

## EPISODE NINETY SEVEN - THEY DID US DIRTY

*Original transcript created and edited by Orion*

*[BEGIN Episode 97.]*

**INTRO:** Hey, guys, welcome to season nine of WOE.BEGONE. I hope you're excited. It's going to be a fun ride. Some quick plugs. I stream every Sunday over on Twitch at [twitch.tv/wobegonepod](https://twitch.tv/wobegonepod), where every Sunday evening I write episode soundtracks and then normally play a video game. I just beat *World of Goo* and I play a lot of puzzle games like that. So if that sounds interesting to you, go check me out over there.

And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon at [patreon.com/woe\\_begone](https://patreon.com/woe_begone), where you can get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&A's, directors, commentaries, postcards, Movies with Michael and more. I just sent out the January postcards this morning and they turned out great. All of the postcards, when put together, tell a larger story about the characters at the Base, and people get together in the Discord to share their postcards and try to piece together what's going on. It's a lot of fun, so go support me over there if that sounds interesting to you. Special thanks to my ten newest patrons [REDACTED] for supporting the show.

***[Warning this episode contains a depiction of violence. Listener discretion is advised.]***

*[Opening theme plays.]*

**MW** *[through a walker-talkie]:* I-I really don't like this, Michael. I-I really don't.

**MICHAEL:** Oh, you really don't, huh? You want to see it a few more times. I ain't tired of hearing it yet.

**MW:** So what? We're just going to do whatever they say?

**MICHAEL:** Yes, we are, Emdubya. It ain't like we got a choice.

**MW:** Well, doing what they say ain't gonna matter for you if you get killed out there.

**MICHAEL:** You could've been the one in the van, Emdubya, but ya froze up the second I suggested it.

**MW:** I got bad experiences with explodin' vans, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** I know, which is why I volunteered.

**MW:** This all feels like one big step back. This is what we were doing when we started Base before there even was an O.V.E.R. Mike. Except it's worse because we ain't even working for ourselves anymore.

**MICHAEL:** We just do what we gotta do until we figure ourselves a way out of here.

**MW:** Yeah, and what's the plan on that? Another connectivity strike?

**MICHAEL:** We got to be more clever is all. But we'll get out from under the thumb of the Hunters, just you wait and see. I've been around a long time, and a lot of that time I was waitin'. You gotta learn to be patient.

**MW:** They did us dirty, you know. Not just the Hunters, I'm talking about Base. They could have sent anyone on this field mission, but they picked the two of us. And you're me, so I know you're wondering if it's because you get killed out here, then none of them care what happens to Sly.

**MICHAEL:** It has occurred to me, but I'm alive and Sly is safe. He's with Marissa until the air clears. And Mikey-boy is still at Base. He wouldn't let that happen to us.

**MW:** Unless the pot was sweet enough, you mean?

**MICHAEL:** No, I mean at all, pilgrim.

**MW:** Okay, whatever helps you sleep at night, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** Nothing helps me *sleep* at night.

**MW:** Alright, I get it. Sore subject. I brought it up because I'm sore. You see anything out there?

**MICHAEL:** No, nothing. But according to our intel, it's only a matter of time 'fore he walks right by here.

**MW:** And you're just going to shoot 'im from the safety of the van.

**MICHAEL:** Shoot 'im, then send him to those coordinates the Hunters told us to. Yup.

**MW:** [*Sighs.*] This is depressing, Michael. Being reduced to hired guns after all this.

**MICHAEL:** Come on, pardner, it ain't like that. We weren't hired, we were ordered.

**MW:** And at least the last time I did this, we had experiments to do. We just gonna sit here?

**MICHAEL:** Well, I guess that means we got time to talk, partner.

**MW:** Yeah, I guess that's true. We haven't really got time to decompress since the Marissa mission. How's August doing, by the way? I mean, I know he's safe, but how's he feeling?

**MICHAEL:** Sly scared out of his gourd, partner. He'd never admit it, but I can see that look in his eye. I'll be talking and he'll seem... far away. And I know what that look is. Sly's new to this and I'm the one that drug him into it. He ain't used to having his life threatened like this. Which is why I sent him away with Marissa. He could've been hulled up in the ranch and probably been fine, but I think he needs to get out in the fresh air.

**MW:** And if Marissa takes a liking to him, it'll be harder for Base to just kill him if they feel like it, right?

**MICHAEL:** You got it, partner. Marissa is not someone that you want to see fired up. She just as soon tear that whole Base down if she gets mad enough.

**MW:** Yeah, she's someone you want in your corner, no question. And her and August *should* hit it off. They're both like riding bikes and shooting guns and getting into trouble.

**MICHAEL:** Yup. Marissa's just a cowboy without a hat, if you think about it.

**MW:** Is everyone just a cowboy in waiting, in your estimation?

**MICHAEL:** Well, look no further than yourself for proof, Emdubya.

**MW:** I needed something, and I was starting over and...

**MICHAEL:** That's how it goes. I started doing it as a joke and I uh, still ain't dropped the bit.

**MW:** So it really was a bit, when I first met you. When-When I was part of Mikey, I mean. The CANNONBALL mission.

**MICHAEL:** Told Mike right before we started. I'm going to make Mikey think I'm a cowboy. We both laughed.

**MW:** Do you know why you're a cowboy, Michael? Because I've been journaling since I moved in, and I've been having thoughts about it.

**MICHAEL:** Well, I got my reasons, but I'm more interested in yours.

**MW:** Well, since you asked, I do have my journal right here, so I can read from it.

**MICHAEL:** That would be lovely, MW.

**MW:** Oh, actually uh, [*Flips pages.*] this is your journal, Michael [**MICHAEL:** Hey, hey, hey! No, put that down. Hey, no, put that down right now, partner.] you wrote “Michael Walters Baxter” on it like a schoolgirl with a crush. And uh, you do crows on the front. You ain’t messing with the crows in the garden again, are ya? I told you to drop it.

**MICHAEL:** What I do in the garden is between myself and them, eleven crows.

**MW:** Well, there used to be seven of them. And if you're out there using dangerous time travel technology to duplicate some crows...

**MICHAEL:** How about you just read that journal entry you was talking about? You know, the one in *your* journal?

**MW:** Alright, I'm just picking on you, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** I'm aware.

**MW:** Alright, here it is. I have been thinking a lot about why I chose to become a cowboy after I got settled in here. Cowboys are cool, granted, but Janelle Monáe is cool, and I didn't decide to be Janelle Monáe when I moved in.

**MICHAEL:** She is very cool, though.

**MW:** I think it has something to do with performance. Being a cowboy, at least for me, is actually the explicit performance of being a cowboy. Which is to say that once I know what I'm performing, I can use that to inform my actions. I can do what a cowboy would do in any given scenario and by doin' so, I can bypass challenging, quote, “my own metal”. In that sense, my actions stopped being about me and what I do, which is freein' because it unbinds me from precedent. Being an amalgam of so many consolidated people means there's too much precedent. I don't know how I could possibly synthesize them, so disregardin' them entirely seems appropriate and healthy. And being a cowboy in particular means that I have the tools to deal with the situations here that I'm put in, situations that often require strength, resolve, and nerves of steel. And I can have these qualities even if I didn't have them before, because I'm a cowboy first and who I was second. And uh, that's the end of the relevant portion and it's all very high-minded proof that I went to college, but I think that it explains the appeal.

**MICHAEL:** I agree that it makes sense, partner. But, uh, you wanna hear what I think?

**MW:** Oh, absolutely. I mean, you've been at it longer than I have.

**MICHAEL:** I am a cowboy because I am Michael the Cowboy, pilgrim. It is self-evident.

**MW:** That feels like where I'm working towards.

**MICHAEL:** The cowboy thing don't go away, no matter what happens, no matter how upset I get, for instance, and that's cause I ain't sitting here thinking, "what would a cowboy do?" I'm doing what Michael the cowboy does.

**MW:** Right. And I'm still internalizing what Emdubya the cowboy does. Still no movement out there, I take it.

**MICHAEL:** No, sir. He don't even get off work till 8:30. So we're early.

**MW** *[dropping his accent]*: 8:30 is that in the brief somewhere? I don't remember s-s-seeing that it says *[Flips pages.]* that we need to be in place by 7:00...

**MICHAEL:** See, you're still slipping. You got distracted and you stopped doing the cowboy voice. **[MW: Michael.]** I can give you tips, by the way, on relaxing so that it gets lower and more gravelly. **[MW: Michael.]** And of course, the voice is far from the most important thing, it's just something that I feel keeps me **[MW: Michael...]** grounded.

**MW:** How did you know that he gets off work at 8:30?

**MICHAEL:** I-I was— I was just guessing, pilgrim. They... told us to be here by 7:00, so they must have known we'd have time to get... set up and ready. Um...

**MW:** Michael, God dammit. You know this guy, don't you?

**MICHAEL:** That's a story that you don't want to hear.

**MW** *[Slowly picks up his accent]*: You can't pull the grizzled cowboy shit on me. I'm in too deep. Okay, partner, from one cowboy to another, what is going on here?

**MICHAEL:** It ain't cowboy shit. It's somethin' that's about to never have happened. So, no point in wasting my breath telling ya about it.

**MW** *[drops the accent]*: Okay, even better. It's not cowboy shit, it's Base shit. That sounds even more important to tell me about.

**MICHAEL:** Well, he ain't gonna work for Base anymore, is he?

**MW:** W-Work for Base? We're killing one of *ours*? Do Edgar and Anne know about this?

**MICHAEL:** Don't matter. None of them know him.

**MW:** But...you know him.

**MICHAEL:** Of course, I know him.

**MW:** And you're fine with killing him because Hunter told us to?

**MICHAEL:** Hunter didn't *tell* us to. Hunter laid out the consequences of what happens to Sly if we don't. And so we're killing him.

**MW:** Okay. Who is he? What is his name? What did he do for us?

**MICHAEL:** Why? So you can go about meddling in this. Get Sly. Get us killed.

**MW:** We can't let them make us kill off our own, Michael. Oh my god, where does that end? It ends with us dead, is where. It ends with Base dismantled, it ends with the end of all of this. Michael... W-Why didn't you tell me that that's what they were doing?

**MICHAEL:** Because we have no choice, there is nothin' we can do about this. Gettin' upset don't help us and it don't help Luis either.

**MW:** But this is only temporary. The Hunters aren't in charge of Mike's Base. They're not in charge of your Base, and that means we get out from under their thumb, eventually. And when we do, we'll correct this.

**MICHAEL:** How incredibly optimistic of you to assume that we ever get free again, and that me and you live to see that day. And that once we do, this will be anywhere near the top of our priorities.

**MW:** Okay, then let's fix it right now. Make an iteration of him right before you kill him. It'll be like what Mikey did with Cole.

**MICHAEL:** Saving and iteration ain't the same thing as saving *him*, and you know it.

**MW:** No, save him and kill the iteration. The Hunters won't know the difference.

**MICHAEL:** Just add one more secret we're keeping from the Hunters, along with how Elder Hunter dies, and what's on those tapes from Sly's house. And if we ever slip up and they do find Luis, then we're dead and Sly's dead.

**MW:** [*Sighs.*] Michael, you were telling me not five minutes ago that you've done it, you fully internalized it, and you do what the cowboy does. Is this what the cowboy does? Because to me, frankly, this feels... yellow-bellied.

**MICHAEL:** You wouldn't say that if you knew everything that I knew.

**MW:** Lily-livered.

**MICHAEL:** I've tried it before and even with Ravi, things went wrong.

**MW:** Cockamamie.

**MICHAEL:** Ain't even what cockamamie means.

**MW:** If he's one of ours, then the strong, upstanding, difficult thing to do is to save him, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** You're wrong. Sheepdogging Base means making sure there's a Base to protect, and that means I gotta kill him.

**MW:** I think that you're making a big mistake that you are going to regret much more than I do.

**MICHAEL:** Wouldn't be the first time. I'll live through it. Now, here he comes.

**MW:** *[Stammers.]* You have eyes on him?

**MICHAEL:** Sure do, partner. Time has come.

**MW:** Please think about what I said. And be careful, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** You don't gotta worry about me, pilgrim.

*[Michael inhales deeply, steadying his breath.]*

*[Michael types on a Calculator.]*

*[Time travel noise.]*

*[A Mike Walters exhales energetically.]*

**MICHAEL:** What...? Mike?

**MW:** What? Mike? Mike's there?

**MIKE:** Michael.

**MICHAEL:** Mike, what are you doing here?

**MIKE:** Someone is ruining my time off, is what I'm doing.

**MW:** Are you there to issue a correction? See, Michael, I told you that flat out killing him is not the best option.

**MIKE:** Who is that? Mikey?

**MICHAEL:** It's Emdubya. He got upset and dropped the cowboy voice.

**MIKE:** Okay, MW, I know that you can't see this, but Luis, getting closer and closer and Michael's sitting there and he's not holding his pistol, he's holding the Calculator.

**MW:** I-I don't understand.

**MIKE:** And it would be much more pleasant for me if Base at my time was run by, you know, Base and not the Hunters. So maybe just... let Luis go, okay?

**MW:** Do you know him too, Mike?

**MIKE:** Yes, I know him, and he's a great guy, and he needs to die tonight, it's pretty important.

**MW:** We're just gonna let them make us kill one of our own, Mike?

**MIKE:** Yup! In hindsight, it is a much better option than our other options. And uh, he's getting closer, so we can argue about this back at the apartment, how about that?

**MW:** So I almost ruined everything?

**MIKE:** You did ruin everything, actually. The concept of a correction sort of implies that it actually happened. It's not the biggest deal in the world. Michael has been in your shoes more than once, and so have I. Michael?

**MICHAEL:** I'd have the shot by now if y'all would shut up and let me concentrate.

**MW:** 10-4.

*[Michael takes a deep breath.]*

**MICHAEL** *[drops accent, whispers]:* I'm sorry.

*[Michael breathes heavily. Fires his rifle.]*

**MIKE:** Good shot, Michael. I know that that wasn't easy.

**MW:** Is he down?

**MICHAEL** *[clearly shaken]:* Job is done. Now I just gotta send him to where the Hunters wanted him.



*[Michael types in a Calculator.]*

**MICHAEL:** Alright.

*[Time travel noise.]*

**MICHAEL:** Job is done. We can go home now. Mike, you wanna come with me?

**MIKE:** Y-Yeah, sure. Uh, I think it'd be a good idea if we hung out tonight, Michael.

**MICHAEL:** I think so, too. Here, let me just *[Begins typing.]* get the home coordinates in the calculator.

**MW:** Alright, see you guys in a minute.

**MICHAEL:** All right. Initiating transport in three, two, one.

*[Time travel noise.]*

**MIKE:** Home sweet home. *[Chuckles.]* Wow, you guys, uh, have really Westerned the place up a little bit, since I left.

**MICHAEL:** Yeah, Sly helped with the decorations and brought some stuff from the Sidewinder. It ain't the same without you around, Mike.

**MW** *[in the same room]:* I'm sorry, you guys. When Michael let it slip that he knew that guy, it just changed everything about how I was thinking about it and... I made a mistake.

**MICHAEL:** It was an understandable mistake to make, partner. Hell, I clearly agreed with ya, cause that's why we needed a correction.

**MIKE:** Michael the cowboy with the heart of gold. Give me a Break.

**MICHAEL:** Speaking of Cowboys, where the cowboy voice go, Emdubya?

**MW:** I think that I've proved that I haven't earned it.

**MICHAEL:** Now that right there, that's cockamamie.

**MIKE:** It's true, MW, that is indeed cockamamie.

**MW:** Alright, in the morning I wake up a cowboy again. How's that?

**MICHAEL:** Sounds good to me, Emdubya.

**MW:** All right, great. Now that that's out of the way, Mike, great to see you.

**MIKE:** Likewise.

**MW:** So the Hunters aren't in charge of your Base, correct?

**MIKE:** That is correct as of this correction.

**MW:** So we just have to do whatever they did, and eventually we will no longer be working under the Hunters, correct?

**MIKE:** It's more complicated than that, but... basically? But I can't tell you how it all shakes out. Because if it propagates backwards, then the Hunters might change what they do, and that would change what you need to do, and it might not happen.

**MW:** I think it might actually be worse that the objectively correct answers are out there and made inaccessible because of a paradox.

**MICHAEL:** I wouldn't think about it too hard, Emdubya. no point gazing into the void.

**MW:** We have to do something though, right? This is just like, WOE.BEGONE or O.V.E.R. We're not going to progress by continuing to do what people tell us to do. So, *[Chuckles.]* we have to start scheming.

**MIKE:** The Mike Walters special.

**MICHAEL:** We can start schemin' in the morning, Emdubya. I'm beat. I just... had a long night.

**MW:** I-I know, it's just that, when I mess up really bad, my brain goes into overdrive and I think of all of these ways that I can make things better and I feel like I need to do it right then. Like, one time in college I got a D on a test and then I stayed up all night studying, even though that night was like the furthest night from when that knowledge would be useful again, because I just took the test.

**MIKE:** Yeah, we know MW.

**MICHAEL:** We was there, partner.

**MIKE:** And we failed that class. If you're looking for a moral to this story.

**MW:** Noted, I just... want to make it up to you.

**MIKE:** Well, if you want to make it up to me, you can start by telling me what this guy's been up to.

**MICHAEL:** I've been letting you know what I'm up to, Mike.

**MIKE:** Yeah, but like, what's he really up to like, what's it like living with him? Like, what is he getting into these days?

**MW:** Well, we changed the furniture and the decorations up a little bit. Uh, we take turns walking Bruno. Oh, I found the deflated basketball.

**MIKE:** Bruno loves that basketball.

**MICHAEL:** I didn't even know about the basketball.

**MW:** Well, I wanted Bruno to like me more than you, so I didn't tell you about it.

**MICHAEL:** You scoundrel.

**MW:** That and duck toy.

**MIKE:** He still has duck toy? I thought he would have ripped that to shreds by now.

**MW:** Yeah, I made a duplicate of it. We're on duck toy number six.

**MICHAEL:** We did take the thing that makes it squeak out of the middle of it. Saved my sanity.

**MIKE:** And Boris's too, probably. How's he doing?

**MICHAEL:** He's doing great and still causing a commotion. I got him a cowboy hat, but I can't get him to wear it. Says it ain't his style.

**MIKE:** Honestly, a little surprising, it seems very his style.

**MICHAEL:** I thought so too, and I even made him a custom band for it. I've been making custom cowboy hat bands in my spare time. Got all these different colored beads and leather and leather string and all that nice stuff. I'm working on one for Emdubya that's got the Emdubya logo on it. I think it looks great. You know, Emdubya, we can still brand you with that logo if you want to match Mikey.

**MW:** I'll pass on that.

**MIKE:** Oh, uh, speaking of branding, where is August? After what happened, I thought you'd be attached to him at the hip.

**MICHAEL:** Sly is on a motorcycle trip with Marissa right now. I wanted him to get out of here for a while.

**MIKE:** August and Marissa together, huh? That's uh, too rich for my blood.

**MW:** There's going to be some stories coming out of that one.

**MICHAEL:** You're damn right, there will be.

*[Closing theme plays.]*

*[Crows caw eagerly.]*

**MICHAEL:** Gather round, gather round. There's plenty of sunflowers for all y'all. Now form an orderly line. Hey, hey! There's enough for everyone, I said. Hey, hey, hey. Quit fighin' each other. Hey! Simmer down. Simmer down. Hey, hey. I'm not giving any more 'till y'all quiet down. *[Crows stop cawing.]* Alright, now you can't tell Emdubya about this, understand?

*[Crows caw happily in agreement.]*

*[END Episode 97.]*