

MY **LIFE** ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

FLORENCE + MONACO + MONTE CARLO + NICE

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?

FLORENCE + MONACO + MONTE CARLO + NICE

DAY 17-20

15-27 OCTOBER 2003

CATHEDRAL FACE

I retraced my steps in the morning, taking David to the Cathedral. The day was crisp, bright, beautiful.

Dave's look when we rounded the last corner was a combination of Dancing Face and Orgasm Face, making Cathedral Face unique in a sense.

Experts say your facial expression in these life-affirming moments will follow you for the rest of your life. Therefore, FACE, thoughtfully.

Dave's was a combination of a Macaulay Culkin's after-shave face from *Home Alone*, meets, constipation.

308

"Dave, do you need a toilet?"

After the Cathedral, we visited the *Piazza Della Signoria*, a virtual outdoor museum displaying some of the world's most significant works of art, all copies.

With everything behind me on a catastrophic collision course with everything ahead, life was playing a game of chicken. An explosive head-on collision was an absolute certainty, rendering my future questionable at best.

That brings us back to David; somehow, he became the foundation of the trip.

Just as my worlds were about to collide and rip life into thousands of shredded pieces, he managed to flip a switch averting catastrophe, saving me from starting again at square one. His presence kept me from vanishing into myself.

My trip became his journey, and David was my guardian, assuming the role gracefully.

That concludes this instalment of *Dave's Love In*.

"Dave, seriously, dude, let's find you a toilet."

SHIRT'S & BOOTS

We learned.

We gorged on food and drink.

The houses of the Lord humbled us.

We bathed in the tap water of the Hotel Golf.

There was only one thing missing from our Florentine experience?

Mad passionate love-making sessions with a gathering of intoxicating olive-skinned beauties as they took turns feeding you grapes, catering to your innermost desires, in a manner rivalling Caligula. Leaving both of your Herculean bodies exhausted and pleurably spent?

That certainly would've been pleasant, but no.

One rack kept drawing me back. The fabric across the midsection was silky smooth, tapering delicately in the rear. One shirt in a collection of hundreds pulled me in.

My fashion sense is keen. At least, I think it is. I believe shirts are where personality lives. I have a collection of beautiful shirts, most of which were lying untouched in my gluttonous luggage.

This shirt was perfect. I couldn't pass it by – blue with a hint of shine, grey, patterned across the chest, breaking seductively toward the abdomen, sparks of light emanating from the torso, a one-of-a-kind. Personality exploded from its fabric, a work of art worthy of display.

309

My traumatized body had become perfect for display.

I read the label: Handmade by an Italian shirtmaker from Tuscany. Delicate sun-drenched fabrics. A one-of-a-kind shirt made by a man dedicated to his craft – after he had created this one, he was retired to stud.

I exuded excitement when I asked Dave's opinion.

He flicked drool from the corner of his mouth while telling me it may be too much for me to pull off. He paused. When he continued, he said, "*It may be too, you know, gay.*"

A montage of Italian love songs played when I emerged from the change room. I asked Dave if he thought it hung beautifully on my taught body. He was still drooling.

The store's clerk suggested; I looked sizzling.

Dave channelled the clerk's lust by agreeing I looked hot, maybe even exquisite.

"*Seed, these boots, they're amazing. What do you think?*"

Dave slipped them on. Succulent Italian leather, bold red, black striped down the side, moulded to Dave's accepting feet.

Shirt & Boots set on the counter; it was decision time; I compared us to works of art.

I said we must buy.

"*How much?*" I asked the clerk

"How much do you have?" Was his reply.

I said, "a lot + a lot more."

He calmly said, "Perfect; the shirt costs a wee bit more than a lot."

It was Dave's turn.

The clerk added several pluses.

As we walked out of the store, I commented on how lovely the store's bags were, adding "eh" to make it feel more Canadian. Suffering from a dose of buyer's remorse, I attempted to average out the amount of *a lot*. I purchased cologne and a shirt emblazoned with CLINK LONDON across the chest.

A Lot x Three still = A lot

As we cat-walked back to the hotel, Dave began to float through the air, opening his deliciously coloured wings. He became a papillon flying high in the artful Italian sky. I strutted alongside, fantasizing about what kind of action my one-of-a-kind creation was going to bring my way in France?

TUNNELS

On the drive between Florence to Monaco, tunnels appear every few kilometres, some exhilarating and curved, others straight and seemingly endless.

The music pulsed, beating down upon us, fuelling our emotions. Like a delicate opera. The day's soundtrack weaved tales, built characters, created flow, inserted love, intensified until it reached a crescendo of the perfectly choreographed beat. We drove on as excitement sparked in our veins as fast-charging bass lines swallowed our souls, only to break at the tunnel's end. The first beat of the next symphony would drop as the darkness of the tunnels turned to light once more.

The timing of the symphony was impeccable. It provided unforgettable memories. The clouds throbbed to the thump of the drums. Then, as Italy turned into France, we were repeatedly elevated then returned to the sea for moments of tranquillity during this 600-kilometre stretch.

Sara McLachlan, Delirium, Dido, New Order, Sinatra, Sinéad O'Conner, The Flaming Lips, Hybrid, continuously raised our spirits, layering them toward the sky then dropping us quickly back to reality, allowing us to gasp for air. It was as if a Conductor was orchestrating our journey.

There could not have been a better manipulation of our auditory senses.

It doesn't matter; it could be I was white or blacker.

The fact in the matter: I dropped some hip-hop – and progressed some message.

The efforts don't stop –

The groove allowed our cares to drift away. We were left to simply enjoy the chills brought our way by an Army of Sound.

The Gods of Song were shining brightly on this glorious day, and I was ecstatic because I had brought a whack of CDS!

MONACO & MONTE CARLO

SMASH

I slammed into a wall in a Monaco parking garage, jarring Dave from his slumber. Dave bitched at me. He said *fuck* and threw his hands in the air in disgust. He questioned how I could drive fine at breakneck speeds, but between zero and one, I couldn't handle it.

I said "*FUCK*," loudly, I suggested we eat.

I imagined a news report highlighting my ineptitude for driving at low speeds. Eyewitness accounts estimated my rate topped out at less than *one kilometre per hour* when I nudged a bus bench.

311

While waiting for the bus, Gloria was the lone victim of my inability to drive.

I saw the car coming from a block away. I was reading a novel – I figured I could finish a chapter – three pages into the next chapter, I looked up. It was too late – he bumped into me. I said, ouch.

Monaco reeks of wealth; it is an old municipality steeped in vibrant, colourful history. It is a proud Monarchy. It stands only *one-square kilometre* in area.

While we wandered past Monaco's opulence, we could almost hear *Robin Leach's* voice filling the air, something about champagne and caviar.

CARNIVAL

It was time for Carnival. Monte Carlo style!

NORTH AMERICAN STYLE

Shoot water pistol into a hole, racing your car to victory, WIN: A stuffed animal.

WIN several times trade-up for a larger stuffed animal.

MONTE CARLO STYLE

WIN ONCE: A DVD player.

WIN several times trade up for a home stereo – eventually –

NICE HOTEL

Downtime for David became critical, and I wanted to continue to escape.

I became a selfish DINK. ⁽⁸¹⁾

We parked five kilometres from the heart of Nice. We searched for an internet café. We glared at each other as we passed hotel-after-hotel, followed shortly after that, by passing restaurant-after-restaurant.

Our friendship was coming to a head; fuses were burning short. We sat down to eat; I sipped my beer and bitched.

"It took a fucking hour to find food. What's wrong with you? All you want to do is fucking lay down. Fuck, Dave, we need to keep going. I don't want to waste the rest of this trip – I want to go home – I'm fucked up. I don't even know what home is anymore."

Tears fell from my chin.

Dave tried to calm me. He said, *fuck*, again. Dave told me to stop torturing myself. He said, *we stop, we go*. We hit a city; we leave. He asked me to let him take a minute to breathe. He asked me to relax. He said he hoped one day, I'd be okay.

Another tear dropped from my chin.

One hour later we found a hotel. I went to retrieve the car. We had parked approximately seventy paces from our new home.

312



The first bar we hit in Old Nice was far too American, and the beer was 9€.

Come to think of it, beer in Europe was always between 7€ and 9€.

Half a block later, we entered *Le Club 6*.

Inside, every eye focused on us and on our \$3,000 worth of smashing fashion. I practised my French by saying *poutine*. The bartenders laughed.

Beautiful people surrounded us. Drinks in hand, we climbed to the club's loft. A couple sitting on a couch to our right were fucking.

We climbed down from the loft.

Then, we met Steph and Arno.

We ventured to another club with them – Steph and Arno were visiting from Marseille. They used to be a couple; they spoke little English – I can say *poutine*.

I found an instant connection with Steph.

We danced.

We kissed.

The music gripped us.

With each song, the passion intensified.

As we danced, our tongues probed each other's mouths. We embraced tightly; for a moment, I felt safe. Steph caressed my cock ⁽⁸²⁾ through my jeans. It stiffened. I sucked her nipples. We were oblivious to all around us. She slipped her hand into my jeans, gripping my cock, stroking it. I was on the verge of exploding; I unhooked her belt and placed my hands on her midsection, inserting a finger—she was moist. Our kisses intensified.

The music ended.

Outside the club, I hugged Arno. He held me tightly.

I embraced Steph one last time.

I imagined her beautiful naked body on top of me as I cupped my hands on her breasts, looking deeply into her eyes.

I imagined our bodies coming together, with each thrust erasing memories of Trish.

We didn't want sex to spoil the moment. Instead, we broke our embrace and said farewell.

Dave was right; I needed to relax; we should've fucked.

313

DAY 19

VENICE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2003

My tears continued to flow when I told Dave I needed a few hours alone.

He asked me if I was okay.

No.

CASTLE HILL

Dave refused to leave me alone.

Every step of our stroll up Castle Hill, I cried, this burdened Dave. He listened as I showered him with a chorus of *why's*—concluding every verse with, “*How could they?*”

A beautiful sweeping waterfall wept with me. We came to an impressive Jewish cemetery steeped in history. I felt sorry for my life.

Castle Hill represents a high point of fortification, and its history dates to the fifth century BC.

My tears stopped, and I was ready to escape once more.

RED WINE

I ordered two beers.

They cost 15€.

We were engrossed in conversation with a Swiss couple from Zurich. They would be travelling home the next day; they didn't like being away from their children. We loved them.

It was time to refresh our beverages. We decided upon red wine.

I ordered a litre, it cost 1€ (a slight exaggeration), – I began to weep again.

We bid our Swiss friends farewell and headed back to *Le 6*. On this night, we met Dominique, Martin, and George.

George was from Beirut.

We moved to another club. I was staggering, profusely. Dave finally left me alone. I became slutty. Maybe slutty is too hard, easy; I became easy.

I returned to our hotel spent, sans keys, at 6 AM. I decided to climb a tree to reach our second-floor room. I cracked my head on the bottom of the balcony. Blood painted my face.

Not to be deterred, I began to spark things off the window of our room.

I heard troublesome voices in my head, telling me to go around back. The voices turned solo; it was our hotel clerk. He asked about my face: I said. I tripped upward.

He let me in.

LATER THAT AFTERNOON

DAY 20

VENICE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2003

Hold finger on the off button for five seconds, reboot.

I was angst-ridden when we woke at 3 PM. I screeched at Dave, "*So much for going to St. Tropez –*"

We were about to begin speeding for home. The pace had been relentless.

Today was our last day in Nice, Spain, and Barcelona was beckoning tomorrow. Thank you for coming along for the ride. Escaping to Europe, as dramatic as this sounds, saved my life.

My story crosses the line between reality and fantasy. That said, the core of the story is real. Fantasy is part of the escape. Fantasy helps create new possibilities.

Now, where was I?

Oh yeah, won't you come along with me? I need to scream at Dave; we've skipped St. Tropez for a snack at McDonald's.

"Dave, get the fuck up. We wasted the whole fucking day. Let's eat."

"Lindsay, what's wrong with your head?"

I glimpsed out the window; the sky was dark and grey. It was threatening to rain on our parade. Release heavens fury. Cry tears of pain.

Stop typing.

Not a single drop fell.

I stepped onto the balcony, searching for what I'd sparked off the window the night before. I had sparked twenty-two coins off our neighbour's window.

At the Golden Arches, David ordered a Mexican-feast-burger-combo and two draughts.

I considered vomiting.

I laughed at David and ordered a Big Mac Meal.

I paid with the coins.

When we sat down, I could only stare at my food.

The wine was free.

We went back to the internet café to search for accommodations in Barcelona.

A messenger conversation popped up.

Steve says: hey, cupcake

Lindsay says: hey

Steve says: where are you now? ...where to next? ...Barcelona, if you're going to Barcelona, you must go to Sitges. It's fabulous.

Lindsay says: i just opened a Sitges website. it does look great.

Steve says: one thing, it is extremely gay-friendly – predominately gay, but fabulous, nonetheless.

81. I'm trying to resurrect the word DINK.

82. Would you have preferred I had used DINK?

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.

431

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.

432

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.
