

Episode 67: ramifications.

[Hey guys. If you missed my other announcement, WOE.BEGONE is now on the Rusty Quill Network. It is run by podcasters for podcasters and gives me a lot of opportunities I wouldn't otherwise have. The show will still be run entirely by me. The only difference you will see is that there will be advertisements. As such, I'll try to make the intro spiel a bit shorter from here on out. Quick plugs: twitch.tv/woebegonepod. I've been streaming, it's been fun.

patreon.com/woe_begone. Early access to ad-free episode, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, q&as, director's commentary, and more. patreon.com/woe_begone. Special thanks to my 10 newest patrons: edgebirb, alison bedell, Timothy Snyder, Matt Parker, SoupHole, Kat Fangs, Julimaybe, Casey Couch, Seth M, and Leige of Fools for supporting the show. Enjoy.]

[Warning: This episode contains some descriptions of violence. Listener discretion is advised. It also contains some sudden noises, the timestamps for which will be in the description.]

The nervous energy in the Riga apartment was palpable. Michael, being the self-proclaimed protector of myself and Mike (he called protecting us "sheepdoggin'"), was trying to translate that nervous energy into excited energy with mixed results. Sidenote on calling someone else "Mike": I should not have so willingly taken up the mantle of "Mikey," as though that were the moniker that I deserved, because now I am forever fated to it. It's going to be on my tombstone. I have officially allowed things to go too far. Mike does not deserve our name any more than I do. Nevertheless, I am become Mikey.

Mike and I were awoken by the sound of loud metal music blaring through the apartment at 9am. Neither of us appreciated this, but I understood. Michael rarely slept. I never witnessed him sleeping-- he always "went to sleep" after us if he slept at all and he was always up by the time I woke up. He woke us up because he couldn't be alone with his thoughts. I didn't like being alone with my thoughts, either, and Michael had been through worse than I had. I get it. Nights where you wake yourself up scared or screaming. Nights where you have almost crossed the threshold into sleeping and then a stray memory rips you back into wakefulness for hours. A mode of insomnia that I wouldn't wish on my enemies.

Still, I was scared of Michael. Being around him felt like being around an untrained dog. He killed the Mikey that wrote the letters without even talking to us about it. I was almost as foreign to him as that Mikey was. Mike told me to lock my door in case Michael thought that killing me might be a solution to our problem, which I did. I didn't hear anything that night, save for one jiggle of the doorknob that might have been imagined, though I wonder if things would have been different had I not locked the door. Michael was still evaluating whether or not he could trust me, but he knew that he needed the extra set of hands on the mission. I was relatively safe.

Ham and eggs were on the table for breakfast. It was all pork all the time in that apartment. You could smell it when you walked in. Michael told me the story of the wild boar that the pork came from over breakfast, trying my best to be an attentive listener, despite my mind being elsewhere and his mind being elsewhere as well.

"Scared the hell out of Mike when he woke up and saw its head on the kitchen table," Michael said.

"It's just a pig, Mike," I said.

Michael laughed. "That's what I told 'im.' I sighed in relief, feeling his guard go down. "I made 'im bacon that mornin'," Michael said.

"If you had just killed the boar, how did you make him bacon?" I asked. "Don't you have to cure bacon for like a week?"

"Time travel, probably," Michael said. He was smiling.

The morning was filled with checking and rechecking weapons, pouring over maps, loud music, and caffeine. I stepped up and took the lead on explaining locations inside of O.V.E.R. My memory of the place was fresher than theirs. I got some affirmative "you got it, boss"-es out of Michael as I explained where we could load in, how long it would take to get our destinations, and where each of us should go.

When Michael wandered away for a moment, I had time to ask Mike a question.

"Is mission prep always like this?" I asked. "It seems a bit... frenetic?"

"This is a new tack for him to take," Mike explained. "I think it was because last time felt like a suicide mission. He thought we were going to die and I think he wonders if we could have prevented falling into the ocean if he had higher morale. That's what he's trying to prevent."

"Does he... like me? He's been enthusiastic this morning," I said.

"He's acting like it," Mike replied.

The sun set and I started to feel the reality of what we were doing in my gut. It felt like guilt, churning abdominal pain. In the meantime, I shaved my head because I remembered that my head had been shaved the night that we were returning to. Eventually, the overstimulation had crossed over into panic as I sat swimming in my thoughts of what we were about to do. Conversation had died down and I didn't like being left alone with what I was thinking. I pulled Mike aside a second time.

"We can't kill Innocent Hunter," I said.

"We have to. It's a connectivity strike. That means we take out all iterations," he explained.

"You learned that term yesterday," I said.

"It makes sense," Mike said.

"Does it have to be me that goes to his cabin?" I asked.

"The other 2 Hunters are much more dangerous," Mike explained. "You're the youngest. We need you to stay alive. The ramifications are more predictable that way."

"We all have to survive," I countered.

"Not technically. You're top priority in that category," Mike said.

"I'm fucking scared, Mike," I said.

"You're scared? Look at that guy," he gestured over to Michael who was on the other side of the apartment, bare-chested with jeans and cowboy boots on, loading bullets into a sidearm. "He's scared. He's scared of everything all the time. Michael never stops worrying about one thing or another. But he channels it into strength. He's just acting, man. You can do it, I can do it. And it gets a lot more done than acting scared. Do you think you can grit your teeth and power through this? For us? For Base? Edgar?"

I looked at Michael in the dim light of the apartment, at the scars running down his back from the bear attack, at the cauliflower ear from an event that I knew nothing about, at the face that was my face but a decade of hardship older. I didn't see fear in his expression. I only saw determination.

"Edgar and I aren't going to get out of bed for a week after this," I said.

"Hell yeah," Mike said. "We're getting him back. Tonight."

Our mission was to begin at 10pm relative to our time in Riga. This was so that we could coordinate with Matt, who would be given instructions on whether or not to correct us relative to his time in Vancouver. If he heard nothing from us by 2pm in his time or heard back from one of us that he was to correct the situation, he was to travel to the apartment using a

calculator and coordinates that we would send to him. I could tell that Mike was skeptical of this plan. He had been at Matt's house when they proposed it to him and I hadn't so I had no room to argue, but entrusting Matt seemed like the best course of action to me. There was no one else to help us. We would have the security program at O.V.E.R. if we needed to take action on the ground. Matt was the only one who could bail us out from a safe distance.

It was finally time. Michael had his shirt on. He resumed getting us riled up. I acted along this time.

Michael: You ready to rock 'n' roll, soldiers?

Mike: Born ready.

Mikey: Let's do this.

Mike: Everyone loaded up?

Michael, Mikey: Yep.

Mike: Everyone know where to go?

Michael, Mikey: Yep.

Mike: Then let's fucking do this!

[All 3 cheer.]

Mikey: For Base.

Michael: For Edgar.

Mike: For Charlie. For Chance and Shadow.

Mikey: For Princess Daffodil.

Mike: I'm ready. Let's do this.

Mikey: Yes, please. Before I think too hard about what we're doing.

Michael: No talk like that, soldier. We're kicking ass and taking names.

Mikey: Sir yes sir!

Mike: Let's go, Michael. While we're amped.

Michael: Alright. Initiating travel in 5... 4... 3... 2... 1...

[Time travel noises.]

[Intro theme plays.]

The sharp chill of the night air of Oldbrush Valley Energy and Resources felt nostalgic. It was something that I had come to know as "home," potentially ironic but not entirely uncalled for given what happened to me any time I had spent considerable time away. It was almost safe.

"[deep sniffing inhale] Take in that fresh air, boys," Michael said. "Don't this take you back?"

"You have quite literally taken us back," Mike said.

We had traveled into O.V.E.R. to the location behind the building with the mail slot that we had hidden behind the night that we saw Marissa shoot us, thinking that we were the bear. That location was my idea. It presented us with relative safety of cover of night, as well as a strategic advantage for all of us to be able to get to where we were going before our targets could beat us there.

"Earpieces everyone," Mike said. "And then we move out ASAP." We all pulled earpieces out of our respective bags.

"The line stays dead until mission goals are accomplished or someone needs to call a variable," Michael explained. "Mikey, call in when your job is done. We will call in at each stage of mission completion. Got it?"

"Got it," I said.

"Mikey," Mike said, quietly pulling me aside. "You got this. And if you don't, if you can just stall him... I'll swoop in and do the wetwork, okay? I'll do that for you."

"You got this!" he said, louder, so that Michael would hear, and clapped me on the back.

"Hell yeah I do," I replied. I was acting. We went our separate ways.

It was a brisk, lonely walk from the mail building to Innocent Hunter's cabin. I remembered that night clearly. It had been brimming with new possibilities. I had stolen the 116E door code from Edgar for the first time and was about to wander directly into the path of Punished Hunter and all that he had in store for me. It was the beginning of Edgar and the beginning of the events that would tear him away from me. I was minuscule in the context of my own story. There was a superstructure that hung ominously over me, challenging me to understand even a modicum of the challenges that it presented and I balked every single time. The mission was my chance to reach out and effect it, grabbing onto and pulling the tendril of some ancient god. I finally understood the Connective Strike. I knocked on the door of the cabin belonging to Hunter Jeremiah Hartley.

He answered the door in gray sweatpants and an Oldbrush Valley 24 Hour Diner tshirt, not so blearily as to have already been asleep, but certainly tending towards that direction.

"Hey, Mike," Hunter said. "Good to see ya, bud. Whatcha doing out here though?"

"I was just in the neighborhood," I said.

"Oh. What's the earpiece, then?" he asked.

"I'm waiting on a call from Marissa," I explained. "I'm having her look out for something for me."

"Oh, well you can come if you want," he said. The kindness on his face allowed me enough space to step through the threshold of his doorway and into his cabin. I walked in and took a seat in a chair in his living room.

"I just put on some sleepytime tea. You want some, bud?" Hunter asked.

"That'd be great," I said.

Oh god, what the fuck am I doing? Why didn't I kill him in his doorway? It worked for the cop. Now I'm going to be sitting here drinking sleepytime tea and trying to figure out how

best to do this. I'm going to chicken out. I'm going to chicken and best case scenario, Mike is gonna bail me out at the cost of his own safety. Worse case scenario, the Connectivity Strike fails and this was all for nothing and maybe now we're captured by the Hunters and it's over. It's all really over. All because I couldn't kill the guy that killed all my friends. I ruined everything. I ruined everything! I ruined—

"I got it down at the grocery about 10 miles that way," he said, interrupting my stream of thought. He thumbed behind him and to his left.

"Oh, I know that one. That's the one where they bring shelter dogs for adoption and set up out front on Sundays?" I asked.

"No, that's the one to the east. That way's southwest bud," Hunter laughed. "You're lucky you have a patrol. You'd get lost if they sat you down in the middle of the woods with your sense of direction."

"Definitely," I said.

"So, why are you joining me tonight? Get lost?" he asked.

"[laughs] Not that. [pause] I was thinking about you leaving us for Tier 2," I said.

"Oh," Hunter said. "Well, that's a bit of a ways off. I'll be in-between for a long time. I'll still get to see you."

"I know. I'm just scared that it will change things between us," I replied. *What are you doing Mikey? You need to kill him! You're on a schedule! We do not have time for an after school special!*

"I don't think so. I know Tier 2 is hardcore, but I'll still be me," Hunter said.

"No, you won't," I said. Hunter looked at me curiously. "I know about the other two."

"What? The other two? You mean Jeremiah and Jerry?" he asked.

"Wait, really?" I asked. "Jerry and Jeremiah? Which one is Jerry? Not the one with the scar, surely."

"How have you met Jerry and Jeremiah?" He remained seated opposite of me, but now he was leaning forward, weight on the balls of his feet. "Did you sneak into Tier 2? Mike, you shouldn't be telling me about stuff like this."

"You're going to kill everyone, Hunter. Everyone. And from the looks of it, they're going to kill you, too, for your trouble," I said. The tactical part of my brain had stopped hurling insults at my acting brain and had instead short-circuited.

"How do you know this?" I asked.

"Because you killed everyone but me," I said.

"You're not my Mike Walters," Hunter said. At this point, he *did* stand up

"I'm sorry that I pretended to be," I said. "It's only a matter of months before the Council of Hunters or whatever you call it kills the whole Base. Anne, Edgar, Marissa, Charlie, Chance, Shadow, the Hamsters... a place that doesn't even exist yet. They kill everyone and then they kill you."

Hunter stared directly through me for a moment. His jaw moved and his eyebrows furrowed in thought. He slid his foot in a circle along the floor of the cabin.

"I believe you," he said. "I'm not an idiot. I know what I'm involved in. What I end up getting involved in. They really kill all of our friends from O.V.E.R.?"

"Every last one. Well, of my friends. You probably have other friends," I said.

"Yeah, you didn't say anything about Jamie or Harlan or Eagle or Ravi..."

"I get it, you have friends. But let's not talk about Ravi, either," I said. "But that wasn't your fault."

Remorse was spreading across the face of Innocent Hunter Jeremiah Hartley. A remorse for something that he had never done, that he was experiencing because something had convinced him that I was telling the truth. I pitied him. He was facing an effect of a cause

far in the future. There was nothing that he could have done to prevent it, but it was him at the center of this mess all the same. Sound like anybody else you know? Maybe the guy with the perfect eyebrows?

[long sigh.] I'll talk to them," Hunter said. "I don't have much pull, being the youngest of them, but I'll talk to them. That's what you want, right? That's why you came here."

I put my elbows on the coffee table and buried my head in my hands. Talking to Innocent Hunter was like looking to a mirror. I should have shot him in the doorway.

"No, I'm not here to get you to talk to them. The problem has surpassed talking at this point," I said. He looked at me, wordlessly.

"I wanted you to know why I'm about to do what I'm about to do," I said. I produced my pistol. "Your gun is locked up because you're one of the only responsible people in this whole fucking valley," I said. "You'll never get to it. I'm sorry, Hunter. I'll try to correct this if there's any way for me to. I really will. You're Innocent. But I have to save Edgar. I'm sorry."

Hunter was flinching away from me, but not running, not scrambling to get his gun safe open. "Mike—" was all that he could manage to say.

I pointed the pistol at center mass and pulled the trigger twice. I hit him both times at close range. He slumped forward, partially onto the coffee table, spilling his sleepytime tea. I walked over to him and positioned him upright in his chair. He was gone by the time I was finished positioning him.

I walked into Hunter's bathroom, threw up for a few minutes, coffee and ham eww, and made my way back to the living room.

I pushed the button on the transmitter to talk. "Innocent is done," I said. I didn't have the fortitude to say any more.

"Good job, Mikey," Michael replied. "We just finished scaring off present Mikey."

"Proceeding into 116E now," Mike added. "Keep the line dead. We will contact you shortly about coordinates."

"10-4" I replied. The line went dead. I was alone in Hunter's cabin.

[long beat]

The landline phone rang. I unthinkingly walked over to the desk that the phone was on. There was a picture of Hunter and his mother in a frame on the desk. I picked up the phone but didn't speak.

"Hello? Hunter?" A voice said after some hesitation, expecting a voice on the other line. It was me. It was present timeline Mikey.

"Go to bed, Mikey," I said. "Stop trying to interfere. Stop asking questions. You'll thank us for this."

"A... another Mike?" Mikey asked. "What are you doing? Where is Hunter? Who was that cowboy?"

"Stop asking questions. Take care of Edgar," I said. I hung up the phone. I had always called Hunter from the landline because it was easier that way, which meant that Mike and Michael had successfully scared him off from entering 116E. They were free to finish the mission, undisturbed.

I returned to my seat opposite Hunter. He was fully dead, eyes open. I had seen Hunter dead a few times by then. Once when a dead Hunter was transported into my cabin, once when I killed Punished Hunter in retribution. A younger iteration of me had fled screaming, literally screaming, into the night, on a nonstop drive to Matt's house. I couldn't handle it. This time, I sat in silent resentment—of myself, of my situation, of how necessary it felt to do this. I felt distant, like I was in the cockpit of a mind that was ordering a body around. I took a sip of the sleepytime tea. I don't like tea. I shouldn't have accepted the tea. That's what I thought about. I looked at Hunter Jeremiah Hartley. Hunter Jeremiah Hartley remained

dead. I made what Michael had been calling a correction. I did what I had to do. I told myself what I needed to tell myself which is that I did what I had to do. I closed my eyes.

About 10 minutes passed before Mike and Michael broke the silence on the earpieces.

"Mystery and Punished are done. Michael's hit. Get in place and ready to report coordinates *immediately*," Mike said.

"Hit? Is he...?"

"In the stomach. I'm helping him to the security building," Mike replied.

"The abdomen," Michael corrected him. "Not the stomach. I probably got a couple hours before you gotta start making funeral arrangements."

"Save you strength," I urged him.

"We're at the security building. Dead air until then. Be ready to have coordinates in 1 minute," Mike said.

"Wait, are we correcting this? Is Michael going to be okay?" I asked.

"Dead air, remember?" Michael said.

Seconds passed. I kept standing up, then remembering that I would need to be in place for the transport, sitting back down, and then standing back up out of nervousness again. Repeat. Finally, the earpiece crackled back to life.

"Coordinates, soldier," Michael said.

I gave them the practiced coordinates for myself and for Hunter. Propping him up in the chair wasn't just a way for me to give him a bit of dignity as he died. It was also a location that I and Mike could cross-reference with the extremely detailed O.V.E.R. Tier map. Mike read the coordinates back. I confirmed.

I heard a keystroke over the comms. "Did... that work?" Mike asked.

I looked at the chair across from me. It and Hunter were both gone.

"He's gone," I said.

"Hunter's gone? That was supposed to be for you," Michael said.

"Don't tease him," Mike said. "Save your strength for holding your organs in."

"I don't appreciate that," I said. I was not interested in levity.

"Alright, you're next, Mikey. We'll clean up here and we'll meet you there. Standby for transport," Mike said.

I braced myself for the familiar discomfort of time travel. I could already feel the rumblings of things colliding with my perceived reality. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath and held it in. A few seconds later, I was gone.

[Long pause.]

It didn't hurt. I guess I didn't have a reason to think that reconciling timelines with one another would hurt except for some hokey movies where it hurts but they never explain why. It didn't hurt when I completed the first WOE.BEGONE challenge and my whole life after Matt died was rewritten. I slept through the process that time and woke up remembering both iterations. I did feel something, though. It felt halfway between my third eye opening, a whole extra universe inserted into me, and nothing at all. I couldn't clearly parse the changes. The ones that happened in the distant past were as fuzzy as if they had always been there, lingering in the back of my memory. Being Mikey who was scared off by Mike and the mysterious cowboy happened a long time ago. The story of Mike Walters was rewritten and I could see both iterations at once. My life was a magic eye puzzle.

Here's what happened, from the perspective of the Mikey that I told to go to bed and take care of Edgar while we did the dirty work, the chain of events that became true when we were done ensuring them. I was going to use the door code and sneak into Tier 2 for the first time when Mike and Michael stopped me. I didn't recognize that Michael was me. They grabbed me by the hypothetical scruff and tossed me out of 116E before I could get myself in trouble, then they went inside. I went back to my cabin. It was like nothing had happened to me that night. I never saw 3 Hunters. I called Innocent Hunter but it was me that picked up the phone.

The next morning the Hunters were all gone, before I had a chance to know how many there truly were. I searched for Innocent Hunter for awhile. Maybe he had disappeared from O.V.E.R. or was on the run for some reason. I missed my friend, but I didn't have any clue where to search or any idea what was going on. I didn't know why he was gone. I eventually mourned as if he were dead, since he probably was. The lack of closure was painful.

Other people filled the holes that were left behind by Hunter Jeremiah Hartley. Time swallowed people up on its own. Events played themselves out in ways that rhymed with the previous reality. Marissa was the one who was blackmailed into blowing up 357A while Edgar and I were at Glacier National Park. Unlike Hunter, who made it out with a scar on his face, the blast killed Marissa. Another mysterious disappearance, but not one that was hard to figure out.

The death of yet another friend led me to flee to Matt's house, where I was scooped up by the Flinchites. There must have been some considerable effort on their end to ensure that I was always going to end up there, which makes me wonder if they understand something that I don't. I made it back to O.V.E.R. and Anne helped Edgar and I with the big skirmish inside of Tier 2. Hunter wasn't there to help us. Marissa wasn't there to barge in with her golf cart. Anne was killed by the Flinchites with Hunter not being there to protect her. I killed one of the Flinchites and Edgar killed Ty Betteridge. We got the Calculators. The mission was bloody. Edgar got hurt. He killed one of his coworkers. But we made it out alive. Edgar wasn't suddenly transported anywhere. There was no Lost Year. It was a disgusting perversion of what Michael had wanted, a finger curling on the monkey's paw. To make sure that Edgar didn't have to go through that. It came at the cost of Edgar having a limp that didn't fully go away (at least not into the present), Anne dying, and Edgar having the same sort of nightmares that I had, debating with himself over whether preservation was worth bloodshed.

Base was nothing. How could it be? It was me and Edgar, injured and demoralized, not even having the full scope of what we had lost. We had the Calculators, that was it. Mike and Michael took it upon themselves to train us when they weren't correcting us. They told us about corrections, connectivity, consolidation, but it always felt antagonistic, like we were being punished for something but we didn't know what we did. I treated Michael as I had when I was living in his apartment, like an aggressive untrained dog. I avoided him as much as I could. This antagonism peaked with a fight between Michael and Edgar that almost came to blows. It was about Rugby. Edgar and I didn't know what that meant.

The hamsters were probably still alive. Anne had never bought them from the pet store. They were safe. Charlie, Chance, and Shadow, too. They stayed distant. Nobody came for them.

This was the violent recontextualization of my life that whizzed through my head as I lay on the floor of Mike and Michael's apartment in Riga, Latvia, trying to process what had just happened to us in addition to the fundamental changes to reality. I had been consolidated, if this even is the same thing as consolidation, with a Mikey that knew nothing. That treaded water without Base, trying to eke out an existence. I contained him.

Is this how Michael felt every single time?

[long instrumental pause]

As the apartment stopped spinning, I was abruptly roused from my stupor by the weight of two Mike Walters suddenly landing on top of me, first Michael then Mike.

"You put the same coordinates in for everyone, dumbass. You're lucky you didn't half-consolidate us and kill both of you," Michael said.

"Sorry, but we're here now," Mike said.

"Michael—" I started.

Mike: Well, he's talking. Guess the time travel woke him up a little. It got scary in the security building.

Michael: You didn't think I'd miss the chance to say goodbye, did ya?

Mike: You're not dying.

Mikey: Call 911.

Mike: It's 112 actually.

Mikey: Call the number and I'll send the message to Matt to correct the mission.

Michael: The fuck you are, Mikey boy.

Mikey: You're dying and we only saved Edgar.

Michael: That's fine with me.

Mike: Absolutely not.

Michael: Heh. If I hadn't pushed you aside, Hunter would have popped you right in the stomach. Then we'd have problems.

Mike: What a fucking hero. Hello? Yes, hi. [increasingly distant] I need an ambulance. Someone here had been shot in the stomach...

Michael: Abdomen!

Mike: Right, the address for the apartment is [faded out]

Michael: We saved Edgar.

Mikey: What about Marissa? Anne? Hunter? You?

Michael: Don't matter.

Mikey: Michael! Michael! [finger snaps] Don't you go anywhere.

Michael: [whispered] Edgar... [retch]

Mikey: That's it. I'm calling Matt. We're correcting this. You're not gonna die on the floor of the apartment. [calling]

Michael: You wouldn't do that to me.

Mikey: I absolutely would. I'm not waiting another hour for him to hit the decision point. I'm calling him now. [Phone call noises.] Hey, Matt. Mission failed. Pretty badly. [Thudding, slumping sounds.] Yeah, you wanna stop me? Then you've gotta muster enough strength to stand up and come over here. Didn't think so. It's a bloodbath here, Matt. We need the correction ASAP. No, it's alright. Just use the coordinates that we gave you and everything will be fine. You've got this. [Pause.] Matt, I'm watching myself die. You have to do this. ...You're going to do this, right? I don't care how fucking scared you are. I'm watching myself die in front of my eyes. Just do what we told you to do. ...Matt? He hung up.

Michael: Way to go, Matt. Save Edgar. Mikey, you gotta take care of him. You gotta take care of him. You gotta take care of him. Edgar...

Mike: [returning] Help is on the way. Are we doing the correction?

Mikey: Seems like we don't have the option. At least right now.

Mike: It's not nothing. We'll deal.

Mikey: This isn't what I wanted.

Mike: Corrections aren't about giving Mikey what he wants.

Mikey: I can't handle this on top of what really... what didn't... what I knew.

Mike: You can and you will, pilgrim.

Michael: [proud grunt.]

Mike: Yeah, you like that? Stay alive and there's more where that came from... partner.

Mikey: So what do we do now?

Mike: Well, right now, we keep the cowboy alive. After that...

Mike and Mikey: Edgar.

[END THEME PLAYS]