

NO PLACE FOR POLITICS

FOOTBALL IS MY ESCAPE



CONTAINS OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE



1

I kneel to support a better world.

Five white guys are sitting around the bar at their local watering hole – in Canada.

An NFL game comes on the tube, upset three of the five.

The athletes are disrespecting the USA Flag. It's offensive. Football is not supposed to be political. People died for the flag.

ICRINGE

In the USA, the upset is 10,000 fold – despite the athletes repeatedly saying it's not about disrespecting the flag, military or anything else – it's about social injustice and making the great country better.

I can't hear you. I hate to say: you're not white.

My football is not about politics.

It's my escape, my religion.

People fought for your right to play.

Shut up.

A little over a week ago, approximately nine players knelt each week, mostly unnoticed. The broadcasters used the anthem time to – ADVERTISE. Except those in the stadiums, fans used the time to grab a beer – double dip chips – consume. Few stood with a hand over hearts while watching a beer commercial, maybe two.

That changed with the disgusting words of one man, a political leader – made it [political](#). Forty-Three was once called [“The Decider.”](#) Maybe Forty-Five should be called “The Divider.”

There were fine people on both sides.

Get those SOBs off the field.

Shall we sing Kumbaya? Not yet?

Where beer ads used to be on the tube, now, because of “The Divider” – the anthem is MUST-WATCH-TV, the country is up in arms.

2

How dare privileged athletes not be grateful for their good fortune?

Sorry, thank you, master.

The athletes were given, not earned, where they are today.

Apparently, slavery never happened.

American cities were never ghettoized.

Opportunities have always been the same for all members of society.

I SUGGEST READING

[Malcolm X](#); [The Hillbilly Elegy](#); [Lost Girls](#); or –

In Canada, [residential schools](#) and the stripping away of indigenous people’s identities are things of the past – to be gotten over in a generation (maybe a hint of sarcasm here) – as reserves languish behind the times rampant with addiction and little opportunity.

Wait for a second: addiction is now every man’s problem? Not just black or native? Crap, what do you mean it is creeping into the middle classes? Could social injustices be class-related? I don’t care, not my football. Politics have no place. Damn it. If I don’t stand in my living room – I’m hypocritical? No one can see me. I’ll grab another beer.

Hey, bleeping players, could you please protest in silence? What, they shot another unarmed black person dead? Still, silence, please – football is on – now is not the time. All lives matter.

I LAUGH

You don't want it to be political. Fighter jets blast over the stadium. Massive flags drape the field, held by members of the military. A military band plays. The military has been spending [millions-upon-millions](#) on recruiting since 2009 – the NFL is the platform.

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM STARTS

I don't want my football to be political. It's my escape.

I LAUGH AGAIN

Please read above, between the laughter, again.

THE ANTHEM CONTINUES

The bombs burst in the air.

3 What's the definition of being political?

The five guys at the bar in Canada order another beer. They are still white and still miffed at ungrateful athletes. They claim racism isn't prevalent; it's a thing of the past. One guy says he's angry with wealthy Asians buying real estate.

I asked him if he would be okay if it was Germans.

I try to debate and have only one voice.

It must take an enormous amount of courage to comment on things that have never affected you. I'm white (I think), I've never faced discrimination – except for maybe class.

They order another beer, and outrage moves on to a new topic.

*I can't believe it. They are even trying to **change the name** of the SFU (Simon Fraser University) sports teams.*

Teams that until it made the paper; this individual had no interest in – had never been to a game – nor had he followed the teams.

I SUGGEST

Of course, it's time to change the name; it's Clansmen for bleep's sake.

My friend sees no harm. So what's in a name he says?

[SFU plays in the NCAA](#) and is the only Canadian team in their conference.

MY BLOOD CURDLES

Why would you champion this cause – how would it hurt you if they changed the fucking name?

I ask.

The conversation ends.

I flashback to growing up in lily-white Saskatoon (decades ago). Saskatoon is (was?) predominately white, except for a large native population. I hope attitudes have changed. When I lived there, horrific racist views were taboo – making inappropriate comments to an audience that looked just like you – funny, suitable? Fellow whites could be knee-walking-bile-puking drunk, which was okay. If we saw a native drunk, “Hey, look at the drunken p...t.”

COMMENTS ABOUT OTHER CULTURES FLOATED THROUGH THE AIR

I wish we had a black player on the team. It would give us an advantage for night games.

A University coach commenting (TV) on his recruitment efforts of a star black running back who was considering a scholarship to a US University.

He should enroll here because, on any street corner in LA, there are 100s of guys just as good as him.



Reuben Mays was the NFL Rookie of the Year with the New Orleans Saints.

AND THE MOST DISGUSTING OF ALL

When I was 12, we had a Siamese cat named Guy, named after Guy Lafleur (hockey superstar).

Anyway, a family member came up with a nickname for our cat.

Guy, rice-gobbler, g..k, slant-eye n... ger-face.

I'd often stand on our front steps calling for Guy to come in.

I was oblivious to what I was saying. However, I can say without question that my family member is not racist. Nor would I call any of the commentators above racist. I don't even think they were willfully ignorant.

WHAT I WILL SAY

Humanity has a long way to go. We can't blink at racism or injustice.

Maybe taking a knee is not the right to protest. It may have created an ugly precedent to be politicized by Forty-Five if they ever stop.

I was right. Brilliant

I DO KNOW

Silence is not the answer – looking in the mirror and being honest with yourself is an excellent starting point.

I've heard the odd friend scream out, "They're racist toward us."

The worst I've been called: "Honky" – which had no bite because I had to Google what it meant.

Football is my escape.

5

THE ANTHEM CONTIUES

Two fighter jets blast overhead at a [Saskatchewan Roughriders](#) game, a military recruitment ad plays on the big screen (several times throughout the game).

I don't want my football to be political.

A new week starts. A political leader opens his mouth – the suffering people in [Puerto Rico](#) aren't grateful enough. The mayor of San Juan is a political pawn for Democrats (according to Forty-Five).

Five people sitting around a bar in Canada order another beer – next topic, please.

I don't want my football to be political.

Take your head out of the sand.

What games have you been watching?

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.
