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## Stinkbase

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**"Stinkbase"**  
**Custom**

**Informant:**

Lisa Thornton is my mother. She was born in Orem, Utah in 1963. She was one of 9 children. She attended schools in Orem and then played volleyball for Snow College. Later, she transferred to BYU to study English. She then studied law at BYU and moved to Arizona to work in a law firm. She met my father there and they moved back to Utah and she began working for a law firm in Salt Lake City. She had five children and raised them all in Salt Lake. When her youngest child was born with a serious disability, she chose to leave the law firm. She worked tirelessly to advocate for better care of children with disabilities in Utah and especially children with her daughter's specific syndrome. She has led multiple organizations, campaigns, and fundraisers in support of this cause. Now, she works mostly pro bono helping parents retain guardianship of their children with special needs. My mother is courageous, assertive, and very competitive. She enjoys reading, tennis, and warm weather.

**Context:**

During one of our regular calls, my mother told me about this game. When she begins to tell a story, she can talk for hours. I did not explicitly ask where my mom was during our phone call, but in this case, I could tell she was sitting at her computer in her office because it has an extremely loud keyboard. Her typing sounds as if an automatic weapon is firing off emails at a rapid speed. This specific call was at night, so the house was quiet on her end. One day when all of my cousins and I were at my grandmother's house, our parents taught us how to play "stinkbase." We loved it and played for many months before we moved on to something else. I never thought of playing with any of my friends, or anywhere besides my grandma's house. The game seemed like a strictly familial game. I later asked my grandma about it and she told me that she played in when she was a young girl.

**Text:**

So, stinkbase ranked higher than any other game as far as games we loved to play. I think we played that more than anything. And like when some of the cousins would do scout trip, like even lately, they teach people how to play this and it's still a favorite. Um, so grandma's lawn was by far the best place to play this because she had flat, straight lawn and then it went down a little hill to the south side. And on the north side it went into the driveway. So, on the crest of the hill, on the south side we would drag a

hose and make a line all across the lawn and make a little circle on the end, on the north end that was the prison or jail. And it was probably like eight feet across, like and eight feet circumference. And then the driveway was the line and there was a square of cement the made the jail on the other side. So, you would divide up into teams again, a lot of fighting about who would be on which team and so we would find a way to do that like "eenie meenie miny moe" or "one potato, two potato" or someone would just, like captains or just pick or some mean cousin would just divide it up and not give anyone a choice or whatever, we would just find some way to divide up into teams. And they were equal teams, if you were going to be fair you would divide it out based on skill level and age and whatever, so the teams were pretty fair. S then, you would all stand behind our line on your side either the cement line or the hose and some brave soul would step out into the middle. And if they could run all the way across to the other team's line without being touched, then they could grab somebody and take them back like that was in jail. Anyway, so, once he stepped out onto the grass, then someone on the other side stepped out onto the grass, the one who cam out later was fresher. And that's the word we used. The one who came out first couldn't touch the one who came out second. The fresher one could touch the less fresh one. So, if you're on the other side and I come out and start taunting you and then you come out and start coming towards you I could run back and go back into my home base and then I could come out again and I would be fresher, but you've got like ten or so on each side playing so you've got a lot of arguing about who is fresher going on. Part of the game was just trying to keep track of who was fresher so you wouldn't be touched by them. If someone came and touched you who was fresher than you, then you would have to go over to their side and be in the prison. Then, if one of your teammates ran across the whole field without being touched by someone fresher then he could bring you back, he could pick someone out of the jail, not you necessarily, but someone who was in the jail. They could bring them back. And once they got everyone into the jail, the circle, then they won. Um, but you could like reach your hands out of the jail and they could touch you. Or you had different rules like that. He

could put one foot in the jail, because he wants to get back and get back to his side before someone from the opposing team get him. So, you would run by the prison and touch someone and you would both run back. You were fair game to be touched until you got back to your home side. [pause] So when all the people on the opposing team were captured, then the game was over. So, it is just mayhem, just yelling and arguing and who is fresher, anyway lots of skinned knees. I think I got the worst skinned knees ever because I was racing in there and I ran too fast down her paved driveway, it was cement on top, but it was blacktop as it went down the little hill to the road. It just, full on, knees, arms, you know face first down that thing. That hurt. That road rash hurt forever. But I wasn't going to get caught. I would rather suffer than get caught. So, we had a whole bunch of maniacs like me who were playing the game who were super competitive. We were going to win at all costs. But oh, what a fun game.

**Texture:**

The memories of competition were strong with this explanation. I could easily imagine my mom and her relatives sacrificing skin from their knees and elbows to win this game. At some moments, her dialogue slowed as if she was lost in a memory, while at others she was speaking incomprehensively fast. She relayed the story from the perspective of someone who most often won the game. I wonder if the experience of the game was different for some of her less athletic cousins. Her memory of the game was solid and surprising. She remembered small details which might easily be forgotten. This game obviously had a positive impact on my mother and led to fond memories.

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