

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND THREE - THE HASSLE

Original transcript created and edited by Orion and Tony

[BEGIN Episode 103.]

INTRO: Hey guys, quick plugs. First of all, February was February Album Writing Month and I wrote 14 songs this month. They are on a second SoundCloud page that I have, so I'll put that link in the description. The songs from this episode were turned into vocal songs for that album. And speaking of those songs, I composed them while streaming the process on Twitch at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where every Sunday I write the soundtrack for the album on stream and then hang out and play some sort of game after that. So check out my Twitch if that sounds fun to you.

INTRO: And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon at patreon.com/woe_begone, where you can get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentary, movies with ma-ma [Laughs.], Movies with Michael, postcards, and more. If you're hearing this on the main feed, then it is too late to sign up for the March postcard, but the April postcard is just around the corner. Each postcard is handwritten and contains part of a story written by one of the characters, and postcard recipients share their postcards to the Discord to get an even larger story. That's patreon.com/woe_begone. Special thanks to my 16 newest patrons who signed up since the last time I read patron names: [REDACTED]. Enjoy.

MIKE: That is a lot to chew on, Mikey. Personally, if Ty Betteridge told me to do something, I would do the exact opposite, but it sounds like he has a point. Has he sent you anything through the burner phone yet?

MIKEY: No, I think he's waiting for me to rally the troops first. Well, he did send me one thing. He sent me this picture of two otters holding hands. I don't think that was *tactical*, I think he just wanted to show me. Should we wake Michael up about this?

MIKE: [Sighs.] I guess so. He does need to know about this 'August' person. I just don't want to have an intervention.

MIKEY: Me either. Let him drink himself to death, fuck it.

MIKE: It only got worse after he started setting those crow traps. I don't know why he's doing it. Boris isn't paying him that much and it's taking a toll on him. Oh, speaking of, do *not* mention his eye. Flapper pecked him pretty bad when he was checking traps yesterday.

MIKEY: Flapper? He's naming the crows before he kills them? No wonder he's having a crisis.

MIKE: He says that he's saving Flapper for last, which is, uh, a choice. His eye is gross. He's wearing an eye patch over it.

MIKEY: Well, since he didn't become a cowboy, it only makes sense that he becomes a pirate.

MIKE: Yeah. Yo, ho, ho and a bottle of rum. I'll go get him.

[Mikey's phone buzzes.]

MIKE *[from the other room]:* Hey, uh, Michael?

MIKEY *[muttering]:* Now Ty texts.

[Mike knocks on Michael's door.]

MIKE: Michael? Mikey's here. *[Pauses.]* Hello? *[Knocks again.]*

MIKEY *[to himself]:* Michael... huh.

MIKE: You okay in there, Michael? *[Pauses, then knocks again.]* If you don't answer, I'm gonna open the door.

MIKEY: Hey, uh, Mike. He's not gonna—

[Brief time travel noise.]

MIKE: Huh. So you remember him too, right?

MIKEY: Yeah, uh, not the cowboy shit that Ty told me about, but there was a guy, and we called him Michael. Right?

MIKE: Yeah. Which means that H just corrected something, but he messed up.

MIKEY: Ty brought up something about proximity when he was trying to get me to remember Edgar. I don't know what it *means*, but maybe we were too 'proximate' to Michael to forget him? Is there any way to contact his Base? See if he's alive or dead, or what? Like him or not, he's our future. I'd like to know that it still *exists*.

MIKE: He was always super cagey about his Base. I don't know what's up with him. I don't know how to get in contact with them.

MIKEY: Well, here's an idea. We could go forward ten years in time and start poking around looking for him. The Base is still in Oldbrush Valley in ten years, right?

MIKE: From what he told me, yeah, but you aren't serious. We're not going forward ten years in time to look for Michael. You have to ask yourself, am I willing to take an extreme risk and go against protocol to save Michael? The answer is no. But do I miss him? The answer is also no.

MIKEY: Look, man, I don't care about Michael. I just want to know that I live to 40.

MIKE: Well, if H is the one that did the correction, do you even have anything to worry about? It's not like he'd kill us for funsies.

MIKEY: Mike, H kills me for funsies all the time. I was in his office the other day, and he said that he killed me twice out of frustration during *that* conversation alone.

MIKE: Surely he was just pulling your leg.

MIKEY: Yeah, pulling my leg off of my dismembered corpse, maybe.

MIKE [*unamused*]: Buh-dum-tish.

MIKEY: Look, ever since I returned from the compound, things have felt different. Like there's a sinister undertone to everything. I used to think that H had my best interest at heart, and I could just laugh off anything that he did that seemed out of the ordinary. But now I can never be sure. Ty told me that we were running the Base. The hunters took it from us. And so now, anytime they do anything, I ask myself, what are they taking from us? And why?

MIKE: Okay, counterpoint: Ty Betteridge is on one of many sides in a convoluted time-travel conflict. And he gave you his side of the story. You haven't separated what he wants you to do with what he stands to materially gain from it. From what you told me, we murdered Hunter in cold blood. Even though we were deeply in debt to him after he iterated us to prevent us from being murdered so that Anne could finish the fourth WOE.BEGONE challenge. And then Michael's cowboy-boyfriend murdered him a second time. And in return, all they want is to be in charge of Base, which has never operated better, by the way. In a sense, all we're doing by following their orders is paying them back. And if he wants to kill you a few times, that you don't even remember, who cares?

MIKEY: I care, and you skipped over the part where Ty keeps cutting my fingers off if I don't do what he says. [*Sighs.*] At the very least, I would like to live in a world where I didn't murder my date. And if we're going to get there, then we need iterations because if I can't trust Hunter then I don't know who to trust. Anne and Marissa are probably safe, but I can't ever be sure. We need Mikes, which is why we have to go get Michael.

MIKE: Counterpoint two: No.

MIKEY: Okay, let me put it this way. I'm going to get Michael, and whatever I do is going to propagate in all directions. So if you want to make sure that I don't fuck anything up, then you should come with.

MIKE: This is what you're resorting to now?

MIKEY: Yes, it is. Come on. Michael would do this for us.

MIKE: You know that he wouldn't.

MIKEY: Okay, but there once existed a cowboy iteration of him that would.

MIKE: Depending on your definition of 'existed,' yeah.

MIKEY: I'm going. Are you coming with me?

MIKE: Begrudgingly.

MIKEY: Aw, I knew you begrudgingly would.

MIKE: But if we're going out in public, will you take off the cowboy hat, please?

MIKEY *[cowboy voice]*: 'Fraid I can't do that, pilgrim. Hat stays on.

MIKE: Pilgrim's actually an insult. You taught me that.

MIKEY *[cowboy voice]*: I sure did, pilgrim. Now saddle up.

[Time travel noise. Opening theme plays.]

MIKEY *[normal voice]*: Hmm, I know it's silly, but for some reason I thought that the future would look different?

MIKE: Did you think that the time I came from was coated in chrome?

MIKEY: Yeah, and with like androids and maybe like dayglow is back in fashion. Oh! Or, uh, indie folk! Remember how like indie folk was super in like ten years ago? I think that that's due for a comeback.

MIKE: Chance and Shadow would be millionaires if that came back. Wait, is this your first time in the future?

MIKEY: I think so? I mean, I don't know what time it is at the Flinchite Compound, but uh, out and about in the world? I think so.

MIKE: Well, welcome to the future, it's basically the same as your time.

MIKEY: Actually, in my time, there's a building on this plot of land. Uh, we all used to live and work there. We called it the Base. Uh um, any idea what to do now?

MIKE: No clue. If Michael lied to us about this, then who knows what else he lied about.

MIKEY: Are we sure that he's actually a Mike?

MIKE: Yeah, no one would choose to be Mike Walters.

MIKEY: We could always go to O.V.E.R. and see if he's working there.

MIKE: No, we can't go to O.V.E.R. because if anyone that we know sees us, that information will propagate.

MIKEY: Okay, then we can go to the apartment? Maybe he's in Latvia?

MIKE: The Latvia Base exists entirely to assist *your* time period. It doesn't exist here.

MIKEY: Then we can sit around here with our thumb up our asses? Mike, what are we supposed to do?

MIKE: Well, I think that we can either put together a missing-persons poster and hand it out all over Oldbrush Valley or we can call it off and go home. *[Truck engine rumbling.]* And tell the Hunters that Michael has been lying about his Base existing.

MIKEY: Hey uh, Mike? That-That truck is watching us.

MIKE: Great. All the more reason to go home. Let's get out of here, Mikey.

MICHAEL *[gruff]*: What the fuck are you two doing here?

MIKEY: Fuck was that?

MIKE: I think we found Michael.

MICHAEL: Mikey. Mike. Get in the truck *now*.

MIKEY: He's a cowboy again, I guess?

MIKE: An imitation of one, at least. Are we gonna do what he says?

MIKEY: Hell yeah, we are. The whole reason we're here is to find him. And we found him.

MIKE: If you say so.

[Truck door opens.]

MIKEY: Michael, hey! Uh, we were looking for you.

[Truck door closes.]

MICHAEL: I could tell, y'all was about to get yourself killed and cause a connectivity strike.

MIKE: We're fine. Nobody knows what we're up to.

MICHAEL: You're trying to cause a historically large correction. Uh, I think that they'll pick up on it.

MIKEY: So you're a cowboy again? I saw you a few days ago, and you were not a cowboy. And I had no idea you ever had been one.

MICHAEL: That Michael's dead.

MIKE: *My* Michael? Then who the hell are you? Where did you come from?

MICHAEL: Where I came from ain't none of your concern. Y'all're lucky that the Hunters ain't as good at this as they think they are.

MIKEY: So you remember the timeline before the correction.

MICHAEL: I sure do. Speaking of, where'd you get that hat, Mikey?

MIKEY: H... gave it to me?

MICHAEL *[in a low anger]:* That hat was once the property of Sylvester August Baxter.

MIKEY: Yeah, I talked to Ty about the correction and he said something about August. He thinks that H killed him.

MICHAEL: It would explain why he ain't around.

MIKEY: I'm sorry, Michael. I heard he was your... boyfriend?

MICHAEL: You're sorry, alright. I also noticed that Edgar ain't around.

MIKE: Yeah, Mikey killed him.

MICHAEL: I ain't gonna beat you up over it, Mikey, but *you* sure are. Once we put everything back.

MIKEY: I suppose that you're going to help us with that?

MICHAEL: Someone's gotta help you greenhorns. Wandering around my time like chickens with their heads cut off.

MIKE: Yes, we were wandering around in your time, weren't we? Uh, are you taking us to Base? Because Base wasn't where we left it.

MICHAEL: Base don't exist, Mike.

MIKE: Okay. So every time that you brought up your Base, it was a lie?

MICHAEL: You need to get out of my business. I ain't propagating every little thing about my life just cause Mike Walters wants to know about it. I'm taking y'all to a safe house so we can discuss what to do about Hunter. I will not be answering personal questions.

MIKEY: Okay, so you remember, are we doing the right thing? Because honestly, I'm doing this so Ty won't cut my fingers off.

MICHAEL: You don't even know what you lost, Mikey. I'm scared that when you do, the enormity of your loss'll crush ya. 'N even once you have everything back, just the knowledge that it's possible.

MIKEY *[falsely positive]*: Great...

[Scene transition.]

MICHAEL: Alright, I set up a fail-safe to correct back before I picked you up. Hunter don't know I exist. And if he gets wind of me, he's gonna to kill me. Which means he can't ever know about this meetin'. And if the fail-safe gets triggered, y'all are on your own. You won't remember any of this and you ain't gonna to find the Michael that's six feet under. So let's discuss what to do with Hunter Jeremiah Hartley.

MIKE: You said something about connectivity strikes earlier. Can't we just do that to him?

MICHAEL: We done a connectivity strike before, but the moment in time that that strike occurred in has been corrected, so we couldn't do it that way even if we wanted to. And when we did do it that way, there were unexpected casualties. We ended up reaching a deal with the

Hunters to restore their lives in exchange for peace. Then, when that agreement was violated, that's when this iteration occurred.

MIKE: If we can't kill the Hunters, then what can we do?

MICHAEL: That's the million-dollar question, ain't it, Mike. Though I didn't say we can't kill him. We just gotta be smarter about it.

MIKEY: We could correct the correction that got us to this place, I guess. With some sort of mechanism to prevent the Hunters from doing it... somehow?

MIKE: Cool. So we'll write down 'something somehow.'

MICHAEL: Well, I think they already been doing that 'something somehow,' so it ain't going to be that easy.

MIKE: Is there some sort of pivotal moment that we can target?

MIKEY: The formation of Hunter's Base, maybe? When I got back from the Flinchite Compound?

MICHAEL: That night's gonna be tricky. When we did the connectivity strike, that was the source of the casualties.

MIKE: We can make a list of different times and correct one or all of them.

MIKEY: Oh, uh, I've got another idea! So the Hunters need us, right? Like they've gotta keep at least one of us around?

MICHAEL: That seems to be the case. He could have killed us a long time ago. But he only needs one, and I ain't signing up for no suicide mission.

MIKEY: No, actually, my proposal is that we do our jobs so badly that Hunter wants to reset the timeline. If he wants Mike Walters, he can get Mike Walters and everything that that comes with.

MIKE: And he wasn't part of Base when you're from, was he, Michael?

MICHAEL: No, sir. They had their own organization. We called them the Council of Hunters.

MIKEY: So, does this sound doable? I mean, I know how to be bad at my job but, do you think it would work?

MICHAEL: I think that it would get you tortured and us killed.

MIKEY: Well, the only other thing that I can think of is to fix the Elder Hunter situation, which we can't do because it has already been fixed.

MIKE: Okay, what if we correct the correction, and then we fix the Elder Hunter problem before it happens, and convince the Hunters not to correct the correction of the correction.

MIKEY: I think I could see that working. The Hunters don't really want to be in charge of Base, right? They just want to keep an eye on us? So if they're put back in a place where they're not in control of Base, but Base has its shit sorted out with regards to Elder Hunter, then they might just say it's not worth the hassle to go back to the way things are now.

MICHAEL: That seems to be the theme with your ideas, making it not worth the hassle.

MIKEY: It's the best I got, but I think it works. We'll make a list of those moments, like Mike said, and then we'll do it. And then Michael, you kill Sly and then no Elder Hunter problem.

MICHAEL *[gruffly]*: You are out of your *fucking mind* if you think that I'm going to kill Sly.

MIKE: Careful, Mikey. If you make him lower his voice anymore, we won't be able to understand him.

MIKEY: Okay, fine, I'll kill him. But it seems to be the only option. Michael, you two were together in your time, right? And both of you knew that he kills Elder Hunter. So nothing that the two of you said or did prevented it, and it's not as easy as telling him not to do it, because I'm sure you tried that. It seems as though as long as August is alive to do it, he kills Elder Hunter. So I think that we have to kill him. It's either that or we stay in this iteration where he's already dead and the Hunters are in charge. Or we could do a connectivity strike and wind up with who knows how many dead, like the connectivity strike that you told us about. Killing August is the safest option. I do not think that there is a version of events where no one dies, at this point. In this version, only one person dies.

MIKE: I've got to say it's a more tempting plan than uh, let's see here, 'something somehow' and 'be bad at your job.'

MICHAEL: A world without Sly ain't a world that I want to be in.

MIKEY *[cowboy voice]*: Well, you're already in one, pilgrim.

MIKE: What's the alternative, Michael?

MICHAEL *[gruffly]*: *[Grunts.]* Alright, so we don't know when he killed Elder Hunter, I'll... spend the rest of my life lookin' for that time. 'N once I find it, I'll put a stop to it. No one's gotta die. How 'bout that?

MIKE: And we'll just hope that you searching for it isn't the thing that causes it to happen.

MIKEY: I can work with that. When we correct the correction, the Elder Hunter incident will be in our past, so we'll know whether or not it happened. So if we pull it off and Elder Hunter is still dead, I'll know that you failed and I'll kill August. How does that sound?

MICHAEL: You ain't killin' Sly.

MIKEY: Then don't fail.

MICHAEL: I won't.

MIKEY: Glad to hear it. It sounds like we have the outline of a plan.

MIKE: Yeah, and now all we have to do is pull off the heist of the century.

MICHAEL: Don't say 'heist' before a heist. It's bad luck.

MIKE: Is that an old wives tale?

MICHAEL: Look, if you really want my opinion, it ain't going to work. We don't have anything to work with and we are stuck here. Everyone I've ever loved is dead, and nothin' that I do matters. None of our ideas were worth a damn. Hunter's got his claws in too deep. It's only a matter of time 'fore he figures us out and then it's lights out for me. Probably you too, Mike. But if we don't do nothing, it's only a matter of time before that happens anyway, and a one percent chance of seeing Edgar and Sly again is a chance worth taking. But I'm not gonna hope.

MIKE: That wasn't particularly inspiring. But if you're in, I'm in. Did you say that everyone you've ever loved is dead? Does that apply to Anne and Marissa and Charlie? Or just Edgar and Sly?

MICHAEL: That ain't your business yet, pilgrim.

MIKEY: I can't wait to learn what it's like to be a cowboy in my 40s.

MIKE: Hey, uh, Michael, how are we going to get in contact with you after this? We have to be really discrete, obviously.

MICHAEL: Oh, uh, I'm coming with ya. I ain't got a Calculator, but uh, I got a place to stay back then, so the-the Hunters will be none the wiser.

MIKE: You don't have a Calculator. How did you get here?

MICHAEL: I'm from here.

MIKE: Yes, but you have clearly been to times that aren't here. And by the way, you still haven't told us how you remember all of this.

MICHAEL: And I ain't gonna tell ya now.

MIKE: See, I'm just worried that one of the many secrets that you're keeping from us will be something that gets us into hot water later.

MICHAEL: Don't worry about that, I'll sheepdog ya.

MIKE: I do not consent to being sheepdogged.

MIKEY: I thought we were supposed to be a bear.

MIKE: Speaking of dogs, I have to walk Bruno this evening. And if we're going to stay on relative time, then we need to leave. Michael, you're coming with us?

MICHAEL: Yup, uh, I got some coordinates you can send me to. Here, uh, let me pull them up. And here, uh, give me the Calculator.

MIKE: Yeah, sure thing.

[Michael types on the Calculator.]

MICHAEL: Been a while since I used one of these. *[Pause while Michael types.]* How is, uh, Bruno doing, by the way?

MIKE: Oh, Bruno's great. He's got so much energy, though. I can never wear him out, he wears me out first. Is, uh... is Bruno still around?

MICHAEL: Yep, he's an old cur now. I don't get to see him like I used to, but sometimes I pop by. Anyway, it was nice talking with you guys. Uh, I gotta go. See ya!

MIKE: Wait, Michael. What—?

[Time travel noise.]

MIKE: Mikey, I don't suppose that you brought the other calculator.

MIKEY: Regretfully, it is safe at home.

MIKE: And nobody knows where we are or that we were leaving. And Base is... gone now? And maybe everyone's dead, he didn't really elaborate on that. And now there's a cowboy in the time

stream somewhere doing whatever he wants, and he wants to radically alter our lives to save another cowboy.

MIKEY: That would be a summation of events, yes. Do you think Hunter is going to save us?

MIKE: Hunter hates us, Mikey.

MIKEY: Then I guess we're going to see how badly he needs us then.

MIKE: I think we should be trying to find our own way back, just in case?

MIKEY: Yep. *[Sighs.]* Let's start walking.

MIKE: *[Exhales.]* So much for keeping time. We have to go back to this afternoon, you know. Nobody's there to walk Bruno and if he has to shit on the floor, I am never going to forgive myself for it. I'm coming for you, Bruno. You're getting that W-A-L-K. So help me, god.

[Albatross plays]

*it starts innocent enough
euphemistic synonyms
my advice: it's time to toughen up
but now
there's admission of some guilt
and a weakness of the will
that finds you prostrate at my door*

wish you had somewhere to hide that I could find (x2)

*I wasted many anxious years
peering between the blinds for you
but the changing of the guards couldn't come quickly enough
sleeping shift or albatross
I don't remember what I was
Before this form got in the way
what I say? Clocks are ticking us down, cover is getting sparse
return fire now*

*I know the middle of it all
is such a tempting time
to propose calling it off
but now
that the blood is on my hands
the Calvary demands*

*a swift finishing blow
wish you had somewhere to hide that I could find (x2)*

*I wasted many anxious years
peering between the blinds for you
but the changing of the guards couldn't come quickly enough
sleeping shift or albatross
I don't remember what I was
Before my form got in the way
what I say? Clocks are ticking us down, cover is getting sparse
return fire now (x3)*

[Closing theme plays.]

BLOOPER (MIKEY): Is there any way to contact *his* Base and see if he's alive or dead or what? That's our future. I'd like to s... spit, spit on it. I'd like to spit on it.

[Brief start of closing theme.]

BLOOPER (MIKE): So if he's disappearing Michael, then I'm going to assume that he's a big old poopy jerk.

[END Episode 103.]