

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND TWELVE - KITCHEN KNIFE

Original transcript edited by Jenah

[BEGIN Episode 112.]

INTRO: Hey guys, quick plugs. I'm still streaming every Sunday afternoon over on Twitch at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where I write the episode soundtracks and then hang out and play video games. I just got a new computer so hopefully the streams will be a whole lot smoother now, I'll be able to play more games, and I will be able to write the soundtracks without blue screening my computer. That's twitch.tv/woebegonepod.

And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon at Patreon.com/woe_begone, where you can early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentary, postcards, Movies with Michael, and more. I've said for a while now that at \$1,500 per month we would do the beach episode of WOE.BEGONE and we are very close to that goal. Just in time for summer. So if you would like to see all your favorite WOE.BEGONE characters have fun at the beach consider supporting the show at Patreon.com/woe_begone.

Special thanks to my 10 newest Patreons: [REDACTED]. Enjoy

[Warning: This episode contains depictions of violence. Listener discretion is advised.]

[Opening theme plays.]

[Night ambiance, crickets chirping]

MIKE: [CALLING OUT] Yeah, it was nice meeting you too! I've— uh— really gotta go, though. For real this time. I've got a thing in a few minutes, I can't be late— uhh— I'm gonna be late! It was really nice meeting you. Bye Marissa!

[Frantic footsteps.]

MIKE: Fuck. Fuck. What time is it? I actually am late. Goddammit, Marissa. I knew I should have scheduled it some other time, but when's Jam's gonna go out with their friends again. *[sigh]* What's done is done. *[Pause]* Marissa didn't know it was me. She took the fake last name. She didn't squint at it. She just bought it. And "I should let you go so you don't be a Mike Walters" was a joke. I'm telling myself it was a joke. And not that she was hinting that she knew who I was. Fuck. Why is it such a long walk to Jam's cabin? It seemed so short when I was walking to Tier Two. Why is everything spaced so far apart out here?

Alright he's gonna be on the other side of that door in... a couple minutes ago. Fuck. Maybe he's still out of it from the transport? Let's find out. Okay, Mike. Okay, Mike, let's go. You can do this. You've got the guy. Let's go get him.

[Door opening.]

CHANCE: *[Commandingly.]* PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM OR I SHOOT.

MIKE: Uhh... uhh... yeah, sure. I don't want any trouble— uh— Here are my hands. See? I don't mean any harm. I don't have a gun or anything.

CHANCE: WHO ARE YOU?

MIKE: *[Unconvincing.]* I... uh... my name is... Boone... “Grizzly” Babcock. And you don't want to know why they call me Grizzly.

CHANCE: Bullshit. Do you normally hesitate that long before saying your name, Boone?

MIKE: I— I go by Grizzly. And normally I don't have a gun pointed at my head. How do you know that's not my name? Do you know my name?

CHANCE: How would I know your name?

MIKE: You know, just thought that you might. I don't look familiar to you? Maybe from a couple years ago?

CHANCE: Nope. Hence the gun. What are you doing in Jamilla's cabin? What am I doing in Jamilla's cabin? Why did you bring me here?

MIKE: If you don't know me, how do you know that this isn't my cabin?

CHANCE: There's a framed picture of Jamilla and Jeff Tweedy from Wilco in the hallway. I work with Jam, dipshit. Why aren't they here? What did you do with them?

MIKE: Oh so you don't know who I am but you know that I'm not Jeff Tweedy from Wilco. Curious. And I didn't do anything with Jam. They had plans tonight with friends. I'm friends with Jam. I'm visiting from out of town and I'm staying in their cabin for a little bit. I went to get some fresh air and when I got back, there was a gun pointed in my face.

CHANCE: Uh huh. Getting some air, walking around a top secret government facility unaccompanied. Meanwhile, I mysteriously get transported into the cabin you're staying at. Jam wouldn't let their “friend” wander around like that.

MIKE: I've never been here before, man. I don't know the rules. For all I know, people are transported all over the place all the time. I don't know anything about why you're here. You said you work with Jam? Maybe some wires got crossed and something was supposed to be transported into Jam's cabin and you got transported instead. Did you think of that?

CHANCE: Nobody I work with is that careless, Jam least of all. You did this. Get on the ground and put your hands behind your head or I will shoot you right between the eyes [**MIKEY:** Okay, okay, man.]. If there wasn't an outside chance you actually are Jam's friend you'd be dead by now. On the ground [**MIKEY:** I'm on the ground.]. [Pause.] Exactly like that. Good. Alright, now don't move. I'm gonna call Jam. And if I can't get a hold of them to prove they're okay, then this is going to get messy.

MIKE: Don't... uh... don't tell them what's happening. Please. Don't bring them into this. Uh. You're right, I'm not supposed to be here, uh, Jam's doing me a favor and they could get in big trouble if anyone found out, so don't let them know that you know that I'm here. Okay?

CHANCE: We'll see if you come up in conversation.

[Phone ringing.]

CHANCE: Hey, Jam! It's Chris. [Pause] Oh, sorry, I lost track of time. I didn't realize it was so late. I'm working on a project for Base, it's gonna be an all-nighter. [Pause] Yep, me too. Night owls unite. Hey, I was wondering: did you get the email about the Slack channel? You shoulda got an invite from Eagle a couple of days ago, but I went to send you something and you weren't in there. [Pause.] Yeah, yeah, no rush or anything. Whenever you get some time. I can always email it to you in the meantime. Sorry again for bothering you so late, it won't happen again. [Pause.] Yeah, you too. See you tomorrow, bright and early, as usual. Uh huh. Alright. Yep. Bye Jam.

[Bloop of phone call ending.]

MIKE: You didn't tell them about me.

CHANCE: It wasn't to protect you, don't flatter yourself. I don't want any information propagating until I can get a handle on the situation. And I'm gonna try to stay out of everyone's business if I can manage. I didn't stay alive at O.V.E.R. so long by meddling where I didn't have to. Consider yourself lucky that it was *me* that got transported here and not one of my more reckless co-workers. I know a couple of them would have killed you before you could give your fake name.

MIKE: That's me, Mr. Lucky on the ground with his hands behind his head.

CHANCE: So, whatever you brought me here for was a bust. A pathetic one at that. Here's what's going to happen now: I'm going to leave and I'm never going to see you again. Alright, "Boone"?

MIKE: I go by Grizzly, but other than that, yeah that's fine with me.

CHANCE: And if I ever catch a whiff of you again, I am going to shoot you on sight. Got it?

MIKE: Loud and clear, boss.

CHANCE: And I'm walking right out that door to set up a contingency. So if you try anything ever again, same thing: on sight.

MIKE: Yeah, I get it. On sight.

CHANCE: Thank you for being agreeable. If I were you, I wouldn't tell anyone about this. Not Jam, not anyone. Got it? If it propagates, I'm not going to be the only one gunning for you.

MIKE: My lips are sealed.

CHANCE: Perfect. I'm going to leave now. It was nice meeting you, "Griz." I hope we never meet again.

[Footsteps exiting the cabin then the sounds of a scuffle.]

MIKE: *[heavy breathing and grunts]* You're not getting away from me mother fucker

[sounds of a struggle]

CHANCE: *[grunts and cries out in pain]*

MIKE:*[breathing heavily]* Ha! Who's pathetic now? I've got the gun, now get back the fuck over there.

CHANCE: What... did you stab me with?

MIKE: Um. A knife, obviously. Not deep, though. You'll live.

CHANCE: It was more like a scratch, really.

MIKE: Great. So, you'll be fine, as long as you do exactly what I say. Get away from the door, hands where I can see them, no fast movements, you know, all the stuff you told me? I'm sure you remember it was only five seconds ago.

CHANCE: What the fuck is this even all for? What are you even doing?

MIKE: We're still doing this? C'mon, Chris. Drop the act. It was cute when you were trying to use it to get away, but the gun is pointed at you now so stop pretending. We need to talk about WOE.BEGONE.

CHANCE: I don't know what that is.

MIKE: Bullshit. I've got you pinned, Chris. I know about you and Ryan. I know that you brought me here to O.V.E.R. And I know that you and Ryan are with Hunter at his Base.

CHANCE: *[Defensive.]* What about Ryan?

MIKE: Ryan's the ringleader, right? He runs WOE.BEGONE and you're just his little right hand man doing puzzles? I'd rather have him, but I figured out your patrol route, so here we are. Now it's time for the questions. Why did you bring me out here? Was it so that Hunter could kill me?

CHANCE: Hunter killed you? That's what this is about? He killed you all by himself, huh. That's interesting. Normally he passes menial jobs like that to people like me.

MIKE: *[sighs heavily]* Of course he does because you have the WOE.BEGONE technology so you can get it done fast. Is that why you're at Base? You run the WOE.BEGONE technology for them?

CHANCE: I don't know what WOE.BEGONE is and repeating it won't make me understand what you mean. We have our own technology at Base. We don't need "WOE.BEGONE."

MIKE: I'm not trying to make this difficult for you, Chris. I just want my life back. Everything before this, hey it's water under the bridge. I don't care that you made me cut off my arm or that you made me cut off my hands after spending hours looking for a fucking song, or that you made me kill Matt. I just want my life back, Chris. I want out, alive.

CHANCE: You... cut off your arm?

MIKE: I don't get it. You put all of that work into me for a reason, I assumed. I thought that I got the orders to come out here to O.V.E.R. to be a good little soldier for you and Ryan, maybe do some espionage or get my hands dirty so that you wouldn't have to put yourself at risk. And then I show up and this goddamn Minnesota cowboy shows up at my door and shoots me dead on my very first day. Why do that? What's the calculus on that?

CHANCE: How do you remember H killing you? Are you connected somehow?

MIKE: I remember because I am more clever than you and Ryan think I am. I recorded everything. I have the whole thing on a drive. Hunter made a phone call, basically over my still-warm corpse and gave the game away. It was one phone call but it gave me someplace to start looking. He said that he has Flinch. And that means that he has the WOE.BEGONE technology and the WOE.BEGONE gamerunners are Chris and Ryan and you are half of a pair of Chris and Ryans that work at Hunter's Base. Everything fits together. So. you need to stop playing dumb and start cooperating because I know that it's you. Ryan is your partner, right? You two are together on this?

CHANCE: Uh... Ryan is my *partner*. Like my *partner* partner. We live together. I took a job at Base and he took a job there in order to look after me. We don't "run the technology" or make people cut their limbs off or whatever you're accusing us of. We do real, serious work.

MIKE: What a detailed backstory you've planned out. That's very Chris. Very CANNONBALL. It's becoming tiresome. How about either you start spilling the beans or the knife comes out again.

CHANCE: Have you considered that maybe *that's* why Hunter wanted to kill you? That if you're alive you just go around torturing members of Base?

MIKE: If you give me what I want then nobody gets tortured.

CHANCE: Look here, Grizzle. Look at me. Look me in the eye when I tell you this. [**MIKE:** I'm looking.] I have no clue what WOE.BEGONE is or what you are talking about. [**MIKE:** Uh huh.] At all. [**MIKE:** Uh huh.] And Ryan doesn't either.

MIKE: You know something, the "look me in the eye" trick... it doesn't work. Guilty people say it and innocent people don't. I mean I know that I only say it when I'm guilty. Admit it, Chris. Admit to running WOE.BEGONE and tell me how to get free. Or Ryan goes home to an empty cabin from now on.

CHANCE: I... you...you can't just... someone would figure out what happened—

[*Gunshot and sound of something shattering.*]

CHANCE: Fuck!

MIKE: I can and I will. That is your only warning shot. Talk.

CHANCE: [Huffs.] I don't know what WOE.BEGONE is. Ryan and I are not the Chris and Ryan you are looking for. I don't know anything about that technology or— or why you were brought out here or anything. But... [**MIKE:** But?] If I tell you something, will you leave Ryan alone?

MIKE: That depends on what you tell me.

CHANCE: ...There *is* another Chris and Ryan that work at the Base. And I don't mean iterations of us. I mean a separate Chris and Ryan. I don't know them too well because they aren't on the field team. They don't come into the office and we only ever see them at all-hands meetings. They report to H directly. They might be the ones you're looking for.

MIKE: Okay, can you prove it?

CHANCE: Alright... I'm going to put my hand in my pocket to get my phone, okay? Slowly. That Slack that I was telling Jamilla about when I called them... we're all in there. I can pull it up and show you. **[MIKE: Let's see it. Slowly.]** Okay, look: here's me and Ryan, and then if you scroll there's another Chris and Ryan. That Chris goes by Toph or Topher usually. **[MIKE: Uh huh]** See? I didn't make it up. I can't promise they're who you're looking for, though. But if you're looking for a Chris and Ryan connected to Hunter Hartley, they might be a match.

MIKE: Okay I see. Chris and Ryan... and Ryan... and Topher. Well, then. That must be confusing. One of you needs nicknames.

CHANCE: I'll bring that up at the next all-hands meeting.

MIKE: Hmm. I think I believe you. 51%. I only ever saw the gamerunners with masks on, but still I don't think it's you. Chris had a different demeanor to him. His voice might have been different, too. And you've given me a possible lead. So, I think it might not be you. Tenuously.

CHANCE: This is all an unfortunate misunderstanding. I'm sorry that this all happened to you and I hope you get your guy. We can call a mulligan on all of this.

MIKE: Fat chance. I can't let you leave. You'd run right to Hunter and he'd kill me all over again. You're not going anywhere.

CHANCE: Oh, that's really not a problem. I don't have to remember a thing. You can just call a correction on yourself and skip this whole evening.

MIKE: I'm not sure what you mean by "correction."

CHANCE: It's easy. All you have to do is go back to whatever you used to transport me and travel to the moment you did it and tell yourself not to do that. I won't be transported here, I won't remember anything, and you can go back to hiding in Jam's cabin— and making a mess of the place by the looks of it— and nobody will be any the wiser. Hostage situation negotiated.

MIKE: Hey I only shot Jam's record player because you weren't taking me seriously. But that does sound plausible. If it's that easy, then why kill anyone? Why would Hunter kill me? Couldn't he issue some sort of correction like that?

CHANCE: Normally when we kill people, *that* is the correction. If Hunter killed you, it was to prevent something worse from happening down the line. Potentially much worse.

MIKE: Okay, what happens if I stay alive?

CHANCE: How should I know? When H killed you, whatever you did never happened, so I don't remember it. That's the point of the correction: to make sure that nobody can remember the worse timeline. Look, I can walk you through the correction if you're worried about not getting it

right. I'll go with you, wherever you did the transport– Tier Two? If I'm with you, I can't run off and tattle to H.

MIKE: No, no, no, thanks for the suggestion but I'm not doing a correction.

CHANCE: Then what are you going to do?

MIKE: Is anyone at Base right now?

CHANCE: I don't... think so? Surely not, it's the middle of the night. We don't have any overnight projects going on and everyone has their O.V.E.R. duties and all that, so no one should be there. It should be completely empty. Everyone is either patrolling or asleep in their cabins.

MIKE: Great, then you're taking me to Base. Right now.

CHANCE: Taking you to Base to do what?

MIKE: I've got some ideas. You got a car? I was transported here, so I don't.

CHANCE: Yes, I do...

MIKE: Perfect. You're driving. The gun goes off if you make any unexpected pit stops.

CHANCE: I can't believe you got the gun from me.

MIKE: Yeah, me neither honestly. Alright, field trip. Let's go.

[Scene transitions.]

[Sounds of driving]

MIKE: Is... is that guy at the gate always that oblivious?

CHANCE: Troy? Oh yeah, always. We have a betting pool in the office as to whether or not it's all an act. Eagle thinks that Troy is actually running all of O.V.E.R. and the himbo security guard routine is a disguise to cover it up. Personally, I don't think it's an act and I think people are a little too mean to him. He's a nice guy, always friendly. The other gate guard is named Charlie and she's good friends with him. That said, I wouldn't trust Troy guarding my sandwich if I got up from the table at a restaurant, much less the front gate of O.V.E.R.

MIKE: Charlie... I think I met Charlie at the diner. She seems really sweet.

CHANCE: She is. And she *cares* about everyone. That's her thing. And if anyone does anything to hurt the people that she cares about, she goes on a fucking warpath. You do not wanna get on her bad side. So you had better not do anything to hurt me, "Griz."

MIKE: You'll be the one deciding if you get hurt... but I'm— I'm sorry that I stabbed you earlier. Are you okay?

CHANCE: Yeah, I'm fine. You didn't really "stab" me. It was more like scratch really. What was that knife? It looks like a serrated bread knife or something?

MIKE: I don't know, man. Jamilla's way too fancy for me. They've got all this stuff in their kitchen that I've never seen before. And, I was in a hurry to get to Tier Two and I grabbed whatever knife was laying out and it was that one.

CHANCE: Well, you got the gun out of my hand, so I suppose that whatever you're doing is working. I've still got my eyes on the road. You pointing that thing at me still?

MIKE: Yep. Still got the knife, too. One false move and I cut you like a loaf of sourdough.

CHANCE: And here I thought I was melting your cold exterior and we were bonding.

MIKE: Some of my best bonding has been at gunpoint. If you make it out of this alive, I'm sure we're going to be fast friends. We have a lot in common. I was impressed that you recognized Jeff Tweedy from that picture with Jam.

CHANCE: I mean, Wilco is a good band but they're not exactly an obscure gem. Of course I recognized him.

MIKE: I like Yankee Hotel Foxtrot, but I don't think that I've given the rest of their discography a fair shake.

CHANCE: My favorite Wilco album is A.M., but I'm more of a folky kinda guy.

MIKE: That's the one with the TV on the cover, right? Jam's got it on vinyl. And, hopeful there's not a hole in it now.

CHANCE: That's the one.

MIKE: Oh, hey. Speaking of the diner I think that's the one I met Charlie at. The 24 Hour diner.

CHANCE: I know. There's only two restaurants in the Valley and that's the one that's closest to O.V.E.R.

MIKE: You wanna get something to eat on our way back to O.V.E.R.? Celebrate a job well done?

CHANCE: [*chuckling*] Don't push your luck, Griz.

MIKE: I'm just thinking with my stomach.

CHANCE: Why Griz, by the way?

MIKE: You know. Like Grizzly Adams.

CHANCE: [*Affecting a southern accent*] Oh, do you think that you're a wild west mountain man or something? Came out to Oldbrush Valley to play cowboy?

MIKE: No, I just— I just uh— I thought it'd sound imposing.

CHANCE: I mean I didn't feel imposed upon, but your plan worked, however indirectly. Base trains us on scenarios all the time and we're taught to be prepared for anything, but I really slipped up this time. Normally I've got Ryan in my ear telling me what to do... and I get riled up and protective when I hear his voice. But... all that matters in the end is who's holding the gun.

MIKE: [*affecting a southern accent*] You're damn right about that one, partner. [*laughing*] Could you imagine?

CHANCE: [*pause*] So, what's your real name?

MIKE: You can call me Griz. Didn't you say something earlier about information propagating?

CHANCE: Oh look at you, your learning. Well, we're here. Welcome to Base.

MIKE: You said no one would be here. There are lights on.

CHANCE: That's normal. We always leave some lights on. We don't need everyone in the Valley knowing that there isn't anyone here at night. It scares off the honest criminals, at least. There's no way that anyone from Base is out here this late.

[*car doors and footsteps*]

MIKE: Okay, you've earned my trust but it can also all go away. The gun's still pointed at you. And if someone else is out here, then you're going to be the one paying for it.

CHANCE: Look, I'm not lying to you, Griz. Can I unlock the front door now?

MIKE: Slowly. And give me your keys when you're done. The last thing I need is for you to make a break for it and drive away and leave me here.

[Door unlocking and keys jangling and the sound of them being caught]

CHANCE: There you go. And here is our lovely Base of operations. Where will I be taking you this evening?

MIKE: Why, Hunter Jeremiah Hartley's office, please and thank you.

CHANCE: He's not going to like that.

MIKE: He's not going to know about it. Take me there.

CHANCE: It's straight back at the end of that hallway.

MIKE: After you Chris, I'm not turning my back to you.

CHANCE: What are you planning to do in H's office?

MIKE: Eh, depends on what's in there. We'll see.

[Footsteps]

CHANCE: Here we are. You can see for yourself. Hunter Jeremiah Hartley: day-to-day operations. **[MIKE:** Oooo a plaque] And...

CHANCE: It's unlocked. There was about a 50/50 chance it would be locked.

MIKE: That would've been even better. Jam's teaching me how to pick a lock.

CHANCE: Jam can really do it all, can't they?

MIKE: Seems like it. I'm consistently impressed at least. Okay great, uh let's check out this computer password screen... *[typing on a keyboard]* let's just try "password" real quick... Nope. "hunter"... uh "Hunter" with a capital H? "HJH"? "Blink182"? Nope, nothing.

CHANCE: *[laughing]* Blink182?

MIKE: Yeah, Blink182 was one of the most common user passwords in the world.

CHANCE: Eh, H doesn't seem like the Blink182 type.

MIKE: You never know. We were all fifteen once. I can always get into the computer later. Let's do some scrounging. [*drawer opening*] Let's see here... [*flipping through papers*] These files look important, I'll take those. And... uh... what is this? Oh. These are coordinates. Does this do what I think it does?

CHANCE: That's a calculator and if you take that H won't just kill you. He'll make it hurt.

MIKE: Then I will come up with a foolproof plan to steal it later. But if I can use it here then it makes the next part of my plan a lot easier. I was going to have you drive me back to O.V.E.R. to iterate the computer and the files and then bring them back here. But if the Calculator can iterate them, then I can send the iterations to Jam's place from here. I have Jam's cabin coordinates memorized from the whole kidnapping you thing. That saves us a trip and we won't have to worry about sneaking past Marissa or getting caught or talking to her for forty-five minutes while she ruins your plans, as an example.

CHANCE: What exactly are you looking for?

MIKE: This place feels like a legitimate operation and Hunter seems like a meticulous record keeper. So I'm hoping he took some extensive notes on why he killed me on my first day at O.V.E.R. Why he wanted to kill me, how he went about doing it, that sort of stuff.

CHANCE: I can't promise that any of that will be in there. That sort of paperwork is well above my paygrade.

MIKE: I figure that the boss's computer was the best bet. And if not I'm sure there's something I can use. So let's just move some copies of these to Jam's cabin.

[*brief time travel sounds*]

MIKE: Uh, that was easy.

CHANCE: Just wanna say, this makes the correction you're going to issue a lot more tricky, you know. You want to hold onto those files but the reason you have those files is that I brought you here and unlocked the door for you. If you correct it so that I was never in Jam's cabin, then there's no one to bring you to Base and get the files. I'm not saying it's impossible, you've just gotta swap a bunch of stuff around to make sure the end state is what you want it to be. It's complicated now. It's not a problem. It's a puzzle. But that's the sort of puzzle that Base pays me and Ryan to solve.

[*rustling*]

MIKE: What was that? You said that no one was here.

CHANCE: [*Whispering*] There shouldn't be. I didn't think that there was, I swear.

MIKE: [*Whispering*] Well someone is unless the microwave is operating itself.

CHANCE 2: [*From elsewhere in the house.*] Hello? [**MIKE:** [*Whispering*] *Fuck!*] Is somebody here? Ryan? Marissa?

MIKE: You're here!?

CHANCE: You iterated me!? I was going to head here after my patrol and get some work done. I must've taken Ryan's car because it has better heating and parked around back. I would have said something but *I didn't know I was an iteration.*

MIKE: Duh. Of course you're an iteration. I didn't know what I was going to do with you. If I killed the original Chris, then all of Base would be on my ass in an instant. I needed to be able to kill you without you going missing. I thought you were CANNONBALL. I was going to kill you, sorry. I didn't realize we'd bond or, whatever. I thought you were a gamerunner.

CHANCE: Well, thanks to your brilliant plan, I'm headed down the hallway. What now?

MIKE: Well, I've got an idea. It's a really ba idea and it's gonna have to do for now... I'm really sorry, I'll come back for you. It was nice meeting you, Chris.

CHANCE: Wait, what are you doing? Griz? What do you mean come back-

[*time travel noise*]

MIKE: Alright, flip it from negative to positive—

[*time travel noise and office door opening*]

CHANCE 2: Hello? Anybody in here? Sorry, I would've unlocked the door for you but I was working on my project and I had my headphones in. Hello? I could have sworn that someone was in here. Huh... [*Sigh.*] Maybe my imagination... or the house settling...

[*office door closing*]

[*SCENE TRANSITION.*]

[*time travel noise*]

MIKE: [*Breathing heavily*] Ow. Did I do that wrong? Ugh, okay. Jam's cabin. Let's see. Files... [*papers rustling*] great. Computer? Check. Uhhh, no Chris. Okay, uh, let's see where that coordinate was. [*Exhale. Typing*] Jam's coordinates are these and flip the positive to negative gives us... hundreds of miles off the coast of Chile. That will have to do for now. Man... Sorry,

Chris. It— it was you or me. It was you or me. And there's only one of me. [*Long sigh.*] I'll come back for you. As soon as I'm safe I'll come back for you.

[*SCENE TRANSITION.*]

[*Heavy knocking on a door.*]

MIKE: [*Gasping*] That's him. [*Breathing heavily. More heavy knocking*] Okay, okay. [*Deep inhale*] Whoa, what the fuck was that? Fuck. He's here. Am I recording? Okay. I'm recording. This better help, Jam. The reaper's at the door. [**HUNTER:** [*muffled through the door*] Hello? Anyone in there? I saw you movin' your stuff in. I wanted to pop by and say 'hello'.] [*door opens*] Hi.

HUNTER: Hey there! Hope I didn't scare you when I knocked. I saw you moving your stuff in and wanted to stop in and introduce myself. Hunter Jeremiah Hartly. You can call me Hunter or Jerry or H, or just yell in my direction and I'll probably come running.

MIKE: Hi Hunter, I— I— I'm uh- Mike Walters.

HUNTER: Pleased to meet you, Mike. That's a firm handshake you got there. How're you settling in?

MIKE: Not— uh— settled in at all, really. I— I just got my boxes in a few minutes ago. [*voice trembling*] I was just stopping to catch my breath. Uh— come in, it's cold outside.

HUNTER: Don't mind if I do. [*door closing. footsteps*] Oo, wow, will you look at that. You got one of the big cabins Mikey. O.V.E.R. builds some of them too small, you know? My first cabin had a kitchen where the dishwasher door would hit the wall if you opened it all the way. [*laughs*] Have you had a chance to check out the field manual yet?

MIKE: Uh— no, I- I was gonna look at it later.

HUNTER: Ahh, toss it out. All it's good for is confusin' the newbies. Marissa's coming by later to give you some job training. Watch for her, [*laughs*] she's a firecracker.

MIKE: I'd rather learn on the job anyway. I— I'm a little nervous. You can probably tell. I've never done anything like this before. Is there a lot of— action in this job?

HUNTER: Oh no, Tier One security is easy work. Just a bunch of walking around all day. Nothing to be nervous about.

MIKE: Well, that's a relief. Can I get you something— from the kitchen— uh— water?

HUNTER: No. I'm fine, bud. Drank some tea before I head over here. I appreciate the hospitality though.

MIKE: Oh— okay then— well I— I'm gonna go to the kitchen and get me some water.

HUNTER: Mike. You know. Doncha?

MIKE: Um— Know what?

HUNTER: [*gun clicking*] Ope! I'm gonna stop you right there, pal. You were going for the knife on the kitchen counter. [*Mikey breathes heavily*] I saw it too. You're staying put. Who tipped you off?

MIKE: Nobody tipped me off.

HUNTER: Keep backing away and sit down, Mike, you're not making a break for it. If you run out the back my buddy Eagle is out there waiting for you with a hunting knife and he's a pro with it. You don't want to go out there. It's freezing cold. Sit.

MIKE: Don't do this, Hunter.

HUNTER: [*sighs heavily*] Oh, Mike. I have to do it, bud. I'm saving a bunch of lives.

MIKE: Hunter I don't know what you think I'm going to do—

HUNTER: Ope! I'm going to stop you right there. I don't think anything. I know what you're going to do and it's going to cost a bunch of good folks their lives.

MIKE: No, no, I wouldn't— I won't— I'll do whatever you tell me to do. You can lock me up in the basement at Base. Anything.

HUNTER: [*sighs*] Sorry, Mike. We tried everything. We really did. Dozens of times actually. I wouldn't be here if there was any other way. It must be in your nature. Mike Walters is a fox in the hen house. I'm just protecting my flock, doncha know? Someone's gotta nip this in the bud before it gets out of control.

MIKE: You have full access to time travel. You can do anything. You have my full cooperation. We can stop whatever you're afraid of happening. We'll work together. I'll do whatever you say.

HUNTER: I can do almost anything. It's hard accept but I'm tellin' the truth. I already tried everything else.

MIKE: People will know that I'm missing. They'll come looking for me. They'll figure out it's you, they'll destroy your Base.

HUNTER: Let me worry about that bud. That's none of your concern.

MIKE: Hunter, I haven't done anything.

HUNTER: I'm sorry Mike. It's about what you will do. And you don't have as much control over that as you think.

MIKE: No you have it all– [*gunshot. Mike grunts in pain.*]

HUNTER: I told you to sit down. Oo, got you pretty good there. Sorry, Mike. Looks like the conversation is over. I promise you. We did everything we could. It's time to go. [**MIKE:** [*gasping and wheezing*] Hunter. Hunter.] Take it from me, Mikey. The more you try to wriggle out of this, the more it's going to hurt. So, try to stay dead this time, [*Mike gasping and wheezing*] okay? Alright. Here we go. [*big sigh*] Good bye, Mike. [*Mike gasping and wheezing. Gunshot and thump of a body*] [*big sigh*] That was rough. Let's see that phone of yours, Mikey. Someone tipped you off. Yup. Let's borrow that fingerprint from you there. [*phone unlocking*] Hm. Looks like you were recording me. That'll do it. So you were sending these to... Jamilla Gardener. Huh. Interesting. Okay. I'll forward these to me. And all gone. Hope that puts an end to it. [*footsteps exiting and door opening. Phone rings.*] Hey, it's H. The fox is out of the henhouse but it didn't go as smoothly as I wanted. Looks like he was comparing notes with Jamilla Gardener. I made copies of the recordings and deleted them on their end. Keep an eye on Jamilla. I don't want Mike Walters coming back from the dead. That should be the last of him at least. Should be smooth sailing from here on out. Add Jamilla to the docket for a meeting later. We'll get that sorted out. Alright. Yep. I'm excited too. It's a wonderful day in the valley. No more Mike Walters. Catch you at the meeting. Alright. Bye now. [*phone call ending pinging sound*]

[*Closing theme plays.*]

CREDITS: This has been WOE.BEGONE. The voice of Chance was Taylor Michaels. If you'd like to hear more from Taylor, you can check him out in *The Department of Variance of Somewhere, Ohio*. I wonder if Chance is related to the interrupting bar patron in the bar in Texas. The voice of Hunter Jeremiah Hartley was Gary Furlong, check him out Facebook, instagram, and Tiktok at garyfurlongvo. Thanks for playing.

CHANCE: Hi there! I'm Chris. You might know me as Chance on the hit podcast WOE.BEGONE. And I'm here with a very special message. It's fun to listen to A.M. by Wilco at full volume in your headphones while you get important work done, late at night. But you know what's not fun? Getting caught unaware while a nefarious element leads an iteration of yourself around your Base because you're too in-the-zone to hear them. Take some time every half-hour or so to walk around and stretch. You can check in on the rest of the Base and it's healthy. It's also a good opportunity to hydrate! Some things are too important to allow yourself to be distracted. So, next time you are tempted to let your guard down, remember what Chance told ya: don't get hurt, be alert! Thanks for listening.