

THE ADVENTURES OF

Little Andy

A HILARIOUS MEMOIR OF MESSED UP LIFE MOMENTS

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WARNING: Not suitable for children!

PREFACE

Hi, I'm Little Andy. I consider myself a good person. I have a core group of friends who I love dearly and will do anything for. There are also some family members in that mix, but to be frank, not as many. I'm the kind of person who'll always message my friends and family on their birthdays, check in with them when they're struggling with life's challenges, or send them a little care package if they're unwell. I write to-do lists, have a well-kept home, cry when dogs are killed in films, regularly buy groceries for homeless people and even pick up discarded plastic bags so they don't end up in the ocean choking our beautiful sea life. Now, this isn't a book about how I think I'm God's gift. I'm far from that – so far that it would be a *very* long drive between my house and Saintsville.

After my forty-plus years on this planet, you'd think I'd be well-versed in the appropriateness of life's situations. However, I can honestly say I've unwittingly fucked up many times. I've dug myself so far into socially-awkward holes that no amount of '*Oh, I'm sorry, let me explain, I didn't mean...*' would bring me crawling

back out of those deep, dark and dirty pits. This book is about what I'd consider my top fuck-ups, where I've put myself, my long-suffering partner Matt, and sometimes other innocent victims in awkward social situations that we'd all rather forget. It's kind of like the finale of a talent show – only the best of the best will make it.

The first eighteen years of my life were pretty uneventful. I had a decent childhood growing up in the 1980s and 1990s with my eldest brother Mark and middle sister Kylie, me being the baby of the family. We had our ups and downs, like any family, but for the most part it seemed to run relatively smoothly. I had the things most middle-class Australian kids had during that era: a BMX bike, two cats, a rabbit, a dog, and a nice family home with a well-kept yard. My dad was a budding landscaper, so our front and back yards were always kept immaculate, like something you'd see in a gardening magazine. When I got my own dog as a thirteen-year-old, he was a beautiful and super-intelligent Blue Heeler-Kelpie cross that I named Dog. Genius, really, as everyone who met him knew his name instantly. People would always say, 'What a lovely and well-behaved Dog you have.' His ears would prick up and he'd shower them with sloppy kisses.

From an outsider's point of view, we were the lucky family in our street, as we had an unheated, semi-above-ground pool in our backyard. It was basically a fancy-looking water tank doused in chlorine, with a timber desk on either side, but Mum and Dad

sold it to us as a *pool*. The neighbourhood kids would all come over to our place to swim, and it became the destination house during summer. My mum and her bestie Angie, who lived a few doors down, would drink cask wine while supervising us, baking themselves in baby oil on the timber decks. When they'd finished a cask, they would throw the bladder to us, so we could use the metallic silver pillows as floaties. Us kids would try and drink the remnants of the wine. Sometimes, we were lucky enough to get a quarter of a cup between six of us. While I can appreciate a good bottle of wine now, back then it tasted like cat piss – well, if cat piss tastes like cheap lukewarm cask wine. By the end of each summer, I usually had a collection of about thirty of those pillows that I'd carefully store under the pool deck, so they could be re-used when the kids came knocking for the next pool party.

Although this may sound like irresponsible parenting, it was the 1980s and all very loose. No seat belts if you were in the back seat, no sunscreen when you were out in the blazing Australian heat. It was a joyous moment to peel sheets of sunburnt skin off my siblings' backs. The aim was to get the biggest piece of intact skin, like in *The Silence of the Lambs*.



First day of school with our family dog Kristy.
I was very sweet and innocent back then!



On my BMX bike, which I absolutely loved

I just seemed to glide through the years, relatively unscathed, but once I hit eighteen years old, it all took a turn... for the worst! It was like someone had side-swiped me on life's highway, pushing me into oncoming traffic, and I couldn't turn left or right to get out of the way.

I was in trouble. Big trouble.

In reality, there is no recall function, like you get when you send a wrong email. You have to own what you've done, or hope to God Kim Jong-un gets trigger happy with North Korea's nuclear missiles and starts World War Three at that precise moment, just to distract everyone from the shit show you've put yourself in. Then you can do a discreet exit stage-left to your nuclear bunker, resurfacing months later to a toxic and desolate landscape. But on the upside, by then everyone's forgotten about your foot-in-mouth moment.

I've been with Matt for over fifteen years, so he's been with me during my finest hours. He's my complete opposite, but I like to think I bring him out of his shell when it's needed, and he puts me back in my shell when I need it – which is quite frequently. He's solid in every sense of the word. A solid partner, solid support system, solid personality... a solid employee of a major bank (unlike me), a solid lover, and a solid best friend, with a solid muscular body. He's got gorgeous thick brown hair that curls when it gets a little long, the cutest brown eyes that stare deep into your soul, a big, beautiful smile, and a loud bellowing

laugh when he finds things genuinely funny. This usually happens when he watches a political satire show I don't understand. He's also got a slight sassy side, which not many people have seen. He comes out with his own toe-curling one-liners from time to time, and it's one of my favourite things about him. I really did kind of hit the partner jackpot when I met Matt. Without him, I wouldn't be alive today – I know that sounds dramatic, but there's good reason for it. More on that later.

Whenever I put myself (and my partner) in an awkward situation, I almost have an out-of-body experience. I can sometimes see the pile-up on approach, going down the wrong way of the highway, but my brain and my mouth don't seem to catch up to each other in time, and before I know it, *crash, bang*, I'm in the shit. Usually dragging an unwitting person or persons along for a ride they did *not* want to go on. One part of me is kind, considerate and thoughtful, while the other part is a fucking menace with zero self-awareness or filter. But in the nicest possible way, of course. I'm harmless, really. I honestly don't mean to say or do what I do. I'm a walking contradiction, I guess – or I have a form of undiagnosed Tourette's Syndrome. Maybe that's a bit over the top, and I'm just an unwittingly horrendous person. But have I learned from these fuck ups? Absolutely, isn't that what life's all about? See, I'm trying to drag myself out of this hole already!

The title of this book sums me up well. I'm small, skinny,

and pasty-white, to put it bluntly. But it's also in homage to how my former work buddy Kate Langbroek used to greet me at the radio station, when I did promotions for the Hughesy & Kate national drive show. She'd sing the relatively unknown Dolly Parton song *Me and Little Andy*, usually while approaching my desk, on the hunt for a sweet treat from my drawer. Google the lyrics – it's quite a troubling song.



Me with the beautiful Kate Langbroek, an icon of radio

This book is a collection of fifteen episodes spanning over twenty years of my life. I call these messed up life moments *episodes*, as some are particularly bad – maybe I have a mild case of PTSD from a few. Many have been shared throughout the years, over colleagues' desks at work, wine with friends, and family backyard barbeques, causing raucous fits of laughter and a few well-timed gasps. But some have never been told – yes, I'm going

to place the teaser right here – until now! Gripping, isn't it?

These episodes can be read in sequential order, or at random, kind of like a choose-your-own-adventure book for adults, but in this case a choose-your-own-Little-Andy-fuck-up. It's entirely up to you. I've changed some details – names, timelines and locations – so the people who don't want to be recognised stay that way. It's a bit fact-meets-fiction. Therefore, 89 per cent of this book is based on true events, mostly about me, innocent Little Andy. Now, I assume you know the saying that *'the apple doesn't fall far from the tree'*. If not, it's about how a person inevitably resembles their parents or family. But I'm going to take creative licence and include friends in that meaning. The majority of it's about me, and the shitshows I've created, directed and starred in. But there are a couple episodes that involve me only as a special guest star, like Heather Locklear on Melrose Place (if you're a Melrose Place fan, you'll understand that gag). But the main characters in those situations are other members of my family and circle of friends. The world has gone through, and continues to go through, some pretty horrendous events – maybe now we need a bit of Little Andy in our lives. Just a teaspoonful. I'm unwittingly offensive, politically incorrect and should probably be cancelled. But maybe Little Andy's the little distraction we're in such desperate need of.

So, make yourself comfy on the couch. Grab a cuppa, a packet of your favourite biscuits, a glass of wine, a joint... I don't mind.

Actually, this book is probably best served with wine – cask wine, perhaps. Just save the silver bladder for me and my inner child, please. I really just want you to be comfortable, so you can enjoy from a distance the moments when Little Andy fucked up in life, and thank your lucky stars I didn't unwittingly drag you into the social warzone I call my life!