

LINDSAY WINCHERAUK



ON THE SLUSH PILE

**MY SISTER IS
MY MUM**

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?

SQUARE PEGS. ROUND HOLES.
2007 BE BEE? BOUND HOLES?



2004 + 2005

(WITH TWO FLASH FORWARDS TO 2006)

DEAR FAMILY

DEAR FAMILY

VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

3 JANUARY 2005

DEAR FAMILY

You destroyed my life.
Nah. You didn't

Collectively, you are responsible for the miserable failure I have become. I am stupid, lacking ambition; I take and take never giving anything back, except for vile disgust.

Nah. That's not true at all. I have managed to embrace compassion + empathy, + the brilliance of pain-filled comedy.

I've stumbled. I've self-medicated. I've tried things I never thought I would.

I don't blame any of you. That's a lie. Someone, anyone, was supposed to find the strength to tell me the truth about MY LIFE. But none of you did. You all choose silence. Why?

I fucking understand the only responsibility should have fallen on the shoulders of Grandma + Grandpa + Bernice. Still, they were too consumed with shame to know how ridiculous caring what other people think is.

I WAS A FUCKING BABY

How could people so intelligent be this incredibly stunned?

The question is rhetorical.

I WAS A FUCKING BABY

I don't want to fight. I like the easy way, three ~~brothers~~ and three ~~sisters~~; I'm the baby, love and support were never to have been a question. It was supposed to be my birthright.

Our ~~parents~~ died, and the fucking equation turned upside down. We went our separate ways; my safe place no longer existed; our family lost its glue. We were supposed to rise to the occasion and take care of each other. We didn't.

You've harmed me.

My failed relationships, work problems, financial problems, my troubles keeping a roof over my head, my lack of friends, my inability to love, everything was taught to me by you.

The result being: a miserable life that when it's over, you'll likely rejoice, hell, that's

DEAR FAMILY

bullshit, you probably, won't notice.

I ramble. I want each of you to feel my debilitating pain. Hold on a second; I need to bang a needle into my arm. I need a swig of vodka. Once the juices enter my veins, I can finally escape you.

The pain you caused runs fucking deep. I don't recall ever hearing *I love you* – from any of you, ever. I'm your baby ~~brother~~, for God's sake. What a load of crap.

Every time we said bye, I cried. I showed each of you, my love. Did you miss it?

Like said, I don't blame any of you. I wish it would have been different, and we could have been the exception to the hideousness of society.

Most of you, my lovely ~~sisters~~, left the nest before I arrived.

My memories are few, and I never felt loved.

Beverly treated me the best.

Sadie, I've come to realize your place in the family tree was likely difficult.

Stepping back into my misery: I'm not miserable. I don't bang needles into my arm. I only occasionally drink copious amounts of alcohol. I'm full of ambition.

As for the boys: Brian, you get a free pass. We were close in age, yet we were the least close. I'm sorry.

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I witnessed the family dynamic and decided it was best to be like Don.

I loved your father and mother. I know they loved me. At least, I think they did. I need to believe that.

I robbed your parents of their golden years.

I know some of you weren't my biggest fans. Because I took the energies of your parents, and you were forced to pretend I was one of you.

I don't wish you heartache; 2003 was the most challenging time of my life. It was time for you to erase your past frustrations. It was time for you to step up to the plate and love me. Not even one of you did – when I needed you the most.

Sadly, I don't think I will ever be a father. I wouldn't want my child to spend their youth watching me die.

It hurt to type the last sentence.

I've cried several rivers about the family I no longer have. My tears have run dry; your absences sadden me. I don't think I ever honestly had a family.

When my life spiralled downward, friends, not family, picked me up, dusted me off, hugged me, told me they loved me and helped me wipe away the tears.

We were all raised the same way.

A WORD TO EACH OF YOU

BRIAN

We were left to pick up the pieces after ~~Mum & Dad~~ died.

You were the only one who probably didn't know the truth.

It must have been challenging following Don, the golden child. Living directly under his shadow must have been horrible. ~~Dad~~ wasn't fair to you. I witnessed it firsthand.

We were forced to listen to the nightly fights, mostly about money. We didn't grow up in a loving environment; quite the opposite, it was filled with struggle.

We both struggled for the last energies and attention of our ~~parents~~. I had the unpleasantness of watching your treatment and decided survival required me to be more like Donald.

I know at times; I wasn't good to you. I am sorry, I truly am—I love you, Uncle Brian.

That was weird to type.

Thank you for easing my pain by being there with me through our journey through Hell. I know ~~Dad~~ wasn't good to you, but you never complained and were there at his deathbed; ~~Mum's~~ too when their times came to leave, your presence gave me strength.

I wish you the best and hope you find incredible happiness.

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DONALD

I wanted to be just like you. I looked up to you; you were a star; Dad loved you. You brought the family pride.

I know you visit Vancouver regularly. Each time you neglect me. I can't explain how much that hurts. Before 1996, I couldn't understand at all.

I know you were angry when I couldn't pay back the money you lent me.

I should've made a better effort. I'm sorry. I'm sorry we lost touch and never talked about it again. I will rest the responsibility on my shoulders; I could've picked up the phone. I didn't.

What pains me the most, as I share this with you: Priscilla told me you are a remarkable, loving father. I knew you would be. Having said that, you must understand how fragile we are. How much we need the love of our parents. How much we need a family.

I needed you. Where were you at my low point when I found out the devastating news?

JAMES

For the most part, you treated me like your little brother.

We were the closest; you went to my games. So, in a sense, you were my father. Thank you.

Your daughters are beautiful kids, and you and Charlotte are fantastic loving parents.

Look into your daughters' eyes. Think about how you feel about them. That feeling was missing for me.

I'm not mad at you, maybe you are with me.

CLICK

BEVERLY

Being the cutest at your wedding isn't enough.

SADIE

I'd guess ~~Dad~~ wasn't great to you, any of the girls for that matter; that's only a guess.

At one time, we were close, but the distance between us grew as the years went by. So, I won't pretend to understand what it was like when you were born.

I wish you well. Sadly, you didn't have the strength to be the voice of love.

The emotionless cards and presents of obligation hurt deeply.

BERNICE

YOU'RE MY FUCKING MOTHER

I want to scream. You stayed in my fucking life. You left me on my own to discover the truth. Didn't you think that day was going to come?

I don't hate you. Hate takes too much effort. I'm sure my words can't even inflict pain.

It was your responsibility to tell me the truth.

COLLECTIVELY

A BIG FAT ZERO TIMES

That is the number of times my phone has rung since you found out I knew the truth.

I've heard that I'm still your baby ~~brother~~ for some of you. That nothing has changed.

I watched your parents die. It has become crystal clear if the weather is fair and the truth can be swept under the rug, then, and only then, I can be your little ~~brother~~. Your silence doesn't eliminate the lie.

DEAR FAMILY

You've all chosen not to participate in my life. I'm sad. I can't continue to be your little brother you never hugged or told me you loved. I can't.

You have your own families; I'm not part of them. My friends have become mine. That role was supposed to be yours.

Is it too much to ask for you to acknowledge my life has changed?

I'm sad we've missed each other's lives.

Love Love

Lindsay

I hated writing this letter. I had to; it is part of the healing process. The emotions it evokes run deep. I drive crack heads and junkies to work every day.

Most of them fall to where they are because of neglect. The deepest pain in life is when existence is not acknowledged. I exist.

Does my mother get to keep pretending she's, my sister? –

That's what I thought.

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After the truth be told; I've often wondered what it would be like to be part of a loving family. To have a home to go home to. But with reality staring directly at me, I spend far too much time having my emotions pushed and pulled, wondering if anyone in my family will ever reconnect with me. It is a worthless, pointless exercise.

What it has done is left me longing for the impossible.

It has caused me to sabotage much of the good in my life.

Cruising through life with no morals and values to anchor a person, it's no wonder many lost souls end up alone, alcoholics, divorced, or worse – yes, there is a worse.

Every year that slips by, the further I am from family, **FUCKING. SUCKS.**

My baggage is the never-ending story that ended long ago for everyone involved except me.

I don't want to be an obligation. ⁽⁹²⁾

I look at the mirror with a glassy tint to my gaze. Another page is coming, another, and another, and long after this volume is complete, another glorious page.

My family may have damaged me, but I am a good man.

92. You're not; the people from your past are too damaged to evolve.

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.
