

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THREE - FUTURESOUTING

Original transcript edited by Jenah and Theo

[BEGIN Episode 153.]

INTRO: Hey, guys, quick plugs. As always, I am streaming on Twitch every Sunday at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where I write that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. I recently just overhauled the whole Twitch, it's got a whole new layout, and there's gonna be new channel points and donation incentives. And we are still playing *Kentucky Route Zero*, so if that sounds fun, come check that out at 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 get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentaries, Movies with Michael, postcards, and more. People are beginning to receive their March postcards; that's very exciting. Each postcard comes with a handwritten message from one of the characters, as well as a special cover song that I do just for postcard subscribers; I don't think that that comes up very often in these... So if you're interested in that, that's the \$15 level at patreon.com/woe_begone. Special thanks to my 10 newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Opening theme plays.]

[We hear a doorbell in a residential neighborhood.]

MIKE *[while opening the door]:* Aw, yeah. Time for some burritos— Ah, you—! *[Stammers.]* You are— not... burritos.

MIKEY: No, I'm not. I'm Mikey. We need to talk.

MIKE: You're... Mikey?

MIKEY: Yes. That's what I said.

MIKE: Show me the brand.

MIKEY: Uh— Sure thing, yeah. *[Lifts up his sleeve.]* Right here.

MIKE: Okay, you pass. How do you know where I live?

MIKEY: Mike, we've spent so much time together in my time period that I figured it out on accident. Every time you told a story about your time period with your Edgar, that's just one more data point. There's nowhere else it could be.

MIKE: I do not appreciate being stalked through time, Mikey.

MIKEY: Well, it's too late for that.

MIKE: Just—! Get inside. You're already in enough trouble futuresscoping as it is. What if someone out here saw you?

[The door shuts.]

MIKEY: Mike, it's the middle of the day on a Tuesday. Normal people have work. There's no one out there.

MIKE: No one that you saw! Futuresscoping is against protocol for a very good reason. This is an enormous propagation risk. If Edgar found out, he would kill you.

MIKEY: He's going to end up thanking me. We need your help, Mike.

MIKE: If you need my help, you can call me. I could research what happened from my time period, and show up there with the tools to get it fixed. I can't do any of that from here, which is another reason that you shouldn't be here.

MIKEY: It wasn't safe to meet you in my time period, Mike. Trust me, this was a last resort. I don't take this lightly. I couldn't meet you at Base, you would have to go to the Compound, and then the Compound would hear our whole conversation. And we couldn't go to the apartment, because I—

[We hear clattering in the back room.]

MIKEY: Wh— What was that?

MIKE: *[Huffs.]* I-I don't know, Mikey. The cat, probably.

MIKEY: You have a cat?

MIKE: Yes, Mikey, I have a cat.

MIKEY: What's... his name, then.

MIKE: *[Sighs.]* Sir Reginald Cattinbottom the Third, Esquire.

MIKEY: You've never said anything about having a cat.

MIKE: What— What is there to say about him? His name is Reggie, he's a tortoiseshell, he eats shoelaces, uh, end of list! That's everything.

MIKEY: Can I see him?

MIKE: No, because he's hiding. He hides any time there's company. What were you saying about the apartment?

MIKEY: Yeah, I went to the apartment, actually. And when I showed up, Boris met me outside and said that some "outlaws" were in the apartment. And that some of the outlaws in the apartment were our, quote, "brothers"? But not any of the four that Boris knew. And that I had better be extremely careful if I was going up there, and then he offered me his shotgun.

MIKE: So, did you go into the apartment?

MIKEY: No, I figured that whoever was up there was more dangerous than a shotgun could manage. So the apartment is off the table, and we can't go to Texas, because that's what this is about.

MIKE: What—? How is this about Texas? Is something happening at Tex's house? Or is Tex in trouble?

MIKEY: I wouldn't say that, more like he's involved. I was just down there. I lost Stinky, and since Stinky is Tex's... p-pet, or whatever, I called Tex to see if he could help me.

MIKE: I am assuming that Stinky is some kind of skunk that you made friends with?

MIKEY: Oh, he's a skunk alright. Stinky is the iteration that Tex put into Storage when he let me out. I had a mission inside of O.V.E.R., and so I took Stinky with me. Mike, do you know who Nobody is?

MIKE: No, I don't. Is Nobody the one that's an animal friend?

MIKEY: Why do you think that there's an animal friend involved?

MIKE: [*Huffs.*] I don't know. With you and Michael, it just— there's always animals.

MIKEY: Nobody is a Mike iteration that is working for the Council of Annes. At least, according to Tex.

MIKE: Weird. Working for the Council of Annes isn't a very life-affirming choice, but maybe that's why he's called Nobody? How does this relate to Tex?

MIKEY: Nobody has been giving me orders and threatening me if I don't comply, and he made it so that Stinky doesn't go into Storage. So I took Stinky with me to retrieve a file from a red flag cabin for Nobody. While I was doing that, Stinky made a break for it. I called Tex because he's the one that had Stinky in the first place, and Tex helped me get him back. Also, Tex has the

bear now? Like, The Bear, I'm pretty sure. They've got him locked in the feed shed at Tex's house.

MIKE: Mikey, that does sound very chaotic, but not more chaotic than usual. So why do something as risky as futurescoping? That doesn't seem proportionate to what you're dealing with.

MIKEY: Mike, do you know about Helen Hartley?

MIKE: No, uh... Hartley as in Hunter Jeremiah Hartley?

MIKEY: Well, she's certainly not one of my animal friends, Mike. Helen is Hunter's mom, and she worked at O.V.E.R. in the '80s. The reason that I was at O.V.E.R. was because Nobody ordered me to retrieve a file on her from a red flag cabin. I made two copies of the file using the Calculator, one for Nobody and one for me. Then I put the original file back in the drawer. After Stinky escaped, I went to Tex's house. While I was getting into cowboy stealth gear for the mission, I found the exact same file on his desk in his bedroom.

MIKE: Sort of *snuck* "cowboy stealth gear" in there...

MIKEY: It is the exact same file, Mike. The information isn't printed on it, it's written in ink, and the ink on Tex's copy has smudges in the exact same places as my copy. He didn't iterate it from me. I never told him about it. I don't know if it's the copy that I sent to Nobody, or if it got iterated after that. But Tex has a copy that can be traced back to that mission. And he never brought it up when I told him that I had been in a red flag cabin. If there was an innocent explanation, why not bring it up while we were eating biscuits and gravy at the diner? [*imitates Tex's voice.*] "Oh, you were in a red flag cabin, partner? I just happen to have this file here that was from a red flag cabin. Whatchu know about Helen Hartley? It was easy gettin' the file, cause my horse is so big, or—" [*Normal voice.*] Whatever, he didn't say anything like that.

MIKE: That does seem odd, Mikey, but I would caution you against jumping to conclusions. You know as well as I do that there are lots of good reasons not to tell someone everything that you know. Even if you know and trust them. Even if they're another iteration. Maybe he's planning on telling you when the time is right.

MIKEY: Tex had plenty of time before, during, and after the Stinky mission to tell me. It was pretty relevant.

MIKE: What are you even accusing him of? Tex has the file, therefore he's working with... with Nobody? With the Council of Annes?

MIKEY: I mean, he knew who Nobody was, and knew who he worked for, which is more than I knew.

MIKE: Okay, but... why'd you say Stinky was with you, and Nobody attacked him? He can't go back into Storage for some reason?

MIKEY: He doesn't turn off, or whatever, it's the same as, like, locking him in a closet.

MIKE: So Nobody wants to kill Stinky.

MIKEY: Yes, Stinky and everyone else in Storage, I think.

MIKE: But Tex didn't kill Stinky, right?

MIKEY: No, uh— Tex made a big to-do about keeping Stinky alive, actually.

MIKE: Look, I'm not saying that Tex doesn't have any skeletons in his closet. In fact, when I was there, one time I opened the pantry, and there was a prairie dog skeleton inside. To be honest, I barely know the guy. But what I do know checks out. He gave all of us a place to stay when the Base Dome stuff was going on. He protected MDawg when Operose showed up to take—

[We hear more things knocked over in the back room.]

MIKEY: Would you like to go check on your cat? Mike?

MIKE: No, he's probably just... got the zoomies. As I was saying, Tex protected MDawg from Operose when Operose showed up at his house.

MIKEY: Yeah, but Operose was actually there to take Troy.

MIKE: Tex didn't know that, though. None of us did. And then Tex climbed up on the roof, and got cut in half, remember? It was brutal, I've had a nightmare about it... And he did all of that to keep the defensive array up. You think all of that was a ploy to gain our trust? What if he had failed? Tex would've just died up there for nothing? It is not a very masterful gambit.

MIKEY: Yeah, but he's a Michael iteration. Death is not the same thing to him as it is to you and me. It's cheap. And that's not even because we have technology to make it sometimes reversible. Michaels are simply more willing to die, for some reason. That's why Operose has a whole army of them. That's why Lieutenant is a Michael. I absolutely think that it's possible that him protecting MDawg was all some sort of scheme to further some sort of end. He could've planned that whole thing out with Lieutenant! Do you remember when Lieutenant finally broke the defenses, and knocked on the door? Remember what he said after Tex explained that he and Outlaw Ty built the array themselves? He said, *[Imitates Lieutenant's voice.]* "Impressive work. Give Operose a call if y'all ever wanna make a boatload o' cash. They'd buy that technology up in a heartbeat, pard. I just *love* killin'. Love it."

MIKE: You think that Tex sold us out to Operose for cash?

MIKEY: I'm not saying that's what I think, I'm saying that it is an argument that can be made.

MIKE: This doesn't feel like a healthy distrust, Mikey. This feels like someone who listened to way too much of a true crime podcast. This is a lot of extrapolation from a file that you didn't even ask Tex about. He might have an explanation.

MIKEY: It's not just the file, though. I've been thinking about everything that's happened out there. That's where we all met up before the Shadow Dome fight. That's where that Michael iteration that wasn't the Dome Michael consolidated with our Michael. What if that iteration was Lieutenant, and Tex knew about it? What if he facilitated the takeover of Michael by Lieutenant in order to help Operose and sabotage the Compound? We know that him and his best buddy Outlaw Ty are not big fans of the Compound.

MIKE: Mikey, we all thought that they should consolidate, not just Tex. I thought that we were doing what was fair, because we thought that he was the iteration that you and MW and Michael made a promise to. How does this make Tex duplicitous, and lets *us* off the hook? What's to keep me from arguing that you and MW didn't facilitate it? Maybe you were working with Operose to get something that *you* wanted.

MIKEY: MW seems like he's in the clear, but I am still investigating him.

MIKE: What are you talking about? You know MW. You were there when we made him. He has been around.

MIKEY: And I was suspicious of you, too, and I had pretty much cleared you until we started talking. I didn't tell you this, but, uh... I tore your whole fucking house apart while you were getting groceries earlier, and then corrected everything back? [**MIKE:** What the fuck, Mikey.] So you're not hiding anything, at least not about Tex and Stinky and Nobody. [**MIKE:** Mikey, are you serious? You were here?] Or, if you are hiding it, you're at least smart enough to not hide it in your house.

MIKE: Mikey Fucking Walters. Listen to me. You cannot just search my house!

MIKEY: I'm glad that I did, because you're clearly hiding something! Because I searched the whole house, and I never saw a cat.

MIKE: Mikey, you are in the future. You are futurescouting, which is absolutely forbidden. The propagation risk is absolutely fucking massive! Not to mention that I have a right to my goddamn privacy. How fucking dare you!? This—! This conversation is over. We're— We're correcting this— Mikey, give me your Calculator. I'm going to issue a correction right now.

MIKEY: I am not going to give you the Calculator. We are going to get to the bottom of this. Let's do it for old time's sake, Mike. You are going to help me, and we are either going to clear Tex's name, or find out the truth. But I can't do it alone.

MICHAEL *[from other room]:* Do you want me to shoot him, Mike?

MIKEY: What the fuck is that?

MIKE: Ugh, goddamnit, Michael, you are not helping!

MIKEY: Michael's here? Which one!?

MIKE: You might as well come on out, asshole. Cat's out of the bag.

MIKEY: I knew that there wasn't a cat. There isn't a litter box!

[A door opens.]

MICHAEL: Howdy, Mikey. Long time no see. What brings ya here to the future, pard?

MIKEY: I... tore the whole house apart, why didn't I find you?

MICHAEL: Ran out the back when I heard ya smashin' shit. I didn't want no trouble.

[A cat meows.]

MICHAEL: And he didn't, either.

MIKE: Hi, Reggie.

MICHAEL: That was me knockin' shit over, though. I tripped over Reggie tryin' to get my ear to the door to hear y'all.

MICHAEL: Mikey, this is Sir Reginald Cattinbottom the Third, Esquire. Sir Reginald, this is Mikey.

MIKEY: Nice to meet you, I guess. Sir... Reggie... Cat-Butt whatever.

MICHAEL: That's "Sir Reginald Cattinbottom the Third, Esquire" to you, pilgrim.

MIKEY: Nice to meet you, Sir Reginald Cattinbottom the Third, Esquire...

[Reggie meows.]

[Scene transition.]

MICHAEL: Can I get y'all anything? We got tea, uh, coffee, whiskey, catnip.

MIKE: Water would be great.

MIKEY: I don't want anything.

[Reggie mews.]

MICHAEL: And a whiskey for Reggie. I'll be right back.

MIKEY: So, what's his deal? How did you come into possession of a Michael?

MIKE: You weren't the only one who was concerned about the showdown at the Shadow Dome, Mikey. The way that the Michael stuff was dealt with was... really peculiar. I understand why someone in Ty's position might not want to rock the boat, but the boat needed to be rocked. Charlie had just outed our Michael as an impostor, which meant that there was no more real Michael in this timeline. I guess Ty was okay with that because he's got a warehouse full of iterations that he can play with, but it didn't sit right with me. I was really close to Michael, as I'm sure you remember. He was easily the iteration that I was closest to. I spent all that time in that damn apartment; I got lost at sea with him; I went on his podcast. That's how much I cared about him. I was willing to go on *his podcast*. Really, after Edgar, Michael was my best friend.

MICHAEL: That's quite flatterin', pard. Here's your tea.

MIKE: Thanks, Michael.

MICHAEL: And sorry, Reggie. Turns out we're outta whiskey. Hope catnip'll do.

[Reggie mews.]

MICHAEL: Yeah, I know. I let ya down, pard. Anyway, I figured Bruno was your second best friend.

MIKE: Bruno's great, but he's a dog, he's not my best friend.

MICHAEL: Careful, now. You'll make Reggie angrier than he already is.

MIKE: You get my point, right, Mikey? I had lost him. There was half of him left in this timeline, and that half was consolidated by a malicious entity, and then stuffed into Compound Storage. I wasn't going to let that stand.

MICHAEL: I like this part o' the story, pilgrim. It's where I come in.

MIKE: Enter Continuous Correction Michael.

MIKEY: Oh, so he's a continuous correction. So, what's his timeline?

MICHAEL: It's a timeline where Mike here stopped the correction.

MIKEY: So he's the same Michael... all the way up to the correction?

MICHAEL: That's right, Mikey. I'm back... kinda.

MIKEY: It's great to have an iteration of you back, Michael, even if you aren't exactly our iteration. Though it does make me wonder, is there any way to use the continuous correction technology to find out, with certainty, who Michael got consolidated with?

MICHAEL: There sure is, pilgrim. And we done it.

MIKE: Yup. If we can take him right before the correction, then we can take him right after the correction, too.

MIKEY: Wait, so you brought him here? Is he here now?

MICHAEL: Not anymore, pilgrim.

MIKE: We interrogated him... until we could figure out for sure.

MICHAEL: Fella wouldn't say a single word. No matter how I threatened him, what I told him, how I hurt him, killed him, and brought him back. Ironically, that's how I figured out he was Lieutenant. Any other iteration woulda folded. I know I woulda.

MIKE: Yeah, Mikey. So there is no uncertainty here. That was Lieutenant setting up the showdown in the Shadow Dome.

MIKEY: Well, he managed to pull that off, but then he got stuck in Storage for all his trouble. Which I have access to, by the way. I work for the Compound, and my job is to interview people like him in Storage.

MICHAEL: I think we might should plan a visit. You ever heard of a slam consolidation, Mikey?

MIKE: We are not slam consolidating Lieutenant.

MICHAEL: If'n you have a better plan, we woulda done it already. Mikey can get us in; I say we do it.

MIKEY: What is a slam consolidation?

MIKE: You're propagating future terminology to the newbie, Michael, is that what you wanted?

MICHAEL: He's gotta figure out eventually. He half-invented the dang thing.

MIKE: Mikey, ignore him. He wants you to do something extremely dangerous.

MIKEY: If you guys wanna do something in Storage, then we should probably do it soon. Nobody has a plan to eliminate all of Storage. And to bring it back around, Tex has heard of Nobody. Michael, have you heard of Nobody?

MICHAEL: Yeah, ain't that the— the movie? Uh, *My Name Is Nobody*? You're talkin' about a movie?

MIKEY: No, I am talking about the most insufferable iteration of Mike Walters, which is... kind of impressive, actually. Tex knows him, and says that he works for the Council of Anne, and both of them have the same file on Helen Hartley.

MICHAEL: First I heard o' Helen Hartley was when I had my ear to the door. So however Tex heard it, it weren't when he was Michael.

MIKE: I'm sorry to say it, Mikey, but it sounds like you have two different problems. You've got the Lieutenant-Michael hybrid in Storage, and then you've got Nobody who, among other things, wants to kill the Lieutenant-Michael hybrid in Storage.

MICHAEL: And that means we can talk trade. Cause Mike and I have also been concerned with that Lieutenant-Michael hybrid in Storage.

MIKEY: You're saying that if I let you into Storage, you'll help me out with Nobody and Stinky.

MICHAEL: I ain't never met a man named Stinky who I couldn't defeat. I got us a plan for Storage. Just need Mike to give the okay.

MIKE: I— I-I don't want to lose you again, Michael. If something goes wrong, and the wrong people get tipped off, then I might not be able to do another continuous correction.

MICHAEL: Then we won't do anything wrong, partner. Easy as that. Ya can't keep me cooped up, Mike. That ain't how Michaels are. We're made to roam. You gotta let me do this.

MIKE: Okay... Let's do it. But I am setting a ton of correction points.

MICHAEL: Ain't gonna need 'em. Right, Reggie?

[Reggie mews.]

MICHAEL: See? He trust me.

[Scene transition.]

[Storage door opens.]

MIKEY: Hello... Subject.

LIEUTENANT: Look, I don't know what's goin' on, but... they made it so I don't go away in Storage no more. I was awake in there. I don't even know how long it's been.

MIKEY: I am well aware of that, actually, but that's not why I'm here.

LIEUTENANT: Look, ya ain't gettin' information outta me that way. No way, no how. I dealt with worse. I'll starve if I gotta.

MIKEY: That is not how I plan on getting information, Lieutenant.

LIEUTENANT: You been talkin' to folks.

MIKEY: All it took was talking to the right people. So, uh, we're gonna try something today... Uh, let's see here... Yup.

[Time travel noise.]

MIKEY: Alright, grab him, quick.

[There is a scuffle between Lieutenant, Michael, and Mike.]

LIEUTENANT *[overlapping]*: Oh! Wha— Who—? Oh—! Let... go of me. Who are you? Ah— ah— Oh! Fu—! Oh... Urgh— What are you doin', Mikey? What, do you think you're gonna torture me?

MICHAEL *[overlapping]*: Oh—! Come here, ya slippery sonuvabitch! When's the last time you got hogtied? ...Yup, I-I got this arm down.

MIKE *[overlapping]*: I got this arm! Michael, get him on the table... Hold... still, asshole. *[Huffs.]*

MICHAEL: Got your end?

MIKE: Yeah, I got him.

[Slamming on metal table.]

MICHAEL: That oughta hold him, Mikey. He ain't goin' nowhere.

LIEUTENANT: Ya found yourself another cowboy, didja. Don't know what you're plannin'. Figure the powers that be won't let ya correct it, or... I'd be corrected already, wouldn't I?

MIKE: Alright, uh, Michael, I know this isn't optimal, but could you... lay down on the floor right beside the table?

MICHAEL: You got it, boss.

MIKEY: Alright, Mike, are you gonna show me what buttons I'm supposed to hit?

MIKE: Yeah, uh, lemme see, you just put it in "normal"... li- uh, like this... and then, to do the slam consolidation, [**LIEUTENANT:** The hell's a "slam consolidation"? You're gonna consolidate me?] go through these menus, and it's right... There. That sets up the macro, so it will start whenever you push the button.

MIKEY: Okay, and we're all sure that we wanna do this?

MIKE: No, but it's Michael's choice.

MICHAEL: Let's get 'er done, Mikey!

MIKEY: Okay! Uh, see everyone on the other side. Hopefully. [*Breathes in.*] Okay. Starting the slam consolidation in three... [**LIEUTENANT:** You're gonna consolidate me with that 'un-] two... one...

[Time travel noise that becomes choppy at an increasing rate.]

LIEUTENANT [*choppy and distorted*]: What- What- What are you doing? [*Groans.*]

MICHAEL [*choppy and distorted*]: Keep goin', Mikey... [*Breathes heavily.*] Stop!

MIKEY: Okay, stopping!

[Time travel noise abruptly stops.]

MIKE: Michael, are you okay?

MIKEY: Did it... Did it work? Michael?

MICHAEL: Oh, yeah, it worked, pard. How many consolidations was that?

MIKE: I set it up for 64, Michael.

MICHAEL: That's a good number, pard. Lieutenant's just a faint glimmer in there, but I reckon I remember enough that I can make my way around Operose, no problem.

MIKE: And if we get our foot in the door there, we can figure the rest of this out.

MIKEY: So, where do we go next? Texas?

MICHAEL: I say we rustle up some grub first. Lieutenant was starvin' when I consolidated with him, and, well, I could eat.

[Closing theme plays.]

[I Never Did Anything Wrong plays.]

*I became fragile today
In ways I didn't know I needed to be worried about
My body is letting its secrets out
It comes in waves
I don't know when each one will hit
Or when I'll go under with it
The waiting is worse than holding my breath*

*Fixate
On relief
The ritual
Is complete*

*I hid too long
I never thought that it would get done
I saw the distance in the storm
I knew it would rain but I
Never did anything wrong did I?
My ideas
I found some paper to put them in
I'm getting over this
Indelible twinge
Drifting out to sea
Must feel excellent*

*I broke open today
In ways that I didn't know to be careful about
My ribcage is letting my spirit out*

*Once considered
A master of my whole domain
I slump to the side in order to stabilize
I favor convenience now*

*Restate
Aphorisms
Meticulous
Vision*

*I put it off
I thought eventually the work was done
I saw the atoms at the source
I knew they'd decay but
I never did anything wrong did I
My ideas
You should proceed with caution from here
I'm getting over this
Indelible twinge
Drifting out to sea
Must feel excellent*

I don't ever wanna feel bad again

[END Episode 153.]