

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY NINE - OPENING

Original transcript edited by Theo

[BEGIN Episode 149.]

INTRO: Hey, guys, quick plugs. As always, I am streaming on Twitch over at twitch.tv/woebegonepod, where every week, the actor that I've hired to say he's me writes that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. We have been playing *Kentucky Route Zero*, and it has been very surreal and interesting and so much fun. So if you'd like to hang out, that is 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. This week, I am recording a Q&A for \$2-and-up listeners, where I answer questions from the Patreon and the Patreon-exclusive Discord channel. So if you would like some behind-the-scenes answers to some questions, it's a cool thing to have. And if you would like to hear all the extra music that has been in the show, that is available for all patrons \$1 and up. Do not worry, the actor that I've hired to say that he's me does not get any of the Patreon money. Special thanks to my 10 newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Opening theme plays.]

[Office ambience with the clacking of a computer keyboard. A door opens.]

HELEN: Michael? Mr. Michael Walters?

NOBODY: "Mr. Walters" will suffice, thank you.

HELEN *[slightly off-put]:* Alright. You're Mr. Walters?

NOBODY: That would be me, yes.

HELEN: Great! I'm ready for our interview. Could you step into my office, please?

NOBODY: Yes, ma'am. ...Hey, uh, would you know... Is that a VIC-20 that he's typing on?

HELEN: Sure is. The office splurged on them earlier this month. Top-of-the-line office equipment. You can't even buy them in America yet. Japan only.

NOBODY: How futuristic.

[Door closes.]

HELEN: If you say so. I haven't got the hang of computers yet, but they do appear to be the future. ...Have a seat. Can I get you some water?

NOBODY: No, I'm fine, thank you. ...I like your desk. Very personalized. Cute dog in the picture. Uh, cute kid, too, of course. I... I-I don't know, I just don't... really like kids.

HELEN: Oh! [*Brief chuckle.*] That's Jerry and his best friend, Rusty. We got Rusty when Jerry was born, so they're growing up together. Those two are attached at the hip. We need to get him some real human friends, but... we just moved here a few months ago, and school hasn't started yet. Are you from Oldbrush Valley?

NOBODY: No, actually, I drove in for the interview. I'm staying in the hotel off the highway.

HELEN: Ah. That makes sense. Almost everyone that works here is from out of town. There isn't really much of a town to speak of, just this place and the shops and the school. How did you hear about the job opening?

NOBODY: I read a want ad in the paper.

HELEN [*a little suspicious*]: Huh. I didn't know we were running ads in the paper. O.V.E.R. is a government facility, and they like to keep things secure. We don't hire many people off the street.

NOBODY: Well, that is why I applied for the job. I am good at keeping things secure.

HELEN: I would hope so. So, welcome to Oldbrush Valley Energy and Resources. "O.V.E.R." for short.

NOBODY: Yes, I have picked up on that.

HELEN: My name is Helen Hartley, and I'm in charge of security operations inside of Tier One of O.V.E.R., along with Roger, whom I'm pretty sure you met in the lobby?

NOBODY: Yes... Is he the one who tried to shake my hand so hard I thought that he was gonna tear it off?

HELEN: Yeah, that's him! He's a great guy. One hell of a handshake. We oversee all of the security guards that monitor Tier One. O.V.E.R. has two Tiers, Tier One being the more relaxed buffer zone between the facility and the rest of town. There's another gate like the one that you passed through to get in, and things are locked down even further inside of there. Think... "Area 51."

NOBODY: Sounds top secret. Am I allowed to ask what goes on inside of Tier Two, or is that topic off-limits?

HELEN: *[Chuckles.]* You're allowed to ask, but no one in Tier One really knows what's really going on in there. Everyone's got their own ideas about what it is, and they'll be happy to tell you their pet theories, but... whatever *is* in there, they're protecting with everything they've got. We're hiring a lot of people right now. Not just me and Roger, but all of the other departments, too.

NOBODY: And what do you think is going on in there, Helen?

HELEN: I always tell people we're protecting Bigfoot. *[Lightheartedly.]* My son might actually believe me.

NOBODY: That's a good one. I'll have to remember that.

HELEN: Should we get started with the questions, Michael?

NOBODY: "Mr. Walters" is fine.

HELEN: Okay, Mr. Walters. But... if you do get the job, I'm not going to keep calling you "Mr. Walters." That's... a bit too formal. You can call me Helen, by the way. No "Mrs. Hartley," please. It reminds me of my mother-in-law.

NOBODY: Alright then, Helen. I am ready for your questions.

HELEN: Alright. First question. You are applying for the role of Patrol Officer. You'll be patrolling a route on foot, five days per week. This will require a lot of walking. Are you able to comfortably walk 10 or more miles per day?

NOBODY: Yes. I am easily capable of walking that much, **[HELEN:** Mm-hmm.] and have experience doing so.

HELEN: Great! Um, what is your walking experience?

NOBODY: I... lived in a very rural area for a few years. I didn't have a car at the time, and it was a fair distance to anything. Work, groceries, friends, whatever.

HELEN: That must have been frustrating.

NOBODY: You get used to it eventually. And I got very good at walking.

HELEN: Good to know. I'll keep that in mind in case we ever need someone to run and go get something in a jiffy. *[Amused sigh.]* So, as I described to you, O.V.E.R. takes its security extremely seriously. That's the whole name of the game around here. Can you tell me about a time that you needed to... keep something secure? What was it, and how did you do that?

NOBODY: Let's see... I... once had to keep an animal, a-a pig, in my apartment for a few days. And I had to make sure that it didn't get out or break all of my stuff. And I had to make sure that nobody else in the apartment saw it or heard it or smelled it, because if the landlord found out, he was not going to be happy. So, for a few days, I had to keep the very important secret that I was harboring a pig.

HELEN: That is a... really interesting situation. How did you get yourself into that one?

NOBODY: Well, I came acro— I— I found a pig, and... it was lost, it wasn't, like, a wild pig... It was domesticated, so I couldn't just leave it where I found it, so I took it in.

HELEN: And what did you do with the pig?

NOBODY: I killed it. *[Pause.]* I— *[Stammers.]* I'm sorry, I'm sorry! I'm kidding, I'm kidding! I called an animal sanctuary, and they came and got it.

HELEN: *[Brief laugh.]* I was worried you were serious there for a second! Don't get me wrong, I eat pork, but I couldn't imagine killing a pig in an apartment!

NOBODY: Oh, yeah. Me neither. That sounds like chaos. I was just joking. I kept the pig secure until I was able to find a home for it.

HELEN: I should let you know that pets are allowed in employee housing. You have to fill out a form requesting permission, but I don't know how they would feel about a pig.

NOBODY: It is not an experience that I wish to ever repeat.

HELEN: Gotcha. Alright, next question. You noticed the VIC-20 computer in the lobby. Are you knowledgeable about computers?

NOBODY: I know just a little bit about computers, but not enough to do anything fancy with them. I could learn on the job if I need to, but... this is just me taking the long route into saying "no." So, yeah, sorry. No, I don't.

HELEN: That's fine. Your job doesn't require knowing how to use a computer. I ask because computer skills are highly valuable right now at O.V.E.R. If you did know about computers, one of the other departments might have tried to snatch you up.

NOBODY: Hmm. Good to know. I would like to eventually learn how to use a computer. They do seem like they're the future.

HELEN: So, you aren't good with computers, okay. Are you comfortable firing a pistol? You shouldn't ever have to use it, but all O.V.E.R. employees are given a service weapon for their own safety. You might have noticed that I have mine in my hip holster.

NOBODY: Yes, I am perfectly comfortable firing a pistol. I have undergone training for it, actually.

HELEN: *Excellent.* We provide our own training, but... the more experience, the better. Some people get rusty from not having to use theirs, so... it's great to have someone that knows what they're doing. You know how to protect yourself. Do you know what to do if, say, a bear approaches you?

NOBODY: Approaches me as in "gets within striking distance"? Uh, do I have bear mace with me in this scenario?

HELEN: I'm not sure what bear mace is...

NOBODY: Oh, uh. Bear mace is— It's just like pepper spray, but for bears. I'm... surprised that you don't keep some one hand to hand out to your employees; it's super useful. Are there... a lot of bears in Oldbrush Valley?

HELEN: I wouldn't say "a lot"... But, if you work here long enough, you are definitely going to see one on your patrol route.

NOBODY: In that case, I would keep my distance, and try to put as much extra distance between myself and the bear as is possible without alerting it. For instance, walk the opposite way of the way that it's walking if it hasn't seen me yet.

HELEN: Hmm. Great answer. Keep your distance, and get into a building with a phone in it, and call O.V.E.R.'s Animal Control department... if possible. The number is printed on the first page of the O.V.E.R. employee manual, along with a few other numbers that you'll want to remember. Don't shoot the bear, unless there's no other options. But also don't die because you didn't want to shoot the bear? Just use your discretion.

NOBODY: I can promise you that I am not a shoot-first-ask-questions-later type of guy.

HELEN: That's a relief! You'd be surprised how many people *are*... [*Quietly.*] and how many of them end up working for me. [*Normal volume.*] We had an incident once where a guy shot a squirrel because he thought it was a robot with a spy camera. He didn't last long.

NOBODY: Did... O.V.E.R... kill him?

HELEN: *What?* No! [*Chuckles.*] He was fired.

NOBODY: Sorry, I misunderstood. You said this place is like Area 51, and then I started imagining things.

HELEN: Not a problem. Next question. You're doing your patrol route, and you come across someone that you don't recognize, and you suspect that they're somewhere that they're not supposed to be. How do you deal with him?

NOBODY: I do exactly what the guidebook tells me to do. I mean, I suspect that what the guidebook would tell me to do would be to... flag him down, ask him for either his O.V.E.R. identification or his guest badge, verify the authenticity of the identification, and ask him what business he has inside of Tier.

HELEN [*suspicious*]: Very good. ...That's almost exactly what the guidebook says. How did you know that? ...It's almost like you've worked here before. Do you know one of the other guards?

NOBODY: N-No, no. Uh... Nothing like that, uh, a lucky guess, I suppose? It's just common sense, really. You see someone being suspicious, and you ask them to explain themselves. I imagine that that's what most of the job is.

HELEN: Well, you have good common sense, Mr. Walters. I think those are all the questions I have for you. I'm not going to waste both of our time with "where do you see yourself in 10 years" and stuff like that. Do you have any questions for me?

NOBODY: Just, uh, when will I know whether or not I got the job?

HELEN: I have got to go over all of the candidates with Roger, and we will make our decision before the end of the day. You were the last person left to interview. I would say things are looking pretty good. We're hiring quite a few people, so... I think there's a good chance that we'll be able to find some room for you. And your pig, should you bring your pig.

NOBODY: That is great news. I cannot emphasise enough that I do not have the pig any longer. Thank you for interviewing me, Helen. I'm excited to get started.

HELEN: Thanks for coming in. We'll be in touch soon. It was great to meet you... Mr. Walters.

NOBODY: Likewise.

[*Scene transition.*]

[*Cabin door open.*]

NOBODY: [*Grunts.*] Home sweet home. 21A... [*Sniffs.*] Ugh. It smells like smoke in here. I hate 1980, man. There's no internet, and everyone smokes inside. How did people live through this? I'm becoming Jokerfied, and I get to go home when this is all done. These people are gonna

make it through 1980, and then they have to live through 1981. It's *tragic*. ...Maybe I shouldn't say the word... "Jokerfied"... while I'm living in 1980.

Okay, before I forget again... it's the stupid cassette voice memos for C.O.A. and the team. I don't think I could've come up with a more convoluted way to use the C.O.A. dropbox if I tried. It's like I'm on a fucking podcast. [*Huffs.*] I should have figured out how to use this before I got here. [*Starts recording.*] Testing, testing, one, two, three. This is Nobody. [*Stops recording.*] Did it work? [*Rewinds tape.*] Uh, rewind it... [*Plays back tape.*]

NOBODY [*through recorder*]: Testing, testing, one, two, three. [**NOBODY**: Ugh. Is that really what I sound like?] This is Nobody. [*Stops playback.*]

NOBODY: Alright, let's just get this over with. [*Starts recording.*] Note One. These cassettes are being recorded for the purpose of cataloging my observations regarding my mission inside of O.V.E.R. for the purposes of preventing their technology from coming to fruition. This is necessary to shape this timeline. The mission with my team inside of the Compound, still ongoing relative to my experiences, will prevent the Compound from using Storage to correct anything that I've done or to gather information about other possible outcomes. I am not going to be conducting this mission inside of 1980 linearly along with my time period. I will be returning to C.O.A. the moment that I left. No one is to access these tapes in the dropbox before I get back, unless I am confirmed dead. If you are listening to this and I am not present, stop immediately. [*Stops recording.*]

[*Starts recording.*] Note Two. Today is Tuesday, June 15th, 1980 at 4:30pm. I have successfully landed a job as patrol officer at O.V.E.R. The interview process was suspiciously easy. My boss... is a woman named Helen Hartley. If I understood correctly from the picture of, quote, "Jerry" on her desk, that makes her Hunter Jeremiah Hartley's mom. Does C.O.A. know about this? Does anyone? This is the first that I've ever heard that Hunter's mom worked for O.V.E.R. It could be how he learned about O.V.E.R. in the first place. Helen Hartley does not have an accent. Hunter says that he's from North Dakota, which raises all sorts of questions about him. Is the accent fake? What does it mean that his mom works here? Is her working here related to Mystery Hunter killing her while playing WOE.BEGONE? Did he even really do that? Is she involved with WOE.BEGONE somehow? Look into Helen Hartley. This will be easier in 2024 with computers and time travel, but I will try to get the work started here in 1980 by speaking directly to her. My other boss is a guy with a big, ginger beard named Roger. I do not know his last name. I had an uncle named Roger on my dad's side who died before I was born, so I wouldn't recognize him if that were indeed him. Though it is possible that there are other people named Roger. And if this man is indeed my uncle, then he does not have very long to live. [*Stops recording.*]

[*Starts recording.*] Note Three. There are only two Tiers at O.V.E.R. in 1980, before they got the ability to time travel. I think that this is not a coincidence. From what Helen has told me, it appears that I got here right as they began building Tier Three. Its creation seems to coincide with the technology appearing. This makes sense. From what I know about Tier Three, its

security is generated by the technology itself, so no tech, no Tier Three. This means that I have come to the right time period to travel to. O.V.E.R. doesn't seem to propagate information or technology backwards beyond where they got the tech. I know that it is possible to travel backwards to before then, because that is what I have just done. It is not a limitation of the technology itself as in *Ars Paradoxica*. There could be some security purpose for this decision. Maybe the situation at O.V.E.R. gets out of control if they start using the technology now. *[Stops recording.]*

[Starts recording.] Note Four. Helen told me that O.V.E.R. just purchased a suite of new Commodore VIC-20 computers, and that people who know how to use them get promoted into other departments. This could be something to look into. If I could teach myself how to use them, I might have an easy way to access Tier Two, no spycraft necessary. This would make disrupting the tech from inside of O.V.E.R. much easier. I am hoping that there is some literature that I can read in order to learn this. Bookstores still exist in this time period. *[Stops recording.]*

Alright, I think that that was everything. I am not looking forward to more voice memos, but also I hate when people transport loose paper into the dropbox, so... I'm not contributing to the problem. ...Whatever, i-it's hip. Cassettes are hip now. Cassettes are hip in 2024, which isn't... now... *[Sighs.]* Alright. Transporting the cassette to the dropbox in three... two... one.

[Time travel noise.]

NOBODY: Alright, that was everything for today, so I have until Helen gets off of work at five... So... what do I do? Cause I can't fuck around on the Internet. I guess I could watch... TV. On a standard definition TV set with bunny ears, ugh... 1980 is gonna suck. I guess there's movies to look forward to. *The Shining... Empire Strikes Back... The Thing...* I-I think; when did *The Thing* come out? Does... Oldbrush Valley even have a movie theater? Alright, so *[Click.]* this turns it on... *[TV static.]* Uh... When do I... know to stop moving the bunny ears around? Does it—

[We hear a loud knock on the cabin door.]

NOBODY: Uh—! Fuck! Fuck!

HELEN *[muffled, from the other side of the door]:* Michael!

NOBODY: What time is it. *[Mutters.]*

HELEN *[muffled]:* Michael. Michael? Are you in there? I brought a housewarming gift!

NOBODY *[projecting]:* Uh... Give me a minute, please! I'm naked in here!

HELEN *[muffled]:* Okay!

NOBODY *[to self]:* Alright, *[Turns TV off.]* contraband, **[HELEN (muffled):** I didn't know I hired a nudist.] gotta get rid of all the contraband. *[Gathers items.]* Uh, phone, wallet, uh... Calculator,

laptop... When— When I worked here, there was a safe... in the closet. Yup. Great. Some things never change... *[Clunk.]* Contraband goes in the safe. Uh, is that everything? *[Clunk.]* What else is from 2024? Uh... *[Clunk.]* I can't think of anything. Alright, I should be fine. Uh. What time is it? *[He huffs.]* Of course she's early. I hate when people are early. ...Okay. It's 1980. You can do this, Nobody. Just act like it's 1980. Okay. You got this.

[Door opens. Outdoor ambience.]

NOBODY: Helen! Uh, hi. Uh— Sorry! I was in the shower. Uh, I didn't think you were coming for another... 30 minutes.

HELEN: I finished work early, so I thought I would pop over. How's it goin'? Are you settling in okay? Got any *pigs* in there?

NOBODY: Pigs— Oh— ...No, not yet. But yeah, I just started getting unpacked; I thought I had more time. Did you say that you got me a housewarming gift?

HELEN: I got you... a... joyride. In one of the security patrol carts. I thought it would be fun to show you around.

NOBODY: Oh. *[Stammers.]* Okay. Uh, I didn't know that we'd be going somewhere, uh. Do I need to grab anything?

HELEN: Nope! We're just drivin' around O.V.E.R. I'll show your route, where the mess hall is, all the cool stuff. You ready to go?

NOBODY: Uh... Yeah. Sure. Let's go.

[Door lock sound. Sounds of walking.]

HELEN: Now, don't get too excited. It doesn't go very fast? But it does beat walking.

NOBODY: "Doesn't go very fast," uh... Do you mind if I look under the hood?

HELEN *[confused]:* Umm... I guess not? What are you lookin' for, exactly?

NOBODY: So, there is a little piece called a governor that limits how fast the cart can go. *[Click.]* But there's a bolt on it that you can adjust so that it goes as fast as it possibly can. Maybe 20 miles per hour, give or take? But we do need to remember to put things back the way that they were before we take it back, because otherwise the cart guys will start yelling about lawsuits if they notice. *[Pause.]* I mean, they— they probably will. And... there we go. *[Click.]* Let's motor.

HELEN: You sure do know *[Starts up golf cart.]* a lot about a lot of things, Walters.

NOBODY: I try my best. ...You've gonna call me "Walters"?

HELEN: Yeah! I think I like it. Walters. Like you're a soldier, and I'm your commanding officer. Drop, and give me 20, Walters!

NOBODY: And here I thought that my days answering to a Lieutenant were over. *[Amused.]* I don't think I can do 20 pushups, Helen.

HELEN: *[Laughs.]* Then forget about it. Let's get outta here.

[The golf cart motor continues to hum.]

HELEN: I would be very careful tampering with O.V.E.R. property, Walters. It's no big deal with the golf cart, but... you work for the government now, and they are sticklers for the rules. I'm not trying to scare you, but they can do worse things than fire you if they decide they don't like the cut of your jib.

NOBODY: Hint taken, Helen. What you mean to say is that O.V.E.R. will kill me if I start snooping around, right?

HELEN: Hey, I told you I'm not trying to scare you. O.V.E.R. isn't dangerous unless you make it dangerous. It's like a wild animal. You have to show it respect. Things are a little more strict than usual right now... Whatever they're doing inside of Tier Two is big. O.V.E.R.'s always been serious, but they're especially serious now.

NOBODY: You can trust me, Helen. I've been in tricky situations before, and I know how to navigate them. I know how to look out for myself, and I know how to keep my head down. So you don't have to worry about me.

HELEN: I had better not. You'd be surprised, though. People get comfortable; they get... curious. They think they can get away with looking for things that they shouldn't find. You've got to play by the rules. The ones that don't play by the rules don't last long around here.

NOBODY: Well, that's the classic trap, isn't it? Hubris? Thinking that you're too clever and know too much to get yourself caught. I know better than that, Helen. Or at least I pretend to.

HELEN: *[Sighs.]* I wanna believe you, Walters...

[We hear the cart leave the path and enter the woods.]

NOBODY: Uh, Helen?

HELEN: I'm not sure I do, though.

NOBODY: *[Pitch raises.]* Uh. Uh. Where—? *[Clears throat. Resumes lower pitch.]* Where are we going, Helen? Uh. W-Why are we going off the path? Uh, this— this isn't a shortcut; the woods just keep going this way.

HELEN: What are you actually doing out here, Walters?

NOBODY: What do you mean? You hired me as a patrol officer.

HELEN: You know what I mean. What haven't you been telling me?

NOBODY: Is this something that you do to all the new employees? To scare them straight? Look, Helen. One, I've never been straight in my life... maybe I shouldn't say that in 1980. Uh— Look, Helen. I know the job is serious, and that O.V.E.R. is scary. You do not have to put the fear of god into me by driving me out to the middle of the woods.

HELEN: You might think that you're too clever to get caught, but... you already did. I saw you through the blinds earlier. I saw what you did to the cassette tape. You pointed something at it, and it vanished. Or it *looked* like it vanished. We both know that probably not what it did, because I don't know why you would do that. It... went somewhere. You pointed that thing at it, and it teleported to somewhere else.

NOBODY: Helen. You can't just watch someone through their blinds. I could have been naked in there!

HELEN: You said you were naked in there.

NOBODY: You— didn't— see whatever it was you thought you saw. Okay? Cause that's not even... possible... is it? To teleport something like that? Helen, I have a laser that I use to clean up cassettes so that I can keep recording over them and it doesn't degrade. I keep voice memos, and I don't want to buy new tapes every time I fill one up.

HELEN: *[Brief chuckle.]* You're not fooling me. I know what I saw with my own two eyes. You aren't some normal guy who heard about us in the paper. Things are ramping up inside of Tier Two, and here you are, with the ability to make things disappear. You're connected to whatever's going on in there.

NOBODY: I thought you said that Bigfoot was in there.

HELEN: Don't be cute with me, Walters.

NOBODY: I don't know what you're talking about, Helen. I don't know what's going on inside of Tier Two or Tier Three, and I'm not connected to it. I just needed a job.

HELEN: I guess we'll see for ourselves in a minute here.

NOBODY: What the hell does that mean.

HELEN: You put the device and some other stuff in the safe.

NOBODY: That is absolutely none of your business.

HELEN: That's why we are out here in the middle of the woods. Far away from your cabin. After I saw you teleport the cassette tape, I called Roger on the walkie, and told him that something was going on. By now, he has already let himself into your cabin, and taken the safe. Now it's just a matter of getting it open, and seeing what is inside.

NOBODY: You can't do that; you're violating every rule in the O.V.E.R. handbook. That's my stuff, it's private, and I need it!

HELEN: Oh, I bet you do! Which is why you're going to let me and Roger in on whatever it is that you're doing. That's if you ever want a chance at getting your stuff back. He's hiding it somewhere you would never find it in a million years. You have to do what we say, or you will never see it again.

NOBODY: I— You— Ugh— Fuck. Fuck. *[He exits the cart, and starts walking.]* I'm stuck here. I need to get back to the cabin.

[Helen cocks her pistol.]

HELEN: Ah ah ah... You *are* stuck here, Walters. You aren't going anywhere. Now come back to the cart. Nobody has to get hurt, you're not getting your little toy back, and you aren't going to go to O.V.E.R. and tattle on us. You're gonna come back to the cart, and *start talking*.

[Nobody groans, and walks back to the cart.]

NOBODY: You aren't going to want to be "let in" on what I am doing. I'm not doing something constructive. This isn't me raiding the casinos for all of their cash, or anything. This isn't *Ocean's 11*. I'm here to wreck the place.

HELEN: I don't know what *Ocean's 11* is.

NOBODY: *[Groans.]* Right, because... Wait— Wait, no, wait. The original *Ocean's 11* came out in the 60s; like, you should have heard of it. Frank Sinatra is in it.

HELEN *[shrugging]:* Dunno. But I'll be the one to decide whether or not I want in. Not you.

NOBODY: Fine. But it's going to take a lot of explaining, and you still won't really understand everything by the end, and you're going to ask questions that you think will elucidate what's

going on, but really what you've done is unlock a series of unending tangents that never seem to fully resolve one another. Is that what you want?

HELEN: Lay it on me.

NOBODY: Okay. Let's start here. Your son, Hunter, is a real asshole.

HELEN: *What?* My son is four years old. *[Pause.]* Wait... how do you know his first name?

[Fade out.]

[Closing theme starts playing.]

CREDITS: This has been WOE.BEGONE. The voice of Helen Hartley was Tatiana Geffer. Check out their podcast [Soul Operator](#). You should get caught up on Soul Operator before their next episode comes out. For no particular reason. You can also hear me and Tatiana in the newest episode of [The Grotto](#). Thanks for playing.

[Closing theme plays out.]

[Everyone Starts Moving plays.]

*I was penitent
Ignorant
Digging up through the trenches
Buying time for cheap
And wholly devouring it*

*I was savoring
The water squeezed
From the wood that was
Encasing me
Pulling at shackles
Hoping they would bend
Until*

*I'm free (the terror never lessens)
I'm free (it's a shame, it's not your shame)
I'm free (once I pick your bones clean)
I'm free (everyone starts moving)
Everyone starts moving*

*It was violent
Unthinking force*

*A tragedy that has been rehearsed
There is so little to resort to
When it comes time to resort*

*It was shelter from the rain at first
It was the stone that keeps my innards cold
Dismembered into parts
Cartilage, hope, meat, sinew, and bone*

*I'm free (the terror never lessens)
I'm free (it's a shame, it's not your shame)
I'm free (once I pick your bones clean)
I'm free (everyone starts moving)
Everyone starts moving*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (HELEN): I should let you know that pets are allowed in em– employ– ple– *[Mouth noises that sound increasingly strangled.]* I'm dying. Okay. *[Clears throat.]* We don't need dying no– noises for this episode. ...Not yet! *[Fake laughter.]* I'll only need dying noises when my son murders me! Anyway. *[Brief pause, then giggles.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TATIANA): Gah–! God–! F-Fuck–! *[Thump.]* Jesus! People– Oh, my god... I'm freaking out. Forget other people. *[Takes a breath.]* Man. Dylan. I was supposed to be mad at Hunter, and now you have to make me think about him as a four-year-old child with a mom who loves him and a dog named Rusty? ...How di– ...I can't believe this is all Mike Walters' fault *again!* Why is it all Mike's fault *again?* Goddamnit! *[Sighs.]* Welcome to WOE.BEGONE.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

[END Episode 149.]