

# 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.*

# DEVELOPMENT

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MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE

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# HIGH SCHOOL

## SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

### EVAN HARDY COLLEGIATE – THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE TRACKS

SEPTEMBER 1974

Please select from the choices below to ensure the best High School Experience. By picking one or more of these, you just might happen to avoid becoming an outcast.

1. Excel Scholastically.
- ~~2. Be a Stoner. Come from a Rich Family (not really a choice).~~
3. Excel Athletically.

With 2 + 3 scratched off my list, I chose sports, primarily football, my pathway to being like Don.

#### GYM CLASS NUMBER ONE

Coach Knoll, my gym teacher and the head football coach barked out the roll call.

*"Lindsay Wincherauk."*

*"Here."*

*"Great, is Don Wincherauk, your older brother?"*

*"Yes."*

*"Coach Mooney, it looks like we have a prospective star in our presence."*

With Coach Knoll dropping that lofty expectation onto my shoulders, it became abundantly clear, high school was going to be a bitch. I had just turned fourteen, we were living on the wrong side of the tracks; I was the brother of a god-like athlete, + I was the son of a sick, aged father. And I would soon be sharing my name with the Bionic Woman. *Could it be any other way?*

With Coach Knoll's words, I instantly became petrified I would never be able to live up to the expectations left behind by Donald's white cleats. I cowered.

Oddly, I chose to play golf because it's a rich man's game-winning division in a junior tournament. I played and excelled at tennis. And I joined the track team, running in tattered hand-me-downs.

Glaringly, my family remained absent during my many victories.

# DRIVING LESSONS

## SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

### A FARMER'S FIELD ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN

JULY 1976

*"Dad, I just turned 16; I want to learn how to drive. How hard can it be? You drive."*

*"Stop the guff boy. Okay, son, pick a car from the fleet (a fleet of two), and we can hit the open road."*

We ambled to the front yard. Resting, waiting for its cylinders to be sparked to life, sat a dusty white 1963 Epic Envoy – a car resembling stacked boxes.



We strolled to the back yard, sitting there, anxiously, as if cars can sit in anticipation, parked within white lines painted on the lawn, rested a burgundy Oldsmobile 98, a huge automobile. An automobile unduly large to the point where I struggled to see over the hood. Being blind in my left eye wouldn't help.

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*Oh yeah, I'm blind in my left eye.*

I chose the stacked boxes.

The Epic screamed babe magnet.

Dad hopped behind the wheel, drove twenty miles out into the countryside, + turned off the highway onto a gravel road. Dust billowing in our wake.

*"Dad, do you know the owner of this land?"*

*"No."*

Dad drove for three more miles, turned right, and between two signposts decorated in barbed wire, crows perching on the top, Dad finessed the beast into an unknown land. Then, another mile later, he hammered on the brakes grinding the Epic to a stop in the middle of a well-rutted field.

Dad barked at me, *"Get out, get into the driver's seat. It is your turn to drive."*

Eager for my first lesson, I fastened my seatbelt, threw the gearbox into first and finessed the gas pedal and clutch. Then, we lurched forward, sputtering out in a few feet.

Dad screamed at me again, *"Not forward."* I gave him a stunned look. *"Reverse, I learned how-to drive-in reverse; you will do the same. Unless, of course, you want to whine all the way home sitting in the passenger seat."*

I shifted into reverse. Three times per week, for forty minutes per lesson, I never drove forward. Then, with my father intensely staring my way, without uttering a word, we plowed a stranger's fields, swathing my way around a wheat maze, laughing inwardly each time I ground the gears.

After two months of training, I was ready to tackle my driver's test.

### **DRIVERS TEST 1**

Failed. Being blind in one eye required the car to have two outside mirrors. The Epic only had one. The instructor never even let me get in the car.

### **DRIVERS TEST 2**

Failed. I killed at parallel parking, but I laboured when looking through the front windshield for some reason.

### **DRIVERS TEST 3**

Passed.

The Epic was going to provide me with a causeway to freedom.

# THE BIONIC WOMAN

## SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

1976-1978

**B**y the time 1976 rolled around, I acted as the neighbourhood's anti-smoking advocate for several years. I assumed the role because of my hatred of my parents' smoking addictions. Nicholas suffered from a collapsed lung. But still, ignorantly, he'd sneak cigarettes in the bathroom, with the toxic scent wafting from underneath the door. My dad was willfully killing himself. I cried every time I smelled the lingering scent of death.

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48 Whenever I witnessed a neighbourhood kid lighting up, I'd beg and preach to them about why they needed to quit.

*"Hey Billy, smoking is dumb. Do you want to die young?"*

Billy was an idiot. He disagreed with me. He called me a dick and threatened to beat me senselessly.

I was now entering Grade 10. I still took it upon myself to lecture smokers. In 1978 my advocacy took on a new bent. The Bionic Woman starring Lindsay Wagner filled the small screen. Being named Lindsay began to pose a new challenge.

*"Hey Billy, smoking is dumb. Do you want to die young?"*

*"I'll tell you what, Lindsay Wagner, I am going to beat you senseless. Right after I finish my smoke."*

*"Great, at least you won't be smoking while you beat me."*

# VICE WORLD PART 1: SPEED

## SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

### WELCOME TO VICE WORLD

*Alright, step right up. Vices for everyone. If you crave an alternative form of excitement, you have come to the right place.*

*Vices, vices, vices!*

*Come on in, Vice lovers.*

*Here at Vice-World, we're slashing Vice prices in half!*

*Whatever you crave, we can satisfy your needs.*

***Sugar Highs + Travel Addictions + Lost Innocence + Passion + Love***

*We can mix and match whatever you want and find the right combination to whisk you away to a better place.*

*Give us an offer on our massive selection of Vices, and we'll blow it up.*

*Ala' carte and combinations are available. Ask your provider for details!*

*Why don't you try Caffeine to pep up your day, for starters? Instead, speed up your rush with a blast of sugar.*

*Alright, alright, we've got Fitness Addiction + Smoking + Video Games + Speed + Rock & Roll.*

*Visit our Rock & Roll section and let the bassline thunder you to a more illicit marketplace.*

*Why don't you take a moment to masturbate? Yes, it is a Vice. It is also fabulous for prostate health.*

*Lindsay, I see you staring at Speed. So why don't you move away for a moment? Don't limit yourself.*

*We got Sex Vices, Greed Vices, Work Vices, and the limiting Vice of Serial Monogamy.*

*If you are courageous and want to take it up a notch, we got Booze Vices and a delightful array of Drug-Filled Vices.*

***Visit on Sunday for All You Can Ingest Sundays.***

*Lindsay, if you choose to go down the Booze road, one day, the sickness just might earn you a plaque at the end of a bar. Until it kills you, of course.*

*Remember, all options are interchangeable. Ask one of our providers to mix & match for a fuller effect.*

*Purchase one vice on Tuesdays – get a second vice for free.*

*The best thing about the Booze + Drugs Vice is they often land you in the bed of the Sex Vice, always fulfilling and meaningful.*

*Keep perusing the menu until you find selections that suit your needs.*

*We've got Booze, weed, trips into the world of after-hours, ecstasy, speed, GHB, heroin, lick-able toads (only in season), and many more.*

*Try one of our hallucinatory vice bowls, and watch your mother and father reunite in the new realm you most certainly will discover.*

*Here at Vice-World, we provide the safest experience. We have experienced users waiting in the wings to act as your mentors and ensure you continue chasing your right to alter.*

*Try any Vice pan-fried.*

*Lindsay, I don't recommend you delve into the last page. It's not for the faint of heart; it is for the demented, a few world leaders spring to mind.*

*We got Crime, Fear Mongering, and World Domination on the last page.*

*Lindsay, I don't think your ego belongs on that page.*

*The beauty of most of these Vices, they don't care about age.*

*Let me know when you are ready to select.*

50 *Lindsay, the great thing about Vice World is that we have locations everywhere to help you ~~mess~~  
~~up and~~ make your life spectacular!*

**ME**  
TATE

*Wow, everything looks so enticing.*

**ME**  
TATE

*May I have a minute to decide?*

**VICE PROVIDER**  
VICE PROVIDER

*No problem. Life has a habit of eventually bringing everyone to our door.*

**ME**  
TATE

*Will the Vices harm me?*

**ME**  
TATE

*How many VICES, and how much consumption, is too much?*

**VICE PROVIDER**  
VICE PROVIDER

*Nothing risk-free, Lindsay. A taste won't harm you. It may even take you to a better place.*

**ME**

*One last question: Once I VICE, how long will I stay on the program?*

**VICE PROVIDER**

*Lindsay, it depends on how much you want to experience and how far you want to get away from reality?*

**VICE PROVIDER**

*May I suggest: Start with a taste and take it from there!*

**ME**

*Well, I just passed my driver's test, so I think it might be time to launch my Epic Envoy into high gear. So, I think I would like to start with Speed. Vroom!*

**VICE PROVIDER**

*Great choice, Lindsay. Now go, go, and hit the open road. Come back when you want to add more Vices to enhance the quality of your life!*

*Before you go, I'd like to ask you a question: What took you so long?*

*Come back often, you hear, Vice heaven awaits.*

## **SPEED**

I hit the open road, grinding my way through the gearbox. My flowing locks flowing.

First gear, second gear, third gear, fourth gear, and grinding gears. The Epic maxed out. Sixty-five miles per hour. The Epic would not be satiating my thirst for speed.

My friend Tony asked me if he could drive. He was only fifteen; I let him anyway.

A few blocks into Tony's driving adventure and **SMASH**.

Tony t-boned another car, smashing out the Epic's right headlight.

I parked the car in our backyard. Dad discovered the damage the following morning. My dad used his mechanical skills to hook up a one-hundred-watt trouble light from the housing to the battery.

Laying in front of the Epic became an excellent place to read a book.

Two weeks later, I thrust the gearbox into second gear while cornering hard. I reached for the steering wheel. I had the gearshift in my hand. We looked down to where the gearshift used to be; the road was blasting by under the car.

When dad discovered the damage, he replaced the gearshift with a silver clamp; that just so fittingly happens to have another name, vice-grip.

The girls at school began taking numbers!

Unfortunately, the number machine was stuck on zero.

To stop my *VICE* selection from being an unmitigated failure, I bought a car I couldn't afford, a 1978 Mercury Capri.

*Number 17... Please...*

I began collecting speeding tickets when I nearly turned the Capri into an incendiary rocket because of my overzealousness. I collected six in one year. Two within twenty blocks, on the same night.

The DMV put my speed on hold for one month.

# GRIDIRON PURSUITS

## SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN

**AUGUST-NOVEMBER 1978**

*“Lindsay, it’s not too late for football. Why don’t you try out?”* Coach Knoll gently encouraged me.

Nobody starts playing football in Grade 12. I did. I made the team. I finally stepped out of Donald’s footsteps.

My best friend Tony Gagnon also tried out. Tony was in Grade 10. He, too, made the team. Tony and I eventually shared the quarterbacking duties of the blue & gold Evan Hardy Souls.

Tony quickly became a star, both on and off the field.

As a matter of fact, we both excelled in leading the Souls to City and Provincial Championships.

I wasn’t done.

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## SASKATOON-EDMONTON-SASKATOON

**1978-1983**

### 1978

While Tony’s star continued to shine in high school – he had broken several of my brother Don’s long-standing city records, Tony moved on to be a star with the Saskatoon Hilltops.

On the other hand, I played for the Hilltops for my first year after school. We won the Canadian Championship, along with the laurels, our team was inducted into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.

### 1979-1981

I moved on to play with the Edmonton Wildcats, where I managed to throw the longest touchdown pass in Canadian Junior Football History (108-yards) to Gord Bolstad. I dropped back into our endzone, and from five yards deep with Edmonton Husky defenders nipping at my heels, I launched a rocket – Gord sprinted under it, catching it at the 50-yard line and then racing the rest of the way into the endzone.



### LONGEST PASS

108t Lindsay Wincherauk to Gord Bolstad, Edmonton Wildcats (PJFC)...Sept 24, 1979

(The tennis players in the background were missing history in the making)

## 1982-1983

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**A**fter my two-year stint with the Wildcats, I decided upon higher education. More on that later. I walked on to the University of Saskatchewan Huskies, trying out for the team on a cold winter day, in street clothes, in the Saskatoon Field House.

The coaching staff immediately recognized my rocket arm.

Don't believe me?

Way back in High School, Coach Knoll had initially dubbed me, *Throw it through me, not to me, Wincherauk.*

Zip.

## 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.