force, identities stripped away, and the best you've got is they're –

Us, poor whites, maybe at the worst we faced: was being called a cracker or honky. We've had it tough. I've never once cowered in fear when being pulled over by the police. For some, I think it may be life or death. The only oppression I've ever faced: financial.

**JIM** and I often discuss sensitive subjects. We discuss – civilly. **JIM** used to be the mayor of a small town – relevance to the story: none.

*In the words of DL Hughley (paraphrased): I can't believe anyone could've voted for Trump, especially anyone with pre-existing health conditions, say, like diabetes. To vote for Trump: those people must hate blacks more than they like their feet. During the election campaign, the GOP even tried to convince America that the poor forgotten Whites were so hard done that they couldn't find jobs. It worked. The reality: In America, if a White person doesn't have a job – they wasted a four-hundred-year head start.*

With **JIM**, myself, and Robert having resolved the simple concept of *racism*: it was time to chase demons.

Joe smelled bad.

Joe was tipsy, stumbling toward drunk.

Joe wanted conversation.

Joe picked me to accost.

Shamefully, I had moved my personal belongings toward **JIM**, and I had judged Joe.

**Joe**

*Sorry if I'm butting into your conversation.*

His voice quaked as he whispered in my ear —

*I need to take a leak. I don't trust the guy next to me. Can you watch my stuff?*

After he returned from the washroom, he continued to barge —

*I've done two tours in Afghanistan. I've been killing since I was sixteen. The military is forcing me to retire after my next tour, my last tour: Korea and the Vatican. I'm shipping out tomorrow.*

He paused, and his voice cracked more.

*I'm in Vancouver visiting my daughter. She's a ballerina, she teaches.*

He paused once again.

His voice dropped, scratching the floor.

His eyes began to water.

*I had a second daughter. She became the victim of rape and murder.*

I felt his grief.

I believed his story.

I couldn't escape his stench.

I want him to leave.

The barkeep delivers his tab. He pays with a credit card. Shamefully, I drop an ounce of judgment. I still want him to leave. Our friendship's complete.

**Joe**

*Can I buy you and JIM drinks?*

I cringe. I decline the offer. Crap, I realize: Joe's staying.

**ME**

*You know North Korea and the Vatican are — ?*

**Joe**

*I'm rich. I have more money than I'll ever need. When I turned eighteen, the society gave me \$1.3 million - I've turned it into twenty-times that amount. I own several properties in Vancouver.*

His story is a broth of fascinating – fiction – non-fiction – fiction – or bat-shit-crazy?

*I like you. You're a strong, wise, caring man.*

**ME**

*Thank you.*

I consider doing push-ups.

**Joe**

*I'm a sniper. I have 386 kills.*

**ME**

Lost for words, I try to relate.

*My friend JL could hit 18 of 20 targets from 500m when he was in the Korean Military.*

**Joe**

*1500m – 2000m or more – 386 kills – the most in US military history.*

Joe is believable. I'd still prefer him to leave.

I pick the \$50 bill off the floor and hand it to Joe.

**Joe**

*You're honest, to boot.*

I feel a shift in the conversation.

---

130 *I chase devils. I'm part of a secret society. If you follow me, I can bring wealth into your life.*

*You will never worry again.*

*I'm a Banshee, a devil chaser.*

*You are a stellar man.*

*One of the best I've met. Believe it.*

**Joe**

His eyes pierce into my soul.

*You're yummy. Hug me?*

I oblige, and Joe kissed my cheek.

I glance to my right; a demon has entered the bar, stalking, dark, disturbing.

**PREACHER BOY** takes the baton, Joe begins to saunter away, stage right; he stops and taps my shoulder.

**Joe**

*I'll talk to you soon.*

His nostrils flared.

*Damn, you even smell good. You'll never worry about money again. You are an amazing man, believe it. I've been sent to tell you that.*

By the time I stroke the next word of this story (Joe), I will be heading to Korea + the Vatican (?) —Joe has our back in the spectral realms!

I'm yummy, I believe!



My pain has settled at **5ish** as it continues rolling from joint-to-joint. It has pushed upward to my temples. It feels like a flash-frozen vice clamped onto my skull and cranked repeatedly. It's +20 Celsius.

On Tuesday I see The Specialist. I must tell him about my brain clamp. Maybe, I'll just smile.

**JUST BECAUSE YOU THINK  
SOMEONE IS BEING RACIST TOWARD YOU  
YOU DON'T HAVE TO PARTICIPATE**

DEMON CAUGHT  
DEMON CAUGHT

In Joe's absence, I glanced right again. The ominous character I noticed before is scanning the room. He's dressed in black. He's heavily armed.

My chest begins to pound.

The man raises a gun.

He fires twice toward the bar.

A barkeep + a bartender collapses to the floor. Their blood spatters against the backslash, drawing legs on the bar mirror, staining Smirnoff bottles, and then dripping to the floor, covering the victims in their plasma.

I scramble with PREACHER BOY toward the electronic dartboards. We pull them away from the wall and cower behind them.

The Demon calmly turns toward the upper seating area. He releases round-after round toward 2G and British J. Magically, the bullets whiz past them, taking out three passersby on the street. Three people on the patio are also critically wounded.

2G and British J rise from their seats and walk past the masked man. As they pass the assailant, British J, oblivious to the horror around him, drops with a hint of British inflection —

*We're going for a beer.*

The Demon whispers back —

*Enjoy.*

Today is the day PREACHER BOY, and I are about to die, at least, we assumed.

The Gunman refocuses. He turns toward the bar, unleashing two rounds. Sitting at the bar, Nelly J is repeatedly shredded by hot lead. I gasp. I then remember a conversation Nelly and I had long ago — a conversation Nelly wasn't part of, one where his prying ways eavesdropped.

## NELLY (flashback)

*I overheard you talking to someone yesterday. You'd think adoption should be taken seriously. You think there need to be stringent requirements. You believe gays shouldn't be able to adopt just because — what are you: a Nazi?*

Nelly's corpse slumped onto the bar with his head falling into his hands as if he was resting through grade school detention. The wounds on his body spelt: ASSHOLE.

The second-round ends John G. I flashed back again, three years ago.

**ME**

*Hey, JOHN G, you just returned from South America. That's fantastic. I think it is cool you travel alone, courageous.*

**JOHN G** turns casually and looks directly at me.

*I wish you were dead.*

Despite my pending doom, I smiled, looked at their dismantled bodies and thought: Huh, oh well. If I spoke French, I might have thought: Say-la-vee.

The Gunman's eye's oozed fire. He reached over Nelly and grabbed a chicken wing, reloaded, grabbed another chunk of bird, dipped it into one of Nelly's gaping wounds. He then devoured it, ripping the meat from his bones with his teeth.

PREACHER BOY and I were next. PREACHER BOY panicked in bravery. He jumped out from behind the dartboards, squared his stance —

## FLASHBACK

PREACHER BOY has become a dart-junkie. When he first took up the game, he'd hit the bank machine to the left of the dartboards more than he'd hit the boards; one-hundred-eighty, not.

He never gave up.

He never wished I'd die.

He's improved dramatically.

I told him if we played — I'd slaughter him.

One week before this dreadful day, we played: 501 - Double In - Masters Out; **PREACHER BOY** destroyed me 501 to 0.

PREACHER BOY fired a dart at the attacker scoring a direct hit to his juggler, saving our lives!

Blood was about to pour from the DEMONS wounds; no blood flowed — the dart bounced off him.

The Demon fired at PREACHER BOY. The bullet sliced through his groin. PREACHER BOY collapsed, grasping his leg, squealing in agony. PREACHER BOY extended his left hand toward me to hand me his last two darts. I snatched them from his hand. I stared at

PREACHER BOY's tear-filled eyes and mouthed: *Plastic tips.*

I felt a hand draped over my shoulder. It startled me, causing me to smash my head into the backside of a dartboard.

My heart momentarily stopped.

Sweat dripped from my chin.

I turned, expecting that my destiny had arrived.

**ME**

*Joe, how, you left? Where'd you come from?*

**Joe**

*I heard the popping sounds of engagement echoing in the air from one block away. I knew the Demon had arrived. I needed to return, to chase. Don't worry; I've got your back.*

The Demon fired in our direction; his first three shots hit: double-twenty; triple twenty; and triple-twenty – one-hundred-sixty!

Joe cracked open a small bag, no larger than a shaving bag. He pulled out ten pieces of gear from the bag, snapping them together. Upon completion, he was sporting a sniper's rifle. I looked inside the bag. It contained only one bullet.

Anguish began breaking on my face.

**Joe**

*Don't worry, I never miss.*

Joe cupped his right hand over his right ear and began speaking to –

General, I don't have a clean shot. General, I won't miss I don't want anyone else to perish. General, no, no, no, fire.

His face became orgasmic as he squeezed the trigger.

The single bullet cut through the air rotating in slow-motion, entering JOHN G's right ear – exploding out his left.

The brain-mattered soaked bullet then entered Nelly J's right ear – exploding out his left ear, splashing brain matter all over the Demon, before carving into his heart – a direct hit!

The DEMON collapsed violently headfirst into the bar and slithered down to the floor. His blood is staining the hardwood. Happily, this was to be his final resting place. He had met his maker, a maker who exorcised his terror.

**TERMINATED**  
TERMINATED

I turned to thank Joe.

He'd stored his weapon.

He was walking through the back corridor.

He paused.

**Joe**

*Demon exterminated: Number 387! I was never here.*

In a heartbeat, Joe vacated the premises.

PREACHER BOY picked himself off the floor. His wound had healed. Together we ambled over the Demon's dead corpse. PREACHER BOY crouched down and clasped the Demon's mask with his right hand. He ripped it off his face like pulling a band-aid from an old wound. We could hear flesh tear from the Demon's face. PREACHER BOY looked up at me, terrified.

**PREACHER BOY**

*Military (\_\_\_\_) — masters out!*

I pulled back and fired a dart at PREACHER BOY. It bounced off him and bounded into the blooded mess below.

**SATURDAY MOURNING — NOT — MORNING**



*What's your social insurance number?*

*Why do you need it?*

*You're applying for work. You just handed me your application.*

*Oh. I'm just a homeless kid trying to get through the day.*

*I don't think we can employ you.*

*Please. Give me a chance.*

*It says your first name is A. What's your first name?*

*It's A.*

*No, it's not. What is it?*

*Undecipherable*

*Okay, we'll give you a chance.*

*A didn't pan out.*

## ENTER NEW APPLICANT

*What's your first name?*

abcde ghi lmnopqr tuvwx yz

Nelly J and JOHN G rose from the grave. They were both still dicks. Mid-life passed them by — most mellow at mid — dropping judgment because they realize the clock is ticking, and kindness is a better option. Not these two.

Nelly J and JOHN G prefer to whine opinions about other people, rarely looking inward.

JOHN G was raised in a native (?) home. He comes across as racist. A conversation with him usually leads to him throwing insults at whoever's on the other end of the discussion.

As for Nelly J —

I don't mind if you find my last few thoughts laced with judgment.

This story is fiction with a non-fiction bent. The characters may appear genuine — they may seem to be accurate characteristics — some of them may be real — “really.” FA

**FA**

*The Chinese are destroying Vancouver.*

*They are buying up everything.*

*All Asian women are whores.*

*Do you see the way they dress?*

*Sharia Law will be here within a year, mark my words.*

*Vancouver is a dump. Who'd want to live here?*

*She lives here.*

*The weather sucks. Vancouver is a horrible place. The Chinese, Asian women, Muslims —*

**ME**

*I think greed destroys things. I love Vancouver. You do know my friend JL is Korean, don't you? So, what, he's one of us, he's okay? Sharia Law, isn't coming here? I don't agree with anything you're saying. If you hate it here so much, leave?*

**FA**

*If you can't see the truth, you are a dunce. Vancouver is garbage. I'm leaving as soon as I can.*

**ME**

*Would you like to dance?*

**FA**

*Can I buy you a beer? Vancouver is going downhill fast. People are no longer kind here. They (non-whites) are destroying it. So, we need someone to bring Covfefe Law here and a WALL.*

FA joins Nelly and JOHN G. Luckily, they connect and revel in judgment, bouncing around like pinballs as life leads them toward dinosaurs.

Jim's turning seventy-four; he's a charming bloke. He's a good friend. He looks toward the threesome and then toward me.

**JIM**

*They're not good people, are they?*

**ME**

*I would say you are correct, Mr. Jim. Maybe they're just depressed or mad at the world. But, you know, Jim, I figure once you hit a certain age being depressed or angry at the world is pointless.*

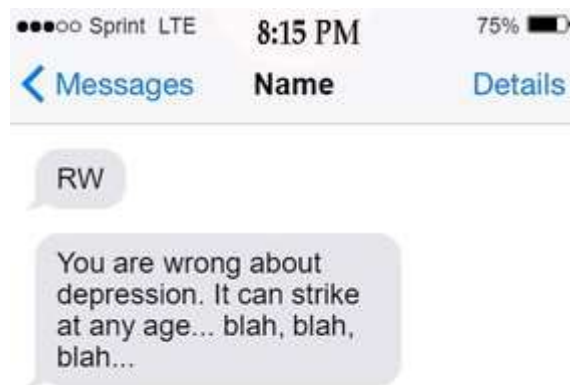
*I'm not sure what the number is, but shall we say: if you hit ninety – seeing a therapist might be a waste of time.*

I hadn't thoroughly thought out this theory, + I know it's probably not that simple. My words were bar speak, nothing more.

ONE HOUR AGO

**Ye-hah, Rob W** wasn't part of our conversation. He was listening in from over my shoulder.

**Ye-hah, Rob W sends** me an email. He was not part of the conversation.



Why do people think it's okay to comment on personal conversations which have nothing to do with them?

TIME FOR A RAUNCHY SEXUAL PIVOT

OR NOT?

PARENTAL  
ADVISORY  
EXPLICIT CONTENT

KJ (Kieran) couldn't snap a finger on where or when they met. Taran plopped down to Kieran's left onto a sofa in the chill-out room of a legal drug den. Where, well, for the most part, the authorities choose to look the other way.

The dense air filled with the aroma of high. Vision blurred. The occupants of chill were drifting in and out of flux and euphoria.

Sexual tension floated in the toxicity of the fragrant air. Kieran and Taran stared intensely into each other's clouded eyes, connection found.

What's your name? Taran, hello Taran, I'm Kieran. I love it: we both have unisex names!

Kieran flashed to the past, to a dream, a fantasy where waves lapped over Kieran's taut body. Kieran's breathing became shallow; expiration was soon to come. In the vision, Taran hovered above—and when Kieran was on the verge of expiring, Taran breathed air into Kieran's mouth, snapping Kieran back to life.

The music pulsed. Kieran and Taran became locked in a kiss. Kieran pulled a flap of white powder out of a pocket (left), then reached into the other pocket (right), pulling out a pen cap. Their kiss intensified with Kieran's tongue probing Taran's accepting mouth. Kieran felt loved, maybe for the first time.

Kieran is five-five, with sinewy delicate curves—defined, but not hard, delicious. Kieran's svelte body gave an illusion of height.

Taran lifted the pen cap, filled it with powder, placing it under the left nostril, and sniffed, sucking the wonder-dust into the nasal cavity. Then, dipped the lid into the flap and raised it to Kieran's nose. Kieran snorted. They were both about to elevate.

The music slowed.

Tell me when it kicks in—they faded out and in, feeling the chemicals burn in their bloodstreams. Another beat dropped.

Kieran ripped open Taran's shirt.

With Kieran's right hand, Kieran cupped Taran's left breast.

Kieran's tongue darted over Taran's hardened nipples.

Taran heaved.

Their bodies melted into one, burning with desire.

Tell me when it kicks in — I feel the chemicals burn —

Pinwheels filled the room spinning frantically, colours intensifying with each rotation — carnal became the quest of the place.

Kieran moaned, torso raising off the sofa — close to exploding.

**Kieran**

*How do I know you?*

Taran's soulful brown eyes screamed out here + forever.

I feel the chemicals burn in my bloodstream. Is this how it ends?

A warm rush flowed through their bodies. The chemicals were kicking in — they retreated to the washroom in the back of the drug den. They were about to swallow each other's love. They entered a stall. Their eyes flashed in and out of focus. When they opened their eyes, they found a stranger standing next to them, unisex as well; named **JT**. JT had faded in.

The walls dripped with sweat. Pen cap filled, one, two, three, bumps.

**JT** mouthed —

I'll watch. I'll tell you when it kicks in — can you feel —

**Kieran** mouth pressed violently against **Taran's** lips. Taran's lips tasted of ocean salt and were flavoured with the toxicity of Ketamine.

I'll just watch.

**Taran** lowered onto the toilet's seat with **Kieran's** tight waist directly in front of **Taran**. **Taran's** mouth pressed against **Kieran's** strained pants.

**Taran** lowered **Kieran's** pants. **Taran's** tongue brushed over — sending **Kieran** into orbit.

Sweat dripped from **Kieran's** forehead splashing onto **Taran's** tongue. Pleasure-filled-waves rolled through their sweat covered bodies. **JT** delicately stroked their backs.

I'll just watch.

## FADING AWAY

**Taran's** tongue slowly rolled across **Kieran's** midsection. **Kieran** lifted **Taran's** taught body off the seat — thrusting their bodies together. They pulsed in time to the music.

Taran penetrated Kieran. The thrusts mirrored the beat moving from slow to fast — they collapsed, spent in the throes of passion.

JT looked away.

In the chill-out room, they struggled to regain composure. The room spun in a pixilated blur. Kieran looked left, right, left, and then slipped into a passionate kiss.

This is how it ends. This is when it kicks in — fading out and in, I feel —  
JD faded out.

Kieran looked over Taran's shoulder. JD's eyes focused on the couple behind Taran.

THEY WERE FUCKING  
THEY MAKE FUCKING

Pleasure dripped from the chill-rooms walls. Kieran became transfixed on the male of the fucking couple's eyes. Kieran became submerged in a deep blue sea with hundreds of frantic people searching the shallow crystal-clear blue waters. Kieran could hear "Kieran" name being screamed out. The stranger blinked. When Kieran's eyes flashed open Taran was diving into the water for what would soon become forever more.

JT filled the cap with powder taking an overflowing bump.

I'll just watch.

Kieran and Taran both knew they'd meet again!

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2017

THE SPECIALIST  
THE SPECIALIST

It was my second visit to my family-doctor-appointed specialist, Dr. Chan. Unlike St Paul's, no drug-addled human would be stealing the doctor's attention.

*You don't have Plantar Fasciitis.*

My pain sat at a constant seven, ripping back and forth from my knees to my brain.

This is probably: how it ends.

Dr. Chan wiggled, prodded; and then determined —

I don't think you have Rheumatoid Arthritis — but you have something attacking your immune system. I need to drain your blood. What kind of harsh addictive prescription would you like until we get to the bottom of this?

## FLASHBACKS

I sat in the passenger seat of my sexy red Fiat convertible, my friend Wes behind the wheel. I placed my feet on the dash. While stopped at a light, an intoxicatingly beautiful woman in the heavenly vehicle to our right blew me a kiss; and then licked her lips.

*You have the most beautiful feet I've ever seen*, she shouted out her window.

## SURVEY COMPLETE

I have beautiful feet.

Foot beauty had left me ever since my currently undiagnose-able phantom-ailment tripled my foot size.

Do you know what they say about big feet?

I popped four pills—it's kicking in.

## BACK TO THE SPECIALIST

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Lindsay, I think you have a rare disease called *Sarcoidosis*, the luck of the draw. Chances are it will vacate you on its own; without rhyme or reason, let's monitor it closely for a few months. Imagine a French-fry being dragged slowly through a lake of ketchup. That's what's happening inside you. If it doesn't fade "out," more than "in," I'll change the chemicals burning in your bloodstream; if that fails, well, we may need to do some transplanting.

Great, I don't have RA or PF!

Hopefully, I get to keep my organs, at least the vital ones.

## FLASHBACK

My sexy red Fiat convertibles last days with me, it would only turn left. So, I took it to St Paul's. I stuffed several needles in the glove box.

I popped two pills.

## THE NEXT DAY

Maybe I should write a song about *Sarcoidosis*.

I took a long, pleasurable draw on the straw of my Matcha Chillo at Blenz Coffee, Davie + Burrard. I cracked open **Squirrel Seeks Chipmunk** (David Sedaris). The at-times fucked-up world passed by just beyond a smeared pane of glass. I revelled.



A cow draws a turkey for Secret Santa.

A man with a thick Mohawk sat to my left — he spewed toxically.

**Mr. Mohawk**

*Fucking police, they think they're the best in the World.*

*I have evaded them for the past five years.*

*They're bullshit, fucking pigs.*

*I'm superior.*

*Probably, best to ignore.*

Hmm: A pot-bellied pig goes on a diet.

I cough.

**Mr. Mohawk**

*What a pathetic hack, fucking loser.*

*I will destroy.*

*The World is bullshit.*

*I will be the answer.*

Oh my: A mouse adopted a rescue snake.

**Mr. Mohawk**

*I will bash your brains all over the window, and I am going to kill you.*



Mr. Mohawk stood behind me with his shoulders squared to me.

**Me**

*Excuse me.*

**Mr. Mohawk**

*I will bash your brains all over the window, and I am going to kill you.*

**Me**

*Do I know you? Why are you standing here?*

**Mr. Mohawk**

*I am going to splatter your brains, and I will kill you.*

**Me**

*You need to back away from me. I don't know you.*

I removed my glasses.

**Me**

*You need to go away.*

**Mr. Mohawk**

*I am going to kill you.*

**Me**

*I'm asking you to leave now.*

I pointed at the door. I then did the only reasonable thing to do at a stressful moment: Looked at the floor.

**Me**

*Do you think I have beautiful feet?*

Mr. Mohawk grunted and then left; I think the grunt meant: YES.

Mr. Ugly Sweater had been sitting two stools over from me; he approached me.

**Mr. Ugly Sweater**

*What was that all about?*

**Me**

*Thanks for your concern.*

A little late mother jammer crossed my mind.

I grabbed him by the collar of his sweater and bashed his head into the pane of glass. Blood spurted from his broken skull, drawing legs against the window as the at times fucked up World passed us by, a mere few feet away.

Four blocks from Blenz, I punched my PIN into a bank machine. I looked to my left. Mr. Mohawk's face was pressed against the bank's window.

I began to pace.

I raised my phone to my right ear.

He ran away.

Two hours later, I hopped on an elevator in my building — full car — nine people.

My skin began to crawl.

The Lift halted on Floor UM.

Eight people slithered out.

The door closed.

I looked over and sheepishly smiled at the lone occupant left with me.

**Me**

*Ewe, Realtors. (And Laugh)*

**Lone Occupant Left**

*My sister sold her place in Victoria. So many showings, the Realtors.*

I smashed his brain into the elevator's floor buttons.

His blood dripped slowly over the keys.

He paid a hefty price for not comprehending comedic nuance.

**Tell me when it kicks in?**

## THE NEXT DAY

1. Will Lindsay write the Sarcoidosis song?
2. Will Nelly Jim + JOHN G face another gruesome death or be sent to Purgatory?
3. Will **Kieran** remember how he/she knows **Taran**?
4. Will a release date for **MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE** be announced?
5. And in the washroom stall: who thrust whom?

TO FIND THE ANSWERS TO THESE + MANY MORE QUESTIONS READ

PURGATORY  
LOKCVLOKX

On the eastern outskirts of VanCity on the Northern shore of the Fraser River sits an ominous institutional looking building. A building spared from the flames of developers' desires. Its hallways inhabited with phantoms living in a spectral world.

A yellow taxi pulls into the driveway. JOHN G jumps out. His hair freshly died (dyed) blonde. His clothes clutch to his obesity.

A second taxi arrives. Nelly J slithers out.

**JOHN G**

*What are you doing here?*

**Nelly J**

Whines.

**JOHN G**

*Where the fuck, is here?*

---

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The building blends into the river's bank. It is made up of slate concrete and a dirty white veneer, shattered through the years. Piercing through the windows is a series of cubicles filled with people who are staring anywhere but out. The buildings tattered awning splashed with pigeon shit and an unidentifiable smear of larvae.

The entrance emblazoned with:

YOUR TOMMOROWS ARRIVE HERE  
LOOK TOMMOKOM? WKKIAP HEKE

**JOHN G**

*I received a call. The deep gravelly voice on the other end of the line told me I was a winner. My judgments are incredibly astute. He told me to jump into a cab and come to this address.*

**Nelly J**

*OMG, meeee tooo, I'm a whiiineer; Wee whiiine! Oh, oh – the doors opening, over there. Here comes someone. What did we win? What did we win?*

A tall, lanky man approached.

He was sporting a white lab coat.

He had a patch on his left eye.

His face was emaciated.

## **Patch**

*Hello, lads. I'm your welcoming committee. That always cracks me up. How can one man be a committee? Anywho, welcome to (inaudible mumble) your new home. Isn't it delightfully sterile looking? Oh, by the way, my name is Patch.*

## **NELLY + JOHN G CHANT IN UNISON.**

*Did he just say: NEW HOME?*

Patch's attire consisted of red, green, and black and white slacks. If you prefer, trousers, along with a white hooded lab coat, he pulled up the hood. His face disappeared, turning into a shadow.

Nelly + JOHN G looked stunned and appeared to be lost—but only slightly more than usual as life skips past them.

## **PATCH**

*Follow me, follow me-follow me. Don't you love the remarkable cadence of my singing voice? Hey, you, the less fat one, are you Nelly J? You are. Frap. Great, I'll make sure to line up your selection of exhilarating merit badges.*

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Nelly's eyes watered.

He stumbled to speak.

He couldn't find his voice.

He mouthed: *PATCH* while reading the pink Patch embroidered on Patch's hoodie.

## **PATCH**

*Nelly J, how's about I call you Nelly for short? Perfect; such a time saver, you know what they say: time is of the essence. And JOHN G, I presume that's who you are? I was told your weight balloons up and down like a yo-yo. That doesn't make any sense. Oh well. As for the ballooning, this must be an up time for you. I'm not trying to be mean. Besides, your girth may be a blessing here. Screw that; if anyone deserves to be fat-shamed, it's you.*

JOHN G fumes.

## **PATCH**

*JOHN G, you think all Muslims are damaged? You certainly are a fine piece of work. Your mind must be firing on all cylinders. Just so you know, I'm not being sarcastic.*

## JOHN G SCREAMS

*They're all damaged. Admit it?*

## PATCH

*All cylinders – I'm not sure if you are capable of thinking. You are a charm. Your words flash clarity on your selection, why you're here. Follow me; both of you are rising stars!*

## JOHN G NOW SHUDDERING

*Do you think he's fucking with us?*

## Nelly J

*Ewe, did you just wet yourself?*

## JOHN G FILLED WITH ANGST

We are so superior to this fucker. Look what he's wearing. He's an idiot. C'mon, Patch, what-the-fuck-ever, I hate him.

## PATCH

*Poor, naïve, man-boy, we just met, didn't we? Sorry about my laughing. I can't help it. Today is going to be enjoyable. If not for you – for me for sure – I'm Muslim, by the way. I'm everything you disparage. Maybe I'm just fucking with you, Sunshine(s).*

Patch found it to be astounding. Nelly + JOHN G didn't sprint or waddle back to their taxis – instead, they followed him down a long, seemingly endless hallway. Glass cages darted out from each side. Inside each cell sat two individuals locked in silence. They were staring intensely into each other's eyes.

## PATCH

*Guy's, don't you love the sterile stink of the hallway? It reminds me of the clean stench of a hospital. But, here, death unfortunately never arrives. Trust me; you'll pray for death. Sounds enjoyable, right?*

## WORDS DRIP FROM NELLY'S MOUTH – WORDS DRENCHED IN CONDENSATION

*Why are we here?*

## PATCH

*Why are you here, Nelly? I assure you you've earned it. The two of you have reached a phantasmagorical level of devolution. You'd do the dinosaurs proud. Your innate ability to lace life with judgment has won you, well, this! You are the Champions of the Future. Future – rich! I want to burst into laughter. Do you like my slacks? How have you two managed to become dinkier with maturity – a rarity – that's why the selection committee selected: YOU(S).*

## NELLY + JOHN G IN UNISON

*We never liked you.*

### PATCH

*Sweet, unison; a second time, the repetition brings me honour. You don't know me yet; I've earned your approval. Stop. Hmm, Room 6868-minus-6202. I'll be damned. Here's your new room. Quaint, isn't it: 4 x 6?*

*I know it's sparse. Two chairs. They aren't comfy, I might add. I just did add. Your asses will surely hate them. Do you want to know what the fuck, is going on? Why is the room a glass chamber? You probably want to know who those people are gawking inward. Do you like my smile? I just had my teeth whitened. Glistening, don't you think? I'm messing with you. Anyway, JOHN G, may I call you John? Why are you panicky? I don't know how many John's are in the World? I know three. And besides, I read your chart, pouring over it like a fine toothcomb, maybe not a comb; I did give it a thorough read. There is no better way to describe you with the chart's last word read than an all-caps DINK. –*

## THE NEXT DAY

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Fear came swathing down, taking Nelly + John in its clutches. Flames pierced Nelly + John's eyes, rendering them blind. In their vision challenged state, next, they were blasted into the seats in the cage. Their arms froze. They screamed in silence as words escaped them; John's wet spot continued to grow more substantial on the crotch of his trousers.

### PATCH

*You're home, my friends! May I call you friends? Welcome to Dinosaur College—maybe not college. Oh my, Marge hates it when I try to be creative. The two of you are shadow bringers instead of purveyors of light so, the world is about to repay you. Everybody is about to repay you. Even the Muslims – Dink – I mean DINK. Childish, I know. My name is Patch, after all. Didn't like it as a child – but it grew on me – do you guys like it? Use your words. I'm betting that now you guys maybe regret coming back to life.*

*If you'd like, I can share the program with you?*

## CURRICULAM

1. You will never sleep again.
2. You will face each other 24 hours a day. Eyes wide open. Your brains will function, but you will not be able to speak. Or even blink. Fun hey!

3. Twice a day, we will feed you a wonderfully nutritious plate of grub. Well, kibble. It's disgusting. You will get used to it. By disgusting, I mean it tastes like a donkey's ass that's been marinating in slug larvae for weeks. Twice a day. Yummy. You must ingest every bite. If you don't: zap – zap – with each zap increasing intensity. Believe me, be you will eat!
4. Do you guys remember your racist friend: FA – she's going to join you – to (almost undecipherable) sew your sphincters' shut, closed solid – the wrong choice of words?" –

**PATCH**

*OMG, the look in your eyes, priceless. Did you think I said sphincter? I did. I do have a beautiful smile. Thank you(s). You asked about the people outside: they're evolving. They feel sorry for you. But and this is a big but: like yours John, they will accept whatever the outcome may be.*

**HELEN**

*Patch!*

**PATCH**

*Oh, hey, Helen, nice lab coat. I like the Helen patch, sweet, you've brought another chair – for who?*

**HELEN**

*Patch, I'd like you to meet Mr. B. He may or may not be a permanent fixture? Room 666 is going to be bigly special. Maybe we can even add Bigly one day?*

**Mr. B**

*Nice to meet you as well, I think? What is this place? How did I get here?*

**HELEN**

*What's the last thing you remember, Mr. B?*

*Mr. B*

*Well, I had messaged a friend, a writer friend. I asked him to join me for a drink. Then, when he arrived, I poked his belly and then joked about how big it got.*

**HELEN**

*You poked his belly, fun. Why didn't you tell him he looked tired as well? – I find those two things to be fantastic conversation starters, don't you? Sarcasm, you think I'm sarcastic, never Mr. B. How did your friend respond?*

**Mr. B**

*Strangely, not well, he went off a little, he barked, my comments made him feel like crap. I told him he's not fat. So, I suggested I was providing a service by letting him know he's gained a few pounds. I don't think he agreed.*



**HELEN**

*Hand over your Mensa Card, Einstein. It's unfathomable anyone would think telling someone they're fat would go well. Except, John, poke away. I don't know your writer friend, but I think he's likely an outstanding measured-thinking, and a funny-as-hell writer from your words.*

**Mr. B**

*It didn't go well.*

*It went horribly.*

*He told me to piss off.*

*He said he knows when his clothes are a little tight – an indicator he's gained weight. He said he doesn't need an asshole "friend" pointing things out. He asked me if I felt better by making people feel awful. Can you believe his reaction?*

**HELEN**

*Yes, yes, I can. Continue, please.*

**Mr. B**

*I stressed I'm a friend trying to help. I said I didn't call him fat. He said I'm stupid. He asked me how I'd feel if people came up to me without gauging my mood and said, you look fat and tired? I don't understand. I never called him fat.*

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**HELEN**

*But you said you poked his stomach and made a comment, right?*

**Mr. B**

*Sure did.*

*But it was out of friendship.*

*He disagreed.*

*So, I changed subjects, is that Nelly J + John in the cubicle? – I fucking hate those guys.*

**HELEN**

*What did you change the subject to?*

**Mr. B**

*Light shit, comedy, like how you must be careful about who is present when you tell certain jokes.*

**HELEN**

*How did that go for you?*

**Mr. B**

*Why are they staring at each other? Creepy – this place has a sterile stink to it. It reminds me of the time I woke up as a cockroach, long story – maybe I can tell it to you over a beer sometime.*



**HELEN**

*You're not going anywhere soon; a cockroach, interesting. Please go on.*

**Mr. B**

*I respect my writer friend; his opinions are spot-on-the-point. I was just trying to help. But he still chose to call me stupid. He may have added: fucking ridiculous. I told him: some racist jokes are best told only to specific audiences.*

**HELEN**

*How did he respond to your tremendous fresh insight?*

**Mr. B**

*He stated in an unwavering bent: there is no such thing as a racist joke. I tried to tell him there was. He was adamant their aren't – that there are only racists telling what they believe to be jokes – and then, they whine about political correctness. And then-POOF – in a flash of light – I'm here. What is here? Am I going to prefer to be a cockroach?*

**HELEN**

*This, my friend, is your new home, for a while at least, with Nelly + John.*

The light FLASHES once more. Mr. B's body slams into a third chair. He can't speak. He can't use his arms. Mr. B's + Nelly's + John's eyes flipped into the opposite of cross-eyed, eyes split. Each of them had one eye staring directly at the other two.

Wheels clattered off in the distance, and Marge came pushing a cart full of trash.

PATCH smiling chin-to-chin

Lunchtime, hopefully, the kitchen fully cooked the kibble. Remember the last time Marge: Room 222 – after eating, Eddy had two slugs crawl out of his nostrils – ewe!

**SUNDAY, JULY 16, 2017**

## 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.

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