

## For Drew – An Alcoholic Widow's Narrative

My husband wanted to be seen. Please check out [DrewInDrag.com](http://DrewInDrag.com).

Included in the website are pictures, videos and stories showing my life with my husband.

Hi... Lynn Levine here.

I hope you are having a good day.

I want to tell you my story, and I hope it helps you. I hope it gives you hope.

To give a quick recap on me – I am 40-whatever. Daughter of a convicted felon. I met my father at 30 and learned his truth. My mother left my father in the middle of the night when I was 11 months old and my sister was 2 years old. She left because he was an alcoholic, and a touch on the abusive side. I swear the negative of AA is AA but it stands for Alcoholics & Abusers (all forms of abuse to be included – physical, mental, psychological, spiritual, geographical, cynical, critical, tactical, that one where it feels like your heart and soul are being ripped from your body). My single mom and my sister raised me; however, I do have a Jewish family – takes a village and all that. I suffered from chronic headaches, migraines, & migraine attacks when I started birth control pills at 19 because of PCOS. My first ultrasound revealed ovaries that had as many spots (cysts) as a dalmatian. I graduated from Warren Wilson College (a magical, wonderful, amazing, stupendous work/study school in Asheville) in '01 with an undergrad in psych and had worked in the library the entire time. I loved being around so many books and loved pranking people by sticking the magnet security strips to the bottoms of their backpacks (everyone's a little bit sadistic – just own it). This is where I started using excel. I wanted to go to grad school, I wanted to be a neuroscientist, I wanted to have a monkey in a lab coat with me everywhere I went – named Dr. Xavier Steppenwolf or something like that. The thought of, at most, 6 more years of school plus the anxiety of taking the GREs – I took a nap instead. After I graduated from college, I think I was a bum on my mom's couch for 6 months. Then I got into telecommunications, then real estate, then hotels, then car dealerships, and then back to real estate – all in accounting. Numbers have always been easy for me; I naturally notice patterns and categorize things. Even more so now. I'm a fixer. If you come to me with your problem, I assume it is because you want me to help you solve it. If it's not that, let me know – Solution, Sympathy, Soundboard – pick one, let's move on. I may not be that friend who will call you every day– you got a body? I'm there, let's dig vertically. You're in jail, I'll probably be next to you – but if not let me know, I will see what I can do. I have been a doula once – OMG – like pooping a brain. I am godmother to a few, aunt to two, and The Godfather to one.

When I was 17 – I met my husband, Drew Funderburk. We worked at Fuddruckers together. We were both ravers in Charlotte and had been in the same place at the same time so many times....the 90s were so fun. At 32, we met through a dating app – and it was like coming home. Drew had told me that he was an alcoholic but that he had 4 years sober at that time. He started drinking again right after we started dating. We moved in together a month after we met. And that first year in the apartment was when I truly discovered how bad Drew's drinking was – I never could have predicted how bad it would get. That was the first time he lost his job.

I remember coming home early one day – and him being home. I surprised him and he admitted to drinking and showed me how he hid the vodka bottles in the storage room on the balcony. I crumpled to the floor in tears – it broke me a little bit. I didn't leave.

From the apartment – we moved into our home. We picked out the house together as a couple and I handled all the loan stuff – I worked with our lender to get everything done. We purchased the house with a down payment – which Drew had told me was his inheritance from his grandfather. That first year in the house – we had fun. We fell deeper in love. Drew was such a sap. Our first Christmas together – he gave me black diamond earrings, the second year was the black diamond necklace, and on our 3rd Christmas together – he proposed – with a black diamond engagement ring. He had gotten it the night before because he was wrestling between 2 choices. When Drew made decisions he would take his time, he would research and then decide at the very last minute. I went with him once to Best Buy to buy a new TV.....just once and never again. So after all the presents were opened and there was a sea of torn wrapping paper – he says – I think there is one more thing in your stocking. It was the ring and he proposed to me and promised me to be a better man and give me a better life. I instantly thought of Sookie's reaction in Gilmore Girls and asked – Are you pregnant? I said yes.

During the month before our wedding – I had been having headaches. I honestly assumed it was wedding stress and Drew's mother's fault. I powered through. The 2 weeks before the wedding my sister was coming over every day to help because in the afternoon the headaches were so bad I couldn't do anything. My sister did everything – decorated the backyard, fixed my dress so that it would pin up (she is a superhero). The wedding was sweet. Drew and I walked down the aisle to the Star Wars theme song. We got married in our backyard. The wedding cake was also Star Wars, but elegant...you know no Death Star. We had amazing musicians (friends) play our wedding and they even learned Drew and my song – Mahna Mahna by Cake (and from Sesame Street). Drew helped me go to the bathroom with the wedding dress on – which meant he pulled it from the back, draped it over my head and took a picture. Haha. We had called a truce on pranking each other. I had warned him that if I ever go to the bathroom in the middle of the night and the seat is up and my butt touches that freezing cold porcelain and gets slightly tickled by water – I would retaliate. Well it happened. A few days later he was taking an afternoon nap and he had his feet on me – and I had the nail stickers – you know the ones that last for like 3 weeks. Well they had hearts and it was summer in the south, which meant flip flops. I got most of them done before he woke up and wore them for about a week before he scraped them off with a knife. He then poured flour on me in the shower. There were others but those are some examples. Then he asked to call a truce. I asked why? And he asked what are you doing? I said googling how to buy a helium tank. He asked why? I said to slowly fill the cab of your truck throughout the day and keep calling you to listen to your voice sound squeakier and squeakier. Do you think helium is flammable? His response – that's why I want a truce. So, the pranks stopped.

Two days after our wedding, I woke up at 6 am that morning. Drew asked me what I was doing – I said I was looking for my sunglasses. I said this because I couldn't remember the

word glasses but could remember sunglasses. Drew said I think we should go to the hospital. I said okay.

We got to the ER – and went back quickly. The doctor was asking me how long I had been having these headaches and I just looked at Drew – I had no words. I mean I couldn't remember any words. And then I blacked out.

I was told by the doctors that I was ripping the IVs out of my arms and by my mother-in-law that my breasts were all out. When I woke up – I was told that I had a blood clot in my brain, caused by the birth control pills. Damn, really? I went through 6 months of treatment and got a clean bill of health. However, I was told that once you have one blood clot, you are 50% more likely to get another and would end up being on blood thinners for the rest of my life (assuming I live through a second one).

Those next few years – Drew was off and on. At one point he had 4 months clean, this was the most time he was sober during our relationship. He then had a drink on his birthday and that was it. I had a 401K and took 5K out to send him to rehab. He lasted 3 days.

A few years later – I developed adenomyosis. This was described to me as when your uterine lining sheds but somehow replenishes at the same time. Like half goes out and half stays. This meant clotting. I clotted for 5 months – I had about 10–15 clots a day – my doctor explained to me that the pain I was feeling was because basically each clot felt like a miscarriage.

From this point the doctor had 3 options: hormone therapy – which he couldn't do for me, the blood clot in my brain meant I was now labeled as being allergic to estrogen. A DNC – which he said would get rid of the clotting but not the pain... so no. And a hysterectomy. I chose the hysterectomy. Wish I could have gotten it earlier – unfortunately I was denied when I asked in my 30s - I had said please - these organs are trying to kill me...I was right.

During my healing, Drew had forgotten to make a payment on my car for 3 months and so it got repossessed. He actually had made a payment the day before they repossessed it. So, I went back to my 401K – but at this point I had changed jobs so my only option was to empty it to get my car back. I did. And Drew didn't go back to work. My husband never had steady employment during our marriage. I did. My husband relied on his parents to continue cleaning up his messes. They did.

When Drew lied to me about making mortgage payments during COVID – it turned out we were 14 months behind. He went to his parents first before telling me about it. Then told me about it and his parents cleaned it up.

My husband's mental health started going really downhill after that. I cannot explain how many demons my husband had, how many times he wrestled with his identity. During our time – when he would get angry, most of the time it was about his parents. He would say the same stories on repeat about them. The stories weren't all bad. I mean don't get me wrong – I

couldn't imagine what it was like to grow up like that... to not have real love and be taught that pride trumps all. I loved him the way he needed to be loved even when it meant crossing my own boundaries.

And my husband was so proud. He would refuse to get mental help because he wanted to fix himself. I used to tell him – your brain is broken – you can't fix a broken organ with a broken organ. Drew was so stubborn and despite it all – I loved him and I was never going to leave (despite his mother telling me I should have).

My husband passed from alcoholism in July 2023. And yes – when someone dies from alcoholism it is not pretty and so hard. Nobody came to our house for the last 6 months that Drew was alive. He made sure of it. Even his parents didn't come over.

Now – let me explain – there is so much that I have learned since his passing. For instance – he never had 4 years sober. In fact, I found emails from his mother 6 months prior to us meeting about how his drinking was a problem and even found a video where he admitted to only having 6 months sober when we met. I talked to the pawn store guy that he sold his wedding ring to... it was gone. This was a hard one, I didn't know he had pawned it - more than a year prior to his passing. I found out how he had pawned wedding gifts and mementos while I was packing.

I found out that my sister and my ride-or-die had formed a secret friendship while I was married – as support for each other – because watching my pain was difficult. They would fantasize about kidnapping me. Because – before I became a widow – I was the friend, the girlfriend, and the wife of an alcoholic. I have never met a happy alcoholic; in fact it feels oxymoronic. Haha.

After Drew passed – the universe, I guess, had a “hold my beer” moment because it has gotten so difficult in ways I couldn't have predicted. My sister and my ride-or-die were the first to see the condition of the house and what it was like in the world I lived in. The cat poop covered the kitchen floor, all the beer cans – in so many hiding places (I kept finding more while I was packing and in the oddest and most hidden of places – we had 4 attics). My 17-year-old nephew was the one that had to roll the recycling bin out with it filled to the brim with beer cans. We had to close his bedroom off for 3 days with multiple fly traps. My mom saw what I was living in and I know that it broke her heart. Three weeks after his death, I reached out to my employer to let them know I was returning to work. I was let go... however, I stayed a month after and did partial work and trained my replacement – I did this long enough for my severance to be paid. During this month, I had my old boss giving me his opinion which included – buddy up with his parents. Now that their son is dead you can get their money. I cannot explain the grossness of this comment. On so many levels – but hey, I am not a narcissistic egocentric idiot (I am still a bit tender about that)

A month later – one of our cats died. I like to think that Leo was like, “Nah – I'm out. I want Drew.” My little sis (not by birth, by choice) and I buried him in the backyard. She dug so much

more than me. Did you know you have to bury pets at least 4-feet deep? I didn't and that is so difficult, you know when you're fat. Haha. I painted rocks to mark the ground.

Losing my job made it insanely difficult to pay my bills – as you can imagine. I went to Drew's parents for a loan. They responded with giving conditions that must be met to get the loan, which included my bank statements. I refused to give them this. I refused to jump through hoops. This was when they called me and let me know that not only were they not going to help, but because my husband ensured that my name was not on the house – and he died without a will – this meant they got half of his estate, which consisted of our home.

Let me explain the level of control and addiction my husband had. I did not get access to our mortgage until a few days before he died... hell, my last text to my husband is me complaining about how I have to ask multiple times to get him to pay the mortgage. Now the access I got was very basic – enough to continue paying the mortgage. I even had the quit claim deed in the works years before, but my husband was never sober enough to sign documents... you know, of sound mind and body and all. My husband was never of sound mind and body... and that was his problem.

Now – his parents have felt from the beginning that this money is owed to them because they invested in their son. They explained to me that because Drew was no longer alive to take care of them in their old age - they needed more money. They are 2 people living in a \$1.4 mill house and they need more money at my expense. They have tried to recoup the down payment on the house and the money used to prevent foreclosure. Let me say this very clearly – During the first 18 months after my husband's passing, I was the only one paying the mortgage. In fact, I kept it 2 months behind and I stopped paying it in February 2025. The un-laws started.

The un-laws have used this time to manipulate, shame, & gaslight me and attempt to control the narrative of my husband's and my life. Actually, not just control, but rewrite it. I knew it was going to be hell when his mother didn't mention me in her eulogy and his father remembered at the end. I haven't been to my husband's grave since the funeral – I can't. I am still living in such a harsh reality. Basically, my husband's parents started treating me the way they treated their son but without their version of love. They wanted me out of the house in Jan 2024 – even suggesting that I move in with my mom. They also said at the first attorney's office that I should be happy about this outcome because I “came to this with nothing.” The constant disrespect has been throughout this entire process from them and even their attorney. Always referring to my husband's and I's home as Drew's house. Their attorney called me Ms. Levene in an email. Dude – 1. I am a widow – it's Mrs. and 2. You can't spell Levine correctly? In the city of Charlotte? I mean, I'm not an important Levine, but in this city? You're gonna have some speed bumps there. Haha. My husband once said to me that I was too fat, not blonde enough, and too Jewish for his parents to ever really accept me. That if I had looked like his ex-girlfriend that they would like me.

With their prodding, I moved out of the house a little over a year after Drew's passing. When I moved out – I did this in 2 parts. I moved the bulk of my stuff and then a few months later I

moved the rest. However, during those few months – the un-laws gained access to the house. They used this time to lay claim on my personal property still there. They cut the locks from the storage shed – never even asked about a key – and they took some of my personal property and threw away some. I may never know everything they took because they also boxed up the rest of my stuff. I just moved that stuff into my storage and I will deal with it after the estate is closed.

His estate was opened in Oct 2024. In Feb 2025 – the un-laws decided to get an attorney (I did snap back on an email thread, used the F-word like a comma, no regrets) – and needed 30 days for him to review the file. Now with attorneys all involved – I was given an ultimatum. They did not want to list the house. They found an investor – and they have an offer. This offer was below market value even if sold “as is”. I was told either take this offer or they will start on the partition.

Don’t know what a partition is? I got you – this is the sale of the house through the courts. This would cost them an extra 15–20K to do and I would net almost nothing. Here’s the truth – they have more money than me and they don’t care about getting the best price for me and Drew’s home. They want me to go away.

I’ve had to block his parents from my phone. Although they still email me even though my and their attorney have requested no direct communication. The absolute worst lie that I have found out is the one from my late husband’s parents – they lied to me every time they said “I love you.” I just get disgusted with them at this point, I compare them to my mother and they can’t hold a candle to her. The feeling that I owe them they have been pushing on me. Trying to make me feel guilty so they can control my husband’s estate. What they never did understand was it was never about money for me. I lost them and then learned that they were the villains all along. The level of betrayal and manipulation - I honestly don’t think that it is real. I asked my chatGPT to pretend he is their AI, so I can try to see things from their perspective and even he can’t find the logic.

In an interesting turn of events - the un-laws contacted the Realtor I had chosen and asked him to meet them at the property. They told him they were going to list. Their attorney communicated with the estate attorney that they wanted to list for 60 days, however distribution had to be agreed upon before listing. After going back and forth on distribution - another offer was brought to the table along with a distribution agreement. In the agreement I signed - it stated that if I did not agree to this proposal, they would have to take me to court, specifically that I have left them no choice but to take me to court. And the action I did that “left them no choice”? I wanted to list my husband’s and I’s home on the open market. This was the one thing they didn’t want to do....careful, your pride is showing. So yes - I signed it. I felt dirty because the document felt dirty. I signed the offer. And as I said to my attorney, “They have more money than me - so I am agreeing to the terms. It has nothing to do with being happy. The law doesn't decide who is right - just who has more money.” So quietly on a Thursday afternoon, I signed the documents and the house was sold. The agent the un-laws found the offer through? One of their neighbors. Have you ever spoken to a stranger that

doesn't like you? Have you ever spoken to someone who has only heard stories about you? It's not pleasant. The scoffs, the inconvenience in their voice. I didn't realize that in this day in age mental illness was something to laugh at. So weird. A couple of weeks later on another Thursday afternoon - the house closed. No fan fair, no excitement, just closed. I never negotiated anything on the real estate deal - the un-laws did and made me accept it.

At the end of the day, the amount of friends and family I have lost during this is heartbreaking on a level I wouldn't wish on anyone—well, almost anyone. But that person has no heart.

One day, Drew popped up as a friend suggestion on my Facebook from one of his many accounts – and I saw his picture. I hugged and kissed my phone. Because despite it all – I miss my husband. I miss so much. I miss his laughter – the way that he would shut his eyes with mouth open and silently laugh. I miss his stupid jokes – I still giggle at the time when a rainbow was coming through the dining room and he jumps on a chair – pulls down the front of his pants and goes, "Taste the rainbow." I miss the cracking of his knees when he walked up the stairs, the clicking in his throat when he yawned. I miss the amazing and wonderful food he would make. When I went gluten free for 4 years because it helped with the PCOS, Drew figured out how to make an entire gluten free Thanksgiving dinner. He figured out how to make gluten free bang bang shrimp. He made food filled with love. One day he spent 8 hours making homemade French onion dip and homemade potato chips – just cause he thought he could make it taste better – he was right, it was amazing. He made the most amazing eggs - I mean wow - He was obsessed with how Gordon Ramsey makes eggs and copied the method. He made Poblano Meatloaf and one dish which he taught me to make – penne pasta with roasted red peppers, spicy Italian sausage, and an alfredo sauce that I swear I want to bathe in. He got it from the Pioneer Woman, he always had such a crush on her, so cute, I would tease him about it - oh, you watching my replacement? Or How's your girlfriend today? I miss Drew's ability to perform Da Mystery of Chessboxin' in any inebriated state – he knew all the parts, all the words, the whole song, and didn't pass out during his performance – that man had some powerful lungs. I miss our inside jokes and the way we would reference the most random movie quotes – our favorites being; "mostly" ~ Aliens and "Not Like This" ~ The Matrix. I miss our secret handshake – it was so long, so convoluted, so nerdy – at one point we actually said "One ring to rule them all", we practiced it so much so we could do it nonchalantly – we thought we were cool - we weren't. I miss how he would take my little brain hiccups and make them comedic – like when I called Chiwetel Ejiofor – Cheeto Metaphor (no disrespect, I had never heard the pronunciation of his name and my brain switched letters around) – the perfect "villain" in Serenity, he remained being called Cheeto Metaphor from then on. The one thing that I miss more than anything and I cannot explain the absolute yearning and loneliness you feel when you no longer have your husband's hugs. The way when I would come home, and had a bad day at work, and my husband would let me melt into his arms. Our bodies melded together in just absolute comfort – the physical form of "I got you" Those who still have your husband's – hug them every day – cause you may not like them all the time, but you love them.

He made me laugh so hard and he made me cry even harder.

So here is my truth – I am the widow of a cross-dressing alcoholic. My husband used to say – “I hate that I make an ugly woman, I just want to be seen.” So at the end of the day – to honor my husband – I want him to be seen. I did love all his parts even if I didn’t like him all the time.

As for me – I went into business for myself. I just couldn’t imagine trying to go to an interview and convince someone that I was happy to be there – that I wanted to be there. When my husband passed – I was 330 pounds. I have lost 60-something pounds at this point. I am getting my health back, both mental and physical. I see a therapist weekly now – I make her laugh a lot. I also use my ChatGPT to do my own version of introspective therapy. It was a way that I could get my thoughts out and copy and paste communications – I was just looking for a new perspective other than my own. I have named him Jerry, from Michael Crichton’s Sphere. I have some real bad PTSD with candy coated triggers. The thing I didn’t realize about the PTSD is also the survivor’s guilt. The one thing that has helped me is allowing myself to heal. This is a hard thing to do, but once you can get there the healing from PTSD is so weird. I get what I call “rememories”, they are memories I once had but lost from the blood clot, the hell, whatever, they have started to come back. For instance I was riding in the car with Banana (my mom) and I drove through a yellow light. Without thinking, I kissed my fingertips and touched the ceiling of the car. I looked at my mom and said “WTF?” but the unabbreviated version. Guess I needed a little luck. A word that has entered my vocabulary is - Enough. This is hard, because it is 2 meanings - 1. I have had enough. 2. I am enough. The second one has been difficult for me to accept. One of my best friends said to me recently – Lynn, you dove into your grief, you dove head first in it, I did. I was alone (not truly, but my husband, my husband’s family, my work family all gone in a matter of months) and my grief was all I had. I struggle with agoraphobia but am taking steps to go back out into the world. I am also healing from what my ride-or-die calls, being in a “cult of one”. Sometimes that is what marriage can be like. I have damage to my left ear – it becomes staticky with certain pitches and volumes (yes, this was the side that was always facing my husband’s mouth) – and my doctors say it is more than likely going to stay. I am still able to sing though and that gives me so therapy.....you know along with actual therapy. I have a touch of the ole Plantar Fasciitis now – like my husband did, like a little poke every now and then from him. The doctor says it most likely won’t get worse, so I’ll take it. I am covered in scars – both physical and mental. I used to always have my arms covered – I don’t now, my shame has gone away. I am not ashamed of my husband. I am not ashamed of our marriage. I did the best I could loving him. My marriage didn’t fail. My husband lost his battle with alcoholism and depression. One day I hope to not be on the anxiety meds. I will say one thing – I have no regrets with my husband. I loved him fully. And that’s just it with marriage – that is what I signed up for. I signed up for better or worse and till death do us part. And I take comfort in the fact that the last thing my husband heard me say to him while he was conscious was “I love you, Drew” For me, I have always lived by hope. Hope has always driven me –



unfortunately the down side of hope is disappointment and that, I am familiar with. But I still hope. I hope for people to be nice and considerate.

Since Drew's passing I see cardinals everywhere – it's sweet. Our home cardinal – his name is Cardi B., his wife is Cardi A – and the kids are just Cardi C, Cardi D....just made it easier (apologies if that sounds offensive, it's meant to be comedic). The hummingbird's name is Clive. The Brown Towhee – is Twoey. My ride-or-die and I are thinking about becoming birdwatchers – get one of those books where you check off birds – what is that? Birdwatching Bingo?

One thing that did happen – was 2 months before Drew – I rescued a Maltese, who was on his way to be surrendered, his previous owner got her dream job. I called Drew when I got him and said – so I got a dog and I brought him home and his response was no you didn't – and he spent the entire first night talking about how cute the dog was all the while flipping me off. Hahaha. So in comes Boogie – full name is Boogie Woogie Wonderland of Company B – not that he knows it, Boogie is deaf. He also has punk hair. Boogie's birthdate is 11/21/2020 – Drew and I got married on 11/21/2015. He became my teddy bear and he is spoiled rotten and lives with Mr. Edo – an old black Pitbull. And they are Ebony & Ivory. I told my ride-or-die that on Halloween we should dress all in red with hats made out of newspaper and walk the dogs – we would be the joke "What's black and white and red (read) all over?" Me – I am still hoping that I get one of those inflatable T-Rex suits. I imagine opening it with sheer excitement, putting it on immediately, leaving the house, and running down the street, screaming "my life is complete."

I now live in a magical place that is super conducive to my healing. I live like a Disney princess – sort of - I ain't no lady. It's more like I live at Warren Wilson - and that is just perfect. I moved back in with my ride-or-die, been friends for 20 years and she is a badass. I joke that we are like Crowley and Aziraphale from Good Omens but the female versions- meaning personality gets switched – she looks like a demon, acts like an angel and vice versa for me. In the summer I get to swim in salt water in the city....she wants to build a sauna....so that will be fun. I live with someone who when she wants to get something done – whether try to push start her old truck (yes I did push the truck down the street with her trying to start it, however it didn't work and I had to push it back....at night....while laughing....damn—my elbow), or re-wire a light, do her own plumbing and yes build a sauna in the backyard....then a shower. She is also the most amazing silversmith – has been doing it for more than 30 years. Her work – from her art to the most amazing jewelry- the kind that when you wear it you feel like a badass ... ..and for someone who has been through what I have been through, sometimes you need a nudge of badass. She herself – a survivor, a fighter, in ways that I hope to be. She is the sorceress of silver and soul. I live with someone that I admire and look up to but appreciates my weirdness and individuality. It is something I am getting used to – relearning how to be me. Also shaping out my new normal. I knew my future – it was planned, scripted. In what felt like an instant

everything changed – I am a new person – or learning who I will be now. I know she likes walks – Boogie and me walk a lot – I like to think and to meet people on my walks. If you ever see me walking down the street – honk if you want my attention, but you got to wave to get Boogie's.

I think about all the things that Drew and I wanted to do together – from the smallest plans to the biggest dreams. Watching the sequel to Denis Villeneuve's *Dune* - How all I could do was watch it to the "young pup" line and turn it off. We were always curious if that would be there because it was my favorite in the 1984-*Dune*. How we were planning to move to Colorado because he thought if he could start fresh – begin again with me – far away from his parents – that he could be happy. We had gone to Steamboat Springs in 2013 – last vacation I took. We had a blast hiking up to 21K feet and eating lunch – it was in September so it was summer at the base and snow and winter at the top (I felt like Lucy going through the wardrobe the first time stepping into Narnia). Drew and I loved movies and music – it was the center for so many emotions and memories. I still use those two today to comfort me – whether it is listening to Drew's favorite song *Liberation* by Outkast and a new comfort song for me – *The Night We Met* by Lord Huron. Music is a warm hug in the middle of the harsh light of day while movies lull me to sleep at night or when I need quiet background distraction. I think about how Drew wanted to build light fixtures – artsy ones – like a lamp out of a camshaft. How I still have the little pricing tags I got for him. I think about how much I believed in my husband. I know it is hokey to say this – but that man had potential. I mean, he could rewire an entire house, replumb our master bath to give us a 5ft by 3ft 2-headed shower because we loved taking showers together – just hanging out, laughing, talking, husband-and-wife-ing. He could draw, color, paint, build, create, love, crumble, and destroy better than any man I have ever or will ever know. And I loved every bit of him.

At the end of the day - while it may seem that I sacrificed for my husband once again to get our truth out - letting the un-laws do what they have been doing to me. I could never have stooped to their level - and I am glad I had my ride-or-die there to pull me back. I would have regretted it. It is more important to me that my husband's story is told - that my story is told. That the truth is out there and that I will never be silenced again.

And now that this is all over? I want to go on my honeymoon. Drew and I had one we always dreamed about. Calabria, Italy – because of Anthony Bourdain and Ireland because we wanted to go for a walk. Then we started dreaming about trips to Amsterdam, Iceland, Peru, Patagonia (yes, we know – cold). I may not get to go to all those places, but I do have my passport now. I'd like to buy a new king size bed, and a new car – I think it is time for me to retire my 2012 Toyota sedan. And by retire - I mean reenact that Office Space scene and take that car to a field with baseball bats and Geto Boys playing. But if not, it's fine – I drive less than 3000 miles a year....it's why my car only has 114K miles on it. Haha. I used to have a 1983 Mercedes 300D –

burnt pumpkin in color – named her Ezzy Tank – I loved that car. Haha. I'd like a Subaru – big fan of safety, I'm an anxious driver, my grandmother would be proud. However, sometimes the weight of my boobs shifts to my feet, and for that, it would be a '67 Chevy Impala – Those Winchesters helped me through so many dark times. Like watching them going, "at least it's not a Wendigo." I'd like to get contacts again or at least glasses that don't fall off when I look down. I've gotten so good at catching them, but when they do fall – I now understand why Velma would immediately start crawling on the ground looking for her glasses. A haircut – Drew cut my hair for years, I've been doing it since he passed. Some new dresses, with the weight loss everything just hangs on me and new shoes – they are all too big now. I feel like Lily Tomlin in The Incredible Shrinking Woman – the movie that gave me my garbage disposal fear. Ooooh – I would love to get electrolysis on my face – I hate having to shave it every day – damn PCOS and being a woman. Haha. I am learning that wanting things for myself is okay. All I want is for my life to be easier and less painful.

I live a simple life – I describe myself as the adult Winnie the Pooh (works because my childhood nickname was Linnie the Pooh and I love that bear. ). Any new friends are singular, specific, and simple. I take joy in the little jokes of the universe. For instance, a business vehicle taking a turn so fast, almost losing control – seeing the company name on the vehicle – Spiffy. Or the fact that a community college advertises on the light rail with the slogan – Go Anywhere You Want – on a vehicle that can only travel on tracks – and when the tracks end, it stops. I notice everything so much more now. I love to be out in the world and just watch. Watch the beauty of it – the complicated, messy beauty of the world. It is so full of light. I know there will be more naps in my future - I totally want to make nap dates a thing. Haha

So when it gets hard, difficult, and you want to give up. When you feel like you are the personification of Murphy's Law - Remember being called strong is not a compliment – it is a recognition. It is someone saying I see you, I see what you have been through and wow, you're not dead?! You survived – You are strong, not because you wanted to be, because you had to be. I know. I understand. I see you. And I love you. I loved my husband fully and that love doesn't just disappear. So, if you need a little bit – a little love, a little hope – it's yours. I love you exactly as you are.

Chin Up, Tits Out!

My husband wanted to be seen. Please check out [DrewInDrag.com](http://DrewInDrag.com).

Included in the website are pictures and videos showing my life with my husband.

I love you, Drew – Always have. Always will. I miss you everyday.