

EPISODE 80: Sunday

[Light cutlery noises.]

Mike: So, uh, I talked to Anne today. One of the Annes, from the current Base, I mean. I don't know how you feel, but I'm starting to feel old, Michael. It feels like every time I talk to her, we about stuff that happened in college. Like do we not make new memories anymore? Well, I guess we do make new memories, but uh, it's a unique situation. Not as fun to say "hey, remember that murder we committed together? Let's remember that", and it's not really fun to talk about current events either now that I think about it. Anyway, we were strolling down memory lane and—[Laughs] do you remember going to that Tae Kwon Do tournament? And we didn't know anyone that did Tae Kwon Do so we just thought it'd be like two dudes like duking it out or something [Uncomfortable laugh]. [Strained] And then we got there, and it was 8th graders doing katas? Remember? And then we left and got ice cream... 'Casue it was the hottest day of the year? And then I turned into a dolphin and flew away? ... Hello, are you listening to me? Hello? Hey, Michael? Hey! Earth to Michael. Good morning, starshine! The Earth says hello! Hey? Michael?

Michael: [Grunts.]

Mike: This might be a silly question to ask, but: are you okay, man? I understand that you're the grizzled old cowboy, but you seem a little... too grizzled lately?

Michael: Thanks for the criticism. I ain't never been better. I promise ya.

Mike: Hmm... Not convinced.

Michael: Then don't be convinced. Just pretend I said whatever I need to say to get you to leave me alone. [Huff] [Under his breath] Asshole.

Mike: Yeah—It's just you—When was the last time that you went outside? This apartment isn't a healthy place to be spending all of your time, or really any of your time.

Michael: [Gravely] Sunday.

Mike: Sunday? Michael *today* is Sunday. Are you saying that you haven't been out of the apartment in a week?

Michael: Two.

Mike: Two as in two weeks!? Michael, no wonder you're grumpy. I'm honestly surprised you haven't developed some sort of skin condition from being in here that long. You're losing weight, though. *Fast*. I'm worried, okay? I'm worried if I'm being honest. This isn't like you.

Michael: Two as in two months, Mike.

Mike: What? That doesn't make any sense. I've been places with you in the last two months. You have left the apartment. [Pause] You traveled? [Stutters] F—For what?!

Michael: Next door. In two months. Needed some time. I knew it was definitely empty after the... one night, so I went in there and just sat there in the quiet. You wouldn't've liked me much those first few weeks.

Mike: [Quietly] *Michael*.

Michael: I had a difficult decision to make.

Mike: No, no this is unacceptable. I'm sorry that I didn't catch on to this sooner. I should have made some attempt to be there for you especially after what happened that night, even though you weren't reaching out to me. [Sighs] I know what this is about.

Michael: A regular Nancy Drew figurin' that out.

Mike: I didn't say it to sound clever I was just putting it out there. This is obviously about the night with the axe. But that's for us to confront together. You're not alone. I'm literally right in front of you. And you've dragged me out of the pits that I've fallen into, so maybe it's my turn? Let me be the sheepdog.

Michael: You're a bad dog. Wolf got in the pen.

Mike: Well then lucky for me that I'm not your average sheepdog. A normal sheepdog doesn't have a time machine to get the wolf out of the pen, does he? I'm gonna to fix it. I'll issue a correction. I'll stop you from going away for two months, and then we can confront this together.

Michael: No, you won't. Base would never approve it and you're not gonna break protocol. Edgar would be upset, and you'd get me in a lot of trouble. Might even send me back.

Mike: They wouldn't send you back, you melodramatic idiot.

Michael: Well, I guess we're gonna find out then, huh?

Mike: Okay. Then I won't ask Base, but I don't care what Edgar thinks about it.

Michael: 'Course, you do.

Mike: You can't keep tossing away months like this, you'll be gone before you know it, you know?

Michael: "Before I know it" would be a blessin'.

Mike: No, no, no. Shut it down. Not engaging. Do I need to give you a... a Michael speech? [Bad impression of Michael] Now, looky here partner, I been out in them wilderness...es... and I can tell you from experience there ain't nothing out there for ya, buddy. Come inside. We're all waitin' for ya. [Impression ends] Oh wait, did I get it at the end there? [Slightly better impression] "We're all waitin' for ya, Michael." [Impression ends] [Delighted laugh] I got it! Only for a second, but I dropped right into it! Um, uh now, let's uh get along, little doggy... um, no that didn't work.

Michael: Are you done makin' fun of how I talk yet?

Mike: I will never be done. But, hey we have the day off. So, I've gotta get you out of this apartment. I don't have Bruno today, so I guess no dog park but uh... hey, you wanna go to Base? See everyone?

Michael: If I say no, are you gonna let me go back into my bedroom and lie down in peace?

Mike: Well, that depends, would you actually get some sleep?

Michael: Probably not. Don't know if I remember how.

Mike: Okay, then it's settled we're going to Base. C'mon let's go see Marissa and Anne and Edgar and Mikey.

Michael: What if I can't bear to look at 'im.

Mike: What? Of course, you can. Look, I know how you get. You can be in a funk like this and then you snap right out of it when you're around people. Especially, Mikey. He activates your protection instincts, I think. It'll be good for you. Take your mind off of... God knows what

your mind's on. And maybe while your mind is off of it, you can forget about it. You can't seriously want to sit in here all day. The mold is going to start growing on you and not just the walls.

Michael: [Sighs] Fine, you wore me down, Mike.

Mike: I know that you saying that was supposed to take the wind out of my sails, but I'm not going to let you. Go on, grab your stuff. I'll call ahead and get approval from Base to use the Calculator to travel there and they'll say yes. We have some paperwork to drop off. And then we can just hang out all afternoon.

Michael: Alright, if those are the orders. Does...Edgar...you know, know?

Mike: About the night with the axe? Yeah, he knows. There wasn't much we could do about that. That night is a key piece of information in an important investigation. Mustardseed is the culprit, and we need to catch them.

Michael: Does he know about my Edgar?

Mike: No, he doesn't. Mikey said he thought it would be best not to tell him. I think he's right. I don't think that I'd want to know something like that if it were me. So, that story is gonna stay among the Mikes. Were you thinking about telling him?

Michael: Nah, I just wanted to know if he knew.

Mike: Totally understand. Now, seriously go pack your bags. It sunny and 80 degrees there right now. So, let's go kick our feet up in the sun in Oldbrush Valley, okay?

Michael: Yes, sir.

[THEME SONG PLAYS.]

[The sound of beer bottles being shot with a gun.]

Mike: [Under his breath] And...yes. [Speaking at regular volume] Hell, yeah Mikey! I know that you weren't *that* good a shot when we first met.

Mikey: Well, it was this guy right here that made me want to practice. Michael told me that I needed to get better at shooting, so I've been putting in the work. Don't wanna be in a

tough spot like we were and not be able to get out. Right, Michael? And the cowboy hat increases my accuracy by *at least* ten percent.

Michael: Weren't that good a shot. Them bottles weren't even that far back. Here, gimme the rifle and my hat back.

Mikey: Okay, show me how it's done.

Michael: I will if you'll finish your story about the O.V.E.R. team.

Mikey: I was so focused on shooting bottles that I forgot that I was telling a story. Where was I? I finished telling you about how they ran me off when I went alone, right?

Mike: Yep. Said you made it back to Base and Edgar wiped the tears from your eyes, put his forehead against yours, told you that he was going to make everything alright, and then gave you a quick but passionate kiss.

[Gun shot.]

Mikey: Yeah, something like that. Next thing I know, Edgar's transported us to the cabin but it's night. We barge in and wake them up and Edgar's waving a gun in their faces and tells them that they better do what we say or else. And *then*, another Edgar comes in and says that he's doing a correction, "Don't kill the O.V.E.R. team"—well, specifically don't kill them tonight. And that's what scared them into following orders because they thought that Edgar really was going to shoot them and that he could do it any time that he wanted to. But here's the twist! That wasn't actually a correction, [Gunshot.] that was just Edgar from that night. It was all a bluff! Oh, and both the Edgars were wearing cowboy hats. I'm a little bit worried about that. It was intense seeing Edgar square off against himself like that. He never gets mad. I think it might be because it was an iteration of him that was causing all the trouble that made him so angry, but uh scared the hell out of me.

Michael: Yeah, that Edgar can be a nasty cur when he needs ta. [Gunshot.] You know he means business when he gets like that. Now, I get mean all the time, so it don't mean much comin' from me. But if Edgar's eyes go red, he's goin' scorched Earth until he gets what he wants. God damn, I love that man. [Gunshot.] Bullseye. Hey uh, we got any more beer bottles? That was the last of 'em. Or we could wait for a squirrel to walk through the yard. I'm startin' to get hungry.

Mike: I saw a few more on the kitchen counter. I can go grab 'em. Be right back [Mike leaves, sound of footsteps.]

Michael: Ya know, Mikey, I'm real glad you're learnin' to be a sharpshooter all on your own. 'Cause I ain't gonna to be around forever to teach ya.

Mikey: Excuse you, you better be around forever. The longer you're around, the longer I'm around. I am very invested in you being around.

Michael: You gotta take care of Edgar and you gotta let Edgar take care of you. Ten years used to feel like a real long time, but it's over in an instant. Savor it. Savor it and know that it's gonna be gone in a flash and there's nothing gonna slow it down.

Mikey: Michael, you're scaring me. Is something going on? Like more than the stuff that I know that's going on.

Michael: Nah, you know what's going on. Someone killed Hunter and put the Base in danger. Mustardseed is on the loose and trying to destroy us. The Flinchite compound is still out there and we're in the middle of that, too. Mike Walters ain't a very good person to be, I don't think.

Mikey: Okay, but none of that's news to me. What happened to sheepdogging? What happened to being strong and protecting the Mikes and the Edgars?

Michael: *That's what I'm doin'.* [Softer] I'm—I'm doing that. And part of that is teachin' you to fend for yourself. That's all I'm sayin'. I sure couldn't shoot like that when I was you. I'm glad you got the gumption to work on it. It makes us better in the long run.

Mikey: You know that none of us blame you for what happened that night, right? Mustardseed was trying to hurt us, and they succeeded. Whoever they are, they're experts at hurting us and they hurt us in an expert way. You didn't do anything wrong. Mustardseed did. *And* we corrected it. You gave us a speech like two weeks ago about letting go of things that never happened. It might be time to practice what you preach.

Michael: Can't argue with that.

Mikey: So, between us... did you kill Hunter?

Michael: That wouldn't stay between us, and you know it.

Mikey: I wouldn't blame you if you did. The whole mess between Base and them started because I killed Hunter. I know that there are reasons. I know that there are things that Hunter can do to us. Or to someone close to us. Like Edgar or Anne.

Michael: You ain't gettin' a confession out of me, Mikey boy. I suggest you drop the subject, and we go back to having a breezy Sunday afternoon.

Mikey: Or if you were protecting someone who did.

[The sound of clinking beer bottle.]

Mike: [Returning] Okay, I have returned with the beer bottles. There aren't a lot of them, so I brought some full ones, too. Figured you guys might be thirsty. But, uh... hey, Michael? Edgar stopped me while I was inside and said that he needed to talk to you. Maybe go check in with him real quick? Didn't seem like a big thing, just like he wanted to see you.

Michael: I'm on it, boss. Here, Mikey. Hat's yours. Give them beer bottles hell for me.

Mike: I'm not your boss. Mikey, beer?

Mikey: Thought you'd never ask. You know, I was never that much into IPAs until I moved in, [Opens bottle] and they were always in the fridge. I don't dislike the flavor but it's a little heavy for a hot summer day when I'm just hanging out, you know? I've lived like a mess my whole adult life so having a stocked fridge with different things to choose from in it is such an amazing luxury. Anyway, Michael's out of earshot now and he is scaring me, and we need to do something about him.

Mike: Scaring you? He didn't threaten you, did he?

Mikey: No, nothing like that. He was just going on about how he isn't going to be around forever. Big red flag. Is everything okay?

Mike: Well, nothing is okay, but you know that. Things are getting worse though. He's traveling all the time now. Even more than he was when I talked to you when you stayed over. He gave me some lie about how he's been traveling to be alone for two months in the last two weeks, but I think he's going somewhere.

Mikey: Do you think that he's going to a time period where his Edgar is still alive? I could see myself doing that. I know I'd be rattle if I went through what he went through.

Mike: Plausible. He's wasting away in front of me, and he won't tell me why. Now, I'm a selfish guy. I see him and I know that I need to do everything that I can to patch him up because that's gonna be me one day.

Mikey: That's essentially what I told him, too.

Mike: But I can't do that if he's keeping secrets from me, and I can't get them out of him. I can't fix him up if I can't know what's broken.

Mikey: Do you think that he killed Hunter?

Mike: Well, Occam's razor, yeah, it makes a lot of sense. We've killed Hunter before.

Mikey: That's what I said.

Mike: We could definitely have our reasons and they could be great reasons, even if it is making things difficult in this present. But I don't think that it's a given. Who knows? I do think that he's keeping a lot of things that we need to hear from us in the name of protecting us, and I don't think that it is actually protecting us. I think it's protecting Michael from some tough conversations that he doesn't want to have. And I'm worried that some of these secrets are going to blindside us the next time that Mustardseed makes a move.

Mikey: Well, at the end of the day he's still Mike Walters, even if he is wearing a cowboy hat. Tough conversations aren't exactly our wheelhouse. Passive aggression and conflict avoidance, yes.

Mike: Right. He's us and we suck. He has the same penchant for the dramatic and the drastic as us. Which means that we have to figure out what drastic measure he's about to take that he thinks will solve everything and is gonna make everything worse and stop him before he can make this mess even bigger than it is now.

Mikey: Any clue to what the plan is? I mean, you're the expert. You live with the guy.

Mike: No idea, unfortunately. All I know is that it's coming soon. That's why he's acting like this. That's why we're here. I was trying to keep him distracted and boost his spirits. He might tell us when he's ready, so we need to make him comfortable.

Mikey: Oh, I hear ya. So, anyway, as I was saying, it isn't that far of a drive out to the lake, and I've been trying to take advantage of that.

Mike: Huh? Oh, gotcha.

Mikey: But the thing is, I'm an awful fisherman. It might be because no one's ever taught me, but it feels like I'm genetically predisposed to being bad at it. It doesn't matter if I'm up there for two hours or twelve hours, I'm not coming home with a fish.

Michael: [Approaching] Howdy, fellas. Mikey I can teach ya to fish. Hope y'all didn't kill all the beer bottles without me.

Mike: Nah, we left some for you, big guy.

Mikey: What did Edgar want to talk to you about?

Michael: He just wanted to catch up a little in private, see how I was holding up after what happened. Said no ill will toward me and all that, but I knew that already. It was good to see him.

Mike: I'm glad you got some alone time.

Michael: Now, gimme a beer and my hat and I'll show you lily-livered scoundrels how a cowboy hits his mark. Ya see, it's all about keeping steady on your target, taking drop and wind into the equation, and bein' smooth and patient as you squeeze the trigger. Just... like... [Gunshot] that.

Mike: Michael, you missed.

Michael: Even a cowboy misses sometimes, pilgrim.

[SCENE TRANSITION.]

[The sound of clear night air.]

Michael: [Deep sigh] [Quietly] Hoo, can I even do this? [Sighs] No, I gotta do this. Okay. Okay. Toughen up, Michael. Okay, it's now or never, partner. Do it while you got the courage, just do it, *okay* [Grunts]. [Pause] Howdy, Ty Betteridge. It's Michael, ya know, the cowboy. I... I don't wanna do this, but... I need to make a peace offerin'. I don't know how much your folks know about this whole Mustardseed thing, but it's...it's got us on the ropes. We got someone attackin' us and we don't even know who they are, and the attacks are going exactly as planned. They got bugs in our facilities. They're in the walls. They're watching everything. We can't even

make a plan. We need help, Ty. Our Base isn't strong enough to weather this storm. S—So, I'm offering myself up. I'm sorry that I killed all them Mikey spies you been dropping off at my doorstep, but you can have me now. That's more valuable than any of the Mikeys, I reckon. Whatever it is you wanna do, you can do, I'll cooperate. But in return you need to smoke this Mustardseed out of wherever they're hidin' and get rid of 'em. Your folks are a lot stronger than mine right now and you could probably get this done with your eyes closed. Help 'em out and leave 'em alone is all that I ask. I think that's a fair trade. I'll be at the Compound in the mornin'. I gotta say goodbye to my folks tonight. But I'll be there in the mornin' if you can promise me that you will hold up your end of the bargain. Take care, Ty. Be seein' you soon. [Pained noises after hanging up.]

Mike: [Approaching] Hey uh, everything okay out here?

Michael: [Clears his throat] Oh uh, yeah howdy Mike. Yeah, everything's great. Just uh, came out here to uh, take a piss and smoke on my pipe a little. Would you look at that moon. I love a full moon and the night air tastes so good in the Valley.

Mike: Okay, it's just you've been out here a while, Michael. People were wondering where you went. You're the one that picked the movie. It'd be a shame for you to miss it. I know you love *Butch Cassidy*.

Michael: I'll be back inside in a minute. You're right. I love me some *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. But I seen it so much I got it memorized. Picked it so they could see. Don't matter if I ever see it again. I can play it in my head.

Mike: Alright, then. Do you want me to stay out here and keep you company?

Michael: You ain't gotta do that. I think I'm gonna lay down in the grass and look up at that moon. Thank ya for pulling me outta my funk today, Mike. You was right. I got people who care about me, and it makes me wanna be strong enough to protect 'em. And I can't do that if I'm wallowing in my feelings. Seein' 'em again reminded me that it's real. It's all real. The care is real, the danger is real, I'm real. And I'm ready to do better for myself and for them. And for you, Mike.

Mike: I appreciate that, Michael. I'm glad I could help. We all really do care about you, you know? And Base cares about us, even though we're literally Mike Walters. It can be easy to forget that when we're alone for too long, but it's true. So, go ahead enjoy the moon. It is beautiful tonight. I'll head back inside and tell the gang that I found you and that you're doing alright. And you can join us when you're ready to come back. How does that sound?

Michael: Sounds perfect, Mike. You take care, partner.

Mike: You too, Michael. See you inside.

Michael: Yup, see you inside. [Sighs]

[END THEME PLAYS.]

[“Tempest” plays.]

[lyrics]

the past is a grotesque
a sink for forgiveness
I am up to my ankles
because nobody told me
what form to be forging
and I don't wanna find out
the wrong way
that I sculpted out my worst mistakes
the medium is the message I'm afraid
and I wrote it all down

it's a fever pitch
I won't let go of it
I want my knuckles
white and raw
and I won't forget what I saw but

I will try to be kind
I will try to be kind
if the soil will let me
I will try to be kind
I will try to be kind
if the salt will let me

the future's a protest
young and reckless
bittersweet I forgot
how it felt
I've been knee deep in the trenches myself

sustained injuries for all the good it did me
and I don't wanna find out
the wrong way
that I have passed the point beyond decay
ruthless, standing tall, and brutish
best left in the sun to fade

it was meaningless to try
I wasted half my life on
stories to be told
but I'll be curious 'til I go cold
so

I will try to be kind
I will try to be kind
if the soil will let me
I will try to be kind
I will try to be kind
if the salt will let me

tempest crawled to land from out the sea
what a clever thing to be
tempest took to air from out the sea
what a feathered thing
what a clever thing
to be
but try to be kind