

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?



2006
2006

SELL YOUR STORY
SELL YOUR STORY

SELL YOUR STORY

VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

24 MARCH 2006

GOOD MORNING!

It's a gloriously beautiful mid-spring day. Great news today: Wes is dropping by for a visit! He's passing through on his way back to Australia after, not to be a downer, attending his mother, Peggy's funeral in Saskatoon. His father, George, you likely remember him being MacGyver-like, had passed two years earlier.

Despite the sombre reason for his visit, we'll find a way to make it a brilliant day. Won't you come with us to get your sip on?

NOON

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KNOCK. KNOCK.

We skipped words and hugged each other tightly for several minutes.

"Let's go, Wes. It is fantastic to see you?"

It's time to reminisce and to update our BEST OF ALBUM.

"Wes, do you remember when you and Ripper made the shooter pyramid, and –"

"– and we set the guy's hair on fire. Yes, I do. He was standing too close. I told him to back up. He had to go. I had to kick him out."

PIT STOP #1

THE ENGLISH BAY BOATHOUSE

English Bay is a spectacular setting where the ocean caresses the mountains, reaching for the sky in harmony.

I asked Wes to read a section of a book I was writing about the oddities of life, entitled: *Poutine*.

He read with great interest, and I sipped my beer and watched.

Wes was noticing.

This day belonged to Wes except for the “*Sell Your Story Forum*” at the *Fox & Fiddle Pub*. I heard about the forum by reading the local entertainment rag, *The Georgia Straight*. Since I was an aspiring author – I decided I must attend.

PIT STOP #2

FOX & FIDDLE PUB

The lineup stretched for more than a block.

Aspiring authors from all walks of life were attempting to unlock the doors to the glamorous ⁽⁹³⁾ publishing world.

The *Sell, Your Story Forum* at the *Fox & Fiddle* was jam-packed. Wes and I arrived fifteen minutes after the doors opened.

“*Admission is \$20,*” A Doorperson said.

“*I’ll get that, Seed,*” Wes responded.

I looked at the sky, thinking, *Whoever is looking out for me, thank you!*

The sky looked back and called me an idiot, telling me to thank Wes.

Inside, the mob of eager authors turned into three hundred, all hoping for a chance to enter “the get rich quick” world of publishing.

Not wanting to sit dry, Wes picked us up a round of ales. We were the only ones in the crowd drinking. It struck me as odd. I was under the assumption most literary greats were either drunks or substance abusers; at the very least, deeply troubled.

I surmised that if many of our famous authors are troubled and prone to indulging in vices, I must be the only author on the right path at this event.

I think of myself as a comic writer. Comedy comes from painful and even tragic experiences. Pain leads to *VICE*; therefore, I’m on the right path.

The lights dimmed. Lasers shot through the room; a thumping bass line filled the air. The judging elite sat at the front of the room, five in total, one with a thick British accent. They were to act as a sounding board. They possessed the keys to admittance into the kingdom of published authors.

A microphone dropped from the sky; the host began to speak.

“*Let’s get ready to – is Jim Wilson in the room?*”

The over-exaggerated stage area disappeared in a flash, the lights grew brighter, the music lowered, Jim Wilson entered the spotlight. He stood on a podium directly in front of the panel.

ARRIVING LATE = NO SEATS LEFT = SITTING ON A TV STAND BESIDE THE PANELLISTS

Wes and I were virtually part of the panel.

One by one, the authors pitched their book ideas.

"My book is a tale of drunken debauchery."

My book is about a Basque love triangle in 1947."

My book is about the mating rituals of the Brazilian frogs, their ejaculate, and ginger."

The panellists mercilessly critiqued the dreams of the sober literary whizzes.

Incidentally, the panellists bore a striking resemblance to the panellists on American Idol. Complete with a Brit, whom I could've sworn was related to Simon Cowell, the founder and one of the original hosts of American Idol.

When Simon's turn to critique, he tore the pitches to shreds.

"You need to grab the readers' attention in the first sentences; you've failed miserably."

"Why would you write about a Basque love triangle in 1947?"

"I like ginger. I'm not so sure about frog goo?"

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The remainder of the panel tried softening Simon's harsh criticisms by offering kinder advice.

I thought the authors needed to start drinking heavily for the next five years, maybe throw in the odd pill, and start writing once life starts spinning out of control.

Wes asked if I wanted another beer. He said he'd only buy it if I would present something.

I told him, of course. I just wasn't sure what to pitch?

TICK. TICK. TICK.

The last pitch pitched; it saved me from pitching the unknown.

The MC announced there was time enough for two more authors.

West thrust my hand into the air – it was one of three-hundred hands in the air.

"We have time for two more authors whose names start with L."

Wes raised my hand again.

With the MC's final selection, he pointed to me, a mere three feet away.

The first L on stage said into the mike, almost mumbling his words.

"God. The Lord. And, Oh God."

Simon used “festering” and “drivel” in his critique.

The first L author walked away, head hung down, weeping.

It was my turn.

My inner voice shouted three times: *TELL THE STORY!*

I shook my head from side to side violently – I asked my voice to boom – I spoke directly into the microphone.

HI I'M

I asked my voice to take it down a notch.

“I haven’t prepared anything, so I’m going to share a short story that took place in my life in 2003. On March 3 – Aunt Priscilla said she was going to cut my evil sisters out of her Will.”

My inability of speaking in a whisper allowed everyone in the room to hear me.

The hands-on clock raced forward. My three minutes on the podium were nearing the end. The host asked me to wind down my presentation.

“Okay, I guess this is what makes my story unique: 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!”

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Simon called me an excellent storyteller and encouraged me to join the BC Storytellers. He told me I had left the audience wanting more! Simon mouthed the words “*evil sisters.*” He snickered.

The following two judges said “great” and “fantastic.”

I felt overwhelmed with a sense of pride, only to be replaced by the thought: *I suck, this was a fluke.*

Self-Doubt told me to enjoy the moment while it lasts, then in a flash, he was gone.

I walked up to and shook the publisher’s hands, thanking them.

Simon offered more kind words. “*You blew everyone away. Stay focused.*”

Next, Nancy, a prominent publisher, asked me to submit my manuscript to her attention using the exact words I used to end my presentation only a few moments earlier for the heading of my submission.

NOT EVERY DAY—

Before the kind words of the panellists, I spun in procrastination. My wheels rotated in a quagmire of denial.

My hope of writing this story faded away, and I was giving up.

On this perfect day, with my friend Wes, the ripcord was being pulled, my spirit was being awakened.

A THIRTEEN YEAR BREAK TO EXPLAIN HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

2006-2018

I started writing, penning the story two months in one-take after Nancy's request. My entire manuscript was derived from one-hundred-sixty words I had scribbled in a travel diary Dave gave me before our European adventure. I wrote the story in a fever of excitement, letting bits and pieces fly from the keyboard onto the screen. Skits from bar scenes, hotels, and wild characters we met during our travels got mixed in with the story about my "dark family secret." I titled my book *Russians Clowns & Drag Queens - Seed's Identity Tour*. I thought this title, like the trip, was Epic! I printed a copy of my manuscript, put it in an envelope and placed it in the mail. I became overwhelmed with a sense of great accomplishment. The publisher returned a polite rejection.

The rejection stung. I lost sight of the fact my memoir had been **REQUESTED** by a publisher, a word every author longs to hear. So instead of reworking my one-take-manuscript, I did what many an author drowning in insecurity would do: I decided to write a different book.

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I needed a concept. For some unknown reason, Ed sprang to mind and gave me a wild idea for a book. My opinion was to mail a series of bizarre, mostly comedic, letters to a roster of randomly chosen people in North America, all named Ed: seven Ed's and one Ellen, Ellen DeGeneres.

In the letters, I would ask their help with solving trivial or absurd problems, like fixing the weather. Writing these letters to Ed gave me a way to avoid the risk of opening myself to judgement by revealing the truth about my life. I figured: twenty or so odd letters could turn into a cutting-edge, chortle-worthy, deliciously original: book.

Over the next few days, I cranked out the first batch of letters and sent them to my roster of Ed's. I signed the letters with the name "Seed," a nickname my friends had given me. I sent the notes without a return address. The letter to Ellen probably died in her gatekeeper's trash bin.

When I started typing the next round of letters to Ed, everything suddenly changed. That dreary Monday morning, I had watched a man die in a car accident (coming soon) ⁽⁹⁴⁾ on my way to work. Part of my job involved driving construction workers to job sites for a labour agency. On my first drive of this day, I transported a suicidal tool-belt-equipped carpenter to his job. (coming soon) ⁽⁹⁵⁾ He frightened me by confessing his plan to commit suicide if his life didn't magically turn around by his birthday, a mere few weeks away.

I tried to help him get to the root of his problems, but to no avail. This man's downward

spiral blasted a light on in my mind. Hearing his story made me realize I desperately needed to tell my own story. I knew it was crucial to return to my jettisoned manuscript and delve into my past to piece together the missing parts of myself. My early family life haunted me now more than ever.

That night, I began revising my original manuscript. My book was chaotic like my life – totally out of order. Writing down random memories enabled me to do exactly what I needed to survive! After my foundation had collapsed, I needed to find a way to express my emotions. Most important: I needed to redefine who I was by looking at what I once thought to be accurate and making sense of what it had become.

While I was working on my memoir, my life didn't stop. Every day new discoveries lay around each corner, findings that needed a place in the manuscript. So, the story of my past and present life blended. Ed took on a new role as my friend and confidant. I began to write to Ed about what was going on in my life.

I began shopping my manuscript to agents and publishers, only to have it rejected...and rejected...and rejected. I stopped again and set my book aside. Months later, I picked it up and revised it again. The process followed a pattern: revise, set it aside; months later, pick it up again, revise, set it aside.

The years drifted by, but I never gave up on my book. In 2014, I was invited to attend a publisher's workshop in Vancouver with six other authors. When I presented my story, the group was riveted. The consensus: "powerful voice" and "an important story to share."

After the workshop, I was ready to put the final polish on my story, or so I thought. Regardless of the compelling content of my story, everyone who read my manuscript said it lacked focus. In my defence: I was fond of quoting a line from Senior Edward Bloom (in the movie *Big Fish*):

Most men, they'll tell you a story straight through. It won't be complicated, but it won't be interesting either.

My memoir was without question engaging but too chaotic.

I was referred to the editor Kendra Langeteig, based in Bellingham, Washington, just a short hop from Vancouver. I was lucky to find an editor who appreciated what I was trying to do by writing my memoir in such an unconventional way. When I began to write my memoir, I wasn't aiming for a traditional narrative. My life was far from traditional.

Still, while reading your book, finding it provocative and playful, edgy, disturbing, and disruptive –

"Disruptive" – the word delighted me! Kendra understood why I didn't want to tell my story straight but "with a twist."

With Kendra's help and encouragement, another light went on. I found a way to play

with my timeline and splice together scenes from different parts of my life. I also wanted my readers to be involved in the process of constructing my story. Ed plays that role in my “Letters to Ed.” Initially, he served as my confidant in Chapter 1, but that isn’t where he belonged, so he drifts away and morphs into Every Reader.

BACK TO WES

When I look back at this part, I see that I wasn’t procrastinating. My book project may have stalled; however, life kept rolling along. I continued weaving my days through pleasure, pain, happiness, and despair. And, although I was suffering from a dose of writer’s self-doubt, each new day was adding to my ever-changing tale. My mind was full of material that would eventually get to the keyboard and onto the screen.

My moods would swing dramatically upward to the skies above and then down to the depths of despair.

One moment, I would bask in the glow of self-confidence as I yearned to place my thoughts onto a new page. The next, I would wallow in self-doubt, thinking the whole process was pointless.

I know for sure I wasn’t ready to write my story. I guess I needed a break from me.

I was flying solo. My family was gone. They had abandoned me after I told them I knew the truth. I was still in shock; reality had frozen the blade of my pen.

I became a bar regular.

I’d still occasionally trip into the After Hours.

I desperately needed to find work because Priscilla’s blessing was dwindling.

I took a series of menial jobs that I have practically erased from my memory bank out of desperation.

The images of a dead Irishman sitting in a chair as one-by-one, mourners came up to him with two tumblers of scotch, sat beside him, took a swig, toast him, and then dump the second glass of scotch on the floor sprang to mind. *I think I may have worked a stint for a catering company.*

In addition to the menial jobs, I somehow managed to land a semi-regular gig writing **Opinion-Editorials for 24 Hours Vancouver** (a commuter newspaper with a daily circulation of 220,000). Over two years, my opinions were published sixteen times.

The topics ranged from dating to addiction to the gap between the rich + poor.

When Priscilla’s money finally ran dry, Wayne & Fiona saved me from becoming a poor writer without a home. Not only were they always there to offer me hugs, but they also offered financial support; they saved me on several occasions from eviction until I was able to turn menial into something more substantive.

Despite my mixture of emotional turmoil and self-created challenges, most important of all: Thanks to Wes's visit and Nancy's request, this fateful day gave me the courage to write my story.

For the next two months, I cranked out my story. I thought I was penning a masterpiece. What I put together was crap.

SUBMISSION DATE: 15 JUNE 2006 ⁽⁹⁵⁾

PIT STOP #3

THE IRISH HEATHER

We stopped for two Guinness at the *Irish Heather*. Wes read more from *Poutine*. I flirted with our bartender while he read. She seemed to take a shine to me.

PIT STOP #4

STEAMWORKS

At *Steamworks*, Lisa was our bartender. Lisa's hot. Hot seems to be a recurring theme in my story.

Lisa asked how we knew each other.

We shared our stories; Lisa shed a tear; she was sorry to hear about Wes's mother. So, she bought us shooters.

Tears formed in my eyes, Wes's as well. Wes told me, "*Linds, I loved Mom + Dad. It was hard going back. It was probably the last time I'll see Corrie. It's probably the last time I'll be in Canada.*"

Tears rolled down his cheeks and emphasized his love for Libby, his partner.

His voice cracked.

He raised his glass.

We cried, and Wes performed a toast.

"To my loving parents George and Peggy."

PIT STOP #5

THE MILL

At the Mill, we sat outside. Directly to our right were three generations of women from the same family: Grandma, Perry, and Shelby. They ranged from granny to eleven.

Refined with a thirst for “STUFF,” – Shelby had no business being only eleven.
Her divorced parents vied for her love with the said material things.
Her voice rivalled Marilyn Monroe’s. She shared sage advice her grandpa had given her.
He didn’t care whom she married, “*Just make sure you marry rich.*”

PIT STOP #6-7

CARDERO’S + THE LIFT BAR & GRILL

Next, we stopped briefly at Cardero’s, followed by *The Lift Bar & Grill*. A spectacularly beautiful establishment on Coal Harbour’s waterfront.

At *the Lift*, we became the centre of attention. Our bartender happened to be from Saskatoon, leading to more reminiscing.

PIT STOP #8

THE DENMAN FREEHOUSE

We’d come full circle. We were back at English Bay, this time occupying stools at the *Denman Freehouse*, two doors from the day’s starting point.

I love Wes. If he lived in Vancouver, I might die. He lives life to the fullest. No obstacle is too significant for him to conquer, whether drinking or climbing the highest mountain. He doesn’t accept can’t. So, I thank him for raising my arm!

Wes told the bartender he had a fantastic day with a great friend.

A raspy-voiced black man asked me about the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Logo.

I told him I liked it.

He then lowered his voice and said I was hot.

I laughed.

He said, “*Extremely hot.*”

He called me Honey. His name was Willie Taylor, he’s a Drag Queen.

I mentioned his Adam’s apple; he looked at me confused.

English (our bartender), Willie’s friend, joined our conversation. He said he’d seen my ad.

I asked him, “*For what?*”

He said, “*Your ad, it’s been running for years.*”

I assured him I wasn’t running an ad for anything.



He disagreed. He said I provide a service, an Escort Service.

I told him, “*You ain’t seen any ad of mine.*”

Unfazed, he asked, “*How much do you charge?*”

“*For what?*”

“*For me to blow you?*”

“*\$500.*”

I felt his hand slip into my pocket. He told me he gave me his digits. If I was serious, give him a call.

I wonder if he would have gone for \$550.

TIME TO LIE DOWN

Wes suggested going to *The Sandbar* on Granville Island. I thought about it. Crossing water while in a liquid state was a bad idea. Not to mention, I was one sip away from incoherent.

387 I told him I couldn’t. I said my home was calling me; it asked me to pick up milk on the way. But, of course, it was only the voices in my head.

The hill up Davie Street was steep. For part of the last two kilometres, the grade is thirty-two percent, two percent when not liquefied.

We strolled to the corner of Davie & Burrard Streets together. I closed my eye(s) for only a moment. When I opened them: Wes had vanished into thin air. ⁽⁹⁶⁾

Alone with my thoughts: *writing or hooking; either way, I’ll have something to fall back on.*

KAYAKING AND A TRUE FRIENDSHIP

Drunk sleep turned into an early rise, 7 AM. Wes had made it back to my place to sleep; somehow, by 7, he was already in full flow – he was excited to return home to begin living the following chapters of his life.

I asked him, “*How was the Sandbar?*”

He offered me their drink menu. He said he roamed around Granville Island. Wes used to work on the Island. He told the fond memories brought him to tears.

I asked him how he made it back to my place at the end of his night?

“Well. I didn’t feel like making the five-kilometre hike. I chose another option –

one cutting the distance in half, water! So, I decided to commandeer a water vessel. I quietly and politely borrowed a kayak."

I placed my right hand over my mouth. I asked Wes about: quietly and politely. He said he didn't want to wake the owners who lived in the houseboat, so — I asked what he'd have done if they woke up. "Paddle faster," was his answer.

Wes wasn't a thief. He did have the courtesy to moor the boat to an Aqua Bus Stop with a note attached.

*Please return this kayak for me.
It belongs to the brown houseboat across the creek.*

*Thanks
Wes*

The inevitable was upon us. It was almost time for Wes to leave. Emotions began wafting over me.

I desperately tried to fight the tears. We ate our last, and what sadly might be, our last meal together at *The Elbow Room*.

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After we had eaten, we returned to my place for him to gather his luggage — I called him a taxi.

When it arrived, he paused briefly at the taxi's back door.

We embraced tightly, and Tears raced down my face.

I told him I loved him.

He said he loved me too.

He said he left something for me in the cutlery drawer. He said he never wanted to hear a word about it.

He got in the cab. It rounded the corner. Wes was gone, maybe forever?

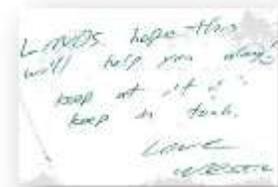
I hate goodbyes. I found cash inside the cutlery drawer: not

\$20 or \$40, something much more substantial.

A note was attached. →→→→

Someone finally came to one of my games, Wes was noticing.

Wes moves on — and on — back to his family! →→→→



I will pause to send out a message to all of the establishments we visited. Please send me GIFT CARDS for the free advertising to —

SELL YOUR STORY

Twelve kilometres + eight establishments + 7 x ___ Adult Beverages = More Please + One Request for a Manuscript + Countless Interesting Conversations with Interesting and Deliciously Hot Individuals + Smile + Laughter + Tears + One Emotional Toast = Best Of→→→

93. One day, I will find the key.
94. Maybe the worst teaser in book history.
95. This book morphed into Driving in Reverse - The Life I Almost Missed into "YOU" into My Life on the Slush Pile.
96. Could someone please Google the saying (vanish into thin air) and get back to me with its meaning and origin? Thank You.

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.