

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?

HELL + ESCAPE + MORE HELL + LOVE
HELL + ESCAPE + MORE HELL + LOVE



THE BIG C

KNOCK. KNOCK. FUCKING KNOCK

SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

MARCH 1979

Sorry about that. I got a little ahead of myself.
BEEP...BEEP...BEEP

Hang tight while I back up the team bus.

MARCH 1979

KNOCK. KNOCK. FUCKING KNOCK.

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A mist was pattering on the window of our home when I heard three ominous knocks on the door. I cracked the door open ever so slightly. A man draped in black stood on the other side. Rain dripped from his jacket. His voice was grating.

"I'm here for Nicholas. Can you get him for me?" The man said in an eerie tone.

"Nicholas is not home," I said. "And besides, he isn't interested in converting."

I slammed the door, but the stranger wedged his foot, blocking my attempt. I pushed with all my might. I couldn't budge the creepy son-of-a-bitch.

"Who the fuck, are you?" I squealed.

"Son, I am the Big C. Your father's number is up. It is time for me to inflict my wrath on your family. It's nothing personal."

"The Big C, what the hell is that?"

"Cancer, you naïve young man, I will be back. You cannot escape time."

Before I had a chance to interrogate him further — **POOF** — he drifted into the shadows.

From that morning forward, I knew the Big C was lurking, waiting for the opportunity to latch onto my father and take him into its steely clutches. Dad's death march began on this day. He was seventy-seven years old; I was only eighteen.

My friend's fathers had taught their children how to throw a ball and ride a bike. My dad

taught me how to deal with the grief of watching his illness destroy everything he was.

Before I pursued football, I used to play catch alone. I'd toss the football as high and as far into the air as I could, then sprint after it, often diving through the air to make a spectacular catch.

During the early stages of Dad's struggles, I needed to escape my realities. When I left Saskatoon to pursue football in Edmonton with the Edmonton Wildcats – Dad was just entering his battle with the Big C.

Football allowed me to deny my family's heartache.

Guilt made me cry profusely as I prepared to drive away from home for the first time.

I raced toward Edmonton, planning to stay with my Aunt + Uncle, Priscilla & Roy.

With tear-filled eyes, I looked back at Mum and Dad; before I pulled away from the curb, they left me with parting words, "*Don't be a burden on your Aunt & Uncle.*"

Four hours later, I pulled into the parking lot of the Sherwood Park Mall. I folded the back seats and turned my car into a campsite there.

After searching endlessly, Priscilla & Roy found me and took me into their home three days later.

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.