

MY **LIFE** ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE FRANCE

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?

BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE FRANCE

DAY 25

1 NOVEMBER 2003

There was no need to REBOOT today; somebody had left the computer overnight. What the heck? Hold a finger on the off button for five seconds, REBOOT. I didn't want to leave Sitges. For many reasons, not to exclude, I never slept; I wasn't worried though, Dave would certainly keep me awake during the drive.

Sitges to Barcelona took 30 minutes, and the highway through Barcelona took 2 bleeping hours to navigate.

I asked Dave how much I owed for our last night with Baylene; once again, our bill came to almost nothing.

FOUR NIGHTS IN SITGES = 1€

325 A 1,100-kilometre drive lay ahead of us, 12,000+ with our detour through Andorra, and Andorra was added to the map to increase our trip country total to eleven.

Andorra is mountainous, rugged, and romantically beautiful, situated in the eastern Pyrenees; it is a skiing wonderland. Its scenery is breathtaking. The extreme topography vibrantly flashes a rich tapestry of colours that changes rapidly when fall begins to turn into winter. It's an artist/photographer's perfect palate.

We climbed the Pyrenees with almost 1,000 kilometres left to get to Paris. The snow lapped across the windshield. My nerves were frayed. A pack of cattle, horned, were being herded down the mountainside by ranchers decked out in ancient garb, a real Kodak moment.

We climbed higher↑.

The snow began to intensify as we headed into the second blizzard of the trip. I glanced at Dave; he was fast asleep. We missed snapping a photo of the ranchers; instead, our only picture to remember Andorra was a sign at its entrance gate with a police car in the background. At least the shutter fully opened.

Snow began blasting toward the windshield, reminding me of the video game *Space Invaders*, with each flake representing fire from aliens. I turned on the high beams, the heavenly fire intensified. Dave kept sleeping. I whispered to him that today was the day we were likely to die, again.

For the next two hours, the roads reminded me of Amsterdam:

↑Up—

↓Down—

↑Up—

Down to the melting line.

My eyes pained me.

Dave kept dreaming.

I thought about Steph when we passed Marseille.

Bellingham crossed my mind.

Each town we passed brought with it its hallucinations.

My mind began to play games. I decided it was silly to try to make it all the way to Paris. I convinced myself if we were still alive when we reached the next town, we could nestle down for the night—I managed to play this game for four hours.

Four-hundred-eighty-kilometres from Paris, we finally hunkered down for the night in Brive-la-Gaillarde. Much to our delight: our hotel's desk clerk was drunk.

DAY 26

2 NOVEMBER 2003

326

We REBOOTED again in the morning. The desk clerk was still jovially drunk. He cheerfully sent us solo into the bar for complimentary beverages while he prepared our bill.

We chose juice.

We'd only been at the hotel for about eight hours; how complicated could our bill be, I thought?

I'm not sure if he chose juice.

THE LAST TOLL BOTH BEFORE PARIS

As we approached Gay Paris, the race became hectically hair-raising. Two lanes became twenty. Every vehicle was shot violently from cannons into the fracas of the well-funnelled highway.

Oh, my, Biff, did you see that horrific crash; Jean Paul's Audi Quattro took out Michael's Ferrari flipping them both several times. OMG, an explosion; I can't make out the cars through the smoke. The carnage—this is awful. It's hard to believe Seed made it this far only to be taken out by Biff; I don't think it. Is that? It can't be—it is—he's unscathed. He looks at ease. And, his co-pilot, Dave, is knitting a sweater?

BRIVE-LA-GAILLARDE FRANCE

Released from the toll booth, I sieved my way between the other drivers, jockeying for position as two lanes turned into four. Weaving into the grid became effortless after *4,080 kilometres* of driving.

DAVE'S DRIVING TOTAL THUS FAR = 0 KILOMETERS

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.