

MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



By LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

Russians, Clowns & Drag Queens

MY LIFE ON THE SLUSH PILE

МЯГКИЙ ПЫЛЕСОС ОНЛАЙН



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?



Russians, Clowns & Drag Queens

RUSSIANS, CLOWNS & DRAG QUEENS

VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

20 JULY 1998

Monday nights in Vancouver are usually sleepy.

On this Monday, the summer heat turned the night into sweltering.

With my living room approaching the temperature of the sun's surface, I decided to hazard a night on the town alone with my shadow instead of melting into my sofa, sweating profusely.

One, two, three, bars into my night, I entered the *Odyssey Nightclub*, and the *Odyssey* caters to GAY.

I focused my GAYDAR toward the dance floor — *I'm not sure I have GAYDAR?*

Anyway, I drew undisputable conclusions from my focus.

THINKING INSIDE THIS BOX

GAY — STRAIGHT — IN BETWEEN — WHO CARES?

DANCING STYLES

- **STRAIGHT:** Stiff in movement, shoulders shrugging, hands planted firmly on the hips.
- **AT EASE WITH SEXUALITY:** The groove flows loosely with every step.
- **FLAMBOYANTLY GAY:** Hands gleefully raised above the head, always?

Just as I finished my thesis, a handsomely attractive, deliciously slim girl; approached me. She took a shine to me, plying me with drinks. She invited me to accompany her to a raging party. Her name was Carla.

I accepted her invitation.

We flagged a cab. Carla and I exchanged smiles. Upon closer inspection, I noticed Carla had an Adam's Apple. I chuckled blushingly; she asked why I was laughing.

"Because I just noticed your Adam's Apple," I answered.

"Honey, I'm in drag," she replied.

We crisscrossed streets and alleyways as the cab driver followed the instructions Carla

gave him. Then, after about thirty-five minutes, we arrived at our destination, which happened to be about a five-minute walk across the Granville Street Bridge from the *Odyssey*.

Carla paid our driver. We hopped out of the cab at the back of a nondescript white warehouse. Carla tapped an elaborate code on the back door. After three minutes passed, the door finally cracked open + a bearded man sporting white overalls emerged from the darkness. He spoke with a strong *accent*¹ – which was Russian, I was informed of this fact, later.

While I waited patiently for Carla to negotiate our admittance, a cab rolled up to us in the laneway. Three men in clown suits jumped out.

Pounding music filled the warehouse, and attractive, scantily clad people danced.

Carla excused herself to retreat to the washroom. She asked me to guard her bag. In her absence, a continuous line of individuals glided up to me and asked me when Carla would be returning.

One hour passed. I put my thesis cap back on: Could Carla be selling drugs?

Carla returned.

With my senses overloaded, I decided: it was time to go home.

While walking home, I wondered if the night's mix of characters would make an excellent title for a book or movie?

156

My trip into the *Odyssey* brought me to an understanding, our collective lives take a wide berth and often lean against one another like the stories of lost souls in voluminous books stacked against each other in a library. It is the responsibility of the lost to support one another, to make every day of a life vibrantly colourful. Carla and my stories may seem light years apart, but for some reason, on this steamy Monday night, they crossed paths and became intertwined.

A million thoughts blasted through my cranium. Meeting Carla may have been a fleeting, one-of-event, but with perfect clarity, my mind rested in the realization, we would likely cross paths again.

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—shielding 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.

431

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.

432

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.