

# My **LIFE** ON THE SLUSH PILE

MY SISTER IS MY MUM

A META-MEMOIR



BY **LINDSAY** WINCHERAUK

**Home Sweet Home**

# 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?*

# CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

## SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

11 SEPTEMBER 1965

We lived in a house behind a Texaco gas station and the Idylwyd Diner. Mum managed the diner, Nicholas the gas station; he was a mechanic. Our home was a meagre bungalow with three bedrooms; Bernice + Sadie, + Beverly was long gone from the homestead; brother James had his own room. I was compelled to share a room with Donald and Brian.

Our home sat four miles from the heart of Saskatoon on a highway racing out of town. A mile up the highway lay a fork in the road. If you were to veer left onto the Yellowhead highway, the next big-city, three-hundred-twenty-five miles away, you'd find Edmonton, the city of my birth. A city I would drive to less than four hours later in my life.

If you took the fork to the right, in ninety miles, you'd arrive in Prince Albert, on clear nights, during the drive, the Northern Lights burst to life, glowing brightly and dancing gleefully in all their glory.

The Gas Station + Diner faced the highway with the gas pumps sitting thirty feet from their entrances and a mere thirty feet from the highway's blacktop. Then, sweeping around the right side of the garage, you'd find a line of tractors and bailers. Occasionally, we'd find a missing pet dead inside the workings of the machinery. On the right side of the diner was the door to our home. Thirty feet to the left of the door was a collection of dirt hills in various sizes: A mountainous playground for us kids to explore.



Just over the crest of the last hill, the horizon slashed down into the murky waters of a slough. I imagined purchasing a submarine to navigate the sloughs waterways. A submarine, like the ones you'd find pictured in the back of comic books.

Directly across the highway from our home laid the runway of Saskatoon's airport. Planes skirted overhead regularly, rattling the walls and windows of our home.

The garage and diner bustled most days with farm families stopping by for a quick bite or to fill up with gas on the way back to their homesteads.

## CLOSING TIME: 6 PM

On most nights, by 6:30, the last straggler, who usually partook in the odd tumbler of scotch with Nicholas, left, leaving the highway empty for the night, apart from the occasional vehicle heading toward the bright lights of the city.

Our closest neighbour lived three miles away.

## FIRST MEMORY

My fragile five-year-old mind could not recall a single event from my first years of life. It was as if every memory had been scrubbed clean.

The clock struck seven. My parents were heading to town for a rare night out. A time to forget their hardships. I watched the taillights of dad's Caddy disappear as they sped down the highway toward Saskatoon. The clouds hung low in the early night sky on this chilly September evening, creating a brilliant city silhouette.

One last flicker of the taillights and mum and dad were gone; I turned to go back inside our house.

## CLICK

I ran to the door. The door was locked. I frantically banged on the door. I screamed at the top of my lungs, "LET ME IN." I began to shake in fear. Tears rolled down my cheeks.

Thirty minutes passed.

A light standard at the entrance to the gas station began hissing and crackling as if it were about to expire. Insects buzzed around its dim glow. The only other lights around were the city lights miles away.

My shivering intensified as thirty minutes turned into eternity as pitch black had arrived.

In the distance, I could hear a dog howl, or it could have been a hungry coyote.

I slammed my fists on the door with every ounce of might in one last frantic attempt for salvation. Finally, I heard the clack of the lock again. The door opened, I rushed inside, trembling; the house was draped in blackness. I dove under the chesterfield hiding from my brothers' who were chanting in unison in a continuous loop.

*"Lindsay, you are not one of us. We are going to get you. You are not one of us."*

Hours later, mum and dad returned home. I rushed from underneath the couch into mum's arms when they entered the house.

My voice cracked and trembled, *"They said I'm not one of them."*

*"Of course, you are," Rebekah stated in the calmest of tones.*

My brothers were nineteen, thirteen and seventeen at the time.

## I WAS FIVE.

## SECOND MEMORY

While taking a bath, Donald entered the bathroom carrying the family cat and threw it into the tub with me.

## THIRD MEMORY

My brother Brian smashed me in the back of the head with a brick when we played in the dirt hills; I was rushed to the hospital in need of stitches.

## FOURTH MEMORY

Donald and Brian encouraged me to stick my dinner knife into a wall socket.

THAT'S ENOUGH REMINISCING FOR NOW.

# CHILDHOOD MEMORIES: SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN



Nicholas (Dad) ran the gas station.  
 Rebekah (Mom) ran the diner.  
 Bernice + Sadie + Beverly had left the nest.  
 I shared a room with Brian + Donald.



James had his own room.  
 We lived 4-miles from Saskatoon.  
 On the city's outskirts.  
 Edmonton my birth city: 325 miles away.



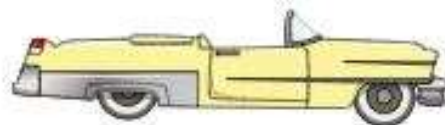
Around the corner of the gas station—  
 —sat bailers, combines + tractors.  
 Occasionally we'd find a missing pet—  
 dead inside the farm machinery.



Dirt hills falling into a slough—  
 —sat 30 feet from the door of our home.  
 A wonderful playground.  
 And a potentially watery graveyard



I imagined navigating the waterways in  
 a Polaris Nuclear Sub.  
 My brothers suggested that was a good idea.  
 I placed my order.



Mom + Dad left for a rare night on the town.  
**NIGHT TURNED PITCH BLACK.**  
 James + Donald + Brian threw me outside.  
 A coyote howled.

# CHILDHOOD MEMORIES: SASKATOON SASKATCHEWAN



**CLICK.** The door locked.

I cried. I pounded on the door.

30 minutes passed before they let me inside.

"Lindsay you're not one of us."

Was chanted repeatedly.



"Ooh, Lindsay you are not one of us."

Tears blasted from my eyes.

"Lindsay, you're not one of us."

My weeping became critical.

I dove under the sofa, crying, shaking.



"Lindsay, you're not one of us."

"Lindsay, you're not one of us."

I'm going to die.

"You're not one of us. We are going to get you."



Mom and Dad come home.

"Mommy, Mommy, they said I wasn't one of them."

"Of course, you are, sweetie."

My brothers were 9, 13, and 17. I was 5.



## 2<sup>ND</sup> MEMORY

Brother Donald tossed our cat—  
—into the tub while I was bathing.



## 3<sup>RD</sup> + 4<sup>TH</sup> MEMORIES

**Brian** - Brick to the back of my head [stitches].

**Don + Brian** - Here Linds, stick this in the wall.



## 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.