

GLUE

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A META-MEMOIR



BY LINDSAY WINCHERAUK

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ΓΛΟΥ



A story about a [man](#) trying to find himself after his parents come back to life.

And then, he witnesses a gay-bashing.

And then, he suffers a catastrophic stroke.

And then –

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ENDING



After battling the BIG C for more than six years, my dad died the day after my twenty-fifth birthday.

His name was Nicholas.

He wasn't really my father.

My dad came back to life in 2003.

His name is Elmer.

I'm meeting him for the first time today!

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007

I'm fucking trembling. Sorry about the profanity. Profanity often screams emotion.

I picked up the phone. I dialled.

"Hello, Elmer, it's Lindsay, from Vancouver."

This call is destroying me. I'm breaking inside. I've made calls before that sort of shared threads with the absurdity of this one. But none quite match this call's finality.

"You must come home soon; it doesn't look good; dad won't last much longer."

I made that call several times in 1985.

I followed it up with countless calls starting with, "My father's gone."

A little more than a year later, I made the same "Come home soon calls." Mum, Rebekah, was dying. Most of the family didn't make it home while she was still coherent. Oh yeah, Rebekah wasn't really my mother.

With dad and then mum dead, the family ran for the proverbial hills, retreating into their lives. The family splintered apart. At the very least, I was left solo to figure out what was next. I didn't realize it at the time; I'd been removed from the inclusion of family.

That's okay.

The last sentence is a lie.

Friends became my solace.

I cried often, and I longed for a place to belong.

I'm fucking damaged. I've been dosed with the infliction of thinking everyone will leave me.

I'm terrified of showing weakness.

I'm frightened to show pain.

I'm just plain scared.

My brain feels heavy, numb.

The tears stopped flowing, only on the outside.

I don't want to be alone.

Sixteen years passed. I found out by accident my whole family life had been a lie, an act. My entire family had been pretending to be someone they're not. They all lied to me.

I don't blame them.

They never started the lie.

They were forced to participate.

Not even one of them found the strength to face the truth.

Nobody drew the short fucking straw.

My whole life had been turned upside down. If anyone in my family cared, even for a second, the only thing I ever wanted was an acknowledgement; things would never be the same for me, ever again.

How could they be?

I found out my real mother, Bernice, is my oldest sister. She wasn't good to me. I don't know the suffering she had to endure. At first, I didn't care. As time slipped by... yeah... I still didn't care. I was the child in the equation. All I did was, be born.

Soon, I'm going to meet Elmer. Elmer is the man Bernice listed as my father on my birth record. We spoke on the phone for the first time, eighteen years after I watched Nicholas die. I trembled when he picked up the call and, I simply said, "Hello, you may be my father."

Elmer's a good man.

He didn't judge me.

He was willing to open his heart.

I fell apart when the call ended.

Unfortunately, two years passed. Elmer ghosted me like my family. Maybe it was too much for him to handle. So, I decided to give up.

I hate my relentless script. I hate talking to people about what's going on in my life. I've heard far too often, "A lot of people come from broken homes." You might as well just tell me to shut up.

I started believing my father would remain a mystery.

My niece/cousin Robyn contacted me. She told me my mother Bernice is dying. She asked me if I would fix things with her before she died.

What the hell; am I fixing? Bernice has never admitted she was my mother.

Robyn also told me she was getting married.

MESSENGER: 14 AUGUST 2006

TATE22NCEK: TATE22NCEK

Robyn: Lindsay, Good morning! :) Lindsay, I need your address...my mom has it, but I don't. I want to send you one of my lovely invitations! haha :) How are things?

Lindsay: All good, exhausted...I work way too much... just want to work on my writing, however, must do other crap until I sign a contract :(:)

Robyn: yep...:) I am busy with work and wedding stuff - so do you think you'll be able to come to my wedding?

Lindsay: we'll see, probably :)

Robyn: I hope so! :) you need to meet Scott

Lindsay: we'll have to talk about some of that; some things are very different for me now.

Robyn: I'm only planning on getting married once! haha :)

Robyn: Auntie Bernice had a stroke - I'm not sure if you knew that or not

Lindsay: no, I didn't

Robyn: yeah...umm...just a small one, and she's recovering okay...no roll

Lindsay: I don't know what to say to that

Robyn: yeah.... just letting you know... I know, thanks...so August 4th is the wedding; for future planning needs! haha :)

Lindsay: okay :), Robyn, I need to run now, talk to you later. many hugs and much love...bye for now

THE INVITATION ARRIVED THE INVITATION ARRIVED

Uncle Lindsay, we'd love you to come to our wedding.

Imagine how awkward it would be to be meeting your dying mother and reconnecting with a family that chose to abandon you at a wedding. Could you?

The messages began rolling in: *Are you coming? Are you coming? Are you – ?*

HELLO ROBYN HELLO ROBYN

I received the invitation.

Not a day has gone by where I haven't thought about your wedding.

As for coming to the wedding, it pains me, but I don't feel it would be the best thing for your special day. Not coming has weighed heavy on my heart; however, I don't think I would be emotionally able to handle the drama that would unfold on that day.

Sweetie, my life has changed dramatically, and I hope you understand that.

I'm sad I won't be able to attend. I send both of you, my love.

Much Love

Lindsay

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At the precise moment, I hit send, and in a sense, closed the book on my family; a message appeared on my computer screen.

HI THERE, HI THERE

My name is Tanya, and I am writing because my Uncle Elmer, would like to be in contact with you. Please call him at home at ***** or on his cell at *****.

Best Regards,

Tanya

PS E-mail me back if I have the correct e-mail address or not.

Thank you

Tanya

I phoned Elmer, leaving a message. He returned my call.

PHONE MESSAGE

Yes. Leslie, it's...uh...Elmer, Elmer Kirk, and I, uh...finally got your message...and...uh...Tanya was good enough to phone me and let me know you had received her fax. I've been trying to get in touch with you, but I had no way of doing it because I was in Vancouver and I was in Kelowna a year ago this time, and when I came home, there was, uh...shortly after that, there was a message, and I got your new phone number in Kelowna. I believe it was, or someplace, there, and I phoned it, and I never got a call...like, I didn't get a callback.

And, uh...then the guy who lives here, he's off...in Vegas with his girlfriend. Still, what he'd done as he was upset there were so many numbers on the phone, he cancelled them all, so I lost your number because when I got home, like; when I came back, I went to work, and my work takes me out of town for some extensive periods-of-time.

I'm trying to retire, but I got to go to work in the middle of July... so I'd like to be able to...get a hold of you, and make, uh, some firm kind of contact so we can talk about this, and we can act on it, and, uh, carry on from there, if it so pleases you?

Because I have no problem with that...and I'm sorry it took so long, because I've had no way to get your number at all... because I don't have any of that paraphernalia as I call it. 'Cause I'm at the age where something more than a digital phone (laughter), I don't understand how to operate them, and I'm at the age where I... don't have the inclination and don't want to learn it, eh.

Hey, and I'm sorry that has happened, and indeed, I am sorry, and that is why I got my niece to try because she said she could do that for me. So, thank heavens she did; she was true to her word, and I hope it wasn't an intrusion on behalf of you, or on behalf of me, I should say, or anything of that nature.

Because I, I, well, I guess we're both in the same sort of situation, we need to know...more about one another and get it settled as to whether we're related or not. And I don't mean anything slanderous by that; I mean we just need to know. So, I'm anxiously awaiting your phone call, and my cell will be with me all the time...the same number you phoned this morning.

Hope you have a great evening and...return my call whenever it pleases you. The sooner, the better for me, but...ah...do it please, and we can sort of try to get together, somehow, somehow.

Okay, Leslie, thanks for being so patient with me. We'll be talking to you soon.

Have a great evening

Bye, bye

A few days later, I phoned Elmer.

The call flowed easily.

It was fuelled with emotion.

It was wonderful.

He made no excuses.

Our relationship picked off where it did two years before during our first call.

Elmer decided to come to see me. He's seventy-two.

He told me the last two years have been hard on him. He told me it was time to step up to the plate. He apologizes frequently.

Two-months pass. I start breaking down. Elmer's ghosting me again.

Is his silence a cruel joke?

I had screamed out, "My father's coming," and then, suddenly, he vanished again.

I desperately call him once more.

He's been working up north.

He'll come when the work is done.

He wants to see me.

We share more conversations.

Our bond grows.

MONDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2007

Elmer left me a message. He's leaving Calgary. He'll be in Vancouver in a couple of days.

I shake when I listen to his message.

I go for long walks.

I can't control my tears.

I think about Nicholas; I think about Rebekah; I think about Bernice.

I cry about life.

I'm broken, excited, confused, alone. The fucking past keeps haunting me. So why does Bernice have to be my mother? At least Elmer wants to be my father!

THURSDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2006

I'm meeting my seventy-two-year-old father today. He'd be excited to see me!

I wait in my car in Earl's Restaurant's parking lot.

The wind is howling.

The rain is pelting down.

There is a knock on the door.

I roll down the window.

"Lindsay, are you going to sit in there all day?"

I open the door.

Elmer is grinning from ear to ear.

He's brought a friend.

We cross the street and get tested. DNA. A formality.

We skip the small talk and focus on our life journeys.

We share similar personality traits.

He's a good man.

So, am I.

We sit down to break bread. Forty-six years into my life, I'm eating my first meal with my father.

He likes me, and our connection is strong.

He wants to be my father!

He tells his lady friend he's proud of me. He thinks I'm brilliant.

I hid my tears.

Elmer wants to be my father!

After our meal in the Earl's parking lot, I looked deeply into his eyes and thanked him.

I reached for his hand.

He pulled me in for a tight embrace.

I was hugging my father for the first time.

"Lindsay, you're a good man. I'm honoured to be your father. I want this. I want this for you. I'm sorry. I want this to be over for you. I don't want you to feel any more pain."

We parted company. I sat in my car and burst into tears. The last memory of my father will no longer be his last breath of life.

WEEKS PASS BY

The formality is taking forever.
I'm restless.
I'm going crazy.
I pressure the lab for the results.
The painful wait continues.

The lab called on Wednesday, November 21. The results were ready. I rushed to pick them up, and then, surprisingly, I couldn't open them. I stumbled across the street to the same Earl's I had the meal with my father. I'm shaking. A server asks if I'm okay. I tell her about what's in the envelope I'm clenching firmly in my hand. She begins to cry.

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Hours pass. I can't look.
I let another day slip by.
I need to close this chapter.
I go for a long stroll.
I pass a friend's (Binh) workplace.
He presses me to open the letter.
I tell him I need to do this alone.
He tells me he doesn't think it's a good idea.
I continue my aimless walk. I sit down on a park bench and stare blankly into the past. Another hour passes. It's time to no longer be alone. I walk back to Binh's shop. I reluctantly open the results.
I'm lost.
We rewind my way to the start of this chapter

FRIDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2006

I've just finished my morning work. It was time to call a great man for his love, support, attitude, and most importantly, for wanting me.

"Hello, Elmer, it's Lindsay, from Vancouver."

"Lindsay, how are you? It's good to hear from you."

"Well..." I paused... caught my breath "...I have the results." *spit it out*, the tears began to flow "unfortunately...." I wasn't holding up well... "...unfortunately, for me, it's not a happy ending."

I couldn't stop crying.

"You're not my father. Thank you for everything. I can't tell you how much I appreciate everything you've done. I'm so sorry to have put you through so much. I'm sorry."

I hung up the phone and broke down.

Elmer wasn't relieved.

His voice cracked during the call.

He wanted to be my dad!

He's not.

The lie continues.

On Friday, November 23, 2007, my father died for the second time.

This time, he wanted me!

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—shielding 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.

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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.