

## Episode 51: Corrections, Corrections

[INTRO THEME PLAYS]

Mike: [voice calling from a distance] Hello? Hello? Mikey? Mikey? [voice no longer distant] Mikey are you in here? Ugh, well you got your guy at least [disgusted sound]. That's a lot of blood. Hey, there you are! Hey, hey! Hey, hey, Mikey, Mikey, hey [smacks Mikey in the face]. Wake up, hey-- you okay?

Mikey: [groans]

Mike: Ugh, it smells like shit.

Michael: *Labdien*, partner.

Mike: Ah! Michael! Jesus. You could have knocked or something or cleared your throat or taken louder steps even! I almost drew my weapon on you why the fuck are you here?

Michael: Wanted my hat back. So, uh what's the prognosis on this one, he dead?

Mike: No, not dead. I mean, I just got gurgle out of him and his eyes are closed which they wouldn't be if he was dead. Looks like he's lost... some blood by the looks of it? It's really hard to tell, I mean, there's blood everywhere is that his? But he definitely got his head caved in. Did this happen to you when it was your turn?

Michael: Nope, but uh, I won the lottery when I did it, so my experience was a little bit different. Not more pleasant, mind you, but different. I think you're the one who screwed the pooch here, Mike, when you came to correct him. I mean, the correction is the only difference, so uh, how'd that go?

Mike: Well, he has clearly been taking inspiration from what he saw you do in Riga because when I got you him he almost fucking killed me on the spot.

Michael: Atta boy, Mikey, good times.

Mike: [sarcastic] Oh, yes, I love to reminisce on those good times. Like when we had to hide those two bodies and Mikey just disappeared so he couldn't help us, and when we reposted the incident to the Base and they told us that they couldn't tell us who it was or who they worked for, man those were good times! Anyway, long story short on this one, I told Mike what he needed to know which was, "don't buy the lottery ticket" and that was *all*. I gave him the correction and then I was gone. Standard operating procedure. Compliant with his Base and ours and his time and ours. It wasn't until I left that I got instructions to come here, and they didn't tell me you'd be here.

Michael: Well, I'm here partner, you're stuck with me. But uh, you left out the part of your story where you tell me where you fucked up.

Mike: I'm telling you that I didn't fuck anything up. I followed the instructions exactly, and almost got killed for it by the way.

Michael: Oh, I'm getting it now, you don't know where you fucked up.

Mike: If it was easy to tell every time where I fucked up then there wouldn't be a need for corrections now would there?

Michael: Well, regardless of what you did now I'm here with instructions of my own.

Mike: And those instructions are what exactly?

Michael: Get my hat back, first off.

Mike: So, just more pretend cowboy shit? I doubt that was in your instructions.

Michael: Well, I doubt that stealing my hat was in yours. [Eastern European accent] Or I could do Eastern European accent maybe? Since we are in America, you like? I'm going as *lacis* for *kekitas*.

Mike: Cowboy it is then.

Michael: [resuming cowboy accent] Damn straight, partner. So uh, I assume your instructions didn't say to kill him or to let him die?

Mike: No, but I can't imagine that it matters too much. I don't think he's connected to us. Did yours?

Michael: Nah, so I guess we're patching him up and shipping him home then.

Mike: And we're patching him up how exactly?

Michael: I am so glad that you asked. [rustling sounds] First aid kit.

Mike: Michael, do you know how to administer first aid?

Michael: Mm-hmm, you know Anne will teach you if you ask. [rustling sounds] Can you, uh get him on the floor?

Mike: I thought you weren't supposed to move someone with a concussion?

Michael: Well, you're not supposed to leave 'em sitting upright in a chair either, so go find a pillow and get him on the floor.

Mike: Okay.

Michael: Alright then. Okay, Mikey in the meantime I'm gonna get you all patched up, okay?

Mikey: [groans]

Michael: The man speaks! Well, sorta. Alright Mikey I'm gonna cut through your pants so we can get to that big gash on your leg, okay? Alright then [sound of scissors]. It's a little... these first aid scissors leave *something* to be desired. Oh, it's not as bad as I thought it'd be—you're gonna be fine, Mikey. And... there we go! Alright, I'm gonna put some rubbing alcohol on it now. It's gonna sting, okay?

Mikey: [groans] Fuck.

Michael: Oh, we're saying real words now. We're gonna have you back to normal in no time, buddy.

Mike: Alright, I'm back. I got the pillow.

Michael: Alright, well let's lay him down and get the bandages on. Alright Mikey we're gonna move you to the floor, okay? And we're gonna be real careful, but I want you to try and keep your neck from moving, okay? If you understood the instructions nod your head yes. [Pause] That was a joke. Mike, if you'll take him under the arms and I'll take him under the knees we'll get him to that ground, okay?

Mike: Got it.

Michael: Okay, you ready?

Mike: Ready.

Michael: Okay, we're gonna lower him straight down to the ground, okay? 1, 2, 3. And there we go. Alright, well now I'm gonna start bandaging up his leg and then we'll get to his ear.

Mike: Not to criticize, but isn't the concussion way more important?

Michael: Well, yea, but there isn't much I can do about it.

Mike: Well, shouldn't we ship him back to Base then? I mean, he came here to get this Calculator we can just send him. God, remember these things? It's like finding a fucking Giga Pet.

Michael: I do remember these things and that's exactly why we're not sending him with one. With our luck he'd land on his neck when he got there.

Mike: Then let's take him to a hospital then. There's gotta be one nearby.

Michael: You are full of bad ideas today, Mike. I mean, that's why I'm here to correct you.

Mike: Okay, then Michael, just bestow your sage cowboy wisdom and tell me what to do already. Are we just gonna fucking sit here?

Michael: Mm-hmm.

Mike: And how long exactly are you proposing that we do that?

Michael: As long as it takes.

Mike: Well, I hate to point out the obvious, but Mikey he killed this guy in his own house, uh I don't think we're safe staying here.

Michael: Well, genius we don't have a choice, and it's an order, so.

Mike: Okay then, we're just gonna sit here and wait for Mikey to get to his feet again and then we're gone, right?

Michael: Well, no we're not just gonna sit here. We're gonna bury the body.

Mike: [incredulous] In the mud?

Michael: Well, there's dirt under the mud, Mike. You do know that, right?

Mike: Tell me that you're not fucking serious.

Michael: Oh, I am always serious, partner.

Mike: Clearly. Is there anything we can do beside bandage him?

Michael: Well, I can think of one thing.

Mike: And what's that supposed to mean?

Michael: Well, I mean, buddy you said it yourself. We got the Calculator; we can consolidate him and you.

Mike: Fuck that and fuck you for even *suggesting* it.

Michael: Woah, partner! I did not mean anything by it, calm down. I mean we could duplicate if that would make you feel better.

Mike: It would not, thank you very much, and would probably violate some sort of rules about propagating.

Michael: Well, don't say I didn't offer. I mean, you're the one who wants to get out of here.

Mike: Well, I do want to get out of here, but I don't want to propagate information back that far and I *really* don't want an improper consolidation.

Michael: Oh, so you're saying you don't wanna end up like Matt?

Mike: No, not if I can help it.

Michael: Well, then maybe you can cease your complainin' and we can go bury this body, and we're gonna stay with Mikey as long as we need to. How does that sound?

Mike: [sighs] Slightly better than the alternative.

Michael: You hear that Mikey boy? You're slightly better than the alternative how does that feel?

Mikey: [Groans]

Michael: Glad to hear it partner we're gonna go take care of this mess and then we'll be right back, okay?

[Pause]

Mike: Ugh, it's so fucking gross out here, Michael, do we have to do this? My shoes are sticking in the mud.

Michael: Shoulda worn boots.

Mike: I don't like wearing boots.

Michael: Well, you probably prefer it to being stuck in the mud.

Mike: [sighs] I guess so. What do you have in that pack that will help us bury the body?

Michael: Two of these. [Metal clanking] Fold up shovels, uh they're a little bit tiny but we're only digging a shallow grave so it's fine.

Mike: This is even more miserable than I remember, you know that?

Michael: And what do you remember exactly?

Mike: [scoffs] That Edgar completely fucked us. He lied to us and put us in danger all for that stupid piece of junk that we didn't even know how to use. We made fun of the Arbiters for being script kitties, but we were just changings ones and zeros too. I guess he thought he would punish us for losing the Calculator in the first place. That's the biggest argument we've ever had. I mean, the biggest argument where I've been on the right side of things. It still makes me mad thinking about it. He could have easily gotten me killed, hell I could have ended up like did Mikey back there. *He did.* And I guess *that* Edgar will have to deal with it at least. And, you know, maybe it serves him right for trying to pull one over on us. I warned Mikey that he was on an assassination mission when I saw him. Before Edgar could. I didn't even want to prepare him I just wanted to get back at Edgar a little bit. Did you two talk about that before you got married? I mean like explicitly, right now we don't talk about it at all, but I don't know that I could do it if we never talk about it.

Michael: Mike Walters I cannot *fuckin'* believe you.

Mike: Huh? Wh—What did I say?

Michael: You warned Mikey about the assassination? What the fuck were you thinking?

Mike: I was thinking that I was going to prepare him because Edgar wasn't going to.

Michael: [through gritted teeth] Well, you thought wrong you stupid motherfucker.

Mike: What? What are you trying to insinuate right now? What did I do wrong?

Michael: You won't consolidate with him because you're worried about propagation, and you're out here propagating whatever the fuck you want. I can't believe you—I can't believe you're *me*. This is so goddamn stupid I'm wasting my whole fuckin' day—at least one day—out here and it's all your fuckin' fault.

Mike: So, you're saying the whole reason this whole thing went bad is because I told him he was on an assassination mission? He was gonna learn in five minutes anyway.

Michael: That's an important five fuckin' minutes, Mike. Look, I know that you haven't experienced everything that I have, but you have to know how this works at this

point, Mike. I sure as shit know that I didn't do anything that stupid in your time. *Fuck*, and now I'm out here burying a corpse just because you couldn't keep your fuckin' mouth shut. *Typical*.

Mike: Okay, well, what was I supposed to do? Let him just get blind sided--

Michael: You were supposed to tell him not to buy the fuckin' lottery ticket and then you were supposed to shut the fuck up.

Mike: Okay, okay I fucked up. I'm sorry.

Michael: What all did you tell him, Mike?

Mike: [sighs] Okay, I told him, let's see... That he has many years ahead of him, which is true. Uh, I told him that the assassination was going to go easily, which was a lie, but I didn't know it was gonna turn out like this, and uh, I don't know. I told him that you were fucking with him with your accent.

Michael: You told him *what*?

Mike: Why are you so fucking attached to that accent, man you sound fucking stupid.

Michael: I don't fucking care what you think about my accent. You tellin' Mikey about it directly contradicts at least one time in my life that I know of. You fucked everything up by talking this much. I can't believe you.

Mike: Okay, okay! I'm sorry, I'm sorry. You know what, I'll dig the grave and you won't have to do anything and then that's my apology to you. How does that sound?

Michael: No deal, Mike. The longer it takes, the longer I'm out here in the rain and mud, and the longer Mikey remains unsupervised.

Mike: Okay man, then just tell me what to do.

Michael: Be smarter, shut up more, and leave me alone.

Mike: Fine. Do you wanna tell me what the scenario was like when it was your turn?

Michael: [Sighs] I was the first one. There weren't enough of us in time for anyone to know any better yet. Edgar sent me to Rugby, and I bought the lottery ticket and of course we won. Edgar sent me out here to get the Calculator back, and I got that job done too, but he stabbed me in the side. And then when I got back to Base all hell broke loose. First I realized that the Calculator was the same Calculator—the one that we had lost when we were watching that guy's house. Then I probably got in the same

fight with Edgar that you did. Edgar's smarter than us I'll give him that, but sometimes he treats us like we're always wrong. I think it shook him up a little, seein' me get hurt on a mission that he set up in order to punish me. Now, he says that that's not why he did it, but I don't see any other explanation. And after that the lottery fiasco happened. Did they teach you about that?

Mike: Uh, sort of. I mean, they taught me that it was something really awful that happened and that I should be glad that I wasn't there.

Michael: That sounds about right. It was a good idea—the lottery. I don't blame Edgar, that would have been enough money for us to do whatever we wanted. We just weren't anonymous enough to fully protect ourselves, not with that dead body rotting in a cabin not far from where we bought the ticket. Anyway, all the rest of that happened, you know, and I was unlucky enough to be there and half of everyone was dead because we didn't cover our asses. All for some money and a damn Calculator. That's when we got serious about corrections. We ended up having just barely enough infrastructure to salvage the operation. We knew that Marissa and Anne and Shadow deserved better than to just be wiped off the map out of nowhere for something they didn't even know was happening. It changed everything, and yeah it made things tense with Edgar for a little while, but I settled down eventually. And to answer your question, no, we didn't talk about it before we got married. I just... let it go. It was the right thing to do and I'm happier for it. You don't have to hold onto it, Mike. If you stop clenchin' your fist you'll be surprised how fast it falls through your fingers.

Mike: [sighs] Well, Michael, I'm sorry that you went through all of that and I'm thankful you told me, and I'm glad that none of the rest of us are going to have to go through that because of you, [sighs] and you're right about Edgar. I do need to grow up and just let it go. I mean, I've done so much worse to him. Our relationship started when I accidentally almost drowned him to death. This isn't any worse than the worst things that I've done to him. I guess that it's always stuck with me because I trusted him not to be like me. So, you didn't talk to him about the assassination before you got married. Did you tell him about the Pacific Ocean?

Michael: Some things are better left unknown. That's the worst thing we've ever done, Mike. Either that or killin' Hunter. Or getting involved in WOE.BEGONE in the first place, but it's a superlative among superlatives. I think back through the fog of time about that night and just *ache*. It is impossible not to ache. But in just as much of a frenzy as the frenzy that we were in when we did it, we were able to undo it. Nothing ever happened to Edgar relative to Edgar. The transgression never happened. We kept him safe. [becoming choked up] Him knowing about it wouldn't change anything—not for the better. And I am likely saying all this to justify that I am a coward, and I *am* one, but no, I am going to die without telling Edgar what happened that night. I'm going to die many times without telling him, but one day I will finally die and there will be no Michael left to tell him. And I am going to make peace with that. If Edgar has a similar secret—something that he did to me—I hope he keeps it hidden too.

Mike: That's a very sweet sentiment, Michael. [sighs] I guess that one day I'll have the same one as you. Which means that I'm never going to tell him. Huh, that's weird to think about. It's also a little bit weird to think about you crying and keeping your accent up.

Michael: [scoffs] You didn't have to go there, man. Honestly, at this point sometimes it's harder to drop the accent than to keep it up. Look man, I'm just trying to ignore criticism and do what I want to for once in my life, you'll get there eventually. And when you're me you'll look back and think—*holy fuck we have company!*

Mike: I'll think what?

Michael: No, look at the driveway. Someone's here.

Mike: You...are... right about that. Did that happen when it was your time?

Michael: No, I didn't stick around when it was my time. I don't know who this is.

Mike: Oh... I think I know who this is.

Michael: Wait a second. What is going on here? Do you think he's here for some sorta grand romantic gesture? Like he knows how big the fight's gonna be?

Mike: I think it's probably more likely that he heard the connection get cut and now he's here to save the day and scoop up his boy. Has he ever done that for you in the field?

Michael: Can't say that he has. Do you think that we should go say hi?

Mike: Huh, well, I say that we keep digging the grave and then maybe we'll go say hi if they're still here when we're done. I don't think that Mikey's put together yet that Edgar sent him out here to punish him, so let them have their little reunion together because I'm pretty sure they're gonna fight later.

Michael: Wow Mike, that's pretty mature of you. I think I'm rubbin' off on you.

Mike: And you know what? I'm just mature enough to let you to continue to believe that.

Michael: Atta boy, Mike. Now uh, let's keep diggin' this grave.

Mike: Sir, yes, sir. Hey, did you see that they're making a T.V. show out of the movie *Drive*?

Michael: Huh?

Mike: Like the Ryan Gosling movie, *Drive*.

Michael: No, I had no idea.

Mike: It's so stupid.

Michael: Hey, we like *Drive*.

Mike: Yeah, and we don't need to see any more of it. It was a movie and then it was over and that's it! There doesn't need to be a T.V. show.

[Their voices become in audible as the sound of rain increases]

[END THEME PLAYS]