

MY **LIFE** ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

Touched by an Angel

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.

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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?

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The Old Terminal Pub sits in an isolated parking lot in a bad part of New Westminister. Sharing the parking lot is an adult video store. One week before this night, thugs beat a store clerk to within an inch of his life. It was a random act.

The pub patrons consist of longshoremen and construction workers, most lacking refinement. As mentioned before, since I was the lone male employee – until the arm snap – *FAG*, was my, pet name.

Most nights, the regulars would be liquored by 7 and then on their way home to their wives and kids.

On most nights, when the last Neanderthal slithered out, I'd be left alone.

The Terminal is in the middle of a large empty parking lot, far from civilization, with two entrances, and just me inside.

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I'd often lock the doors, allowing the odd late comer in, only if I knew them.

The fog was dense on this night. Fifteen minutes shy of closing, I heard a knock at the door.

The knocking began cascading like the rain beating down outside.

Standing at the door was a large man, well over six feet tall, many pounds over two hundred. He was dishevelled, rougher than the regulars; I had never seen him before.

I let him in.

His cadence was a low, broken baritone.

"I've driven past the pub on several occasions. So, I decided to stop tonight to case out the joint. Do you want to play stick?"

We grabbed our cues as we ambled to the pool table. Our arms brushed. I shuddered.

He looked heavenward, paused and in the darkest of timbers with his voice trashed from years of alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse, he began a deliberate sermon.

"I rarely drink now. What time do you close? Are you often left alone? That's scary; the world can be evil. I'm an ex-con. I developed a significant taste for heroin and crack; I've done terrible things. I've hurt people.

I remained silent. Strangely, his words were comforting.

"My wife is gone. She's too far gone. Demons have taken her away. My wife and I royally fucked up: we lost our children to dope. My wife lost her mind. She crashed. She burned."

"My kids have become my life. My wife is too far into the world of 'hype' that normalcy is not an option anymore."

His voice cracked.

"She's the love of my life. I introduced her to the destruction; I'm paying a self-inflicted heavy price. She can't come back. I'm responsible for her flaws. That's my ticket to misery."

I racked the balls.

He asked me to break.

I gently pulled back the cue, thrusting it into the cue ball, sending it fiercely into the tightly racked balls. The balls scattered. The 8-ball shot into the corner pocket. Instant victory. A rarity.

Regardless of my new friend's outward appearance – he'd fallen far, but his resolve was still present, still beating strongly.



"I've come to an understanding: I've had to let my love go. She can't come back. My children, their futures, that's all that matters now; my life is belongs to them. May I tell you what I see?"

I nodded, looking directly into his bloodshot eyes.

"You're broken and confused. You're struggling to find meaning. People are dying; some are leaving you. You want to hold on; you've lost love. I see the pain in your eyes. My friend, all I can offer is, it's not your fault. You must believe that. People lie, sabotaging the good in life; that's just the way it is. You're part of what's right in this world. It's going to get worse for you, for a while at least."

I listened, speechless.

"Your lover made a mistake. She's not coming back. Sorry. You'll survive. You're a great man. I can see that in your eyes. Cry. Cry every day. One day the crying will end, and you'll wake up a better person. Don't let life destroy you. You won't. I've come here tonight to tell you this. That is my mission."

He walked to the door. He asked if I'd ever seen him before. I shook my head.

"My friend, you will survive and come back stronger. That is your mission. Believe it."

I gazed out the window cut in the middle of the pub's entrance as this man I'd never seen before vanished into a dense fog.

That night, when I drove home, the fog intensified. My heart was pounding. My chest felt like it was about to burst. My legs were shaking so violently it was hard to control the gas pedal and brakes on my drive home. My mind was fixated on his words. *My mission* kept coming to the forefront.

I skipped going to the *Odyssey* that night, choosing to go directly home instead. Then, when I arrived, I went straight to my bedroom, undressed, slipped under the covers, and continued to tremble.

My mind tumbled in the words of a stranger. His comments marked an instant when my realities ceased to exist, and another world started rushing to life. I felt myself spring back to alive. A stranger's words had begun to crack something vital for my survival open within the confines of my soul. I gasped for air as I drifted off to sleep.

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.