

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?



PICKING UP THE PIECES

PICKING UP THE PIECES



↑ UP ↑
↓ NB ↓



VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

15 AUGUST-25 SEPTEMBER 2003

I had lost my happiness, and I was terrified I'd never find it again. Life is a continuous struggle. In youth, Mum + Dad is in charge, if life hasn't already broken them.

And then you enter school and easy changes. You are no longer coddled. Pecking orders are established that will likely impact your entire life. Barriers start appearing from nowhere.

Rich hangs with rich.

Poor with poor.

Beauty with beauty.

Losers with losers. ⁽⁵⁵⁾

Home is not immune to struggle and competition. The effort to provide. Competition to keep up with the neighbours. You witness your parents working twelve-hour days to put food on the table. Dad's ego depends on buying a boat, a car, or both. You become lost in the shuffle.

You want what the other kids have, the rich kids. Your family is poor; poverty doesn't shield you from the relentless advertising selling happiness. So, you begin to need things. Thinking things will define you. You crave what others have. Your parents can't afford the dictionary.

One of your grandparents dies. Your mother tries to shield you from the sorrow, but she can't hide the sadness in your eyes.

Death comes again while you are too young to process it. How could you? You are trapped in finding your place in the pecking order.

Technology advances at lightning speed flashing images of products sure to bring bliss. The images overwhelm. They become part of the daily noise. We are manipulated to replace pain with consumption.

Most people consume more when depressed; the marketing is genius.

Unfortunately, consumption doesn't erase the pain of death. You need to grieve. You are too young to suffer, let alone comprehend the significance of what is transpiring all around you.



You pick yourself up. Dust yourself off + buy more stuff. You are blasted with a fleeting high. When it subsides, you start to realize NEW eventually needs to be replaced, and you couldn't afford the purchases in the first place. You long for old.

Love jumps onto the stage, bringing confusion; your upbringing saw to that. Instead of comfort, it becomes part of the struggle. Nobody has taught you how to love or what it means, so like many of us, you project your will, rarely accepting who your loved ones are because you only see them as who you want them to become. So, you roll through life casting many aside, thinking you deserve more, infrequently looking inward at who you are. Our parents taught us this flawed lesson. The more we follow the lesson plan, the more likely needy will become a fixture. Eventually, love will become a casualty of consumption.

Shamefully we move on as greedy, desensitized consumers.

People matter, I think we've lost sight of that.

As we age, the hurdles grow. We become clones of our parents. We, along with our children, become lost in the shuffle. And sadly, eventually, our happiness pays the ultimate price.

A week consists of 168 hours.

Working 80 is typical.

This leaves 88 for life, for what matters.

However, you spend 14 hours commuting.

You need 56 for sleep.

My God that leaves only 18 for your wife/husband, the kids, health, fitness, and relaxation.

Most of us don't stand a fucking chance.

We broke the formula. We sold our souls to pursue STUFF. NEW STUFF leaves everything that matters, including people, fragile and at risk of suddenly vanishing in a heartbeat, those who matter disappear through death or of their own accord because they've believed that they're entitled to more.

THE HUMAN RACE CONTINUES

What the hell are we racing to?

Are we racing to the finish line?

Every creature on this planet uses up its resources until extinction or until humans speed up the process by invading their environs. Urban sprawl springs to mind. The difference between humans and all other creatures is that humans can see the damages they are



causing, yet; we collectively choose to live in denial.

The next generation can fix it.

Unfortunately, the next generation is a product of the last, and the previous liked to consume. The previous generation still needs their children to buy in, so they continue stuffing their pockets.

THINKING INSIDE THIS BOX

STUFF IS NOTHING MORE THAN WINDOW DRESSING

Put down your wallets.

Stop buying the propaganda.

Remember what is profoundly important.

It doesn't matter what you have; it's what's in your heart that counts.

Slow down.

Say, *I love you* and mean it, your happiness depends on it.

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Life is a tremendous struggle. Death, sickness, lost love, financial issues, infidelity, entitlement, will all take turns rearing their ugly heads, testing what we will become. They will visit early + come often, we can't prepare for them, they don't follow a schedule, they'll eat away at you and influence your future. Your happiness may become a wounded soldier sent to triage. For joy to have a chance, it can't be a product of STUFF.

If you are fortunate enough to have taken a beating, gotten up, and concluded: NICE STUFF is nothing more than window dressing, consider yourself lucky. 'Cause, one day. Like love. When you least expect it, you'll breathe a sigh of relief, crack a smile, and understand; happiness comes from within. It is a derivative of how you treat the people in your life who matter most; then, and only then, you will have stepped off the consumption bandwagon and say, *I love you*, and you'll mean it.

Happiness doesn't come from passivity or hope; it does not require a skillset. You don't need to have the strength of character. Significant change doesn't come from the search for happiness. Happiness is just a state of being. It's when life tramples you and beats you down, dropping you into sadness or disgruntlement, a place where everything beautiful is derived. As for happiness, we often discount the importance of sadness in the ultimate quest for elusive happiness.

Does happiness exist?

I know it does. I experienced it firsthand. It may have been fleeting, but it was real.



I hope one day if I let my guard down, I'll find it again.

THE BOTTOM OF THE TUNNEL

When I slammed into the bottom of the tunnel, I'd been crying for 164 consecutive days. My existence shattered into pieces, just shy of 1 million. I needed to retrace my steps to collect the pieces, and I needed to start rebuilding myself.

It took slightly over 6 months to annihilate the first 511 months of living, and then, my life came crumbling down –

*When the walls
Come tumblin' down
When the walls
Come crumbling' crumbling*

– leaving me back at Square 1, this time without the support of family

Guilt and *Logic* came scurrying back.

They snapped a portion of my brain back into place.

15 AUGUST 2003

When I woke, the blood tears of the horrific night before were hardened on my body. I saw a faint flickering light. ↑Up↑ was going to be taxing. The only way for my story to become relevant was if I began the climb to sweep the unimaginable assault of trauma to the side.

What's that *Drama Police*: you think I'm exceptionally melodramatic?

Life is dramatic; how else would I tell my story? Well, how?

Life had beaten me down. Most things ⁽⁴⁸⁾ were not in my control. Fortunately, my core had remained untouched.

With each passing day, the light out of the tunnel shone brighter. I was starting anew. I had been gifted the luxury of setting the parameters.

Sometimes it takes extreme events to emblazon their characteristics into your broken spirit – allowing you to see you need outside help.

I was fucking lost, and two events brought me to conclude *HELP* was necessary.

↑ UP ↑
↓ nb ↓

1. Wayne informed me he was going to be a father. I faked happiness.
2. *Sweetie, we can fix this –*

It was time to reach for a crutch.

It was time to stop sinking into myself.

It was time to open the door to those who genuinely love me.

IT'S ABOUT TRISH

VANCOUVER

19 AUGUST 2003

I was alone, conflicted, loveless; my support network was vanishing. Trouble lingered around every corner. Problems arrived with every phone call. I desperately wanted to stop crying.

I was lost.

My friendship with Wayne is effortless. We know we'll always be there for one another when life matters.

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Wayne is a combination of the following.

- Friend
- Brother
- Confident
- Parental Influence

All without motives attached.

I never allowed Wayne and Fiona to meet Trish.

Wayne never pressed. He looked forward to the day they'd eventually meet.

Fiona, on the other hand, pressed.

In the wake of my *Collapse*, I appreciated it must be tough for them to show sympathy when I kept them at a distance. I finally broke down. I summoned Wayne to meet me for drinks. I needed him to understand how Trish was intensifying my pains.

We drank a few drinks, ate wings, and drank some more.

With a revelation on the tip of my tongue, Wayne sensed my trepidation and told me I didn't have to say anything to him. He said he was going on a holiday, and I could tell

him what I had to say when he returned.

I stressed I needed to tell him. I've been dealing with everything alone. Alone wasn't working.

We switched bars.

I crawled inside myself, digging, trying to find the words. I dug deeper. I knew Wayne would understand. *But, of course, he would.* They love me, I thought.

I finally found the courage. I was shaking, scared. I looked Wayne in the eyes and calmly said, *"Wayne, it's about Trish –"*

A VISIT WITH DR. MUSIAL

"What can I help you with today?" The good doctor asked.

"Well, my life. It's spinning out of control. I don't know how to slow the revolutions. Can I tell you about the last six months? It all started on March third... That is what brings me here today."

"Amazing, Lindsay. It is a testament to your resolve. I'm proud of you. Are you okay?"

"For the most part, I break down often."

"Go easy on yourself; honestly, I've never heard anything so extreme. Be strong, and be kind, to you."

"Doc, I hate my family. I'm not sure they can be family anymore."

"Breathe deeply, Lindsay. People screw up. Try to take a step back. Don't judge too hastily. Give it time. It might be best to eliminate them from your life. But not right away."

"I'm going to a counsellor."

"That's a smart decision, Lindsay. I'm impressed you understand you can't dump everything on friends. I know you'll be okay. You just can't see it now. Today, I will abstain from asking about your chest hair."

I left his office smiling.

A VISIT WITH DR. SAULNIER

Where does one find a counsellor?

The newspaper seemed reasonable.

I contacted Dr. Saulnier on August 15. He assured me he understood relationships like mine.

"Welcome Lindsay, everything you say to me is confidential. Unless there is a crime involved, what brings you here today?"

"Well, my life. It's spinning out of control. I don't know how to slow the revolutions. Can I tell you about the last six months? It all started on March third... That is what brings me here today."

"Lindsay, how have you survived this far?"

"I'm not sure. Trish and my new family realities floored me. My new realities with Trish became vastly overwhelming. I never thought I would fall for a Trish."

"Speaking of Trish, Lindsay, most people take a lifetime to come to terms with what a relationship of that ilk means. Add the fact, your relationship was abusive. You may not have been able to see it. It was harsh."

His words were comforting.

"I'm surprised you never snapped long ago. Lindsay, I have never heard a roster of events so extreme happening in such a short period. I don't think I've ever heard events this drastic happening in a lifetime."

Before I left on this day, he offered one more thought.

"Your ability to assign meaning and to go through the appropriate emotions is amazing. You'll be okay. Let's meet again next month."

30 AUGUST 2003

This was the last night Trish and I, would spend together under the same roof. Her posse dared to brand me as a BAD GUY without one of them ever questioning why I was bruised and battered while Trish was physically unscathed.

↑High↑ wore blinders.

After the dust-up, Trish darted to Jessica's. A few days later, she escaped to her parent's home in Lethbridge, Alberta. Before she left, she asked if I could take Prince for two weeks.

Fifteen minutes later, she arrived with *Crack Whore Jessica*.

BAD GUY = CARE PROVIDER FOR A BELOVED PET. THE FORMULA SEEMS: SKEWED.

I said hello to Jessica, and she sneered at me.

I promised *Logic* this would be the last time.



Logic called me a liar.

Is it not baffling her great friends would allow her to spend this night alone with me?

I cried myself to sleep, and Trish slept peacefully in the next room.

MOVING DAY

The last call arrived, the curtain closed, A van was rented, Trish was leaving. She rallied her friends to help her move.

To keep up the bad-boy façade, I couldn't help or was permitted know her new address.

I took Prince on four epic walks to spare the punishment of watching her move. Saturday morning was perfect; the light was breaking at the bottom of the tunnel. Walls were beginning to form.

I'd sit on a park bench with Prince at my side. Tears flowed from my eyes. I thanked Prince for taking care of me. I said goodbye; I kissed his head.

I expected to return to an empty home after the fourth walk.

"Trish, where are your helpers?"

She was angry. Her lovely fucking friends had partied the previous night, rendering themselves useless. She looked at me sadly. She asked me to help.

I blasted out, *"If I help, I'll know where you live. I thought I was the fucking devil."*

I helped, and each trip caused pain.

I escaped to the club that night. The movers were present. So was Trish. I spent the night unacknowledged, alone. The curtain closed, almost.

ONE WEEK LATER

"I'm going out of town for a week. Can you look after Prince?"

DR. SAULNIER: PART 2

I poured out detail-after-detail of my life, painting my ordeals as the most grievous kind.

He drank them in.

When I completed my tale of despair, Dr. Saulnier asked if he could offer his opinion.

"I don't know how you've done it, but you seem to be well-adjusted. It's as if an angel has guided you, helping you develop an incredible sense of what is right and wrong when interacting with others. I can't help but bestow upon you the



utmost praise for coming to a place where you don't blame others for what's transpired around you. You must go to Europe. You must allow yourself to smile. You must lose yourself. I believe that when you do, you will find yourself once more."

I walked to his office door; I *raked* the room with my eye(s), stopping at his.

His eyes were soft, calm.

"On your journey, if you find out who your parents are, call me anytime."

A single tear rolled over my right cheek and then fell to the floor.

25 SEPTEMBER 2003

My new Birth Certificate arrived. Stuffed inside the envelope was a second Birth Certificate. Vital Stats accidentally sent me another man's as well. *Another lost soul had a piece of who he is, still missing.*

My heart began pounding once more—**I EXIST**—filled my mind, I became flush, my pulse raced. I clamped onto the wall to maintain my balance. I wanted to cry.

I flashed back to the instructions of the Supervisor.

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1. Renew my passport.
2. Send it back to Vital Statistics in Edmonton.
3. When my official Birth Record finally arrives, I will be able to stop asking complete strangers if they are my mommy or daddy.

Pause for breath. How emotionally draining pulling myself up to find out the truth possibly be?

Please let my father be Mick Jagger.

"Dave, good news, my Birth Certificate arrived. We can make travel plans and go. Don't be too mad; I'm emotionally fucked up. I'm stupid. I still think I love Trish. Smack me, please, I don't know if I want to go, but I will; I'm terrified of going, I'm such a flake, I don't want to ruin the trip for you. I'm so sorry."

Dave said with controlled force over the phone. "Listen to me: cut yourself some slack —"

He then offered a dose of perspective —

"— discovering who you are, witnessing death, and losing love all at the same time, come on, quit trying to be superhuman."

55. If that's what you need to tell yourself.



DENIAL
DENIAL

↑ UP ↑
↓ NB ↓

HALFWAY HOME

SEED'S IDENTITY TOUR

i den ti ty - noun

- What identifies somebody or something: who somebody is or what something is, especially the name somebody or something is known by.
- Somebody's essential self: the set of characteristics that somebody recognises as belonging uniquely to himself or herself and constituting his or her individual personality for life.
- Sameness: the fact or condition of being the same or exactly alike.

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Dr Saulnier told me to go to Europe and lose myself. He asked me to escape my realities.

It was abundantly clear if I were ever to find me:

~I NEEDED TO DISAPPEAR~

↑ UP ↑
↓ nb ↓

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.