

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?

WHO AM I GOING TO BECOME?
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ROAD RASH

NEGRIL JAMAICA

11 JULY 1990

Our plane touched down on the tarmac in Montego Bay on this brilliantly sunny day.

Wes, and I, along with Greg (four-foot-eleven), were going to rub our coin collections together and buy a hotel.

We sat on the patio of one of the suites at the White Sands Resort with Steve (named changed), the owner of the hotel's son-in-law. Greg's feet were dangling.

Wes, undaunted by the task at hand, asked, *"What will it take for us to take the hotel off your hands?"*

"\$4-million US."

Wes started blinking as if he was doing calculations in his head. The Caucasian from Virginia, Steve, summonsed his staff to bring us more Red Stripes.

Wes took a big swig.

"Let me get this straight, Steve, the property consists of twenty-nine units, a private villa, a beach bar & restaurant, and it is smack dab in the middle of Negril's seven-mile pristine beach."

"Yes, and our occupancy rates have been outstanding. So, what we are searching for is new owners to keep my father-in-law's legacy intact."

Wes glanced at Shorty and me and then back to Steve. *"I'll tell you what, we are prepared to offer \$2.5-million."*

"If you make it 2.9, we've got a deal. We will give you six-months to secure funding."

It was time to celebrate – we had bought a hotel, sort of.

The next day we rented motorcycles.

I had never ridden one before.

"Wes, should I go back to our hotel to change? I'm only wearing flip-flops and short shorts?"

"Nah. You should be fine."

Shorty was a wee bit stoked.

We blasted over hills, breezed by breathtaking seascapes, all the while dodging carnivorous potholes.

PIT STOP

Tasty Jerk Chicken + Tings = Delicious

Satisfied it was time to return to Negril

Wes opened the throttle, with the *Friendly Giant* trailing close behind and struggling to keep pace.

When we started our journey Wes had told me, "*Don't worry, Lindsay, we'll go at your pace.*"

He lied.

I tried anxiously to keep up. I feared being left behind to be devoured by roaming packs of spliff-wielding Rastafarians.

THUD

I hit a pothole at forty miles per hour, dead center. I started to fly over the handlebars. I figured that would end badly. So, I pushed downward, fell sideways, and performed a fifty-yard slide with the bike between my legs.

It hurt.

A lot.

107 My riding gear didn't protect me.

I sprung to my feet.

I threw my hands in the air.

I screamed at the top of my lungs, "*I'M OKAY.*"

I was alone, and Wes and Kareem were long gone.

I looked behind me and started doing inventory.

Bike: Check

Sandal: Check

Sandal: Check

Hat: Check

Skin: Check

Roaming Pack of Rastafarians —

I paused and pondered.

That's odd; the white tape I was wearing on my hand seemed to have peeled off. Oh fuck, I wasn't wearing tape. Hmm. My toe is dangling. That can't be good.

By the time Willis and Wes returned, the shock was setting in.

"Wessie, my sandals didn't protect me. Have you seen my spy camera?"

A non-Rastafarian Jamaican was kind enough to let me bleed in his vehicle and transported me to a nearby village clinic.

Wes escorted me to a seat. I plopped down. Wes positioned a fan in front of me, and he placed my flip-flops on my toe-dangled feet. A nurse would come by every two minutes to empty the blood from my sandals.

Eventually, I was escorted into the Doctor's Office.

"Hello, my name is Dr. Bab's. How may I help you? Ewe that looks nasty."

Dr. Bab's had obtained his credentials from the University of Nigeria.

"For \$100-US, I'll fix you up good. The price will include everything, including Demerol."

"I only have \$60-Canadian on me."

"I'll do the best I can. But, hey, Rhea, could you grab a batch of purple stuff and a couple of vials of whatever is next to the Demerol."



The vials made me hallucinate.

Correction: it was what was in the vials that made me hallucinate.

It was time to return to Vancouver to pull a rabbit out of a hat.

Rocky, do you want to see me pull a rabbit out of a hat, nothing up my sleeve.

Tap. Tap. Tap. *"Wes, does this sound normal? My calves are as hard as rocks. And look at my foot. It's gigantic."*

EMERGENCY ROOM: SEATTLE HOSPITAL

When Doctor Wright had finished scraping the beach remnants out of my dangling toe, he looked for an older doctor to help him figure out what the purple stuff was.

"Lindsay, I don't know what your plans are, but if you want to save your foot, you probably should stay for a couple of days."

"Sounds good Doc, I like my foot."

PRE-TRIP TICKET INSTRUCTIONS THE DAY OF THE FLIGHT

"Hey Greg, when you pick up the tickets, make sure you get us MEDICAL INSURANCE."

"No problem, Linds, I will make sure to grab us MEDICAL INSURANCE. We can never be too cautious."

THREE MONTHS AFTER MY FOOT HAD BEEN SAVED

"Wes, could you grab the mail?"

Bill. Bill. Bill. Bill. Seattle Hospital Bill.

"Holy crap, Wes, hospitals in the States are SELL-YOUR-FIRST-BORN expensive. Not to worry, I'll get Greg to bring over the MEDICAL INSURANCE and take care of this."

TWO HOURS LATER

"Hey, Greg, why do you look distraught? Never mind, did you bring over the MEDICAL INSURANCE?"

Greg handed me an envelope.

"FLIGHT CANCELLATION INSURANCE. Greg, you bought FLIGHT CANCELLATION INSURANCE on the flight day by mistake. WTF."

Greg hasn't been seen since.

THE MORAL(S) OF THE STORY

- Being patted on the back by Jamaican pavement isn't fun.
- Flip flops and shorts aren't motorcycle riding gear.
- Private rooms in US Hospitals are lovely, but –
- Rastafarians do not travel in packs.
- Nobody knows what the purple stuff is.
- Stay hydrated.

Wes and I began rolling coins.

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.
