

EPISODE 85: Is This What's Really Going On?

We hear outdoor ambiance: birds, wind, maybe horses in the distance, 2 sets of footsteps.

MIKE

You confirmed that it's on and it's transmitting, right?

MIKEY

Yeah. I feel dirty, Mike. Going behind his back.

MIKE

Are you kidding me? Michael went behind our backs all the time when he had the Calculator. And when he didn't have the Calculator he stole it from me. Besides, he's not even the target.

MIKEY

That makes it worse.

MIKE

We have to get to the bottom of this, Mikey. This isn't going away. And it was an order.

MIKEY

I didn't mean to tell them.

MIKE

I'm sure you didn't. [Pause] Look, there he is, right over there.

MIKEY

Look at him. He looks so happy. I almost don't want to disturb him.

MIKE

To hell with that. We broke him out of the compound. We have the right to see him whenever we want. August agrees with us. He let us back here.

MIKEY

I know you're right, but if it were me- and I guess it is me?--
then I'd just want to be left alone.

MIKE

He's not put out to pasture, Mikey. He owes us. Oh, he sees us.
Hi, Michael. Come here.

MIKEY

He's motioning for us to come to him.

MIKE

Fuck that. He's the one on the horse. I don't want to step in
horseshit walking over there. Come here, Michael. Don't make me
yell across the damn field. Okay, he's coming.

MIKEY

Maybe he's not happy to see us.

MIKE

He knows we want him for something.

We hear the sound of hooves approaching.

MICHAEL

Howdy, gentlemen! Boy am I glad to see you. This is Banjo.
Careful, he's tough as nails.

MIKEY [SHEEPISH]

Hi... Banjo...

MICHAEL

I'm pullin' your leg, pilgrim. Banjo's sweet as can be. You can
ride him later if you wanna.

MIKE

I don't think that we're going to have time for that.

MICHAEL

Oh, it's one of those visits, is it? Didn't just come to see how
your old buddy Michael was doing?

MIKE
Afraid not.

MICHAEL
I told the old Badger to shoo y'all off if it looked like y'all
came to make trouble, but I guess he let me down.

MIKEY
Badger? August?

MIKE [TEASINGLY]
Maybe he's tired of having you around here, Michael.

MICHAEL
He ain't tired of only needin' to do half the work around here,
I'll tell ya that. There's too much work out here for one
person.

MIKE
Well he's going to have to get used to it again.

MIKEY
Are you ready to come back, Michael?

MICHAEL
I don't got a choice. I do, but it ain't a real choice. It's
come back or leave y'all out in the cold. That ain't a choice.
And y'all ain't here to ride horses.

MIKE
You're not wrong. We need 3 sets of hands on a mission.

MICHAEL
Does this have to do with all of the other Mikeys running
around?

MIKEY
Yep.

MICHAEL
And neither of y'all have what it takes to kill em...

MIKE

We're not killing them... yet. We're... exploring other options.

MIKEY

That's mostly what Base is trying to figure out right now. What to do besides kill them.

MICHAEL

So, what are we doing then?

MIKE

Locating them.

MICHAEL

We're not waitin' around for each of 'em to get caught in the background on the news?

MIKE

Nope. All of the Mikeys and Edgars originated on the same night, when O.V.E.R. Mike and OVEDgar tried to make a break for it. And all of them succeeded in making a break for it, except the last two who got caught holding the bag. All of these duplications happened one after the other using the tier 2 security program.

MIKEY

Which means that there is a log of them. All we have to do is figure out when the escape might have happened and procure the log from that incident.

MICHAEL

I know when it happened. Edgar... Mustardseed... Edgar told me that it happened not long before y'all came to threaten them. Y'all should be able to start there and work backwards.

MIKE

Perfect. At the very least, we will know where they arrived. That doesn't mean that they stayed there, but none of them have Calculators or access to the technology in any other way, as far as we know.

MIKEY

The mission is two-pronged. One of us will have to break into Tier 2 and snoop around the records to see if they can locate the data and the other will have to travel to the location at the time in question and verify that what actually happened was the transport of a Mikey and an Edgar. I'm working at O.V.E.R. again, so it should be trivial to get in there. Figuring out what data is useful and which isn't is going to be the tricky part.

MICHAEL

So you ended up back at O.V.E.R. after all, huh? What did you do with O.V.E.R. Mike?

MIKE

Michael, that puts you on reconnaissance work. We aren't taking any actions yet. We are only confirming the locations of the suspects. I will be coordinating both of you from mission control.

MICHAEL

Why ain't you goin' out in the field with me? Don't tell me you still ain't right after gettin' consolidated.

MIKE

I'm alright most of the time. 90%, maybe 95%. But I don't want one of those 5% of the time occurrences to happen while we're in the middle of something important.

MIKEY

He's overselling how alright he is by a little bit.

MIKE [DEFENSIVE]

No, I'm not. Just because I collapsed in front of Boris doesn't mean that I'm knocking on death's door. It was just the wrong time and the wrong place. I'm fine. And now the apartment is full of free food from Boris's network of babushkas.

MIKEY

If only I were just talking about that one time...

MIKE
I'm. Fine.

MICHAEL
What about you, Mikey? Are you gonna join me out there once you
get what we need?

MIKEY
This first mission is going to require someone in Tier 2 and
someone checking locations. We don't have any idea what these
logs are going to look like. There might be a lot of them. We
have to narrow down the coordinates to the ones that we are
actually looking for and we will be pressed for time. It would
be much more convenient if O.V.E.R. Mike had applied to Tier 2
when we told him to but, alas, he didn't and here we are.
Hopefully, we find what we're looking for quickly, you confirm
it without incident, we decide what action to take, and we take
those actions in the field, together.

MICHAEL
Are you gonna be able to do the hard work when it comes to it,
Mikey? The killin'?

MIKEY
We are not killing them.

MIKE
Probably.

MICHAEL
Then are ya gonna consolidate with 'em? And risk ending up like
Mike?

MIKE
There's nothing wrong with me.

MICHAEL
Y'all burnt our bridge with the Flinchites. They coulda
consolidated you with these Mikes as many times as we needed.

MIKE

That wasn't a bridge that we burned. We broke you out of captivity. Just because they didn't shove a sock in your mouth doesn't mean that you weren't taken hostage.

MICHAEL

Then I'm sure y'all will come up with some magical third option that will ensure that everyone lives happily ever after. Why is it just the three of us working on this? You told Base about it, didn't you Mikey? I know that you like to do things by the books.

MIKE

Base is working on a different investigation and consulting on this one. Their resources are being deployed elsewhere.

MICHAEL

May I ask where those resources are being deployed, exactly?

MIKEY

It's on a need to know basis. I don't even know that much about it. Everything is slow and bureaucratic right now. We want to stop the rate of critical incidents if at all possible. Base has been putting out fires instead of making progress for a long time now.

MIKE

What do you say, Michael? Are you in?

MICHAEL

I don't reckon I got a choice.

MIKE

You don't.

MICHAEL

Do I get to make some demands?

MIKE

You can *make* some, yeah.

MICHAEL

Can I stay here with Sly?

MIKEY

I really don't think that's a good idea...

MIKE

I think it would be better if you stayed at the Satellite Base with me and Mikey.

MICHAEL

Satellite Base only has 2 bedrooms. And it's autumn out here and I don't wanna go back to that stuffy apartment. Look at me, Mikey. I'm out here living my best life. I'm on a horse. Don't make me go back.

MIKEY

Michael, Augu-

MIKE

You have to drop in for one full work day for debriefs every week. The Calculator stays with us and we come and get you. No breaking 24. We will do reconnaissance missions on our own schedule, no matter what you have planned for the day. One of those missions will occur after our weekly debrief and you will stay overnight at the apartment. Mikey will let you have your room on those nights. You will use some of this time to check in with Boris. He knows something's up and I don't want him asking questions. And he misses you. It's been weeks. The choices are either this or do as we tell you with no concessions.

MIKEY

This is going to be a problem, I can already tell.

MIKE

Do you agree to our terms, Michael?

MICHAEL

Yessir. Did Edgar teach you to talk like that?

MIKE

He did. But I did it all by myself this time.

MICHAEL

You've learned well. When does this mission kick off?

MIKEY

We were thinking that we could do it... tonight. If you're ready.
I don't see any reason to put it off any longer.

MIKE

The longer we wait, the greater the chances are of one of the
Mikes or Edgars making things complicated. Another Mustardseed,
even.

MICHAEL

[Pauses, then sighs.] I'm... happy to help.

MIKE

You sound like it.

MICHAEL

No, I really am. It's time for Michael to get back in the saddle
again. I mean, I'm in the saddle right now. The metaphorical
saddle. It's time for me to get out of the saddle and get back
in the saddle. The time saddle.

MIKE

The time saddle.

MIKEY

The time saddle.

MICHAEL

Let's get down to business, gentlemen.

[SCENE TRANSITION.]

MIKEY is speaking to MIKE and MICHAEL through an earpiece.

MICHAEL

This ain't normal, is it? He's takin' his time.

MIKE

He has been radio silent for longer than I was expecting. Maybe he forgot his way to the securit building? It's been a long time for us, too.

MICHAEL

Should we check on him?

MIKE

No. He knows that he can break radio silence if there is an emergency. And if he's hiding from someone or something like that, I don't want to make any sound that would potentially put him in danger.

MICHAEL

So I guess we're just hangin' out, then.

MIKE

Honestly? Good. We could use the time together. I've missed ya, buddy.

MICHAEL

Nonsense. You don't miss the old cowboy who gets you into trouble. I've had some time to think these past few weeks. Actually being a cowboy. Out there on my own, with Sly. It put things into perspective. I'm sorry, Mike. I got lost in my own head. That's why I handed myself over to the Flinchites. After Edgar... and I thought I needed to sheepdog ya... and I was out of options. [Pause.] We shoulda killed that Michael. The one who did it.

MIKE

What would that have done to you?

MICHAEL

Don't know. But having him as part of me ain't pleasant. I made decisions that I wouldn't make. But he would. I'm sorry, Mike.

MIKE

I'm just glad to have you back, Michael. I'm glad you've found some clarity in your time away, but I don't know what you're

apologizing for. Things worked out, if you remember. We learned who Mustardseed was, we busted you out of the compound, we met your- (new)... uh... August.

MICHAEL
August is... uh-

MIKE
No, I'm glad that you have him to lean on. We couldn't have busted you out of the compound without him, that's for sure. You... he... he calls you Big Bear?

MICHAEL
Uh huh. Can we... change the subject?

MIKE
Please.

MICHAEL
What did Mike do with O.V.E.R Mike? Y'all dodged the question when I asked back at the ranch.

MIKE
I don't know what he did. He hasn't told me. Surely he told Base. He and Edgar moved back in at O.V.E.R. so they had to have told Base *something* right? Edgar is moving back in because Mustardseed is in the Flinchite compound and O.V.E.R. Mike is... consolidated? Dead? Ran off somewhere? Mikey isn't saying and he finds a new way not to answer every time I ask him.

MICHAEL
Sounds like he killed him to me. And the worse it went, the more he won't wanna talk about it.

MIKE
Or they consolidated and he didn't like what happened to him or maybe O.V.E.R. Mike knew something that he wasn't expecting...

MICHAEL
Or maybe it went wrong and he ended up like you.

MIKE
I'm fine.

MICHAEL
I know you, Mike. I can tell that something is off, even when
nobody else can. You can't hide it from me.

MIKE
I'm not hiding anything. I got shot. It takes a long time to
recover from that. You should know. You were stuck in bed for
two weeks when you got shot.

MICHAEL
I was only shot, not consolidated.

MIKEY [EARPIECE]
Hello? You guys there?

MIKE
We're here, Mikey. Are you in the security building?

MIKEY
Yeah. Sorry about the wait. I'm not used to the walk anymore and
then when I got to 116E there were people just... hanging around
outside. Not security for 116E, just some guys from Tier 1
hanging out and shootin' the shit. I had to wait for them to
leave.

MIKE
That's alright, Mikey. You're in the security building now,
though?

MIKEY
Yep. I'm at the computer and the program is loading as we speak,
so it will still be a couple minutes. You know how this thing
is. It's a government program on a government computer.

MIKE
Yep, I know. Do you know where the logs are stored in the
program?

MIKEY

I know that there's a tab, but I've never clicked on the tab.
I've always been using the program on a time crunch and for
another purpose. So I don't know what it is going to look like
when I click on it. Do you guys know?

MIKE

Nope.

MICHAEL

Nope.

MIKEY

Great. And do you guys think that when we click on it it will be
a nicely formatted document detailing who used the program, when
they did it, and where they initiated travel to?

MIKE

Nope.

MIKE

Me neither.

MIKEY

Wonderful. [Pause.] Did you guys talk about anything while you
were waiting for me?

MIKE

We... no.

MIKEY

Convincing stuff, Mike. I won't needle you. Not right now
anyway. Aaaaannnnndddd... we're ready. The program's up.

MIKE

Great. Mikey, do you see the tab?

MIKEY

Ugh, it's all different now. They updated it. They must have
updated it when they got the technology back. We're looking at
security 2.0 here.

MIKE

Is this going to be a problem?

MIKEY

Clicking around... clicking around... and... here are the logs. Oh boy. It's worse than we thought. There are a lot of logs. As in, there have been... 3 new ones since I started talking.

MIKE

Shit. Can you scroll back to older ones?

MIKEY

I'm working on it. I'm going to be scrolling awhile. It looks like there are hundreds of them every single day and the days we are looking for happened weeks ago.

MICHAEL

Won't we know the coordinates when we see them because the starting coordinates will be inside the security building?

MIKEY

This isn't the only security building and almost all if not all of the starting coordinates are inside of O.V.E.R. so they all look pretty similar. I wouldn't be able to tell you which ones correspond to which specific buildings. I think a better thing to look for is coordinates that go somewhere clearly outside of O.V.E.R.

MIKE

How did they get away with this? Does nobody check these logs?

MIKEY

Nobody checks a security camera unless they have reason to believe that something is on it. There's too much to sort through, O.V.E.R. Mike and Mustardseed didn't cause any disruptions, and they have guards to make sure that nothing suspicious is going on.

MIKE

Not the best guards, in my experience.

MIKEY

Alright, I'm at the night before the night that we came and threatened them to apply for Tier 2. This is all a mess. I'm just going to start taking pictures and sending them. Tell me if any of these look like the sort of activity that you would expect from 2 guys duplicating themselves repeatedly and then transporting out of the compound.

MIKE

Alright. I am... beginning to receive the photos.

MICHAEL

This is gibberish.

MIKE

It's not gibberish. It's merely almost gibberish. I didn't realize that they moved so many things around in there.

MIKEY

What they're moving and how much they're moving it might be a mystery to solve later. Does anything look like a potential coordinate set yet?

MIKE

I don't think so. There was one set of coordinates way outside of the O.V.E.R. complex, but there was only one and Mustardseed said that there were a lot of Mikes and Edgars making a run for it.

MIKEY

More pictures coming, then.

MICHAEL

We could try the one.

MIKE

Michael, that's probably not them.

MICHAEL

You brought it up yourself, Mike. The ending coordinates are in British Columbia. That's where Ed Man and M Dawg were.

MIKEY

You don't have to respect the nicknames that they gave themselves.

MIKE

Even if that were them, we already know where they are.

MIKEY

And it's just the one set of coordinates, right? We're looking for a lot more.

MICHAEL

Mustardseed coulda been lying to me. Maybe Ed Man and M Dawg are the only ones.

MIKEY

If you guys wanna try it, go for it. I'm going to keep taking pictures for as long as I feel safe staying in here. I'm getting toward the end of that day and starting on the day before it. It's already a lot to sift through.

MICHAEL

I'm just sittin' here, Mike. Let me go and scope it out for ya. At least then we can have an idea of what we're lookin' at. It could be a test run. I'll be careful, honest.

MIKE

Alright, Michael. I trust you. Keep the comms open.

MICHAEL

I will, partner. I'll check in with you in a minute. Initiatin' transport in 3, 2, 1...

[WE HEAR A TIME TRAVEL NOISE.]

MIKE

Any insight on your end, Mikey?

MIKEY

Nothing. A shocking amount of transport events coming out of O.V.E.R. Not even O.V.E.R. The Tier 2 Security program. I don't think that this program logs anything else. It's impossible to tell how many more transport events are happening in the rest of the complex. This is likely only a small fraction. Do you think that they're duplicating stuff?

MIKE

I don't think so. This is the security program, after all. And the coordinates don't seem to be close to each other. Like, if I wanted to duplicate my favorite jacket, I would have the end coordinates be right beside the previous jacket.

MIKEY

Your favorite deerskin jacket, cowboy?

MIKE

Shut up. This looks as though things are being sent somewhere for the purpose of being sent there. But I can't tell if there's a method to the madness just from the coordinates. We'll have to plot them all out.

MIKEY

Seems like it might be a job for Edgar.

MIKE

I'd like to loop Base in as late as possible, if you don't mind.

MIKEY

Yeah, me too.

MICHAEL [EARPIECE]

Testing... one two three... Mike, are ya there?

MIKE

I sure am. What's your status?

MICHAEL

I'm in a trainyard. Seems like an ideal location for appearing in the middle of the night, never to be seen again. I'm keeping

my eyes peeled. I landed a couple minutes early so I could hunt cover and see if they show up.

MIKE

Sounds good to me. Mikey and I were talking about the other events on the logs. It looks like the security team is moving stuff from one location to another constantly. Does that make any sense to you?

MICHAEL

Nope. Guess security is more than those dinky patrols, but I coulda told you that.

MIKE

The patrols have always felt like more of a facade. Is this what's really going on?

MICHAEL

Might be worth looking into. Have you found any other relevant coordinates? Oh, here they come. I'm going radio silent.

MIKE

Is this what's really going on?

MIKEY

Huh?

MIKE

Is this what's really going on?

MIKEY

You okay, Mike?

MIKE

[Breathing and slumping.] Michael...

MIKEY

Mike? Hello? Mike?

MIKE [WEAK WHISPER]

Edgar...

MIKEY

Mike? Michael, can you hear me? Mike's gone quiet. Mike? Michael, I don't have the Latvia coordinates. I wasn't planning on heading back there. I was going back to the O.V.E.R. cabin tonight. I can't check on him.

MICHAEL

Mike? Mike? You there, partner?

MIKEY

We need to pull the plug on this, Michael.

MICHAEL

Mike? Shit. Shit. Alright. So much for reconnaissance. I'm coming back for ya, Mike.

We hear the time travel noise.

MIKEY

Michael, are you with him?

MICHAEL

Yeah, he's here, but he's weak. He collapsed again.

MIKEY

Send me the coordinates and I'll meet you there.

MICHAEL [TYPING]

Alright... here they are. Safe travels, partner.

MIKEY

See you in a second.

We hear the time travel noise.

MIKEY

Mike?

MICHAEL

I told you he's okay.

MIKEY

I need to see for myself.

MIKE [WEAKLY]

I'm fine. We can get back into the mission.

MIKEY

Not happening.

MICHAEL

We really can't, partner. Two things. One, I got spotted. Two, that weren't Edgar and Mikey that spotted me. Couldn't tell who it was, though.

MIKEY

How many people?

MICHAEL

Hard to tell in the dark. At least 2. I don't think they could make out who I was, but they definitely heard me and looked over.

MIKE

So as far as they know that silhouette could be any cowboy in the world.

MICHAEL

Unfortunately, they've probably narrowed it down to only the handsomest cowboys.

MIKE

It was that dark, huh?

MIKEY

Well, I'm glad you're back with us, Mike.

MIKE

Sorry that I botched the mission.

MIKEY

I think it went... alright. We got a bunch of data to sort through, we tested our recon plan. It wasn't a total loss. These things never go perfectly anyway. It was a recalibration. Getting us all back to work together.

MIKE

I was scared that you were gonna run off, Michael.

MICHAEL

I would never, pilgrim.

MIKEY

All we can do is learn, synthesize what we collected, and try again. Michael, are you good to stay here tonight? I told Edgar that I'd be back at O.V.E.R.

MICHAEL

Sure thing, Mikey. Say, you and Mike made it sound like you was staying here most of the time, but you also said you're back to workin' at O.V.E.R. Which is it?

MIKEY

I've been up to some real Three's Company shit to manage it. I assume. I've never actually seen Three's Company.

MICHAEL

I get what you're sayin'.

MIKEY

Speaking of overextending myself. It's late and I'm exhausted. Can you send me back home, cowboy? We can debrief in the morning. My place or the apartment, it's up to you.

MICHAEL

Alright, Mikey. I'll see you tomorrow. Take care of Edgar for me.

MIKEY

You know I will. Bye, Michael. Bye, Mike.

MIKE

Bye, Mikey.

MICHAEL

See ya round, partner. Initiating transport in 3, 2, 1...

We hear the time travel noise.

[END CREDITS PLAY.]