

# 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.**  
2017 BE BEP? BOUND HOLES?



# WALKING PNEUMONIA

VANCOUVER BRITISH COLUMBIA

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I was burnt out, fading fast, struggling to breathe.

I began coughing in January. At first, I thought nothing of it; by March, it became intense; I was forced to go to my Doctor.

*Cough. Cough. Cough. Health. Cough. Cough.*

I tried to make light of the situation by humorously coughing the words: *HEALTH - Cough. Cough. Cough. Health. Black Lung.* Breathe in slowly, breathe out –

*Cough. Cough. Cough. Black Plague. Cough. Cough.*

My Doctor asked how long I'd been coughing?

I lied, saying five weeks, I had been hacking up junk from my lungs for ten weeks.

390 He told me I have walking pneumonia. He said I needed a powerful antibiotic. He compared me to a sick tree with infected leaves. "*If we didn't treat the leaves, the whole tree would eventually fall and die.*"

The medicine didn't work.

My ears plugged, and I was close to deaf. Everybody began to sound like the parents from the *Charlie Brown and Snoopy* television show.

I returned to the Doctor. I coughed up the chorus of a top 40 song for him. He offered a new diagnosis.

My pneumonia cleared; unfortunately, it took my *Superpowers* with it. The Doctor told me I had caused permanent damage to my lungs.

I didn't like the sound of *permanent*.

The excellent Doctor continued by telling me my lungs were severely inflamed. I would need a super-strong steroid inhaler to attempt to clear heal them.

She advised me to ignore the suggested directions and double the dosage.

My ears began to clear excruciatingly; one week later, *Mr. & Mrs. Brown* left.

The clearing was only a temporary respite from a new storm.

I am venturing a conservative guess on the number of times I coughed over five months.

5 PER MINUTE X 60-MINUTES  
X 24 HOURS (ASSUMING I COUGHED DURING SLEEP)  
X 150 DAYS  
=  
APPROXIMATELY: 2 MILLION HACKS

Financial obligations placed me in a situation where pressing issues needed immediate attention, or they'd risk turning into even more pressing matters.

Automobile insurance and rent came due on the same day. My cash flow had dropped to zero; my landlord wasn't interested; he wanted his money.

*Kitty, I have bad news. Today we might lose our indoor home.*

Marginal-paying jobs suck. If you find yourself in the land of the *so-so*, no matter how hard you work, the hole will grow deeper; mine had reached my neck.

Without car insurance, my driving job (more on that later) was about to end.

I needed help.

I asked friends.

391 When behind the eight ball; and *demoralized*, asking opens the door to judgement from those you request.

*"Why don't you take a job delivering pizzas? You need the cash."*

I reflected that was not *fucking* helpful; did you hear the bit about no car —

*Cough. Cough. Cough. Here's your pizza. Cough. Cough.*

I said to my friend, *"I'm not a kid anymore; potential employers look at me differently. I said I'm not opposed to working marginal, I'm fucking driving construction workers to job sites already; but c'mon, for the most part, past a certain age —"*

My friend didn't care. He told me to lie. He lied to get his job, he said.

He wasn't joking. He was serious. *Fucking* liar —

*It's not a lie if you believe it yourself.*

- George Costanza

I stopped talking.

I was in my forties, my career pursuits were typically two-year stints; get bored, quit, be

fired, repeat. My *resume* reflected this pattern.

Wait for a second; recently, a career counsellor told me to, *Stay away from the Moors*. If you stray from the road, werewolves will devour you. So, it's best to stay the course.

I've found my passions: writing, photography, activism, journalism, art, comedy, interpretive dance, dreaming.

I perused my curriculum vitae, and any interviewer would undoubtedly see my diverse interests and talent.

*Where do I see myself in five years — in Management!*

It looked like bartending, and marginal would be on the docket until I opened the right doors. I was committed to pushing and pulling until they opened. So, I pressed forward, chasing my dreams with fierce determination.

*Now, where do I find a place that wants a bartender in his forties?*

## INTERVIEW 1

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I coughed three hundred times. The interviewer asked if I was okay; then handed me a *Halls* cough drop.

The inhaler wasn't working. My coughing was nearing a critical level. My chest felt like a bodybuilder was doing squats on it twenty-four hours a day. I *Googled* a diagnosis: I discovered; I was dying.

With the storm still raging, I longed to hear a loving voice. Instead of hearing love, I popped another *Halls*. Then, I called a past love in a non-lucid moment of weakness.

CLICK

That didn't go well. *Don't call again*; that wasn't nice. Nor was *I'm entertaining someone*.

*I'll try again tomorrow*. I thought.

I had to face the facts: I was going to die alone.

## THINKING INSIDE THE BOX: BREAKING THE FORMULA

If we don't follow the recipe as we trek through life, we sometimes find solace in solitude.

If we don't marry by twenty-five, have kids, get divorced by thirty-five, work an uninspiring career, marry again, *have a second litter*, **shampoo, rinse, repeat**.

We risk having to spend time alone.

As painful as that can be, I think it delivers us to a place where we learn from life, and most important: We find out how to like ourselves.

*GUILT* piped in for me to quit mulling and get over myself. *GUILT* told me I'm afraid to succeed.

I asked him for my sweatshirt back, demanding that he quit borrowing my stuff.

I promise I'll never phone a past love in a moment of weakness, ever again. I hope I'm not lying.

A work friend picked up the insurance tab for my car.

Now, if only some magic money would fall out of the sky, I would be able to pay my rent and avoid being evicted.

Luckily for me, Wayne & Fiona, who love me, provided me with the magic money I desperately needed.

It was time to go back to my Doctor. He confirmed my lung damage, prescribing a more intense prescription.

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The pharmacist filling my new script told me my medicine was *powerful, shit*.

His words, not mine.

He said it was *one-hundred times* stronger than the last medicine, and my lung disease would be annihilated swiftly, along with *anything else in the medicine's path*. *So don't stay on it for too long, he said*.

*100 times stronger, more than 100 times = 10,000 times stronger; I didn't want that to become my next reality. If it did, "side effects" would likely be replaced with "terminal effects."*

I asked what the side effects would be.

*"Man, there are way too many to list. If you stay on it for any time...anyway, this shit is powerful. Don't worry; you will only be on it for twenty days."*

I thought, great, technically, I'll no longer be sick, yet I may wish for death.

I Googled the side-effects:

Insomnia – Vomiting – Increased Appetite – Hallucinations – Weight Gain – Euphoria – Glowing – Hair loss if you have Hair – Hair Growth if you don't – Teenage Pregnancy – Premature Ejaculation – Developing a Sense of Humour – Menopause – Growth of a Second Talking Head.

THAT WAS PAGE 1  
THAT WAS PAGE 1

Fantastic, my symptoms were going to disappear, but only after I became a pregnant, bulimic teenage girl with an obesity problem. It was no wonder I would get fat because my second head had an eating problem. And, to top it off, he never shuts up.

## 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.

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