

**WOE.BEGONE EPISODE 96: Do You Want To Be Powerful?**

TY

Ah! You must be Cole. Ty Betteridge.

COLE

Your reputation precedes you.

TY

Good things, I hope.

COLE

Mixed, honestly. It seems like you are doing some important work here, but also breaking a few eggs.

TY

I like to think we're making nice omelets at the very least. We are making strides in a myriad of fields at a breakneck pace, if I do say so myself. Fe said something about you having a background in tracing?

COLE

I have a background in working on tech projects for O.V.E.R. I've been working on "tracing" as you call it for Edgar's Base. They need it to locate one of their members.

TY

Wonderful. They've needed some more know-how in that place since its founding. Have you made any progress on the project?

COLE

I have made progress and that's why I'm here. My understanding is that Ryan knocked out *your* tracing capabilities? Is that correct?

TY

Our official stance is that the two situations are unrelated. But we do have to say that. I don't think there's a point in bullshitting you. Ooh, is that what's on the laptop? A tracing protocol?

COLE

It is. I made it using a modified version of the proprietary language that O.V.E.R. uses, since my program is built on top of the O.V.E.R. surveillance software. If you don't know the language, you might not be able to make heads or tails of it, but I promise that it is what it purports to be. There's some spaghetti in there, but Base wanted it done ASAP so I bodged together whatever I could as fast as I could. And... it works.

TY

Wow, Cole. This looks like the real deal. How long did it take you to put this together?

COLE

About 3 weeks? I'm kinda "in hiding" right now, so there wasn't much else to do, so I've been working on it full time.

TY

No kidding. That's impressive. Have you tested it out yet?

COLE

I've done some minor tests with it, yes. Large objects where I know both the beginning and ending locations. And it's accurate to the scale that I need it to be accurate to for *this* mission, though the pinpointing could use some honing for other applications. There's room to improve, definitely. Base wants it to find a member that has been captured, so they aren't willing to wait for a more perfect solution. This gets the job done.

TY

They're about to pull the trigger on their rescue operation, I take it?

COLE

Preparations are underway. T minus 2 days is what they're saying.

TY

You weren't around when they broke the cowboy out of *here*, I don't believe. I would be cautious with them. Their rescue

operations have the potential to become... messy. If I were you, I wouldn't be around when the festivities begin.

COLE

Oh, I'm not going to be inside the thing. I'm just going to push the button.

TY

Inside... what? Are they building something?

COLE

I don't think that they'd appreciate me telling you.

TY

Fair point. I do wish you the best. There are already too many fish in the pond. We don't need Ryan and CANNONBALL swimming around in there as well. Though I'm sure Base would say the same thing about the compound if you asked them.

COLE

I'll be honest. Whatever dynamic you have going on with Base doesn't particularly interest me. If it did, I don't think that I would be here making you an offer.

TY

The offer being...?

COLE

The offer's what you think it is. I hand over this code and you hire me to work for you in Medical.

TY

Cole, you understand that this is a massive conflict of interest for you, correct? Base would be furious about this and, if I understand correctly, you owe them a debt of gratitude. I wouldn't want to jeopardize that relationship for you. We've... borrowed a few of their members for data collection and I don't think they'll ever forgive us for that. Whatever criticisms they have of us, they will extend to you, as well.

COLE

They have the tech they need to recover Marissa. I think I've done my part. I want on your medical team. There is important information to gather in that field.

TY

Okay, but why Medical, specifically? You've made this terrific tracing program. Don't you think that you would be better suited to working in tracing with me?

COLE

Mike has told me stories about the compound and my understanding is that you are working on a method of bringing patients back from extremely close to death or even what we might clinically consider death today. Is that correct?

TY

Oh yes. We are making huge progress in that field. It is remarkable to see what we are capable of. Though, I must warn you, we are not in the business of bringing the dead back to life at the whims of the living. That is a difficult road to navigate, at least for now. If this is all a plan to revive a lost companion, I'm afraid I will have to deny your offer.

COLE

It isn't. O.V.E.R. killed *me*, which is why I am currently in hiding. *I'm* what Base calls an "iteration" of Cole, separated in time moments before my death. What *I* want is to consolidate with the "original" Cole, the Cole that existed before I moved through time. To be "complete," I guess? To leave no doubt that there is a real Cole and I am him.

TY

I find it much easier to not concern myself with "iterations" in that way. It saves a lot of headache and heartache. But I'm not *opposed* to your goal of doing that. If that is what you want, then I believe a job in Medical is quite a fair trade in exchange for your code.

COLE

And if you could leave Base alone, while you're at it?

TY

Oh, we try not to trouble them too much these days. We largely already have what we need from them. At least at this juncture. Speaking of their contribution to our Medical department, would you like to see a demonstration?

COLE

I would love that.

TY

Excellent. If you will follow me, it's just a short trip down the hall here. Medical is running tests all day and there is an observatory with a two-way mirror that we can watch from. You're alright with things being a little... unsightly, I presume? These tests focus on advanced states of injury.

COLE

Absolutely fine with me. That's what I came for.

TY

Great. And we're here. Come inside, have a seat.

We hear a door open and close.

COLE

I assume that is the Medical department iteration of you, Ty?

TY

Indeed it is. I'm afraid that I can't introduce you because contact with other Tys is extremely restricted. But you'll meet him soon enough.

COLE

I'm content to watch. And *that's* a healthy iteration of Michael Walters, correct?

TY

Yes it is.

COLE

Why is he restrained? So that he doesn't attempt to escape?

TY

No, not at all. He's restrained so that our knowledge of his location is as precise as it possibly can be. We can locate him practically to the atom. We're just helping him sit still. That's all. Ty is retrieving the overnighter Michael right now.

COLE

Overnighter?

TY

Patients with sustained injuries that have accumulated over time. We use them to test for worst-case scenarios. If this were a warzone, for instance, you wouldn't have the luxury of being able to consolidate two iterations that were mere moments apart. It might be hours or even days. So our overnighter is our war casualty stand-in, essentially. Ooh, there he is.

COLE

That's... he looks... much worse than I was imagining. Nothing I can't handle but... yikes. Can he... see?

TY

I'm sure he can't. We do have to preserve their hearing, though, in order to give them directions. You must understand: these experiments are quite serious. And they are *experiments*, designed to test the cutting edge of our abilities. Alright, as you can see, the overnighter is secured. So now, Ty is exiting the room and heading to a different observatory, much like this one but with more buttons to press.

TY2 [INTERCOM]

Michael, I am preparing the consolidation. Remember to hold as still as possible in your restraints to ensure maximum results. Are you ready?

MICHAEL [WEAKLY]

Yes.

TY2 [INTERCOM]

Excellent. Counting down from three. 3... 2... 1... and...

We hear the time travel noise.

COLE

That's it? That happened so fast.

TY

We're working on making it even faster. Faster, more portable, less reliant on extreme accuracy. Something you can take with you out into the field, but with all of the power of this bulky experimental version.

TY2 [INTERCOM]

Michael, how are you feeling in there?

MICHAEL [WEAKLY]

Tired.

TY2 [INTERCOM]

Please don't drag this out, Michael. Do you feel noticeably better than you felt before the procedure?

MICHAEL

I still can't see out of my right eye.

TY2 [INTERCOM]

That's expected. Do you feel noticeably better?

MICHAEL

Yes, I do. Can I go now?

TY2 [INTERCOM]

Of course you can. [Pause in thought.] Fe, can you do me a favor and run Michael here over to Yellow? Michael, we've prepared a nice treat for you. You've done so well. I think it's time you get some rest. A very loooooong rest. You've earned it.

MICHAEL

Fine.

COLE

He really does look a lot better. His limp is gone, at the very least.

TY

Yes, a marked improvement to be sure. And more work to be done, obviously, with your help. If you're happy to do it, that is.

COLE

Absolutely. We have a deal?

TY

I will have to make a formal recommendation to Medical, but they will give the green light in a heartbeat. This is an exciting opportunity for both of us, I believe.

COLE

Glad to hear it.

TY

When should we expect you?

COLE

I have to tie up some loose ends back home and assist in the recovery operation at Base, then I can start as soon as you need me to.

TY

Superb. I will make the necessary arrangements so that everything will be in order by the time you arrive. I'm excited to work with you.

COLE

Likewise.

We hear them shake hands.

SCENE TRANSITION.

**We hear the sounds of construction: moving heavy objects/planks, hammering, power tools, etc.**

EDGAR

Hey everyone. How's it going out here? Working hard? On track?

MIKEY

Working up a sweat. Everything is coming together.

MATT

Hey, Edgar. Going smoothly, except that Michael measured incorrectly. This "isolation chamber" is going to be waaaay too small. We're going to be packed like sardines in there.

MICHAEL

I measured perfectly, thank ya very kindly. More space means more mistakes. This ain't a relaxin' spa getaway. We only gotta tolerate it for a few minutes.

MATT

It's not a spa, but it is going to be a steam room with all of us squeezed in there with no windows or doors. [Mocking cowboy voice] It's gonna get hotter'n'a bull's behind on brandin' day.

MW [BACKGROUND]

Can't keep this lifted up on my own, Sly.

AUGUST

Matt! Quick makin' fun of Big Bear and come help M-Dubya lift this up for me.

MATT

[Still cowboy] Be there quicker'n lightnin', Sly! [Cowboy voice ends.] I'll be back in a few. If you'll excuse me, there's some real work to get done.

MICHAEL

Lift with yer legs!

MIKEY

Hey, Panther? There's no way to tell if this room is going to work as a Faraday cage until it's built and the walls are closed, is there?

EDGAR

I don't think so, no. All of the walls have to be tight against one another first.

MICHAEL

All the weldin's perfect. Sly's one hell of a welder, if I do say so myself.

EDGAR

We can always patch things up with foil if we get the walls up and can still detect a signal through it. [Concerned] Ooh, Bear. It hurts just to look at that cut. Are you sure that you don't want Anne to look at it for you?

MIKEY

It's fine. It doesn't hurt. It's not as bad as it looks. It feels a lot better than it did yesterday. Michael stitched me up just fine.

EDGAR

You shouldn't have gotten so carried away, boxing on the night before an important mission. If you had sustained a concussion we would have needed to reschedule and Marissa is still out there. Are you going to be prepared by this afternoon? No distractions?

MIKEY

Yes, babe, of course I am. It's just a cut.

MATT

Alright, I have returned a changed man. The isolation chamber is as large and its walls as thick as they need to be. Any more heavy lifting and I would have thrown my back out.

MICHAEL

I told ya to lift with yer legs!

MATT

How is the logistics side of the operation looking, Edgar? Still in there hacking the mainframe?

EDGAR

[Polite chuckle.] Something like that. We're basically set in there. Cole is locking everything down and making everything final, checking for contingencies, crossing every i and dotting every t, all of that stuff. A good fit for day-to-day Base operations, honestly. Anne and I are working on failsafes, Calculator stuff, preparedness. I've got some gluten-free pastries in the oven. I think that we're ready to go.

MATT

I knew that gluten-free pastries existed, but how do you make them without... flour?

EDGAR

Gluten free flour and xanthan gum.

MIKEY

Matt asking the hard-hitting questions.

MATT

Give me a break. I'm hungry from doing all of the heavy lifting.

MIKEY

He is getting really good at baking.

MATT

Can I... try some?

EDGAR

Of course. You wanna head inside with me? I can show you my baking setup and we can grab some snacks for everyone. I was just about to pull them out of the oven.

MATT

That sounds delectable. Anyone need anything? Pastries? Water? I think I saw some of those Japanese sparkling water things with the marble on the top?

MIKEY

Those are mine and they are not for sharing. But you can grab one for me.

MICHAEL

Water's fine.

MATT [CALLING OUT TO BACKGROUND]

Sly? MW? I'm heading inside for a minute. Water? Pastry?

AUGUST

Both!

MW

No thanks.

MATT

Be back in a jiffy. And I expect the isolation chamber to be finished when I return. Chop chop!

MIKEY

Wouldn't hold my breath on that one.

We hear EDGAR and MATT walk away.

MIKEY

How's it going over here?

MW

This shit is all too heavy. I hate this.

AUGUST

It has to be heavy, M-Dubya. We're doing just fine though, Mikey. Powering through it. [Lowering voice gradually] Just fine indeed. [Quiet] Say... what's the status on them recordings?

MIKEY

[Sighing] They have been replaced. The fake footage is on Edgar's desk.

AUGUST [STILL QUIET]

And Edgar didn't catch ya or ask any questions?

MIKEY

No, he didn't. As far as he knows, that's the same drive with the real footage from inside of your house.

AUGUST

Phew. Look: I'm sorry that Big Bear busted your head open-

MIKEY

Actually, we-

MICHAEL clears his throat sternly.

AUGUST

But ya can't go invadin' my privacy like that on an inkling that something might be wrong. I found the bug in my bedroom when I woke up one morning and me and Big Bear got in a huge fight about it. I'm tryin' to help y'all out and the thanks I got was cameras in my house. What am I supposed to think about that, Mikey? I ain't up to nothin' out there. Nothin' gettin' in your way. Nothin' that's any of your business.

MIKEY

The surveillance was not my idea.

AUGUST [DISDAINFUL]

Your idea? Mikey, this is your Base. This is the Mike Walters Base. You planted the bugs there yourself.

MIKEY

We are worried about you killing Elder Hunter. All of us, still worried.

MW

You need to learn to drop it, Mikey.

AUGUST

I ain't killed Elder Hunter yet so watchin' me won't teach ya nothin' about it. And I have it on authority that I got a good

reason when I finally do kill him. Can I make it even with ya today? I'm doin' the weldin'. I'll pop Ryan's head like a grape if ya want me to..

MIKEY

We have a lot of questions to ask him before we can do anything like that. CANNONBALL, on the other hand..

MW

You'll have to beat me to him.

AUGUST

10-4. Whatever you need me to do, let me know. I don't want you to think of me like an enemy combatant. I'm here to help. Truce, Mikey?

MIKEY [BEGRUDGINGLY]

Truce.

AUGUST

I'll earn your trust yet, just you wait and see. [Pause.] Oh, hey, food's here! Welcome back, fellas.

MIKEY

You really loaded up on treats, Matt. Couldn't carry them all yourself?

MATT

I've only got the two hands.

EDGAR

Almond flour brownies, anyone? They're good. Matt ate 3 of them on the way out here.

AUGUST

I'll take one, Edgar.

MATT

They're extremely good... and I was extremely hungry.

EDGAR

Eat as many of these as you want. I didn't know they'd be so popular. I'll make more when I get some time inside. You better head inside with me for a minute, Mikey. The cut on your head is all dirty and sweaty. You need to come in and cool off and clean up. It looks like Michael butchered you.

MICHAEL

I stitched him up as best I could with what I had.

EDGAR

I know, Michael. You should come inside though, Mikey. Wash up and put some fresh bandages on.

AUGUST

Go on ahead, Mikey. We'll cover for ya while you're gone.

MIKEY

...It does sting. Fine. I'll be back in a few minutes. Don't start firing the nail gun at each other again as soon as Edgar and I are out of sight, you hear? I don't want a repeat of last time.

MATT

Mikey! We would never.

AUGUST

Well-behaved and distinguished gentlemen like ourselves? That would be unheard of. Shame, Mikey.

MICHAEL

Shame.

MIKEY

[Sighs.] Okay. I can't stop you.

SCENE TRANSITION.

(There is a scene playing out in the background, outside, with walla from AUGUST, MATT, MW, and MICHAEL. They are having a nail gun fight. Need sounds of: woo-hoos, hoots and hollers, "gimme that"s, hell yeahs, "my turn"s, yee haws, all the good roughhousing noises. Then:

MICHAEL

Fuck! I'm hit. I'm hit.

MATT

Fuck. Michael, I'm so sorry. I thought I aimed far enough away.  
Are you alright?

AUGUST

Where are you hit, Big Bear? Do I need ta carry ya outta here?

MICHAEL

Grazed my hand is all. I'll live. But we can never tell Mikey,  
ya hear?

MATT

Agreed.

AUGUST

We'll take this to our grave, Michael.)

MEANWHILE:

EDGAR

[Sucks air through teeth.] Oooh, Mikey Bear. That's a nasty cut.  
He really did a number on you.

MIKEY

In his defense, I got much too angry and stepped completely over  
the line and got him fully amped up. I saw what was happening  
and I kept pressing him, which is on me to some extent. There  
were definitely fighting words exchanged. He shouldn't have hit  
me, obviously, but I didn't go out of my way to make it easy to  
not hit me, if that makes sense.

EDGAR

Maybe don't antagonize him so much next time. I don't want you  
getting hurt. I got Matt out of the way for you- good think he  
loves baked goods. Did you talk to Michael and Edgar about the  
surveillance footage?

MIKEY

I did. And they seemed to believe me when I told them that I replaced it with the dummy footage.

EDGAR

Great. The decoy drive is sitting on my desk in my office, just in case they decide to come inside and start snooping around to see if you did what they asked you to do. Meanwhile, Anne is pouring over the actual footage as quickly as she can to see if she can figure out what they wanted to hide from us so badly.

MIKEY

It was a terribly suspicious request of them to make of me.

EDGAR

Something must have happened for them to make that request. I wonder if they've already killed Elder Hunter and are covering it up. And maybe Michael was involved. It looks bad, though. The Annes took a vote on their own and they voted to kill August and they were split on Michael.

MIKEY

That would start an all-out war. They have to know that.

EDGAR

That's what I told Anne and she agreed but the Annes don't seem particularly threatened by the notion. If anything, not acting is a show of goodwill and not an act of fear of retaliation from us, which is good. But I think our Anne has convinced them to cool down. I don't think we've reached the point of entertaining the idea of killing members of the Base, especially iterations of Mikey. Of you, I mean. That would be needless antagonism.

MIKEY

I do turn into him, remember. I do have some investment in his well being. Ouch! Panther, that really stings.

EDGAR [TEASING]

Consider that your punishment for leaving the surveillance equipment in the open where August could find them. Rookie mistake.

MIKEY

Babe, I am a rookie.

EDGAR

I know. Just wanted to remind you.

EDGAR

That looks better already, Mikey. You're good to head back out there. I would keep an eye on those stitches, though. They are an infection waiting to happen and that can grow out of control.

Go see Anne if it starts to get gross, alright? Or a real doctor, even. Someone who can pull them out and put new stitches in.

MIKEY

I would much prefer not to have any more stitches put into my head if I can keep from it.

EDGAR

And keep a close eye on Big Bear and Badger, okay? I don't think that whatever they are doing behind our backs is going to sabotage this mission, but I want to be careful. There are things that we don't know about them.

MIKEY

Oh, no. Never. Michael has such a soft spot for Marissa. He would never put her in danger.

EDGAR

You're right.

MIKEY

I'm heading back out to work. I think we're pretty dang close to putting the walls up. See you when we're done, Panther.

EDGAR

Take care, Mikey Bear.

SCENE TRANSITION.

MIKEY

Wow, you finished the entire chamber while I was inside? That's amazing. Though I did want to see the final wall go up, since there isn't a ribbon cutting ceremony or anything.

AUGUST

Sure did. And no one got a puncture wound from a nail gun while you were inside.

MATT

The four of us finished the isolation chamber and I ate all the pastries. And I did not shoot Michael in the hand with a nail gun.

MICHAEL

I got a tiny cut working with power tools, right between my thumb and index on the web of my hand. But I'll live.

MW

Box is ready is the main thing, I'd say.

MATT

M-Dubya's right. Box is ready.

AUGUST

Box is ready, Mikey. Looks like a miniature version of the one they got in the Flinchite compound. This baby should hold Ryan and CANNONBALL, no sweat.

MIKEY

The support team inside Base is ready.

MW

Which means that everything is ready.

MATT

Why does it have to be a faraday cage, again? Mikey?

MIKEY

I'm going to do a laughably poor job of explaining this, but since you're asking me that means that hopefully you don't know enough to understand just how bad an explanation it is. To paraphrase what Cole told me: we are using near-field high-powered frequencies to execute the program that he wrote, which means that if we transmit from close enough to the isolation chamber, then the signal will make it through. But, since it is a Faraday cage, it will keep almost everything else out, especially any signal coming from a distance. This means that we can get Ryan and CANNONBALL into the chamber, but they can't get themselves out without having someone right outside, which is why our support team is out there making sure that doesn't happen. It's not like we asked the Flinchites why they have a room like this, but that is what we suspect is the case.

MATT

That's a satisfactory answer to me, Mikey.

MICHAEL

We're trappin' 'em all in there and the metal walls means they can't wriggle out.

AUGUST

Perfect explanation, Big Bear. It sounds like we're ready. Are we ready?

MICHAEL

Ready to have Marissa back.

MATT

I was born ready, Sly.

MW

Yeah, sure.

MIKEY

Ready.

AUGUST

We're coming to save the day, Marissa.

MICHAEL

Let's catch us some gamerunners.

SCENE TRANSITION.

We hear the time travel noise.

MATT

Nope, I was correct the first time. The isolation chamber is much too small. We're going to cram three more people into this thing? Two of whom are probably going to try to fight us?

MIKEY

Marissa might try to fight us, too, for all we know. She's just...  
fighty.

MW

It'll be fine.

MATT

There's not anywhere to sit down, either. Cute Christmas lights on the ceiling though.

MIKEY

That's all we had lying around to put up.

AUGUST

You can thank MW for thinkin' about that. We almost ended up doin' this in the dark.

MW

I'm glad I spoke up. I assumed that someone else had thought of it.

MICHAEL

Ya did good, MW.

MIKEY

And we're all in here and nobody is stuck in the wall or transported into space or anything like that. Which means that it is time to send our signal to the support team and see if it works. If it does, support will relay that to Cole and Cole will push the button and we will be off to the races. If he's done his job correctly, Marissa, CANNONBALL, and Ryan will drop right into the isolation chamber with us.

MATT

Let's get it done, son.

MIKEY

Everyone remember their places?

AUGUST

Michael is securing Marissa. You and I are restraining Ryan, Mikey. And Matt and MW and restraining CANNONBALL.

MICHAEL

And we ain't killin' no one, no matter how much we wanna.

MIKEY

Correct. So, it's time. Sending the signal to the support team in 3... 2... 1...

There is an anticipatory silence.

MIKEY

Any second now. Get ready, team.

We hear the time travel noise. MARISSA, RYAN, and CANNONBALL sputter slightly as they gain their bearings. We hear the movement of the Base members as they secure their captives.

MARISSA

What the hell is this?

MICHAEL

Marissa? Are you alright?

MARISSA

Michael? Yeah, I'm alright. What the hell is this box?

RYAN

Mikey? Nostalgic to be blindsided by you again. And you... I don't know you, but hello all the same.

AUGUST

Sylvester August Baxter is the name.

RYAN

That's a mouthful. And you'll be tying my hands behind my back today, I see. Are we... in a Christmas themed... storage container?

MIKEY

It's a Faraday cage.

MW

The lights were the only ones we had.

RYAN

I like what you've done with the place. That's very clever. Toph, are you taking notes on this?

CANNONBALL

Nope. My hands are tied, too. You're... you're not going to stuff a sock in my mouth, are you?

MATT

What? Why would we do that?

CANNONBALL

That's what *he* always does.

MIKEY

Those were different circumstances, CANNONBALL. And I'm sure that if I explained them in detail that everyone would agree with me that that was the right move.

RYAN

Mike's right, actually. I was there for the first one. He did need to be gagged.

MIKEY

Good to see you, Marissa. You okay? You're not... tied up. I thought you would be. They really didn't tie you up?

MARISSA

I'm perfectly fine. They didn't hurt me. And they didn't tie me up. Why would they?

MIKEY

Because you were a hostage.

RYAN

Marissa was much less fuss than you were for Topher. And I've got more powerful methods of coercion than he did. She wasn't going anywhere.

MIKEY

Were they the only two, Marissa? Did they have any collaborators?

MARISSA

Not that I saw. I only saw Ryan and CANNONBALL and no iterations that I know of. There's Flinch, but I didn't see him.

MICHAEL

Flinch gave you the dang technology back?

RYAN

It's been too long, Mike. I never considered how many cowboys I was dealing with here. There's you, there's that one- what's his deal?

AUGUST

That's M-Dubyba.

RYAN

And there's you, whom I just met. So three cowboys?

MW

I don't like labels.

RYAN

So much can change in so short a time.

MIKEY

Where's the tank?

MARISSA

He hid it.

CANNONBALL

We left it out in the middle of nowhere. There was nowhere to put it. We live in a major metropolitan area.

MATT

That's why we have a compound.

MARISSA

The tank's no prob. I can always secure us another one.

MICHAEL

Who were you shootin' at the day they captured ya?

MARISSA

I was shooting at these two idiots. They were in the van across from the house. I didn't know who they were at the time, but they were watching our meeting with Ed Man and M-Dawg. I confirmed they were watching us and opened fire, but they had disappeared by the time the first shot hit. The next thing I knew the tank was in the desert (I think?) and then I was transported out of the tank to their headquarters.

MIKEY

Were you there for Ed Man and M-Dawg?

CANNONBALL

We were there for Marissa. We don't know anything about Ed Man and M-Dawg or anything else your base is dealing with.

RYAN

That's quite the mystery, isn't it? If not us, then who?

MIKEY

So you wanted Marissa for her patrol route access? To get you close to the Tier 2 main gate?

MARISSA

No, they wanted me to lure Ravi out so that they could kill him. Which was news to me, because I was sure that he was already dead.

MICHAEL

I lied to Base.

MARISSA

You should have told me.

MICHAEL

I know.

RYAN

Well, you made a mess when you didn't kill him because now he's a total pain in my ass.

MATT

Pssst... who is Ravi?

AUGUST

I have no idea.

MIKEY

How does Ravi factor into this? Ryan was long gone when that all happened.

RYAN

The same way that anyone gets wrapped up in this. They write some interesting code and Flinch drops a time machine in their lap. I'm sure that Ravi had an edge from what he learned from you losers at O.V.E.R. So now Ravi and I are fighting to the death from Flinch's amusement. Winner gets to keep the

resources. Which is also why we stole those servers from the Flinchite compound. We needed the edge.

MIKEY

You can't expect me to feel bad for you for being forced to play a time travel murder game.

RYAN

No, it's awesome. High stakes, though. Dying sucks. Right, Toph?

CANNONBALL

I'd rather not go through it again.

MICHAEL

Were you gonna kill Ravi for them, Marissa? Follow their orders and take him out?

MARISSA

No, of course not. I was going to figure out how to save the day at the last minute. Like find a way to get on Ravi's side? Or sneak up on CANNONBALL when Ryan was out of the apartment and snap his neck? Hell, I could find another tank if you gave me an hour alone.

RYAN

Toph does have a very snappable neck.

MIKEY

I framed CANNONBALL for murder last time I had to get away from him.

MW

Speaking of CANNONBALL, can we kill him now? Does he know anything worth keeping him around for?

CANNONBALL

I said that I'd rather not die again.

RYAN

What if he *does* know something important? What if *I* do? Does that mean that you aren't going to kill us? Are you going to keep us tied up in Christmas Hell forever? Or let us go?

MW

We'll decide that once we know everything.

CANNONBALL

Best of luck with that. I don't know what else you think we know.

MW

Why were you going around killing iterations of Mike and Edgar? Or was it just Edgars, and the Mikes got caught in the crossfire?

CANNONBALL

That wasn't us.

MW

Interesting coincidence.

RYAN

Mike, do you actually think that it's impossible that you've pissed off more than one person?

MW

My husband is dead.

MATT

Well, sort of.

CANNONBALL

That's unfortunate but we weren't involved.

MATT

Why would Ryan and CANNONBALL care about the Edgars or what they were doing?

MARISSA

Could Edgar... have figured out... that Ravi was alive? And what he was doing?---

We hear the time travel noise and a rumbling as the whole room shakes. **ALL** cry out in some form (give me a couple good ones). We hear a plasma cutter or some such tool cutting a door into the room.

MATT

The fuck? Where are we? I thought that the Faraday cage meant that nobody could move us?

MARISSA

They moved the whole room, dumbass.

MIKEY

Ryan? Are you doing this?

RYAN

Does it look like I'm doing this? You can see me. My hands are tied behind my back.

MIKEY

Your people, then.

RYAN

What people? It's just me and CANNONBALL and CANNONBALL is over there in the corner crying. C'mon, Toph. It's gonna be alright.

CANNONBALL

I'm not crying. But I did twist my ankle when we landed.

AUGUST

You alright, Big Bear?

MICHAEL

I'm just fine. You, Badger?

AUGUST

No injuries. I got my pistol. You want me to shoot whatever is cutting open the isolation chamber?

MW

Hold your fire, Sly.

AUGUST

Can do.

We hear the metal pried apart from each other fall to the ground, creating a doorway.

TY

Hello everyone.

**EVERYONE mutters about Ty Betteridge (variations on "...Ty?", "are we in the compound?", "of course it's Ty Betteridge," etc.).**

TY

Apologies. I do hate to interrupt, but as a kindness to Mikey's Base I thought it pertinent to inform you that Ryan and CANNONBALL here were on the verge of successfully tearing through the rest of your ranks and then finish you off in the isolation chamber when they were done. Just a quick favor, sparing all of your lives and all that.

RYAN [SURPRISED]

Mikey boy! I wasn't sure that you had it in you after all of that dithering earlier. You were going to kill us after all. That's pretty neat. You unlocked one of our failsafes. That only would have been triggered if CANNONBALL and I were both killed in your little storage container. Or... maybe you had one of the cowboys do it. But, either way, commendable work.

MIKEY

I wasn't planning on killing you.

MARISSA, MATT, MW, MICHAEL

I was.

MATT

There's your explanation.

MARISSA

Why would *you* bring us here, Ty? Why would you want to keep Base from getting destroyed?

TY

Because I don't want Base to be destroyed, of course. And if I could pick up Ryan and CANNONBALL here in the process, that's a bonus. I let you have your chance to deal with them on your own and you failed, unfortunately. I needed to get in here before there was a mess to clean up. Fe, would you like to initiate the removal of these two into storage, please?

RYAN

Good luck with that. That wasn't our only contingency. There's dozens more waiting for the right thing to trigger it-

CANNONBALL

...The hell is "storage"? Ty, did you forget that you still owe me a favor?--

RYAN and CANNONBALL are cut off abruptly as they disappear from the chamber.

TY

And all that remains is the Base. I am truly sorry to interrupt- and to reveal how close the tabs we keep on you are- but you were simply not going to handle this on your own. And I need that talent that I'm poaching from you to stay alive, after all.

MIKEY

Talent? Who do you mean?

TY

Oh! I thought that when he said he was wrapping up "loose ends" that meant that he was putting in leave at the Base. Oh well. Not my business. Marissa, glad to see that you emerged from this unscathed.

MARISSA

Thanks, I guess. Guys, he means Cole. That's the only person he could mean, right? Fuckin' traitor. I called it. You can see it in his eyes. No warmth there.

TY

It's a shame that he didn't give you warning. It would have made things smoother. But, yes. He is joining our medical team.

MICHAEL

Fuckin' traitor is right.

TY

I hate to interrupt you and then take off, but there is much to attend to at the moment. We will be in touch sooner rather than later, I'm sure. And I do hope you remember this kindness that I performed for you next time we need to negotiate. Say hello to the rest of Base for me. Take care, everyone! Fe, if you would do the honors...

We hear the time travel noise.

We can hear metal softly buckling as the isolation chamber adjusts after hitting the ground again. ALL groan/moan/sputter.

MATT

We're back.

MARISSA [SEMI-SARCASTIC]

Feels good to be home.

MIKEY

Maybe Marissa was right. Maybe Anne and Charlie should have handled this.

MATT

I think it was a success. Ryan and CANNONBALL are gone and Marissa is back.

MICHAEL

Glad to have ya back, Marissa.

MARISSA

Those dipshits wouldn't have been able to contain me for much longer, anyway.

EDGAR [FROM DOORWAY]

You're... back? Where did you go? Where did this hole come from?  
Is everyone alright?

These next lines all overlap.

MATT

Ty transported us to the compound.

MIKEY

We're fine, Panther. Ryan and CANNONBALL are in the compound now.

MARISSA

Hey Edgar. Happy to see me?

MW

Made it back in one piece.

AUGUST

Yup. Fine and dandy.

EDGAR [AFTER EVERYONE SPEAKS.]

Glad to hear it. You can fill me in later. [Nervously] ...Hunter is here.

MIKEY

Which one?

EDGAR

All three.

END THEME PLAYS.