

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?

↑ FUCKED UP ↓
↓ FUCKED UP ↑



AND

BOOM

GOES THE DYNAMITE

PEOPLE MATTER

VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

28 FEBRUARY-7 APRIL 2003

PEOPLE MATTER

VANCOUVER

28 FEBRUARY 2003

Douglas was homeless.

I am not.

Douglas sat on a bus bench.

I plonked myself beside him.

Douglas was sober.

Me, not so much; I had just finished my last pint at my favourite watering hole and needed a breather before stumbling the rest of the way home.

"Hello, can you buy me a coffee? He asked.

I handed him \$2. And then, like an asshole would say, *"Don't spend it on drugs."*

Together, we watched the world pass by.

"You know, I'm not homeless. If that's what you are thinking? I'm seventy-five, and my pension leaves me scrambling for survival. And besides, drugs wouldn't have allowed me to play to my age."

"Okay, I understand. May I ask you a question? Great. What do you think matters most in life?"

"That's an easy answer. People. People matter. Sadly, I believe most of us have lost sight of that."

Douglas reached for my hand, shook it, and then said, *"Thank you."*

I got up, nodded my head, and began stumbling the rest of the way home.

Little did I know, if I knew the traumas hovering on this story's horizon, I may have remained glued to the bench with Douglas, watching the world pass by.

I must turn the page.

I'm glad you are with me. Life's amperage is about to be cranked to eleven.

Promise you'll stay?

I may need a hug at the end.

DUMPED

VANCOUVER

3 MARCH 2003

8:30 AM, the alarm began blaring, waking us. We were still coming down from the weekend's debauchery.

What's the saying: If it's too good to be true —

My eyes peeped over, I turned onto my side and looked lovingly at Trish, *"Good morning, Sweetie."*

"I'm dumping you," was her reply.

"What?"

I pried her for clarification.

"We're done." She got dressed and slammed the door shut on her way to work. When she returned four hours later, she continued. *"I'm not as happy as I could be. We are not a couple anymore."*

Fucking drugs.

"You just moved in. What about our living arrangement?" I asked.

"You're an amazing man, I want to keep living with you."

Logic emphatically pressed me to *throw her out; you must end this bullshit.*

This will pass; she said she loved me yesterday.

"Harish says you are not thirty. That I deserve more. You are not as successful as you should be by now."

This will pass.

HOW TO WIN LOVE BACK: BINGO

At work that night, the bar was robbed.

A far past-shady character walked in and calmly announced he was a robber.

In a deadpan fashion, I replied, *"You're a robber? What is it you want? Is it the cash drawer? I have an idea: how about you sit back and relax while I make you a drink. But, of course, since you are robbing the joint, you will not have to pay, nor will I phone the police. So, when you finish your drink, I'll hand over the cash, sending you on your merry way. How does that sound?"*

He looked at me in a baffled manner and said, *"My name is Robert. There is a meal set aside for me."*

BRANDON

VANCOUVER

7 MARCH 2003

On this postcard-perfect Friday spring day in Choices Market, one block from my house, we bumped into each other.

"Hey Brandon, how are you doing?"

His eyes looked pained.

"Not so good."

He was trembling.

I hugged him.

Brandon backstepped two times, looked directly into my eyes, and said, *"Life sucks. I've got to go."*

He then walked home on this perfect day and hung himself.

Brandon was eighteen. He was artistically gifted. I met him when he was sixteen in the club.

We adults had no reason to hang out with him. But, since the club doesn't serve alcohol and drugs don't require ID, age became shamefully irrelevant.

187

I cry as I write this.

Brandon was gay, trying to fit in a while being isolated from his family; everything was urgent.

Brandon adored Trish. Later that day, when I told Trish the news, she didn't care.

I hated that week.

Logic and Love chimed in, telling me to stop the self-torment and throw Trish out?

WHO'S MATTHEW?

Trish met Matthew on her last night in Montreal; moments after, she called to say *I love you*.

She was attempting a long-distance relationship with him; Matthew's a lawyer; I'm not. Trish pointed that fact out to me.

Hey, this time, do you mind if we remove your spine? Of course, you don't.

I called Matthew and introduced myself as Trish's boyfriend. He said he'd cut off all contact with her.

He lied.

Living together was going to be heavenly.

SKETCH PARTY MICHAEL (#2)

VANCOUVER

15 MARCH 2003

Mike made it clear his one desire was to get into Trish's pants. I hated him. Trish discounted my interpretations of his intentions. Until they went for coffee together and he painted the picture for her. Trish declined his advances.

Somehow, Michael and I defied the odds and became friends.

I fucking hated home. Home felt like a prison. On my way home from the Old Terminal, I would go for drinks to prolong my inevitable need to go home.

This night, I ran into Michael at the Odyssey, motioning me to join him in a quiet spot.

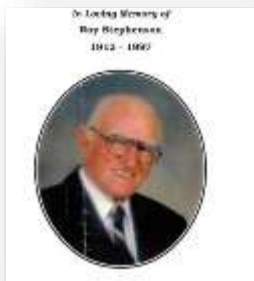
"Lindsay, Trish doesn't deserve you. You are a good man. I consider you a good friend," he paused to gain his composure. "Remember how I always said I would never make it to thirty? Well, I have cancer; I'm dying?"

Is that you, Spike?

AUNT PRISCILLA

VANCOUVER

MARCH 29, 2003



Occasionally, Priscilla would phone me from Edmonton to say, "I love you," nothing more.

Today's call was more sombre.

"Your sisters, your evil sisters, disrespected me. They showed zero gratitude for all the things I've done for them. I'm cutting them out of my Will."

"Priscilla, why are you telling me this?"

"Because I love you, you've always been my favourite. Ever since your mother and father died, you've been on your own. We all need a family. I'm yours. Sweetie, I'm going to my doctor in a few minutes. He's going to tell me I'm dying; I'm going to be with my true love, Roy."

I responded by saying, "I love you," and then I collapsed to the floor and cried uncontrollably.

My brother Jim called me a few days later, "Lindsay, you need to drop everything and come to Edmonton; Priscilla doesn't have much time left."

"Jim, my life is in shambles. I cry daily. I don't have the strength. We have said our goodbyes. I don't need another reason to be able to cry on queue."

PRINCE
LINDSAY

VANCOUVER

7 APRIL 2003

Trish wanted to bring a dog into our broken home. I said okay. I'm ~~am~~ was an idiot.

If you want to win her back, you know Lindsay, allowing her to get a dog is a good starting point.

Who's the idiot now?

Trish selected a Border-Collie from an animal rescue. When Trish brought the dog home, Fuzzy instantly gave up one of her nine lives.

When Trish left for work, the dog went nuts; it barked uncontrollably and began thrusting itself against the sliding glass doors of our sunroom.

When I told Trish the dog had to go, she immediately dubbed me, bad guy.

Trish left for work and the Border-Collie began to bark uncontrollably while repeatedly throwing itself against the sliding glass door of the sunroom.

Self-destruction had become part of my pain menu.

I never missed a shift at Pat's Pub (New Job) or the Old Terminal. More destructively, I never missed a shift at the club. After Michael told me of his illness, I checked in weekly. We ran into each other again at the Odyssey.

"Lindsay, you need to kick her out; I hate telling you this; we fucked."

How do you remain compassionate to a dying man when he just told you he'd fucked your girlfriend?

"I'm sorry I told you. I should've remained silent."

Yes, you should of, you guilt dumping asshole, I hate you.

When I arrived home, I confronted Trish. "Trish, Michael told me. You fucking cheated on me. Did you ever love me?"

She barely looked up from the computer when she said, "I was trying to get you a job. I thought Michael would hire you."

I grabbed the scruff of her neck and threw her into the hallway slamming the door in her

face, never allowing her back into my life ever again.

Unfortunately, I was spineless.

Logic & Love gave up on me.

It was time to manipulate with kindness. A lady at the *Terminal Pub* was forced to give her dog away. I phoned Trish with the news.

"Sweetie, would you still like a dog?"

She declined my offer.

When I arrived home from work, I had to use the bathroom; when I opened the door, a baby Jack Russell Terrier greeted me.

Prince stopped at my feet, looked up, and went, ~~meow~~, *ruff*.

The dog experiment continued –

And I continued drifting out to sea, with a dark melody playing on a continuous loop in the background, tormenting me, reminding me constantly of the ass I was willfully becoming.

When I hit eject, the volume increased instead of stopping the pain, drowning me in my own misery fuelled in denial.

AND I'M FREE
AND I'M FREE

FREE FALLIN' - FALLIN'
FREE FALLIN' - FALLIN'

159

ALL THE VAMPIRES, WALKIN' THROUGH THE VALLEY
ALL THE VAMPIRES, WALKIN' THROUGH THE VALLEY

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.

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.
