

EPISODE 139 - THE PERPLEXING CONVERGENCE OF THE TEXAS POSSE

Transcribed by Jenah and Mothball

[BEGIN Episode 139]

INTRO: Hey guys, welcome to the second half of season twelve. I hope you've been enjoying the season so far, and I hope that you're excited for where it's going, because I am. So, here are some quick plugs.

I've been streaming over on twitch at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where every Sunday I write that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. I'm currently playing through *Pony Island* for the first time. That game is pretty fun so far; none of the horses seem to be very big, though. So, check me out at twitch.tv/woebegonepod if that sounds interesting to you.

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, QnAs, director's commentaries, Movies With Michael, postcards and more. I finally got all the November postcards out the door, and have put in the order for the December postcards. So, if you would like a Christmas/New Years present from yours truly with a handwritten message from one of the characters that tells a larger story when all the postcards are put together, consider supporting the show at the 15 dollar level. Again, that is patreon.com/woe_begone.

We've had a lot of Patreon signups since last time, so special thanks to my 15 newest patrons, [REDACTED] for supporting the show.

[Warning: this episode contains gunfire. Listener discretion is advised.]

[time travel noise.]

MIKE: *[huffing and puffing. Footsteps crunching in dry grass or leaves]* I swear to God Mikey, I'm not covering up for you this time.

[time travel noise.]

MIKEY: Mike, stop! Stop! *[footsteps stop.]* You can't go in there. You can't tell them that I was at MDawg's house. They'll crucify me. That is the one place that I promised them that I wouldn't go. You can't sell me out like that.

MIKE: Yes, you promised us and that's me and everyone else in Texas that you were going to go look for the calculator. So you betrayed me, too.

MIKEY: We found the Calculator! MDawg had it. So I was telling the truth. Sort of.

MIKE: No, I found the calculator. You were too busy getting drugged and tied up and almost losing one of our other calculators and MDawg in the process.

MIKEY: I was creating a diversion. It was teamwork. Teamwork makes the dream work, Mike.

MIKE: You almost jeopardized everything. You could've got us all killed. They need to know because we shouldn't let you out of our sights again.

MIKEY: Can't you say that you went to the storage unit on your own and that I was somewhere else doing what I was supposed to?

MIKE: I'm not trying to be a hard ass, Mikey, but no I can't. Because you were there with MDawg. And he told you all this stuff about where he went and what he did and what's going on with Edman. And since he had the calculator that stuff that we need to know.

MIKEY: So I did help and you can't be mad at me.

MIKE: You helped on accident and I can be mad at you. What are you doing?

MIKEY: I am entering some coordinates. I'm gonna send you somewhere. You're not gonna tell them that I was with MDawg.

MIKE: Mikey, uh, I have a calculator too. That's how I got here. I can come right back.

MIKEY: Not if I put you in the ocean, they're not waterproof.

MIKE: You are not going to kill me over this you dweeb. We're going to go in there and you're going to come clean and everyone's going to be a little bit mad and then everything is going to be fine.

MIKEY: Do you wanna test that theory Mike? Because after Mustardseed we've been doing just fine without you.

MIKE: You know I'm glad that I grew out of whatever this is because it's petty and mean. I'm going in there and telling Tex and Outlaw and whoever else and you can't stop me.

MIKEY: You can't do that. Bluster! Bluster! **[MIKE: Are you ratting me out to a horse?]** We have an intruder. Bluster I need your help!

MIKE: Bluster is not going to come help you.

MIKEY: Where the hell is that horse when you need him. You're not going in there.

MIKE: Yes I am. Back off of me.

MIKEY: No, you are not taking another step toward that door, Mike.

MIKE: Get out of my way before I get serious Mikey.

MIKEY: Back away from the door Mike.

MIKE: Fuck you, Mikey I'm going in.

MIKEY: No.

[sounds of a shove.]

MIKE: Ah!

[a small splash]

MIKE: Fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck the calculator! Fuck it's wet.

MIKEY: Shit, shit shit shit! I didn't see the puddle, Mike! Is the calculator okay? Take the back panel off.

MIKE: Yeah I—I think it's fine. The back panel—*[click of back panel being removed.]*
There's—a—a note in here, Mikey.

MIKEY: A note? What do you mean, a note? How is s there a note inside the calculator?

[unfolding of paper.]

MIKE: It appears to be... signed from MDawg, to MDawg.

MIKEY: Wait, is it from him or to him?

MIKE: I think it might be both, but I really think that we should both go inside and read this.
Truce?

MIKEY: Yeah, truce. I took things too far. I'm sorry, Mike.

MIKE: Yeah let's just go in.

[knocking on the front door. Door opens. A gun is cocked.]

MICHAEL: Identify yourselves.

MIKEY: It's us, Michael. The code is 318428451, okay?

MICHAEL: And who's this muddy critter you got with you that's

MIKEY: That's—It's Mike, we—

MIKE: / slipped off the porch and fell into a mud puddle. [*fake laugh.*] Clumsy me. I met up with Mikey while we were searching for the calculator—which I found by the way—the calculator is fine. It didn't land in the puddle. And so now we're here and we can call off the search.

MICHAEL: Glad to hear it, pard. What else you got there?

MIKE: Uh. This is a letter that appears to be both to and from MDawg. I found it inside of the calculator.

MIKEY: [*sounds of the letter being unfolded.*] We found the calculator inside of MDawg's storage unit. I—I—I went there cause I wanted to talk to him please don't be mad at me.

MICHAEL: Y'all were just with MDawg?

MIKE: Yeah—uh—not even five minutes ago.

MICHAEL: What an interestin' coincidence. MDawg just showed up at this door not 10 minutes ago.

MIKEY: M—MDawg's here. You're sure that he's here? He had the—the eye and everything?

MICHAEL: Ain't no mistaken' MDawg.

MIKE: I—i—is—is he in there right now?

MICHAEL: No, sir. He turned up around here looking for sanctuary. Hopin' Tex would take him in so he an' Tex are off on Bluster having a one on one chat. So why are you stuttering like you've seen a ghost

MIKE: Because we just got done killing MDawg.

MIKEY: Literally less than five minutes ago.

MICHAEL: That would explain that then. Come on in y'all. See we can piece any of this together, starting with that letter.

[scene transition.]

[sounds of the letter being unfolded.]

MIKE: Alright, let's see what it says. "Dear MDawg, you found the calculator! You actually found it! I'm so proud of you, even if it was on accident! I don't know if this means that you found the other notes—" Uhh, there are other notes apparently, "—but if not, I implore you to keep looking for them. There's not enough time to recap everything here, so I'll tell you everything that I can, but I also need to give you some very important instructions. We're so close to figuring all this out once and for all. No more...[uncertain.] split between the worlds. [pause. Letter rustling.] Nothing that Operose can do about that either."

MIKEY: Michael do you know what any of that means?

MICHAEL: I got a hunch.

MIKE: "Initially I had suspected that I was probably walking into a fatal trap. I was sent by Operose to find one calculator and ended up finding...two?" Michael, were there two calculators in that safe?

MICHAEL: How the hell would I know? It was a secret.

MIKEY: I get that you didn't know where it was hidden, but you had to have known what was hidden.

MICHAEL: I don't know what to tell ya. I thought it was one calculator, pard.

MIKE: Well, according to MDawg there are two of them because quote, "the spare one is the one that you are holding in your hands. I thought maybe Operose knew the whole time and were going to punish me when I returned having only the one calculator. But it has been three weeks and no one has said anything about the second calculator. They are not the type to delay a punishment. When I failed Operose in my infiltration of Base and the compound they were extremely quick to punish me." Did you guys know about that?

MIKEY: Uh, don't look at me, I was probably in storage.

MICHAEL: There was that interloper Mikey but he was from the compound.

MIKEY: Maybe Operose replaced the compound replacement? Michael, I know that you said that you knew that it wasn't me, but if the replacement had been replaced would you have noticed?

MICHAEL: All I detected was an interloper.

MIKEY: And Ty thought that I was the replacement and he's been telling me all kinds of stuff so no wonder Operose would want a guy in there.

MIKE: Something else to add to the interrogation questions. Alright, nobody said anything about the second calculator..."Operose is not the time to delay a punishment. When I failed in my infiltration of Base in the compound, they were extremely quick to punish me, which is why you are still blind in one eye. We got away with it. The calculator is yours, and no one knows that you have it except you." Well.

MIKEY: I believe that Mdawg thought that he was blind and one eye because he fell off a cliff or something?

MICHAEL: Operose meddling makes a lot more sense in that, pard.

MIKE: Agreed. It looks like he has no idea of what he's doing inside of Operose. Moving on. "This was made possible because everything at work is going exactly to plan. I am under new management now in a sense. Anne hasn't had much for me to do, but she is not the only project manager that has ambitions for me. [*increasingly incredulous tone*.] I've been doing work for a hard ass manager named *Eagle*!? Who has taken quite a liking to me!? As his assistant, a very strange iteration of *Michael* who calls himself *Lieutenant*!?!"

MICHAEL: Lieutenant's the head army that they turned all the Michael's off.

MIKEY: Well, we tried to turn all the Michaels off, uh, it looks. Looks like like that one is still around.

MICHAEL: Wonder how they manage that. Wonder if we should head back to the trunk and see if we can shut him down.

MIKEY: Surely Operose hasn't given up on the Michaels and started raising an army of MDawgs.

MIKE: No, I don't think so, cause next it says "They're the ones who sent me on the mission to retrieve the calculators," so not army stuff. "They are great to work for, even better than Anne. I feel like I'm participating in the work as a peer and not as a subject. There have been talks about getting to see Edman again and returning to some kind of normality." So Edman is alive.

MIKEY: [*sighing in relief*.] Thank god.

MICHAEL: Still don't mean you was right to go hunt MDawg down while ee got important work to do.

MIKEY: Hey, it found us this note, didn't it?

MIKE: No, I found us this note. Moving on. “I don’t especially enjoy time travel work. It isn’t very—” cop—[*pause.*] co-pas-etic?

MICHAEL: Copasetic.

MIKE: I guess I haven’t seen that word written down before and I do not plan to ever again. “It isn’t very copacetic, but it is better than life has been since the incident that took out our eye. Remember that MDawg, I’m trying to rope you in as well. This has been made all the more easier thanks to the new project that Eagle and Lieutenant have put me on. It is a complicated mission involving the compound and the stuff we saw in there when we were pretending to be Mikey.”

MIKEY: Okay, so, he must’ve replaced the compound Mikey and then left before I showed up, because I killed the compound Mikey and then left before I showed up? Because I killed the compound Mikey and MDawg didn’t die.

MICHAEL: How do we know you ain’t an iteration of MDawg?

MIKEY: Well, you’re the one who does the Mike Walters vibe check, you tell me.

MICHAEL: Hmm. Ya pass, pilgrim.

MIKE: If you would let me read, you would know that there was only one MDawg until recently because the very next line is: “The important part is that they made an iteration of us. There are two MDawgs now. Only two as far as I know which is great news. It sounds bad that there’s even more separation between myself and you besides a state of mind, but it’s actually the opposite. You have a Calculator now I can be in the same room as you. That wasn’t possible as half of a split mind which is why I had to keep trying to sneak you messages.”

MIKEY: We need to tear MDawg’s house apart for these other messages.

MIKE: Agreed there is a lot missing here. “I can stand beside you now and you can consolidate us. Then we will both be all MDawg all the time and you will remember everything that has happened to you.”

MIKEY: So is this MDawg here looking for that MDawg, do you think?

MICHAEL: Or is he here on some kind of mission? Cause Operose knows about this place.

MIKE: Guess we can ask him. Alright, last paragraph. “I fought so hard for you, MDawg. I’ve sacrificed my body. I’ve—I’ve killed *Boris*—!?” He killed Boris—!?!? N—No. He didn’t kill Boris. I just saw Boris. I just walked Bruno. If Boris was dead, I would’ve noticed.

MIKEY: Maybe this letter was written after that?

MICHAEL: I'll call him after this. Make sure he's OK. Finish the letter, Mike.

MIKE: If—if he hurt Boris—*[breaks off and sighs.]* Alright, okay. "I've put my life in the hands of Eagle and Lieutenant. I've allowed myself to be iterated so that I can give you the knowledge that you deserve. I need you to be the one to pull the trigger. I'm being observed too closely to consolidate us myself. The coordinates and timestamp at the bottom of this page are somewhere that I'm going to be waiting for you. It is dangerous to consolidate with a calculator, but this is our chance. If you transport exactly there and then we will consolidate. Do not let anybody else see this. Do not be afraid. Remember, Edman is alive. Take care of yourself," signed "MDawg" and then there's a coordinate and time.

MIKEY: Okay, where and when do those point to?

MIKE: I don't recognize the coordinates, but the timestamp is for today in about six hours.

MICHAEL: That don't matter too much with time travel.

MIKEY: Mike, you were there. You saw the look on MDawg's face. He didn't know about this calculator, right?

MIKE: I don't think that he would've put the message back in the back panel of the calculator and I don't think that he would've been so hell-bent on stealing yours if he knew about this one.

MIKEY: Okay so is he in Texas because he knows that his mission failed and he's doing something related to that, or is it something completely different?

MICHAEL: Well. there's one way to find out.

[cocking of the shotgun.]

MIKE: So, are we gonna go find Bluster, Tex, and MDawg?

MICHAEL: Ain't no way to do that. Bluster is a wanderer. He could be anywhere. Got a big old stride. He could be halfway across Texas by now too.

MIKEY: What do we do then?

MICHAEL: Nothing to do 'cept prepare for when they come back. I know I got some questions for him.

[scene transition.]

[clopping of horse hooves.]

MDAWG: So unbeknownst to me, I've been doing work at Operose and not even for Anne. For a completely different project. So I went from a subject to a full-time worker, which has been difficult because I don't remember any of the work once I get home. I have no idea that I'm working at Operose so it's been really harshing my buzz, especially now that they took Edman.

MICHAEL: So, Operose just snaps the memories out of ya like never happened?

MDAWG: I guess so? That's what it feels like when I get the memories back, I don't know how anything works. Time travel is so much more than time travel. It doesn't feel like I'm losing time. They put me right back where they picked me up at, so I don't even know that I've gone somewhere. Except sometimes I come back with an injury and then I have a false memory about what happened.

MICHAEL: Sounds like they're aging you in double time, pilgrim. Or, even faster. Living in two days for every one day you can remember.

MDAWG: Well, I can remember them but only at work.

MICHAEL: That ain't no way to live, pard. You'll be old and gray before you know it. Take it from me. Lifes too precious to just throw half of it away like that.

MDAWG: For sure it's a bummer but what other choice do I have? I need to get Edman back. That's not negotiable. And once I have my life with him again, these wasted days will all be worth it.

MICHAEL: You're assuming that Operose plays nice and you get your Edman back.

MDAWG: Well, nothing I do matters if I don't get Edman back. Everything I've done is useless, so who cares, right? There is no MDawg without Edman. So if I don't get him back, there's no point to anything.

TEX: You would think so but I know from experience you'll keep on going. It does feel impossible at first, but you're gonna keep moving from the sheer or inertia of it. You'll start drifting out into a new life and 'fore you know it you can't see the shoreline of the old life no more. You'll have your memories or half of 'em. You'll remember his face and everything that y'all did together and how he made you feel. But you won't be able to see it anymore. Eventually, you end up replacing yourself. You wake up, eat, shit, sleep, repeat. Years and years and years and years. The atoms in your body get replaced one by one until they're entirely new atoms. In a few years you won't be the one who lost Edman. You'll be continuous with that person. And you should hold onto him and his memory cause that's what Edman deserves. But there's no paddling back to shore. You don't even know what direction that was in anymore. And once you accept that you can't make it back, you can start to quiet that little head of yours a little bit.

MDAWG: I'm not going to accept— You really think that they'll never let me see Edman again?

TEX: I figured you was tired of being jerked around and manipulated. People using Edman to get you to do what they want.

MDAWG: I am but I'm also tired of people telling me not to get my hopes up.

TEX: Now, I never said don't get your hopes up. But maybe try and hope for something else while you're at it. Maybe there's a different shoreline out there. Don't get lost in the ocean and starve is all I'm saying. Now, enough chit chat. Let's get down to business. Why should I give Operose the time of day especially while they're jerking you around with Edman?

MDAWG: Well, first of all, they already know that you're out here. According to Lieutenant, je sent Michael 963 out here and you guys killed him?

TEX: And I'd do it again too in a heartbeat. Gotta protect my flock.

MDAWG: Oh, I don't blame you and I'm not here to defend them, but you can see why Operose might argue that you owe them something for killing one of their men. So an alliance is the quickest way to make sure that the tit for tat doesn't get out of hand. And we know that Base is in the compound against their will and they are being made to fight Operose against their will. So...

TEX: So it would behoove us both to get them out of there.

MDAWG: Exactly, assuming that behoove means what I think it means based on context clues.

TEX: It's a horse word. Meaning we help each other out, like we both got hooves.

MDAWG: Well then let's both have hooves about this then. Eagle and Lieutenant want to disable the compound. They don't care about the Base. So we were wondering if you would help us in exchange for their freedom.

TEX: Oh, is that what you're doing? Just out here wondering. Came all the way out to Texas to wonder at me. Super MdDawg: Brother Wonder, now available in Texas. Cause it sounds like you're trying to lay the law down on me.

MDAWG: I didn't show up to bark orders at you, Tex. Chillax. I'm just saying that you're already involved. You've already slighted Operose, even if they deserved it. But they see themselves as within their rights to fire back. You're rustling up a posse here in Texas, and if you get involved in this war in a way that hurts Operose, even on accident, they might not be willing to overlook what you're doing out here.

TEX: Whoa, Bluster. Yeah we're stopping here. Get down off of Bluster, MDawg.

MDAWG: Excuse me?

TEX: You heard me. Get. Down.

MDAWG: You're just—You're gonna leave me here in the middle of the desert? Is that what this is?

TEX: I don't appreciate getting threatened. Get. Down.

MDAWG: O—okay, Okay, I'm getting down. We—we can be chill. We can be cool, right?

TEX: Face the sunset Pilgrim. Don't look back at me.

MDAWG: Wha—what are you doing, Tex?

TEX: I patted ya down before we came out here. [*barrel of a gun spinning.*] You ain't got no weapons. No calculator. Nothing. You're at my mercy out here. It's just you and me. I could put a bullet in the back of your head and leave you out here and ride back into town. Ain't no one gonna come looking for you. Eagle and Lieutenant don't care about you one lick. Understand? They ain't in control of me and you sure as hell ain't.

MDAWG: [*stammering.*] You—You're right. Please don't kill me. Edman is alive. I'm so close, please, please don't kill me.

TEX: Operose ain't no better for me and mine than the compound is. They ain't gonna help us. They're only gonna use us just like they use you. If they wanted you to have Edman back you would have him already. Edman might not be dead, but he's gone. They told you that they sent you out here to make a deal with me, right?

MDAWG: Y—yes. J—just to explain why we should work together.

TEX: They never wanted to make a deal, Pilgrim. They sent you out here so I could kill you. I don't know if they want rid of ya or wanna get under my skin or provoke me or what. But Eagle or Lieutenant could've come in person if they wanted to talk. You're a pawn, MDawg. You always have been and you always will be and worse you don't even know you're a pawn. So if you ever get to the end of the board, you won't even know you deserve an upgrade.

MDAWG: Okay, so you're not gonna kill me cause that's what I want? You're not gonna kill me?

TEX: I don't envy you one bit MDawg. You've been at the mercy of a greater power from the moment you was created. I ain't interested in no deal with Operose, especially if they ain't willing to send their top brass down to talk to me. So the way I see it, you got two options. I can

put you out of your misery, save you the trouble of hoping that the tide's gonna turn for you. No more taking orders, no more hoping against hope that Edman's gonna come back. No peace, neither, mind you. Not really. Just nothing forever. Or number two: old Tex here can grab you by the scruff and drag it back home. I'm in the business of taking and runaway Mike's these days. But you gotta be an honest to God run away. That means you don't work for Operose anymore. You work for me. There is still a higher power that you answer to and that is Tex. I give the orders and we do what we gotta do to set the Base free. Operose already knows where we are. If they want to discuss the terms of retrieving ya, but if you were anything like Michael 963, they probably don't care that you're gone. So what do you say, MDawg? Will you be bored?

MDAWG: No, no, no, no, no, no. *[crying.]* This isn't fair. All I've ever wanted is to relax with Edman. I—I never wanted anything from anyone.

TEX: Well the world wants something from you. What's it gonna be, pard?

MDAWG: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No! *[whimpers. Sounds of running footsteps against the dirt.]*

TEX: Hey get back here. Get back here! *[gunshot.]* Bluster, don't let him get to the brush, we'll never catch him. *[gunshot.]*

[hooves clomping and horse whiney.]

MDAWG: Oh fuck, fuck.

[horse snorting.]

MDAWG: Please don't stomp me, Bluster. *[crying.]*Please.

TEX: He ain't gonna stomp ya, he ain't that kinda horse. Right, Bluster? *[horse snorting.]* That's right. Now. I know all about being a coward. I'm a Mike Walters, too, you know. So I know what's going on here. So I'm gonna need you to get back up on the saddle and behave yourself while we ride back into town. And when we get back to my place, we're rounding everyone up and you're spilling all the beans. Understand?

MDAWG: Yes. I understand. I don't work for Operose anymore. I work for you—I work Tex now.

TEX: I appreciate that. Though you'll have to understand that I'm wary about someone with such fickle proclivities. You'll have to earn my trust.

MDAWG: Anything. I know a lot about Operose. You can send me back to spy on them. You can make an iteration of me and send the iteration to spy on them. I know a lot about the compound too. They had me replace Mikey for a little bit.

TEX: All in good time. We'll discuss it at the meeting tonight. After dinner. Hope you're hungry. We're making fried chicken.

MDAWG: Honestly, I've never been less hungry in my life.

TEX: I get ya. You're scared. We should head back. Let's go Bluster. *[clomping of hooves.]* Sorry 'bout that. Things were gonna shake out one way or the other. I just thought I'd save us the hassle. So, hey if, uh, you're gonna be part of the team, have you ever considered becoming a cowboy, MDawg?

MDAWG: *[weak and incredulous]* What?!

[End theme plays.]

AFTER-CREDITS (DYLAN): *[in character as Mikey.]* Oh yeah—*[dog toy squeaks. breaking character.]* Riga. I'm trying to yell. I'm trying to yell at Mike. *[in character as Mikey.]* Oh yeah? Try me, Mike. Because after Mustardseed we've done just fine without you. *[dog toy squeaks. breaking character.]* Riga. Could you squeak some other time? I'm behind schedule. *[Riga, Dylan's perfect dog, whines.]* I'm behind schedule.

[END Episode 139.]