

i THINK
I THINK

if i lose my mind. will i lose me?



BY **LINDSAY WINCHERAUK**

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?

2 DEAD. 3 INJURED. LIFE PLANS CANCELLED

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DATELINE: MONDAY, 29 AUGUST 2016



WARNING: CONTENT MATTER AND IMAGES MAY BE ARE DISTURBING

TEXT MESSAGE 4:45 PM

Did you want to meet up and decide on where to grab something for dinner?

REPLY: Sure, sounds good. How about we meet at the corner of Davie & Seymour around 5:30?

REPLY: See ya there! (A series of emojis inserted here!)

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TEXT MESSAGE 5:00 PM

Kyung wants to meet me for dinner. Is it okay if we change plans?

REPLY: No problem, I will grab something on my way home.

5:05 PM

I start my stroll home.

What shall I have for dinner; Nandos or Nuba?

One block... two blocks... two-and-a-half blocks to home...

I'm passing Nandos...

I love Nandos...

Nandos it is!

5:15 PM

I place my order. As always, Nandos is busy.

5:30 PM

My, what undoubtedly will be, delicious chicken, is ready.

5:35 PM

I arrive at the corner of Davie & Seymour.

I gasp.

I lose focus for a second.

I'm not sure what I'm seeing.

The corner is cordoned off with police tape.

I regain my focus.

I feel sick.

My stomach churning isn't enough to stop me from raising my cell phone and joining the flock: **SNAP**.

My sick feeling quickly turns into disgust – in myself.

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As I try to find my way around the police tape to finish my journey home (you can see my balcony in the second picture), I'm feeling overwhelmed. I try to process what I'm seeing. I know what I'm seeing. The tarp on the vehicle means life has been lost. The severed tree, debris, and damaged newspaper boxes on the corner are where I was going to meet my friend.

Why did I take these photos?

Why am I sharing them here?

The vehicle lost control near Seymour and Davie streets shortly after 5:30 p.m., then slammed into a tree, slipped onto its side, and slid into a lamp post.

CBC: The following day.

I'm standing across the street from the accident, gawking. Maybe 100 people are gawking as well – most with their phones focused – collecting pictures – pictures of a tragedy – why? I think once more.

A friend taps me on my left shoulder.

"Hey, Lindsay, how are you?"

I find the question to be odd, considering...

"I'm okay." My voice quivers.

"How's the writing going?"

"I gotta go. It's going okay, I guess."

A stranger approaches and starts speculating.

"The people in the vehicle are dead. One pedestrian is dead, and a few more were injured."

His tone, to me, seemed matter of fact. He shares a video of people trying to help the injured pedestrians.

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My gut churns, I look around, and almost everyone has their phones raised.

"I gotta go. I took photos, I don't know why? Everyone is taking photos; I don't understand. People died."

"Lindsay..." my friend says... "This is the way people show they care now, they share."

I feel like vomiting, but I don't understand.

"I think we're supposed to be kind to each other... that's it. I feel ill. I must go."

5:50PM

I walk the last few steps toward home. My sickness intensifies. When I first arrived on the scene, I just remembered I had sent a picture to my friend I was going to meet, precisely where the tree now lay. He has yet to respond.

I phone, my friend answers, and I feel relieved.

Shortly after making it home, I take a picture of the scene. People are still snapping photos, and I stop looking.



10:00 PM

I look out the window. I think they are extracting the bodies from the vehicle. The crowd is still gathered, many of which were there at 5:45.

THE NEXT DAY

31 Sleep didn't come easy.

I GOOGLED the accident: 2 elderly people died instantly in the vehicle. 3 pedestrians were injured – 2 in critical condition: the names unreleased – details sketchy.

I'm not usually emotional when I pass a location where a tragedy occurred. I have at times found the reminiscing to be melodramatic.

For example's sake:

"OMG, I went to the top of the World Trade Center in 1994."

But something about this accident hit me harder than most.

Maybe it was because my friend was to meet me at that intersection.

Maybe it was because my second choice was Nuba, which happens to be directly behind the severed tree and light standard.

Maybe it was because of the cell phone photographers, including me.

Maybe it was because of, *"This is how we show we care... we share."*

For me, when random, horrific events take place – when I clear my head of all the noise – I conclude: Maybe we're not in control, all the hatred, racism, war... and shit going on in this world is ridiculous... and a throng of people chose to capture the memory of this tragedy on their phones... aren't we supposed to be evolving?

People died, never to go home again. I don't know them. Their tragedy should simply slip from my mind like the countless other tragedies the news smothers us with daily.

But for some reason, this tragedy is different, "too close to home."

And in tragedy comes a calming lesson, five-year plans, life plans, well, we may never make it to them. So, I think what gives me pause here, random shit happens every day; any day could be our last – we don't have total control over the outcome of living.

OH YEAH, THE LESSON: I think we're supposed to be kind to each other, nothing more. The rest is all crap – if we shut out the noise we are forced to consume, maybe then we could break away from the flock and really start to share!

Thank you, Nandos, for being busy.

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.

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.

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.
