

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?

ESCAPING THROUGH TRAVEL
ΕΣΧΥΒΙΝΘΕ ΙΝΚΟΥΟΗ ΙΒΛΛΕΓ



MONTREAL

8-9 OCTOBER 2003

VANCOUVER - CALGARY - MONTREAL

Every day, when we step out our doors, the goal is to make it home. I believe all anyone wants is to make it home for our entire lives.

I need to escape to have any chance of finding out where home is.

VANCOUVER

7:45 AM

My alarm clock shook me awake. Dave had slept over, and we waited eagerly for Wayne to arrive to whisk us to the airport. When he finally did, he was wearing a blue shirt.

Dave and I went out and got sloshed the previous night. Luckily for us, Wayne is a responsible man.

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I packed the night before while I was pickled. Like Jamaica, eighty pounds of luggage seemed reasonable. My bags were bulging. Wayne brought me a giant suitcase, so I stuffed every garment from my closet into my new suitcase upping the weight to obese.

We made it to the airport with four-minutes to spare.

FIRST STOP: CALGARY

We met Corrie for lunch during our two-hour layover.

I introduced her to Dave as my *ex*.

Corrie then said, "*It's been fourteen-years; don't you think we can drop the ex?*"

BACK @ THE AIRPORT

West Jet was to fly us to Montreal.

Our delightful non-meth-snorting flight attendants took a shine to us.

Karena asked us what the mission of our journey was. She also asked, "*Lindsay, how old are you?*" Before I could answer, she guessed thirty-one and Dave to be twenty-eight. This tickled me pink, as I am nineteen years older than David. Something I will always be if

we are both alive.

"What is the reason for your trip?"

"On March 3 – Four days after that – eight days after that – that's why we've embarked on this trip."

Karena became flush and was at a loss for words. "How could you possibly be, okay? You are lucky to have such a wonderful friend like Dave."

Camilla, her co-worker, also loved us. "Lindsay, your story would make a fantastic book. You must share it."

I am.

MONTREAL

The night was balmy; +15 (Celsius).

It was time to fly by the seat-of-our-pants and find a hotel. I dropped the responsibility on my sleep-deprived, drunk, + hungover travel companion, David.

Dave was cranky and lost.

Whereas my life mysteries were spinning in my mind while I scratched and plucked at past experiences I had stored up, waiting for one of them to unlock my future. How could my entire family have left me floundering in darkness? I needed to find lost.

Dave put aside his struggles and took the bull by the horns. One phone call and a cab ride later we had arrived at our Montreal home, Hotel de Paris. We carefully navigated the hotel's steps, which were carved at a ninety-degree angle. We were assigned Room 101; a room so close to the hotel's front desk; you could touch it without leaving the room.

Dave wanted downtime.

I wanted to chase denial. I was being driven by the fear of the unknown. I needed to face my life, but instead, I needed to run away if I were ever to find where home was.

We stepped out into Montreal's sparkling night sky and began walking, walking, walking, in search of sustenance. Twenty minutes later, we arrived in the Plateau Section of Montreal.

Dave made a dining suggestion. "Sushi?"

"Serious, Dave, sushi? We just flew from the sushi capital of Canada, and you want bleeping sushi."

QUIRK #1

Like married couples, we developed an inability to pick a place to eat.

No. No. No. No. Yes.

At the Three Brassieres, we took a load off.

Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink.

Next, we hit up the Monkey Bar.

Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink.

Finally, we stumbled into the St. Elisabeth Tavern. Monique, our server, was, pardon my English, a babe. Monique feigned admiration and kept plying us with liquids.

Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink.

"Linds, drunk. Must. Eat. Now."

"Next place Dave. I promise."

At the next place, Dave stepped up to the counter. "I'll have a Whopper with cheese combo with poutine." Seriously.

Once we were gastronomically satiated, we flagged our fourth cab of the day, taking it to The Village.

"Hey Dave, do you want to grab a drink here? This place looks cool."

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We plopped our asses onto stools in Le Stud.

"Linds, there sure is a lot of leather in here. It's cool, but also dark and creepy." We pranced up to the bar. "We'll have two Smirnoff Ice⁽⁴⁸⁾ please. Linds, the bartender, is jacked. It is odd he isn't wearing a shirt. Linds, I think Le Stud may be gay-friendly."

Three Smirnoff Ice (each) later, downtime was upon us. We hailed a cab. When we got back to the hotel, we flagged a Sherpa to help with the climb to our room. We made it home by 3:30 + were off to dreamland by 6 AM.

Flashback to the Calgary Airport (Security Check)

"Sir, may I check your bag?"

"Dave, you brought a harmonica and bicycle tire repair kit. Why?"

DAY 2

MONTREAL

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2003

Thursday morning drowned us in beautiful sunshine.

Breathe Lindsay. Breathe.

For the first time during my litany of tragedies, I had escaped. There would be no bawling

my eyes out on this day.

By 9:30 AM, after three hours of recharging, it was time to move.

QUIRK #2

Being three (nineteen) years wiser than David, somehow, I packed far more energy than he did and would often find myself waiting for him to rise and shine.

Finally, we were back in *The Village at noon, and the sun warmed us with a toasty +20 (C).*

Surprisingly, for what likely was the only time we ate in the first place, we found.

We asked fellow customers where we should party that night.

Je m'appelle Lindsay. Il s'appelle David, party...? Where should we party? Bon retour guimauves.

They handed us a stack of Gay Guides.

OUR DAY'S ITINERARY CONSISTED OF FOUR GOALS

1. Find a TD Bank.
2. Buy a camera.
3. DRINK!!!
4. Secure transportation to New York City for the following day.

Oh yeah, and:

Find my lost *happiness*. Trish entered my mind and *told her to get the fuck out*.

She replied she was from Montreal and decided tormenting me would be fun.

She was a manipulative bitch.

Montreal sparkled in the daylight.

We visited: St Catherine's Street + McGill University + Crescent Street + Stoogies (three-levels, one-toilet).

I noticed a travel agency across the street. Dave drank while I glided across the street to finalize our trip to New York City. I returned defeated. The one-hour flight was going to cost \$1,000 each.

Not to worry. The solution resides in drinks. So instead, I bought a camera, and we moved on.

Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink. Drink.

Our American Airlines flight from New York to London was a \$300 return; they must have a deal from Montreal to New York. I phoned. Fuck. Wrong.

Our new camera needed a drink, and we ordered three at the Parking Pub.

"Linds, we should hit up an internet café and find the solution."

"Sir, I'm having trouble logging on. Can you show me how?"

The man I asked for help was named Larry.

"Your voice is exquisite. It turns me on. If you use it over the right channels, you will – "

"Lars, thank you, I simply need to log on."

The internet café was a rousing failure.

On the way home, we grabbed takeout booze. Once home, we began making calls.

CALL 1

"What are you wearing? Perhaps you'd like to loosen your belt and slowly run your hand – " That wasn't it. *"We need to get to New York tomorrow. How much to rent a car, a limo, a pony? To rent a – ?" Sip. Sip. Sip.* *"We don't care how we get there. Do you have a cab, a plane, a train, a helicopter, a – ?"*

"Linds, I need to rest."

"No."

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TIME TO PARTY

"Dave, let's take a limo. We are rock stars, after all, and it's only \$500."

"Okay."

We forgot to book it, deciding tomorrow would take care of itself in the drink.

QUIRK #3

During our stroll to our night of partying, we stopped at the Bus Depot + paid \$100 each for tickets to NYC. Our bus was to leave at 8 AM, the trip was 8.5 hours, we were set.

We slurped our way from St Elizabeth to the Parking Club. The club was hopping with a mixed crowd.

We sauntered up to Linda's bar. Linda was jaw-droppingly beautiful.

She asked us about our trip.

The curtains opened.

It all started March 3 – that's why we're here today.

Linda hung on every word, and at stories, end tears poured from her eyes.

"You're shitting me," she said. *The story is too extreme. How can you possibly be, okay?"*

"Thank you, Linda. My story is true. On our trip to Montreal, you and our Flight Attendants have helped me greatly. It's okay for me to be fucked-up. It's important to grieve. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. I don't know if I'll ever be okay, but your kindness has let me know that that is okay."

They restored the faith my supposed good friends back home stripped me of; by acting as if recovery timeframes exist.

RECOVERY TIME FRAME (DAYS TO GET OVER SHIT)

- Infidelity = 2 days
- Break-up = 2 days
- Suicide = 1 day (3 days if it's your own)
- A young friends battle with The Big C = 1.5 days
- Death of a close relative = 2 days
- Death of your last uncle = 1 day
- Finding out the parents' you watched die were not your real parents and everything in your life has been a lie = 0 days
- Finally, being run over by a train = oops, you're dead.

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CORRECTION

- One day for the life is a lie category; just because it occurred at the end of all the other traumas, in my friends' estimation: recovery should've taken roughly, 9.5 days, and life would simply return to normal.

In fact, Neil, playing the role of *MEAN GIRL*, while I was in a moment of despair, said, "*Lindsay, you've seemed to have changed over the last four months. Maybe Trish cheated on you because she wasn't getting enough attention from you.*"

I HAVE CHANGED

I'd like to stress firmly to anyone sharing threads with that opinion:

FUCK OFF

MONTREAL

I want you to take my message personally.

Does my scorn seem too harsh?

Linda informed us highballs were \$2, so, Dave and I, began a gin & tonic parade.

We decided to up the party ante with a voyage to the pharmacy with two gins in. So, I started hunting for ecstasy. I asked Linda's brother, who happened to be the night's promoter, if he knew of a supply chain.

The question bothered him.

I flashed back to *Russians & Clowns* by approaching a *Drag Queen*, wrong again.

I asked five random shady-looking guys, once again, to no avail.

A man named Alex swaggered up to me. Alex was a delightful English fellow; he took a shine to me. Alex thought I was smoking hot.

That was fun to type.

We exchanged banter, after which, Alex found me to be intoxicating.

I assured him it was because of the gin fumes escaping from my mouth—I did so in a bastardized British accent.

Alex swivelled in a fashion like a stir-stick and was, without question, mixed.

Another man, named Y, since I forgot his name, circled our table. Like a vulture, he was waiting for one of us to have a weak moment. Weak moments had become my thing. When he approached, he told me he thought I was swelteringly hot.

FLASHBACK

VANCOUVER

MARCH-JULY 2003

I'd like to make it clear the HOT theme is actually, true. I do not think of myself in that way. In fact: At times, I'm afraid of my reflection.

Being called HOT became a recurring theme during my time of despair; not only HOT, but I am a man of incredible depth!

To date, my two favourites occurred while out for avoid-home drinks.

FAVOURITE 1

Brandon had ended his pain two days prior. On this evening, my eyes were swollen shut

by tears. I was tattered. Across the smoked filled patio of the Odyssey, I noticed a lovely young lady scouring my body. She traipsed toward me, tapped me on the shoulder. I turned and wiped the tears from my eyes.

"You are a good-looking man. There is something in your eyes: Character. I wanted you to know that."

After the final eloquent word escaped her mouth, she simply turned and walked away.

FAVOURITE 2

I shared my views on love and life while sitting at the end of the bar in the *Granville Room*.

To my left sat a beautiful brunette. I excused myself to go to the washroom. I was standing at the urinal when I felt hands caressing my shoulder. The brunette had followed me. She sharply twisted my torso, and then, kissed me full on the lips.

When our lips parted, she brazenly said, "You're *an amazing man*." And strolled away.

When I returned to my seat, the Girl, two stools down at the bar from me, handed me a note.

Call me in twenty minutes. I overheard your conversation.

I'd like to see you again.

Call me. xxx.xxx.xxxx

S

I called.

I walked past *Milestones Restaurant* on my way home. They were receiving a delivery; it was 2 AM; a five-gallon drum rolled down the truck's loading ramp, stopping at my feet. I looked around; no one was around. So, I took the drum home, opened it: *pickled beans*.

GROPE

Now, where was I?

Alex liked stuffing his hands down my pants, I let him, to a point.

Alex was an Flight Attendant (FA) with British Airways. I assumed all FAs knew how to find a chemist. I asked him. He was back before I finished my question with pills to pop.

One hour later, the assault from the combination of gin and vitamins began taking hold. The assault was peaceful. Alex began to grope. The pharmaceuticals gave me the go-ahead to allow him.

I pointed just below my beltline, I insisted: this was my do not cross point.

He found my honesty to be deliciously HOT.

He gingerly called off his offensive, bought Dave another gin, then offered us a place to stay in London at month's end.

We shared our table with a male/female couple, they made me an offer, "*How about you join us later for some naked frivolity?*"

I declined.

THE PLOT THICKENS

"Seed, I'm leaving for the evening," Dave said.

His face was muddled, pixilated, pulsing.

Before I could process his words, he was gone.

I was going to use his absence to get to know myself. A blip passed. Dave reappeared.

I spun the calculations of a blip in my mind; VOID was the outcome.

I might have been ↑high↑?

235 Dave said something along the lines of "*Girl. Hot. Washroom. Got heavy. Took me places. Rocked my world. Kiss. Kiss. Kiss. Do me. I couldn't. I want more. Meaning.*"

I was still ↑high↑.

I looked at him and mouthed, "SOCCER."

Parking was closing, leaving us with nowhere to go. A congregation was forming outside of the pub. I tried to levitate while attempting to read the masses' minds; someone suggested partying in Laval. *We couldn't, could we?* Laval is near Quebec City, I thought (my thinking was incorrect). We're heading to the Big Apple in the morning. Dave and I like apples. Laval would have been a mistake.

We flagged a cab, jumped in, and one-blip later, we had reached our destination, ½ a block from our starting point. So, we reversed the jump in motion.

We entered Stereo Club. The club was thumping. This night, the club was hosting the opening party for Black & Blue: The Jock Ball. The crowd was less than mixed.

Instructions were floating through the air.

Get High

Take Your Shirt Off

Grope Someone & Dance to the Continuous Thump of House Music!

Our prescriptions began to wane as if ↑high↑ can determine when ↑↑higher↑↑ is required. I checked the label, and it was marked: REFILL.

Gone was *Discretion* and *Logic*.

I think *Logic* may have been a little bit ↑high↑ – just between you and me.

Strangely, with *Paranoia*'s absence, *Logic* was slicing me some party slack.

I approached the first person I saw, "*Do you know where we can get drugs?*"

The first person happened to be from Vancouver. He was friends with another transplant from Vancouver named Mike; I knew Mike; he directed me to the pharmacist, Dr. Creole.

"*Two pills, \$35. Smooth. If you'd like a product with more kick, \$45.*"

"*More kick, please.*"

SEED PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (SPSA)

- Drug dealers deal drugs.
- When high on drugs, questioning skills disintegrate.
- Even the right questions regarding the additional drugs you are about to ingest won't matter as you deal with drug dealers.
- So, don't buy drugs from drug dealers at the risk of sounding hypocritical.

I hawked a hot Floridian on the dance floor with a smoking body.

Kicking led to hitting it off, we danced. Florida invited me to come to Florida. Before tasting the sweet OJ, Florida dissipated into thin air.

The medicine *kicked* more, and the dance floor started to dance, morphing between *full, empty, round, square, truck stop, and Palatial Palace*.

It became abundantly clear to me: I'm Jesus, not of the Latin American baseball variety, but instead, the real deal.

OMG, my good friends would be my disciples, I thought.

Jesus sounded like a pressure-filled gig.

"*Dave, I think I'm Jesus.*"

"*I don't care. Am I a porcupine? Fucking quills.*"

I parted the top of his head with my hands and dove inside his brain to listen. Yes. A porcupine.

"*Please leave, Lindsay.*"

I left, it was time to go home, it was 7 AM, our bus was at 11.

OMG. My blood is curdling. I can't step out from the awning, or I will freeze to death. Awnings protect me. OMG. If I freeze and am hit by a flash of light, I will be vaporized. Shit. There is a tiny blue flicker trying to peek out from the clouds.

"Dave, when did you get here? Run. Run. Run."

We ran back to the hotel. Dave crashed. I ventured forth; sleep would have been pointless. Out on the street, I came across a panhandler and stared at him, trying to read his mind.

"Mec arrête de me regarder. Tu me fous."

"Sorry, Panny, I don't speak French."

"Dude, stop staring at me. You are fucking creeping me out."

My mind started sounding like a playing card stuck in bicycle spokes.

Thirty-five minutes later, I was naked. The panhandler wasn't involved.

Hey Dirt, come over here, do I have a story for you!

THE ONLY THINGS I KNOW FOR SURE: If this were to be the pace of the trip, I wouldn't return home upright.

That and say no to drugs.

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.
