

EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY EIGHT - ANONYMOUS COUNCILS/EDIBLE BOMBS

Original transcript edited by Theo and reviewed by Jenah

[BEGIN Episode 168.]

INTRO: Hey, guys, quick plugs. Welcome to the Season 14 finale of WOE.BEGONE. I hope you enjoy it. A lot of us worked very hard to make it. Season 15 will begin in two weeks. In the meantime, why don't you come hang out on Twitch at [twitch.tv/woebegonepod](https://www.twitch.tv/woebegonepod), where every Sunday I write that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. *World of Goo 2* just came out, and I am currently playing that; it's a lot of fun. If you want to come see what the game is like, that is [twitch.tv/woebegonepod](https://www.twitch.tv/woebegonepod). And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon over at [patreon.com/woe_begone](https://www.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. Since it is the intermission, I will have a lot of free time on my hands, and I am just going to be getting postcard after postcard out the door. August is the two-year anniversary of the postcards, and I'm doing something very special with them, so you're not going to want to miss that. The postcards come with a message from one of the characters, and they're in a completely alternate universe at this point. Boris owns a ranch in Oldbrush Valley. It's complicated; you'll see when you get there. That's [patreon.com/woe_begone](https://www.patreon.com/woe_begone). Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

[Warning: This episode contains violence, including gun violence. It also contains some wet and visceral gore. Listener discretion is advised.]

[We hear outdoor ambience.]

EDMAN: Hey, babe. *[MDawg gasps.]* Long time no see.

MDAWG: E-EdMan. ...Is it really you?

EDMAN: It's really me, Bear. I've missed you so much.

MDAWG: I've missed you, too... I thought they'd never let me see you again.

EDMAN: We can finally be together. They're going to let us leave!

MDAWG: Leave? Edman, how do you know? Who said that to you?

EDMAN: The order came directly from Anne. Operose is going to let us go! We won't have to answer to them anymore. We're finally free!

MDAWG: That's... great... Can Anne just do that? Does she have the power to unilaterally free us?

EDMAN: Anne can do anything that she wants.

MDAWG: Then why didn't she let us go earlier?

EDMAN: We had some important things that we needed to do. But they're all done now, Bear. Don't you understand? We can go home!

MDAWG: What important things? I was in the Shadow Dome, but I didn't do my job there. Is there—

EDMAN: Let's not talk about all of the horrible things that they had us do. One day, I'll tell you about everything that's happened to me in there. But that's for another time. We can finally rest and not have to think about any of it.

MDAWG: I'm having trouble thinking. Helen is...

EDMAN: You don't have to worry about Helen anymore. You don't have to worry about Eagle or Base or the other Mikes or anyone. We never have to see any of them ever again. We're going to be free. For real, this time. We'll go somewhere that they won't ever think to look for us. Yellowknife or Whitehorse or Dawson. Somewhere secluded. A cabin in the mountains, like you always wanted. All we need is each other.

MDAWG: But... definitely somewhere in Canada, you're thinking?

EDMAN: We've done enough with our lives. We can live the rest of them in peace. Just you and me, babe. Isn't that romantic?

MDAWG: I guess... it is. It's what I want, but you always—

EDMAN: Isn't that what you want, too? Isn't that what we've been fighting for?

MDAWG: Yes, it is...

EDMAN: Then don't resist it. It's time for us to take what's ours, and go home.

MDAWG: You're right...

EDMAN: Come here.

[We hear patting as they embrace. MDawg inhales.]

EDMAN: Don't resist it, babe.

[There is a final pat, and MDawg groans in pain.]

MDAWG: I, uh... EdMan... Panther... did you... s-stab me?

EDMAN: You've had your fun here. It's time to go.

MDAWG: Where... was I before I was here?

EDMAN: It's okay. It will all be over soon.

MDAWG: ...You aren't real. EdMan...

EDMAN: Of course I'm not real, MDawg. I knew you'd fall for it! You're too desperate! You need EdMan too badly. It's obsessive. You haven't seen him in ages, but I see him every day. He doesn't love you anymore. *[MDawg groans and wheezes.]* He doesn't even think about you. You're pining for someone who has basically forgotten that you exist. And it turned you into a fool. You are being punished for your foolishness.

MDAWG: I don't believe you...

EDMAN: I don't care if you believe me or not. It's over. The good guys win again. We always do. Nighty-night, MDawg.

MDAWG: The good guys...?

[We hear a snap, and MDawg stops breathing.]

EAGLE: That went great! See whatcha did, Old Man? It's your fault that your dog had to be put down. If you had died back in the Shadow Dome, none of this would have happened. I hope you're happy.

OLD MAN: You coulda just killed 'im.

EAGLE: I sure could have! But that was fun! And now we're going to have even more fun. Get ready.

[Opening theme plays.]

TROY *[singing to self]:* Here's my favorite thing about the basement / I found a salamander, he's my best friend / Sometimes when I am bored he tells me stories / And they are sometimes scary stories

CHARLIE: *[Laughs.]* A salamander? Troy, what are you singing? ...Why is kinda catchy?

TROY: Oh, that? Uh, I— Just some weird song that I found in my recording studio? I guess someone went in there, and recorded a whole song about living in the basement. It's pretty cool, actually.

CHARLIE: *[Brief laugh.]* I'm sorry, wait. Someone was in your house, and you didn't know about it?

TROY: Um, yeah, Charlie. People are in my house all the time, and I don't know about it. My butler, my chef, my driver, my private investigator, my mom. I'm actually not sure why my driver goes in my house; they're supposed to be in my car, but...

CHARLIE: Wait, wouldn't those be people—? ...You know what? I think you might just need better security in your house.

TROY: Okay, Charlie, two points. Firstly, I don't need better security. I'm a security guard. So, by definition, I make my house more secure just by being there. And secondly, if I had better security, nobody would've broken in and made this cool song, so— Hold on, you have to listen. I— I think it's on my phone. It's... somewhere around here. *[Pause.]* Can you... Can you call my phone? I— No, hold on, it's in my pocket, sorry, okay, no, listen, listen to this.

[Troy plays "Here In The Basement" on his phone.]

CHARLIE: Troy... *[Scoffs.]* that's Mikey. You didn't recognize his voice?

TROY: Oh, is that why he says his name is Mikey? I— Makes sense. I— I thought it was my mom, to be honest?

CHARLIE: Oh—! You thought it was your—? Okay. *[Laughs.]* No one has seen Mikey in days. He's missing. Base is putting together a plan to find him. When did you find this recording?

TROY: A... few days ago. Why, do you think that's important? I mean, Stinky was living in my house, and then one day he was gone, and this song was on the computer? I guess I just thought he got lost in the house again, but I'mma be honest with you, Charlie, I'm either out of the house, in bed, or on the trampoline, and if you're not in one of those spots, I— I don't know.

CHARLIE: You should have told someone! Stinky was your responsibility, and this recording studio might've been the very last place they were before they went missing.

TROY: I don't think you should be giving me responsibilities in general.

CHARLIE: Okay, uh, that's... *[Sighs.]* that's a fair point, um... But, now that we have a clue, Base might be able to figure out where they went.

TROY: So... I did good, then.

CHARLIE: *[Laughs.]* Yeah. You did good, goofy.

TROY: Ooh! Maybe they're going to the basement from the song? Because the song is about how great it is in the basement, right? And he's got a salamander friend, and they lick the walls because they're salty. *But...* I don't know where the basement is. I do know, though... I do know it's not my basement, because there aren't salamanders in my basements. I checked, and the walls aren't salty. I know, because I couldn't find any salamanders, and when I licked the walls, they just tasted like normal walls.

CHARLIE: Okay. Yeah, so maybe, um, Mikey's actually singing about Edgar's basement. He was stuck down there for a pretty long time before the Great Correction. At least, that's what I understand. Edgar did say that he had some moisture problems when he first built it, and that could explain the saltiness.

TROY: Oh, you mean Edgar's cabin here at O.V.E.R.

CHARLIE: Yep! That's the one. Base was experimenting with using the time travel technology for construction purposes, and one of the first big successful projects Edgar did was building a basement under his own cabin. We thought it was just because he wanted more space, but turns out that he really did it so he could eventually hide Mikey in there when the time was right. It's pretty sweet, honestly. God, those two are so corny. *[Briefly giggles.]*

TROY: Oh, then they probably did go there. I mean, I know Base is conducting an experiment right now inside of O.V.E.R.

CHARLIE: Troy...? What are you talking about? No, we're not.

TROY: No? Uh, What's-his-name... Uh, Chris! Chris from Base. Not the scary one that does computers. The other one with the acoustic guitar? He came through the gate a couple of hours ago, before you got here, and he had someone with him that he said was his brother? But, *[Chuckles.]* I know better. I'm not as dumb as you all think I am. I know what goes on around here, okay? I know that was his twin brother. Like how that one guy made me have a twin brother, and then they stole him. ...Hey, whatever happened to that guy, by the way?

CHARLIE: Wait, no... That doesn't make sense. No, Chris shouldn't have an iteration. That's not right. I would've definitely heard about that. I know for a fact that he doesn't want iterations of himself running around, and I know Base usually tries to respect that. I can't say the same for O.V.E.R., O.I., or the Compound, but... I still haven't seen any Chris iterations.

TROY: I mean... I guess I could be wrong? Someone once did tell me that I have a face... thing. Alopecia, or whatever.

CHARLIE: Prosopagnosia. That's the word you're looking for. Alright, I'm— *[Sighs.]* I'm gonna go call Chris. ...This isn't right, I need to— *[We hear a phone ring.]* I need to figure out what's going on here.

[The phone rings for a moment.]

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]:* Hey, Charlie! How's it goin'?

CHARLIE: Uh, it's goin' alright. How's the hunt for Mikey going?

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]:* It's going... fine? We're trying to set up some correction points that we can safely track him down. Edgar's got this big map spread across the kitchen table right now. ...Edgar! Say hi to Charlie!

EDGAR *[through the phone]:* Hey, Charlie!

MARISSA *[through the phone]:* Oh, shit, is that Charlie!? Yooooo!

[We hear a light scuffle.]

MARISSA *[through the phone]:* I want to talk to my girlfriend, Chris! Give me! Give me! *Get!*

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]:* Hey— Ah— God— Marissa! Ow! Okay, okay, geez.

MARISSA *[through the phone]:* What a buncha slackers, am I right? It's cool, though, 'cause your girl is onto it, and we are gonna get to the bottom of this, no sweat! ...Things might be a teensy bit more complicated than we first thought, though, because we think there's something going on with all of the Mikes, so we're just tryin' to play it extra careful, and being really bored about it! Being careful sucks. I just wanna blow shit up, ya know?

CHARLIE: *[Brief chuckle.]* No, that's great, Sunshine, but... I did really need to talk to Chris. You guys are all at Base, right?

MARISSA *[through the phone]:* Yeah-huh. You should come over once you've clocked off.

CHARLIE: You got it. But Troy just told me that he let Chris and an iteration of Chris through the gate. I need to know if Chris has been to O.V.E.R. today.

MARISSA *[through the phone]:* Hey, Chris! Get your skinny ass back here. Charlie wants to know if you went to O.V.E.R. today.

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]:* What? I haven't been to O.V.E.R. today, I've— I've been at Base all day. Ryan's in there somewhere running errands, but I've been here the whole time.

CHARLIE: Interesting... Okay... And there aren't any iterations of you that I should know about, right?

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]*: Wait, what? No! If there are iterations of me... that's concerning. I have no idea about those. It's news to me.

CHARLIE: Okay... Well... I guess we're gonna go investigate. I'll let you guys know if I need backup. But I've got Troy with me, so I'll be fine. We don't even know if they're up to no good.

BASE CHANCE *[through the phone]*: Okay, just... let me know? There really shouldn't be any more of me. Whoever made those iterations, that wasn't me.

MARISSA *[through the phone]*: Catch ya later, babe! Make sure to kick ass, and take names! Or just kick ass. Love ya!

CHARLIE: Pshh, I always kick ass. *[Brief laugh.]* Love you, too, Sunshine. Bye-bye.

[We hear the call end.]

TROY: Okay, so it sounds like that wasn't Chris from Base.

CHARLIE: Apparently not. Chris is at Base right now, so... You didn't see the two iterations leave, did you?

TROY: No, they only went in.

CHARLIE: Well, if they were going to leave, they would've have to come back through the gates. So if you didn't see them, and I didn't see them, then they're still in there.

TROY: I mean, I guess we could wait for them to try to leave?

CHARLIE: No... *[Sighs.]* I think that'd be too late. We don't really know what they're doing in there, and, currently, they're unaccounted for, so we need to make sure that they're not, like, working for Operose or something. ...I guess that's our job, isn't it. *[Briefly giggles.]*

TROY: Uh, we're gonna try to find them? Do I have to bring my gun with me?

CHARLIE: Troy, *[Sighs.]* you need to bring your gun with you any time that you step into O.V.E.R. ...I feel like we've had this conversation before.

TROY: Charlie, I don't wanna shoot Chris. He's nice to me sometimes.

CHARLIE: No! We're not gonna shoot him.

TROY: *[Quietly huffs.]* Then why do I need my gun?

CHARLIE: Because you never know what could happen.

TROY: Okay, so I might need to shoot him, then.

CHARLIE: *[Huffs.]* Troy... probably not. But... it's better safe than sorry. Right?

TROY: Okay, Charlie, for you, I will shoot Chris. But only if you tell me to.

CHARLIE: Okay, *[Sighs.]* fine. Let's just go.

TROY *[singy-songy]:* To the basement!

CHARLIE: *[Brief laugh.]* I'm telling you, Troy! I'm placing my bet. Right. Now. He's not going to be in there.

TROY: Okay, Charlie, but the song's about the basement. We need to at least check it out.

CHARLIE: *[Huffs.]* Okay, okay! We'll check. But only because I don't know where else to look at this point.

TROY: Deal.

[I Have A Thing With Faces plays.]

*I've been dialing back my efforts
to make any lasting change
turning shit to gold is so much work
and honestly I think it's overrated*

*I am isolated
I am fine
I can hardly take it
I am fine*

*I'll say I never knew catharsis
Even though it learned my name
You know I have a thing with faces, I can't
Seem to place yours
who are you again?*

*I am isolated
I am fine*

I am isolated
I am fine

[Scene transition.]

[We hear the sound of a circular saw power up. Metal music plays in the background.]

ROBERT: Are you sure this is safe, Sax?

SAX: Do you want it open or not? I'll be fine. I've got eye protection.

MAGNOLIA: Uh— Should we, um.. Should we not... be this close to the saw?

SAX: Up to you. Personally, I wouldn't.

BRITCHES: I don't know about all this, y'all. That's Skinner's property right there. Maybe we shouldn't be cuttin' into it.

PYTHON: Skinner is missing, if you hadn't noticed. The time travel doohickey is in that box. If we ever want to find them or Old Man, we're gonna need it. They could be anywhere at this point.

BRITCHES: We don't hafta save 'em, you know.

ROBERT: We do have to save them, Britches. At the very least, we have to save Skinner.

SAX: We've gotta find Skinner if we're gonna find Skuzz. I hope you haven't forgotten that they went missin', too.

MAGNOLIA: Skinner seemed to know a lot more than they were letting on. I bet they have at least some idea what happened to Skuzz. Old Man, too, for that matter. They both seem to have been at this for a long time.

BRITCHES: And we don't know shit about shit.

[We hear the saw stop.]

SAX: But we do have a brand new toy. Would ya look at that.

MAGNOLIA: I've never seen it up close before. It's a lot... jankier than I thought that'd be.

PYTHON: I've seen Sax put together more professional looking doodads here in the garage.

ROBERT: Are we really going to entrust our safety to this thing? It looks homemade.

BRITCHES: It was good enough for Skinner and Old Man. They said they'd get around with the Calculator all the time. And we saw it work on that Nobody fella.

ROBERT: We didn't see what happened to Nobody. He could've been broken apart, atom by atom. All we did was watch him disappear.

MAGNOLIA: Do we need to be worried about the teleporter paradox? Does this thing break you down into atoms, and transmit you somewhere? Like— Like in *Willy Wonka*, when the— when they shrink the boy?

SAX: Nah, I don't think so. Skinner and the Old Man were both smarter than that. They wouldn't be usin' them if it killed you every time it transported ya somewhere.

ROBERT: I could see Old Man doing that. He loves to make sacrifices. But not Skinner.

PYTHON: We get it, Robert! You have a crush on Skinner. You need to do something about that when we find them again.

MAGNOLIA: So we have the Calculator. ...What now? Uh, how do we use it to find them?

BRITCHES: I think we should figure out how the dang thing works before we start usin' it for rescue missions.

SAX: Are you suggestin' an experiment?

BRITCHES: Yup. See, if you can move that there can back in time a couple minutes, accordin' to the tape, it should appear where it is now and also in its new spot in the past, which means we'll see two of 'em.

PYTHON: That's what an "iteration" is. I think.

SAX: Uh... sure. Just... let me see. These menus are confusin'... I cannot stress enough that I'm not really a computer guy.

ROBERT: I can take a look, if you want.

SAX: Sure thing.

ROBERT: Hmm... these numbers are coordinates, obviously. So, how do you tell the Calculator when in time to take you? Oh! Right here. And so all you have to do is change the output distance by a couple of feet so it's not overlapping... and... mind if I try it?

SAX: Yeah, you go for it.

ROBERT: Alright. We should see a duplicate of the can right... now.

[We hear a time travel blip, and then a soda can falling from ceiling height. Sax shouts in surprise as it lands on him.]

SAX: Hey! If that had been something heavy, it could've seriously hurt!

ROBERT: Sorry. I'm not sure that I understand how it factors in the distance from the ground. I'm sure it's in there somewhere. But that was only, like, seven feet. It's not like it landed on the roof.

BRITCHES: So. Who's gonna be the first human subject?

MAGNOLIA: You want to do *that* to a person!? To one of your friends here? Won't that mean there's two of them? Don't you think we should try to make it a little bit safer before we go testing it out on each other?

PYTHON: That's only a couple foot drop for a person, assuming that they're still in the standing position when it happens. I can jump, and touch the ceiling, it's not that far.

SAX: Are you, uh, volunteerin' to be the guinea pig, then, Python?

PYTHON: Sure. Why not. *[Cheekily.]* I don't care if I live or die today.

MAGNOLIA: Don't say stuff like that!

PYTHON: I'll be fine. Robert will be careful. He wants to get this all figured out, because every second wasted here is a second that he's away from his precious Skinner.

ROBERT: I'm ignoring all of this teasing about me and Skinner. But I'd be lying if I said that I wasn't eager to get this all figured out.

BRITCHES: Python and I do stupid shit all the time. I don't see how this is any different.

SAX: Plus, we have time travel. And if anythin' does go wrong, we can fix it.

MAGNOLIA: We can fix it *if* we figure out how to use the Calculator. That's a big "if"!

PYTHON: Less talk, more rock. You ready, Robert? I'll stand where the soda can was, and you can do the exact same thing that you just did. Presto, change-o, double the Pythons. Hiss! Hissss... *[Beat.]* Those were supposed to be, um, two— two Pythons. *[Clears throat.]*

ROBERT: Alright. Are you sure you want to do this, Python? This is your last chance to change your mind.

PYTHON: Yup. I wanna do it. I'll be the first person in the house to travel through time! How cool is that?

ROBERT: We're all technically traveling through time, just at a speed of one second per second.

PYTHON: I know that, nerd. Just push the button already.

ROBERT: Alright. I'll give you a countdown. Commence the human time travel experiment in three... two... one...

[Time travel noise.]

[Wet and visceral noises.]

ROBERT: ...Python?

SAX *[alarmed]*: Everybody look away. Don't look at him! Go back into the house. Oh— Oh, god... *[Pants.]* Everyone, get out of the garage. ...I'm gonna grab a tarp.

[Sax hastily exits through the garage's hinged door.]

MAGNOLIA: Shouldn't we check to make sure he's dead? I— I know it looks bad, but...

BRITCHES: I got a good look at him, Magnolia. He's dead as a doornail. He died as soon as his head did... that. At least it was instant.

ROBERT *[distressed]*: I... He... He told me to do it. I put in everything correctly. I'm sure of it!

BRITCHES: Ain't no blamin' you, Robert. He volunteered. He fucked around, and found out. Could just as easily been me. I was thinkin' about volunteerin'.

MAGNOLIA: We can stop this from happening, right? We can figure out how the Calculator works, and send someone back here to warn him not to do it?

ROBERT: That's if we figure out how it works. I don't wanna touch it anymore.

SAX: Alright... He's all covered up.

MAGNOLIA: You're sure he's dead?

SAX: I am extremely sure. There's no way to survive being disfigured like that. ...Do we know what went wrong?

ROBERT: No. I did everything the same as the first time. The only difference was that Python isn't a soda can.

SAX: Then that's the new top of the stack. Figure out the Calculator, and use it to stop ourselves from killin' Python. Skinner and Skuzz will have to wait.

ROBERT: Don't look at me. I'm never touching that thing ever again.

SAX: I can take a look at it.

BRITCHES: I know a guy who knows a guy who knows some folks that I think could help us. They live out in the woods, and get up to all kinds o' crap. I overhear 'em talking in the diner sometimes. I think I know where they live...

MAGNOLIA: And you think that they could help *us*. Do they know about time travel?

BRITCHES: They're O.V.E.R. employees, so I reckon that they do. It's just a hunch, though. I don't really know them other than what they like to order at the diner.

MAGNOLIA: Should we really be roping strangers into this, though? Even if they might know what's going on, that doesn't mean they want to help us! What if they attack us, or arrest us, and hand us to O.V.E.R.?

ROBERT: I say we do it. We've got to do something. We can't let Python stay dead.

SAX: I'm with Robert. We got cocky. We're in over our heads. If these people can help us, we owe it to Python to at least try.

MAGNOLIA: ...You're right. ...Let's do it.

SAX: I'll pull the van around so that no one else has to walk past Python. One of you needs to call Flash, and let 'em know what's goin' on.

ROBERT: Not me.

BRITCHES: I'll do it...

SAX: Yeah, yeah, thanks... I'll meet you all around the front.

[We hear a phone ring.]

FLASH *[through the phone]*: You're live with us on 103.3 KOBV, the Valley's only talk radio station. Thanks for calling. Do you have a story about paranormal happenings in Oldbrush Valley?

BRITCHES: What? Flash, it's Britches. I don't wanna be on your dang radio show! I called your personal number!

FLASH *[through the phone]*: Well, howdy, Britches. Uh, it's all the same number. What's up? ...While I have you, could you at least tell the audience about that time you saw a ghost at the diner?

BRITCHES: What audience? Do people actually listen to this?

ROBERT: I do Flash's taxes. You would be stunned at how much money this show makes.

FLASH *[through the phone]*: Is Robert with you? Please don't put him on, dude, I don't think his vibe would go over well with the listeners.

BRITCHES: Listen, Flash! We don't have time for this. We opened Skinner's box, and got their... device out of it. We used it on Python, and something very bad happened. We're going to get help right now.

FLASH *[through the phone]*: ...Is Python okay?

BRITCHES: Uh... He is extremely not-okay...

FLASH *[through the phone]*: Define "not-okay." Are you taking him to the hospital?

BRITCHES: A hospital cannot help us. Look, **[FLASH (through the phone): What the hell does that mean?]** we gotta run. I just wanna let you know what was goin' on. *[Gravely.]* Do not go into the garage when you get home. Got it?

FLASH *[through the phone]*: I... *[Pause.]* Okay.

BRITCHES: ...Ack. Also... One time, I was in the diner alone, and some guy came in covered head to toe in dirt and dressed up in a mining uniform. He sat down, ordered black coffee, and when I came back, he was gone. But his pickaxe was still there, so he was definitely real, and so was the pickaxe mounted above the door in my room. ...There. That's my ghost story.

FLASH *[through the phone]*: There you have it, folks. A real-life ghost story. ...Can you do me a favor, Britches, and, uh, take that pickaxe with you when you go? ...Just in case, you know? It's a dangerous world out there.

BRITCHES: Can do. I'll catch ya later, Flash.

FLASH *[through the phone]*: Bye, Britches. Thanks for calling. Hope everything turns out okay.

[We hear the call end.]

ROBERT: Flash knows that you have a gun, right?

BRITCHES: Yeah, they do. Magnolia can take my gun, and I'll take the pickaxe. Or the other way around. It don't matter to me.

MAGNOLIA: I'll take the... gun, I guess?

BRITCHES: Sure thing. *[Britches hands Magnolia the gun.]* Here ya go.

MAGNOLIA: Thanks... Looks like Sax is ready for us.

ROBERT: Let's go save Python.

BRITCHES: Hell yeah.

[Scene transition.]

CHARLIE: *[Brief laugh.]* I'm telling you, Troy! I'm placing my bet. Right. Now. He's not going to be in there.

TROY: Yes, he is, Charlie. The song's about the basement! I found the song when Mikey went missing, the twins have to be in the basement looking for Mikey! Otherwise, why make the song?

CHARLIE: Look, we'll check, but just because I don't know where else to look at this point. But once we see that no one is in there, we're going to have to call Base. We need everyone else helping us look for them, too. You— See, Troy? We're— We're going to have to— *[Opens the door.]* ...Huh. Interesting... The door was unlocked.

TROY: Ch— See? I told you! The door's unlocked, because they're in here!

CHARLIE: Okay, but I don't see anyone. Hello? Mikey? Stinky? Chris? It's Charlie and Troy! Are you in there?

TROY: Charlie. They can't hear you, they're in the basement. Now... how do we get into the basement?

CHARLIE: There's a hidden door under the rug. Uh, here, can you help me move it?

[We hear them move the rug for a moment.]

CHARLIE: Ugh. I'm so confused. What would anybody want down in the basement? I know for a fact that Mikey only wrote that song because he was stuck down there before the Great Correction. And that Mikey didn't even know anything, so it's not like he left anything down there that could be found. Plus, that was in a completely different timeline, so it wouldn't even be there now.

TROY: I don't know, Charlie. Maybe they want the salamander? Could he even still be down there? How long do salamanders live?

CHARLIE: Oh, man, uh... *[Sucks in a breath.]* Decades? I'm pretty sure. They live a long time. I know that much.

TROY: Then, where are his parents?

CHARLIE: Huh... You know, *[Exhales.]* that's a good question. Where are his parents? I hope they're okay.

TROY: Charlie, if he was born there, then his parents should be there. It's in the song.

CHARLIE: You know... *[Exhales.]* you're right. Maybe we can find them when we go down.

TROY: I'd like that. Thanks, Charlie.

[They finish moving the rug.]

TROY: You know, I think we should be really quiet when we go down there. We don't want them to know that we found them. That way we can jump out, and put the handcuffs on them, and then I won't have to shoot anybody.

CHARLIE: Troy's telling me to be quiet? That's a new one. True, though. And they might have a Calculator, too. If they spot us before we can ambush them, then they could just use the Calculator to transport out of there... If they're even down there, which they definitely aren't.

TROY: We'll see about that.

[We hear the hatch open.]

TROY *[whispering]:* Remember: quiet.

CHRIS: Well, look harder. It should still be down here somewhere.

CHANCE: I don't know what I'm lookin' for! This is all just a buncha dang crap! I thought you said that everythin' we need is in that there box I took off of Michael.

CHRIS: Everything we need *is* in the box, but it would be a lot easier to deal with the... "iteration problem" if we found it. Just keep looking. You'll know when you see it, because it isn't just *[Chance impression.]* "a buncha dang crap." *[Stops impression.]* Look for a file with the name "Ryan" on it.

CHARLIE *[whispering, overlapping Chris]:* Three... two... one... Go!

[Charlie and Troy ambush Chris and Chance. We hear a scuffle, then the sound of handcuffs locking into place.]

TROY: I don't wanna—! I don't wanna shoot you, Chris.

CHRIS: I'm handcuffed! Why would you shoot me?

TROY: *[Huffs.]* You're not— You're not listening. I don't wanna shoot you, that's what I just said.

CHRIS: Then why bring it up?

TROY: Charlie told me to bring it up.

CHARLIE: What—!? Troy! I did not. Chris, I did not tell him to shoot you. Even though I know you aren't our Chris, I would never!

CHANCE: Chris? Do you know these folks?

CHARLIE: *[Exhales.]* Wait, wait, what? Chris... You don't recognize us? It's Charlie. And Troy. We're from Base. Okay, you've gotta be some sort of iteration. Obviously.

CHANCE: I'm sorry, my name ain't Chris. It's weird, Michael kept callin' me Chris, too, and his name is Chris, but mine ain't? I'm Chance.

CHARLIE: Well, I guess at least Mikey would get a kick out of that if we had any idea where he was.

CHRIS: The younger iterations are gone, too? See, Chance, this is what I told you was happening. This is why I had to get you away from Michael. He's missing, too, I take it?

CHARLIE: You sound like you know a lot about what's going on. How about this: I'm going to take your Calculator and this weird box you've got, and we're going to march you over to Base, and you can tell the whole story there. Chris, the real Chris, and the others are already waiting for us. I'll call them, and tell them that we're on our way.

CHRIS: Charlie, with all due respect, you don't have a clue what is going on here. I strongly advise you to just leave Oldbrush Valley, and never return. Maybe invest in some iterations of yourself while you're at it, 'cause the more you associate with Base, the darker your path will become. And that's not "if," Charlie, that's a "when." And you are much too sweet of a person to go down such a dark path.

CHARLIE *[mockingly]*: How sweet that you care so deeply about me, Chris. With all due respect, this isn't for you to decide. Base are my friends. Marissa is my frickin' girlfriend! I'm not walking away from anything. I've never once before, and I'm not doing it now. Me and her can handle a little time travel drama. We do it all the time! Do you even have a Ryan like our Chris does?

CHANCE: "A Ryan"? What does that mean? Like, from the file?

CHRIS: No, I do not. I don't need him.

CHARLIE: *[Scoffs.]* That's what I thought. Now: on your feet. We're going to Base.

[Here In The Basement (Orchestral Version) plays.]

*Living in the basement isn't that bad
Sometimes I lick the walls 'cause they are salty
Edgar wants me to be a cowboy
But I don't want to be a cowboy.*

*Edgar bought me spurs
At the flea market
I don't like to wear them
Because they're clunky
He calls me stinky
And I don't like it
I'm not stinky I am mikey*

*Here in the basement
It gets dark
Unless the light's on
There are no windows
So it's night
If i say so
It's bad idea to try me
My senses are enhanced
By living in darkness*

*Here's my favorite thing
About the basement
I found a salamander
He's my best friend
Sometimes when I am bored
He tells me stories
And they are sometimes
Scary stories*

*Now that I think about it
I think I saw him
Lick the wall and then
That's when I tried it
He's smart about all the basement stuff
Because I think that he was born here*

*Here in the basement
It gets dark
Unless the light's on
I don't think it bothers
The salamander
Are salamanders blind? I don't know
It's bad idea to try me
My salamander friend
Just might be poisonous.*

*Where are his parents?
If he was born here
His parents should be here
I made myself sad
Thinking "what if
His parents are dead"?*

*It's a bad idea to try us
Because now we're getting revenge
For his dead parents.*

[Scene transition.]

CHRIS: You shouldn't have told them any of that. You're a fool. You're not even an actual country bumpkin. All of that was planted!

BASE CHANCE: No. Chance... Ugh, I hate calling you that. You know that Mikey calls me Chance so he doesn't confuse me with CANNONBALL, right? It's insulting.

CHANCE: Nah, I don't know none of that. I don't know Mikey. Or maybe I do? The time travel stuff still doesn't make any sense to me? If he's been down to Texas, I mighta met 'im.

BASE CHANCE: With all this time travel, it's never going to make perfect sense, but you did the right thing telling us. All of us are in danger, even— me. Even us? I-If we're connected somehow, then something happening to me means it's gonna happen to you.

CHRIS: Nothing's gonna happen to you, Chance. He doesn't know what he's talking about.

CHANCE: Are you sayin' you think you're me from the future? Because that's what this one said, too.

MARISSA: Hang on a second, I *know* you. Yeah, yeah, you're the guy from the, uh, uh, Outpost Tavern. Ya came up, and talked to Tex after his set that time.

CHANCE: Yes, ma'am. That was me.

MARISSA: Yeah, I thought you looked a bit like Chris!

EDGAR: What I'm wondering is: what Michael iteration came down to Texas, and found you, Chance? Because it wasn't ours.

CHARLIE: How do you know it wasn't Michael?

EDGAR: 'Cause it doesn't line up with the story Chance just told us. Chance and this other iteration drove all the way from Texas to Oldbrush Valley. That takes time. I assume they drove because he didn't have a Calculator? If he had a Calculator, none of this would've happened. He would've been unaccounted for that whole time, and I don't know why Michael wouldn't have access to a Calculator.

TROY: Where is Michael now? Can't he just, [*Huffs.*] I don't know, hogtie someone, or shoot someone, and get this over with? I'm bored. Too many people have told too many stories today, and Charlie's gonna make me shoot someone, so if Michael shoots them, maybe then I won't have to.

MARISSA: Uh, s— t— Hmm... So, disregarding that entire second half, we were wondering the same thing about Michael. We think someone's doing a connectivity strike on Mike, but it hasn't finished yet. They all seem to have vanished, but I still remember that dipshit, so [*Noncommittal noise.*]

EDGAR: Still, the timelines don't add up.

CHRIS: It doesn't matter which one of your precious cowboys found Chance. Nobody was hot on their trail. And he'd definitely caught up to Michael by now. Look at what's happening to all the Mikes, Chance. This is a teachable moment. I'm glad I could help. That could've been what happened to us if you had stayed with Michael.

TROY: I thought you said that Nobody died in Texas with my friend, the horse? We used to be enemies, but we made up.

CHRIS: C.O.A. says he's still alive. They gave us a warning, which is why I went and picked up Chance here.

BASE CHANCE: You know all of this, and you still don't want to cooperate? I mean, you could help us fix all of this right now if you wanted to.

CHRIS: I could. And I don't want to. What you need to do is stop wasting your time trying to get help from me, and start minding your own business. Chris, you should absolutely come with me, and get away from these people. You're in an extreme amount of danger.

BASE CHANCE: If I leave Base, am I eventually gonna turn into you? 'Cause ya seem like an asshole.

CHRIS: I don't know what you would be like. That's the whole point of an anonymous council. We're not supposed to know each other! Knowing each other creates connectivity, and connectivity can be exploited. That's why Chance here [*Chance impression.*] thinks that he's from Texas. [*Drops impression.*] You'd get a new identity, too. It's like witness protection. Maybe we throw you in Paris? Could also work going to Alaska, I hear it's nice this time o' year.

CHANCE: What do you mean, "think" that I'm from Texas? That's the only home I've ever known. I'm Texas born and raised.

CHRIS: And we worked very hard to keep it that way, until Michael came along, and screwed it all up.

TROY: Okay, listen. We all know what an anonymous council is, but Charlie honestly was telling me on the way in that she didn't know what it was, so maybe you could explain it for Charlie. So that Charlie knows.

MARISSA: I mean, since you already know, you could just explain it, right, Troy?

CHRIS: What is there to explain? It's exactly what it sounds like it is.

EDGAR: I think I understand. It explains why Chance doesn't know anything. Information can flow in both directions through time, which means that all information is potentially dangerous, because it becomes impossible to tell what effect it might have. If there are iterations that don't

know about the other iterations, that means they are safe from a connectivity strike, unless the person doing the strike manages to learn about them some other way. Do I have that right?

CHRIS: It's a bad sign for Base if you're just figuring this out now, Edgar. You're supposed to be the smart one.

BASE CHANCE: If you're so much smarter than us and you know what's going on, why don't you help us? I'm supposedly part of this council, aren't I? Do I get a vote? I vote to help Base. Chance?

CHANCE: Oh, wait, I get a vote? I wanna go back to Texas.

CHRIS: No one gets a vote. I've got other plans, and being suddenly transported into a volcano, or whatever the hell this is, because I got mixed up with Base is not among them. This whole Nobody thing is a pretty mixed bag for the Council, and I'm happy to just let it play out without getting involved. There are some drawbacks to there being no Mikes or Tys Betteridge, but it's yet to be seen whether it's a net negative or net positive.

MARISSA: Ty whomst now? ...Are we supposed to know this guy?

CHARLIE: Hang on, no. You don't mean Ty Betteridge from O.V.E.R., do you?

CHRIS: You remember him? Of course you would.

CHARLIE: Eh, well, it's not like I really "remember" him? I've never actually met him before, but I do know that he used to work at O.V.E.R. in the 80s. We got some employee files that I flip through if work is slow at the gate. Helps abate the boredom, you know? Plus, I like to know who is who, given the time travel, but... I know I've seen that name before. What does he have to do with any of this?

CHRIS: He is a much more important target than Base, and much harder to squash. So it's really fuckin' bad news that he's out of the picture if the same person who struck him out is out to get you. They're gonna be asking the same questions about you, Chris. It'll happen before ya know it.

MARISSA: Alright, so, Chris? I'm just gonna punch this fucker in the face, and if you don't feel it, then I'm just gonna go ahead and kill him. At least then we might actually learn something useful about iterative murder!

CHRIS: If you kill me, you're never finding out what's in that box. And if you want to get rid of Nobody, oh, you are going to need what's inside.

MARISSA: Nope. No more riddles. If you have a solution, then give it to us.

TROY: I mean, the box is locked. I— I have a locksmith on retainer that I can call if we want. I keep locking myself out of my house, and it's easier to just pay him to open the door for me when I get home.

CHRIS: Nice thought, sport. A good one for once. But, unfortunately, a locksmith's not gonna be able to get this one open.

TROY: Hey, "sport," counterpoint: go fuck yourself.

BASE CHANCE: Look, there are enough stubborn jackasses doing time travel that I'm used to this sort of behavior. "Chris," I'm just not gonna cooperate with you. You know me because I am you, so you know I'm not bluffin'. You're going to help us, because helping us helps me. I'm willing to die on this hill. I've died before, and I'll fuckin' do it again. For Ryan.

CHRIS: This is how it's gonna be, huh? That's the only way I get these handcuffs off? Fuck it. You strongarmed me. But when you see how this all shakes out, you're gonna come crawlin' back to me for a correction. And you owe me big time. Disconnectivity devices are super expensive.

MARISSA: "Disconnectivity devices"?

CHARLIE: Um... Well. Uh, hey, Edgar. Sorry to interrupt, but, uh... were you expecting anybody else to be joining us? There's a van outside.

EDGAR: Huh? No. I'm not expecting anyone. Who is it?

CHARLIE: Uh. Well. A whole bunch of people. I don't think I recognize any of them.

MARISSA: Oh. Great. Just what we need. More mysterious guests. Alright, Troy. You ready to shoot these trespassers?

TROY *[stammering]*: Uh— I— Uh... Ch... Charlie, I— I-I don't want to—

CHARLIE: *[Clicks tongue.]* Ugh! Marissa! Don't tease him. We're not shooting anyone. I'll answer it.

[We hear Charlie open the door.]

CHARLIE: Um... hi. Can I help you?

SAX: Hi. Yeah, uh, heh, sorry for the intrusion. Um, my name is Sax. We need help. We found, um... this?

CHARLIE: Oh.

SAX: And we heard that you and your friends might be equipped to tell us how to use it.

BRITCHES: ...We fucked up pretty bad... and could use some help, ma'am.

CHARLIE: That is... That's a Calculator. Where did you get this?

MAGNOLIA: Our friend Skinner had it. Do— Do you know them?

CHARLIE: Um, I can't say that I do... Hey, Edgar? These people have a Calculator. Should I let them in?

MARISSA *[distant]*: 'Kay, we need one of those! Confiscate that shit, babe!

CHARLIE: Uh, is that okay, you guys? Sorry, we're all... kind of a little... on edge right now. ...Is that okay?

ROBERT: Give her the Calculator, Sax. It's not like we're doing any good with it.

CHARLIE: Thank you very much. I appreciate your guys' cooperation. Right this way. We're... well. *[Sighs.]* Like I said, we're on edge right now? We're kind of in the middle of an entirely separate incident, but I'm sure we can figure something out...

[Scene transition.]

SKUZZ: Old Man? Old Man, hey! It's me. It's Skuzz!

LIEUTENANT: Skuzz? What the hell are you doin' here? How'd you find my office? And why were you lookin' for me?

SKUZZ: Everyone from the house is out looking for you. We listened to the tape. You sounded like you needed help. We might not know how any of this stuff works, but we do wanna help you. You help me schlep gear to Cutting Grass gigs, I can't let you split without returning the favor.

LIEUTENANT: That's mighty kind, but you didn't have to do that, pard.

SKUZZ: I know, but we wanted to. The house just isn't the same without you, big guy. And, I needed to get you a new Cutting Grass cassette, since you recorded over the old one.

LIEUTENANT: Sorry about that. Uh, you know, that cassette was all one big, tall tale. I had to take some top secret work from O.V.E.R., and I didn't want y'all knowin' that I worked here or what I was doin'. I thought if I made up a super specific story, then you'd believe it.

SKUZZ: I'm surprised I've never seen you in O.V.E.R. before.

LIEUTENANT: Well, most my work is top secret, so it's important that I remain anonymous.

SKUZZ: You mentioned O.V.E.R. on the tape. Is it gonna be a problem that we figured it out? They're not gonna disappear us, or anything, are they?

LIEUTENANT: Heh! No, no, it's fine. Friends and family usually find out eventually. They ain't gonna disappear ya.

SKUZZ: So, all that stuff about the fire And Texas and the guy you picked up...?

LIEUTENANT: Dramatic story, ain't it? Ya know how I love to spin me a yarn. But, yeah, Texas ain't even a real place.

SKUZZ: Texas *is* a real place, Old Man. At the Drive-In is from Texas. Be serious here.

LIEUTENANT: So your evidence that Texas is real is that At the Drive-In is real. *[Exhales.]* You're one-of-a-kind, Skuzz. A real one-armed scissor.

SKUZZ: I sure hope so.

LIEUTENANT: Welp, as you can plainly see, the mission is complete, and I'm back in town. So, let me just grab a couple things from my desk, and we can head on out o' here. You wanna see if Britches can snag us somethin' from the diner on our way back?

SKUZZ: Nah, we already got Britches in trouble for asking for too much free food.

LIEUTENANT: Dang. Welp, hold on a sec... I got somethin' to attend to, and then we can meet the others at the gate.

[We hear a phone ring.]

SAX *[through phone]:* Hello? You alright?

SKUZZ: Guys, you're never gonna believe this. I found the Old Man! Turns out he was in O.V.E.R. after all. You can thank me later, by the way. Turns out he **[MAGNOLIA** *(through phone):* Skuzz...] accepted some contract work for them, and he needs to be out on location for awhile, that's all. He says the whole cassette thing was one big, tall tale. Says that he has something to attend to, and then he'll come to the gate with me, and explain what's goin' on, simple as.

BRITCHES *[through phone]:* Hey there, Skuzz. Did he recognize ya?

SKUZZ: No, not at first. But he got confused that I was lookin' for him.

SAX *[through phone]:* Skuzz, that's not the Old Man. You need to get out o' there!

SKUZZ: What do you mean? Of course it's him. It's Michael. My dude! He was where we thought he would be. Hey, Michael, I'm on the phone with everybody. There were... Hey, wait, whoa. ...What's going on? What– What is that?

OLD MAN *[through phone]:* Skuzz, I'm here. **[SKUZZ: Come on now, we're friends.]** You need to get out of there.

SKUZZ: You don't need to point... whatever that is at me. It's–

[We hear garbled glitching.]

[Lieutenant dusts off his hands.]

LIEUTENANT: Well, that was too dang easy. Skuzz, you naive, little sonuvabitch. I thought you'd put up a little fight. Maybe you're savin' it for Eagle. Somethin' felt a little off about the transport, though. Wonder if they made it there in one piece. Come in, Eagle. Did you receive the package?

EAGLE *[though earpiece]:* Hey, Lieutenant. Yup. Got them right here. Say hi, Skuzz.

SKUZZ *[through earpiece]:* Old Man!? What did you just do!? Why did he call you Lieutenant? Where did you send me? This is, like, anti-chill, *[Lieutenant laughs.]* dude. This is not good.

LIEUTENANT: That's wonderful. You take care o' Skuzz, alright, Eagle? Give 'em what they deserve.

EAGLE *[though earpiece]:* All of that, and more, pal. You gettin' the Calculator after this?

LIEUTENANT: You know it, pard. Shouldn't be too hard to dispatch the folks livin' in that house Skinner was in. Speakin' of dispatchin', how are MDawg and Old Man doin'? You got to 'em yet?

EAGLE *[though earpiece]:* They're resting easy. Old Man didn't even put up a fight after he saw me put down MDawg.

LIEUTENANT: That's what I like to hear, Eagle.

EAGLE *[though earpiece]:* The good guys win again.

LIEUTENANT: Hell yeah, we do.

EAGLE *[though earpiece]*: You want me to save this one until you get back?

LIEUTENANT: Naw, you go ahead, and get started. Don't play with your food, bub.

EAGLE *[though earpiece]*: Roger that. I'll see you when you get here.

LIEUTENANT: Yup. Bye, Eagle. See ya soon.

EAGLE *[though earpiece]*: See ya.

LIEUTENANT: Damn, it's good to be one of the good guys.

[Lieutenant pulls out and ignites a Zippo lighter.]

[We hear the door fling open, then shut close.]

MARISSA: Ah, dagnabbit! I wanted to say hi to Eagle, too. Oh, well. Hey, buddy! Long time no see. Thanks for holding on to our friends for us, but we'll be taking them back now. Don't suppose you've seen a Skuzz around here anywhere?

LIEUTENANT: *[Laughs.]* Y'all are way too late for Skuzz. You're funny, Marissa. You got Sax in tow with ya, and he's the one what answered the phone, so I know he's got a record o' when I sent Skuzz off. So why didn't y'all show up five minutes ago when they were still here? They're already on their merry, little way to see Eagle.

SAX: Oh. Good. Great job, everyone.

MARISSA: What, and miss your confession to killing Old Man? Not on your life!

BRITCHES: Let me make sure I got all this straight. This fella, who ain't Old Man, already sent Skuzz off. That means we win. Right?

LIEUTENANT: You didn't win shit, Britches. And why the hell are you holdin' a pickaxe?

BRITCHES: Magnolia needed my gun. So we win, 'cause if the information about Skuzz has... wh... what did Edgar call it?

MARISSA: Propagation, baby!

BRITCHES: If the information has propagated, then this guy could have sent a message back to himself to stop it from happening, and he obviously didn't. So we win.

LIEUTENANT: Information? What information?

MARISSA: Skuzz is a bomb, dipshit.

LIEUTENANT: Whaddaya mean, "Skuzz is a bomb"? Ho— What kinda bomb? Who the hell told you that?

SAX: Well, uh, we've done a considerable amount of networking since you sent Skuzz off. And we learned a lot about what's goin' on. Skinner was working for an organization, Old Man was working for a Base in Oldbrush Valley, and an iteration of some other guy from that Base was watchin' us from afar. He's the one that told us that Skuzz is a bomb.

LIEUTENANT: What iteration? Are you sure they didn't say, "Skuzz is a bum"? 'Cause I'd agree with 'im. Not to speak ill of the soon-to-be-dead.

BRITCHES: Heh. Looks like the Old Man knew more than you thought. He's the one that made Skuzz into a bomb.

MARISSA: So, it was incredibly important that we made sure that you sent them off to Operose, because, whaddaya know? That's where the bomb needs to go. Good job, Lieutenant. You really did us a solid.

LIEUTENANT: We had Old Man back at Operose. He is currently worm food. How do y'all know any o' this?

MARISSA: It's called "the power of friendship," dipshit. These guys knew the Michael iteration known as Old Man, and we recognized the Skuzz situation as Classic Lieutenant. Troy and Charlie lucked out, and rustled up a couple iterations of Chris, and they filled in the rest. Word on the street is that you have some of our pals locked up, and, uh. Well. Looks like the phone call only confirmed it.

LIEUTENANT: I heard about them Chris-Chance iterations. You know, they'd just as soon lie to ya as tell ya the truth.

MARISSA: Yeah, you see... that's the great thing about time travel. The truth will come out eventually. It might be messy, but between Team Alpha goin' to 1980 and Team Dorkass goin' to Texas, we're bound to figure something out. And then that's when the corrections begin! You're gonna love it, pilgrim.

LIEUTENANT: And what are you gonna do with me, Marissa? If I walk outta here, your plan's kaput. And I'm half Michael, ya know. I'm all the Michael that's left.

MARISSA: Did ya miss the pickaxe, bud? I dunno, we just kinda figured that a pickaxe would be less likely to attract security [**LIEUTENANT:** You wouldn't.] We'll find a purer Michael somewhere else, I'm sure. Britches... after you.

BRITCHES: I've been champin' at the bit ever since I heard him say he killed the Old Man.

MARISSA: No need to hold back on my account, champ.

LIEUTENANT: You ain't gonna kill me, Marissa, with these folks you barely know.

BRITCHES: Mm, you wanna swing, Sax?

SAX: Heh. No, thanks. I'm, uh, content to watch. It was nice meetin' you, Lieutenant. We've got a better iteration of you that we're bringin' back home with us.

LIEUTENANT: Marissa, you ain't gonna let him do this! I-It's me! I-It's Michael, pard! Uh— We've been through— You can't—! Ah—!

[We hear the pickaxe come down on Lieutenant. He gurgles.]

MARISSA: Whoo! Good aim.

[The pickaxe comes down again, and Lieutenant stops gurgling.]

MARISSA: Cheers to a job well done, Britches.

SAX: *[Laughs.]* Britches always said that a ghost left that pickaxe in the diner.

BRITCHES: Hah. Nah, don't believe that. I only say I do because it gets Flash so riled up.

MARISSA: Yeah. Pretty sure the only ghost around here is the ghost of our dearly departed Lieutenant. RIP, bozo. ...Lucky for us, the Calculator has a handy dandy body disposal preset. Comes in handy all the time. All I gotta do is push this button, and...

[Time travel noise.]

MARISSA: ...he is outta here! As for his ghost, well, *[Spookily.]* who's to say? Ooh!

SAX: Yeah... Let's get out of here before we find out.

MARISSA: Hey, don't gotta tell me twice. Alright, everyone good? Heading back to Base in three, two, and...

[Time travel noise.]

[Scene transition.]

[Time travel noise.]

[Outdoor ambience.]

ROBERT: That was unbelievably unpleasant. I don't think that I like time travel.

TROY: Oh, it's not that bad, it's just these early Calculators. I mean, I've— I've definitely been through worse.

ROBERT: This is the place?

TROY: Yep. Oh! Hey, that's Bluster! *[Bluster approaches Troy and Robert.]* Hey, Bluster! Wa— Watch out for him. He'll try to eat your shirt.

[Bluster whinnies.]

ROBERT: That's... the biggest horse I've ever seen.

TROY: Yeah. He's big, and he's pretty great, and he's my friend now. So. Here, show— h— c'mere— Bluster, pick me up. ...Pick me up, Bluster!

[We hear Bluster pick Troy up.]

ROBERT: Troy, we really don't have time for this. According to Chance, this is the day that Bluster went missing, which means it's the day of the arson attack. We need to stop it before it happens.

TROY: Yeah, right... Uh, Bluster, do you know how to put out a fire?

ROBERT: Evidently not. Bluster died in the fire, too, Troy.

TROY: Bluster! No...

ROBERT *[trying to be patient]:* Troy. This is serious. And I don't know these people. I know that they're copies of the Old Man and all that, but one of them is apparently evil. And we don't have a Calculator, so either we fix this mess, or that evil copy is probably going to kill us. Ugh, Skinner! How did you get me into this?

TROY: Relax. Even if we die, they can just make it so we didn't die! They've done it tons of times.

ROBERT: I would rather not discover the logistics of that arrangement.

TEX: Identify yourselves.

[We hear a shotgun cock.]

TEX: Troy? What the hell are you doin' here? And who's this fella?

TROY: Tex! Howdy there, partner! This is my friend, Bluster. You— You know him, I think, he— I'm pretty sure he lives here?

ROBERT: Hi, Tex. I'm Robert. Troy... isn't going to be very helpful, is he?

TEX: Howdy, Robert. No, sir. I think you got put on babysittin' duty. Well, I guess Bluster is babysittin' now. What can I do ya for?

ROBERT: I am friends with a copy of yours that I don't think you know about. We call him Old Man. He and my other friends are in grave danger, and in the process of trying to fix everything, we learned that you are, too. Old Man left us a tape where he described finding you and the other members of this household dead in an apparent arson. According to reports of Bluster's disappearance, today is the last day that anyone saw any of you alive.

TEX: It was Nobody, weren't it.

ROBERT: We believe so, yes. Our group had a run-in with Nobody, as well. He was holding Old Man hostage. We got away from him, but Base's explanation indicated that he needs to be stopped on several different fronts at once, or else he cannot be stopped because of a peculiar quirk of how time travel works.

TEX: Base is right. If Nobody's alive anywhere else, he'll come back and warn himself here. You got other folks doin' a connectivity strike elsewhere in the timeline?

ROBERT: Charlie and Edgar are going to 1980. We think that he has a copy of himself there to do a connectivity strike on someone named Ty Betteridge.

TEX: I ain't never heard o' no Ty Betteridge, so I guess he's doin' a pretty dang good job.

TROY: Yeah, so we need him to eat a bomb!

TEX: Excuse me, Troy?

TROY: Yeah, so, Chris from Base came to Base with another Chris named Chance, and they said that they dug up a magic box, and then we argued about it for a while, and then Chris opened the box and said it was a bomb, oh my god, and then we need to find Nobody and make him eat it, or he won't die.

TEX: Uh, Chance as in my Chance? Wh— What the hell was he doin' at Base? Uh—! Okay, Robert. What did they actually say?

ROBERT: No, that was correct. Nobody needs to eat this bomb to ensure that that connectivity strike is successful. I assume that it's not a bomb in the colloquial sense. I take it that it does time travel stuff.

TEX: I don't know nothin' about it, but I reckon you're right. And if a iteration o' Chance is sayin' it, then I tend to believe 'im. Hey. MDawg! Get out here!

MDAWG: Oh. Uh, hey, guys. Uh, why are you here? Uh, did something ungroovy happen at Base?

TEX: Troy here says we gotta jam a bomb down Nobody's gullet, or else he's gonna burn the whole dang farm down.

MDAWG: So, what does Base actually want us to do? I can try to access Troy's memories if you want, though it might take a while.

TEX: Well, this here's Robert. And accordin' to Robert, we actually gotta feed him the bomb.

MDAWG: Before we do that, may I see it? I'm unclear as to what you mean by "bomb."

TROY: Um, sure, here. Uh, don't–! Don't eat it, though! When I'm not supposed to eat something, it makes me want to eat it even more, so be sure not to eat it! But also don't think about me saying that, either? Don't eat it, and don't think about me saying not to eat it, fuck. Fuck! Ah. Did I mess everything up? Don't– Don't eat the bomb, MDawg! Don't eat it! Seriously, don't eat it.

MDAWG: I'm not going to eat it, Troy. ...Oh. This is a disconnectivity device. We had some of these at Operose. Where did you get this?

ROBERT: Chance and a version of Michael named Old Man dug it up out of the ground.

MDAWG: These are rare and expensive, and whoever he took them from was not happy to part with it. I can feel their aura. Are we sure we want to waste one of these on Nobody? That feels like using a Master Ball to catch an Oddish.

TEX: Sounds to me like Old Man thinks that we're connected to Nobody. So if we kill Nobody without this, then some of the Mikes are gonna die.

MDAWG: I suspect that the Old Man thinks that *he* is connected to Nobody. Maybe he's not an iteration of you after all, but perhaps Nobody in the future. So killing Nobody would then kill him.

ROBERT: I can vouch for Old Man, if that helps. He's quiet, gentle, but not afraid to kick it into high gear if we need him. He's always willing to sacrifice whatever he has for us...

TROY: Huh! That sounds like Michael!

TEX: Whaddaya say, MDawg? Wanna help me hold down a mangy mutt, and shove a pill down his throat?

MDAWG: Not if I don't have to. Are you sure it is inevitable that he burns the place down? I feel like I've been making inroads with him. We're starting to vibe on a spiritual level. Is killing him really the only option?

TEX: I told ya not to get attached to him! It's like gettin' attached to a pig on the farm. You know he's gonna be dinner one day.

MDAWG: Tex, I was merely treating him with dignity.

TEX: Sounds like your dignity gets us all killed.

TROY: Edgar said that if you said you don't wanna do it, we're supposed to say that it was an order. And if you said you don't take orders from Base, then we're supposed to say: pretty please. Pretty, pretty, pretty please.

TEX: I don't really got a problem doin' it. And I think MDawg'll get over himself.

ROBERT: You don't know me, and you didn't ask for my advice, but the past few days have completely torn my friend group asunder. Old Man went missing, Skuzz got kidnapped, something is going on with Skinner and now they're missing too, and we accidentally killed Python trying to use the Calculator for the first time. If killing Nobody means putting the pieces back together, then we have to do it. I'll do it myself if I have to.

MDAWG: Your aura is pure lavender. You do not have the disposition of a killer.

ROBERT: Not even close. But I'll do it.

TEX: I appreciate the offer, but I'll be doin't it, thank ya very much. You got a gun on you, Robert?

ROBERT: Yes, I do.

TEX: Nobody's in that there shed. Follow me in there, and stand guard. You two can wait out here. Are you gonna be okay with this, MDawg?

MDAWG: You do what you have to do, Tex.

TEX: I will. I'm savin' your hide, too, pard. Robert?

ROBERT: Right behind you.

[We hear Tex open and shut the shed door.]

[Muffled scuffle and dialogue inside the shed.]

TEX *[muffled]*: you sonuvabitch! It's time for you to take your goddamn medicine!

NOBODY *[muffled]*: Tex. *[Chain rattles.]* Hold on. What is this about? ...Who is he?

TEX *[muffled]*: ??? not fair ???

NOBODY *[muffled]*: No— Get off of—

[There is a scuffle. Nobody struggles, then chokes.]

NOBODY *[muffled]*: Get back—

TEX *[muffled]*: That's what you get for settin' the place on fire. Now die, dog.

NOBODY *[muffled]*: Fire? Wh—!(?) What is going on? MDawg! Help! *[bang]* Please.

TEX *[muffled]*: He ain't helpin' ya. Time to go.

[Gunshot.]

[Outside the shed.]

TROY: I know how you feel, MDawg. ...I had a pet when I was a kid, and my parents made me kill it, because it was a snake, and I kept flinging him around like a lasso, and he kept biting me, and the doctors were scared that the blood inside my body was gonna get outside too much, and so I ended up tying him into a knot and blowing him up like a balloon and letting him fly away, and my parents said it was all better, but it was still really sad, and I cried for a couple weeks.

MDAWG: That... sort of is how we are with Nobody. I know that Tex is doing the right thing in there. Nobody will bite us again. Thank you for the story. Never change, Troy.

TROY: Oh, also *[Snaps fingers.]* we're supposed to ask you for a ride outta here. Uh, Robert doesn't know how to use a Calculator, and everyone else had to be on other parts of the mission, and they won't let me use the Calculator because... of course I don't know how to use one. I'm Troy.

MDAWG: Sure thing, buddy.

[Scene transition.]

MAGNOLIA: It was really nice of you to help us out, Chris. I don't think we could have done it without you.

CHRIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm not being nice. I'm trying to keep my Council from falling apart, because this asshole doesn't understand what's at stake here.

BASE CHANCE: I know exactly what I'm doing. Don't think that you're smarter than me. You are me. And you were dumb enough to get caught. That's why Magnolia and I are here babysitting you. I don't know how we got so selfish. Is it because you don't have a partner to think about?

CHRIS: Let's not resort to low blows.

CHANCE: How many more of us are there? Are we all just walkin' around like me and this one, not knowin' about the others?

CHRIS: Let's not discuss that in front of this company, Chance. They don't need to know how our council operates.

MAGNOLIA: What? *[Brief laugh.]* It's fine! You can say anything in front of lil' ol' me. I don't even know what a Council is. Honestly, I don't even really know the people in the house I'm staying at. I just moved in, and I'm kind of along for the ride. I was only meant to be here to cover the disappearance of a gigantic horse.

CHANCE: You're here because Bluster's missin'? How does that make sense? Why did you come here instead of going down to Texas?

MAGNOLIA: Well, I mean, no one was sure exactly where he lived, and there was some reporting being done that suggested a connection to Oldbrush Valley. I really wasn't planning on staying long. A couple weeks? A month at most. It was just a lead I was following.

CHRIS: If you're a Bluster scholar, why didn't you go with Robert and Troy to Texas? You probably have some idea of the layout of the house and farm at this point, right? You coulda helped them out.

MAGNOLIA: I... didn't want to go....

CHRIS: You didn't wanna see the gigantic horse you've done all this research on? Or you didn't want to see Tex? MDawg? Nobody?

MAGNOLIA: Chris, they're going to Texas to kill someone. I had never seen anyone die before this morning, and then Python died, and it was awful! I understand logically why you think that he has to die. I saw Nobody with Old Man, and he obviously has bad intentions, but it's not something that I want to see for myself.

BASE CHANCE: I forgot that this all started 'cause your friend died. This situation kinda spiraled out of control from there, but we owe you all for helping us connect the dots on this case. It seems like the worst might finally be over. Don't let us forget to correct Python's death, okay? It shouldn't be difficult for us to do.

CHRIS: What a happy friendship this is blossoming into. I'm sure adding a dozen new people to the Base family will only result in happiness for everyone involved.

CHANCE: Well, this Python fella'll be alive again, won't he? I'm sure he'd be happier alive than dead. I know I would.

CHRIS: Chance, there are some things worse than death. Speaking of: Magnolia, you look so familiar. But I just can't seem to place where I might've seen you before. Do you know?

MAGNOLIA: Hmm? No, I don't think so. I've definitely never met you before. Maybe you've seen one of my videos? But they don't have a lot of facecam in them. They're mostly me talking over the footage, I mean... Maybe you recognize my voice?

CHRIS: No, no, it's not your voice... I think I know your face from somewhere...

MAGNOLIA: I... get the feeling you're trying to needle me about something that I don't know anything about.

CHRIS: Oh, no, no needling here, I— I was just trying to remember.

BASE CHANCE: Hey, Chris. Quick question. Could you maybe stop being so fucking exhausting for a minute, and just be normal? I know you're in handcuffs, but this doesn't have to be a downer. Maybe we could talk about something else? Like... Like Bluster. We all know Bluster. What a horse, am I right?

CHANCE: You don't believe that he's doin' the stuff from the TikToks, do ya?

BASE CHANCE: We try to let the Michaels have their fun. They've been through a lot. Like a hundred extra years a lot? So if Tex wants to say that Bluster hit a hole in one usin' only his hoof, then I don't see the problem with it.

CHRIS: Yeah, there's a lot of deception goin' on around these parts. It's a total quagmire.

BASE CHANCE: Stop it.

MAGNOLIA: It's good that Bluster's famous though, right? His disappearance made the news, and that's how Old Man found out about it. Then Old Man found you, Chance, and then Chris found the two of you, and that's why we're here. The plan only came together once everyone got involved.

CHRIS: Is it good? 'Cause it's a lot o' paperwork and re-establishing relationships and accidental connectivity and all sorts o' headaches for me. But it would be even worse if the Base iteration died, so... really just this whole thing is a nightmare.

BASE CHANCE: It's becoming less and less surprising to me that you don't have a Ryan. I have a name, Chris, and it's literally the same as yours.

CHRIS: And that's why I'm not using it.

MAGNOLIA: I sort of wish I was on one of the killing people missions. It would be more pleasant than listening to you two argue.

[There is a moment of silence.]

CHRIS: I get along fine with the other iterations, you know.

[Scene transition.]

[Time travel noise.]

MIKE: Oh, god, here we go again.

MW: I know everyone's hurt, but don't let him get nothin' outta ya.

MIKE: Wait. Wasn't there someone else... with us? Uh, a— a woman, uh... fuck.

EAGLE: And that's the sign of a job well done.

SKINNER: Eagle? For fuck's sake, man. Are you going to kill us or not? Because I kinda feel like you're screwing around with us at this point. And as fun as it's been hanging out with Mickey and MBoy here, I've got places to be. Oh! Also. Why the *hell* is Skuzz here?

EAGLE: I'll have my fun with you soon enough. Old Man and MDawg have already gotten what was comin' to them. There's no rush with the rest of you. We need to have a little chat first. Specifically: I need to talk to you and Skuzz about what's going on in that damn house of yours.

SKUZZ: Yeah, dude. I might work at O.V.E.R., but I don't know anything. I didn't even know about the time travel until Old Man came back. Now, looking back, of course there were signs, but I thought that was another one of Flash's *wacky* conspiracy theories.

EAGLE: For a place where nothing's goin' on, you sure did attract quite the number of interesting figures. Magnolia, for example. Let's start with them. What did you know about Magnolia, and when did you know it?

SKUZZ: Magnolia? I mean, they moved in pretty recently. I... It was right when all of this stuff was happening. They seem pretty chill. I don't think they knew what they were getting themselves into.

SKINNER: Heh. ...Nothing. Nothing was going on at that house except pool noodle fights and movie nights until you and Nobody started fucking everything up.

MW: You know, ya— ya don't gotta tell him nothin'. It ain't like he ain't gonna kill ya if you tell him what he wants to hear. 'Cause killin' is his favorite thing to do.

EAGLE: Oh, MW. I have other hobbies. Killing is my way of ensuring that justice wins out in the end. And who wouldn't take pride in bringing justice to the world?

SKINNER: Supervillain monologue nonsense.

MIKE: And he is definitely underselling how much he enjoys killing people.

EAGLE: It sounds so cruel when you say it like that, Mike. But we're getting sidetracked. I need to know about Magnolia. What did you know, and when did you know it?

SKUZZ: If you wanted to know about Magnolia, why did you capture us and not them?

EAGLE: You were easier to come by. And Skinner here has a relationship with Ol. Besides: you're scared of me? Magnolia is much scarier than I am, and more difficult to understand. I'm a simple man. I wanna kill the bad guys. Does anyone know what Magnolia wants?

SKUZZ: What Magnolia wants... *[Sighs.]* is to write a video essay about a... I wanna say a giant horse?

MIKE: A four-hour video essay on Bluster would do huge numbers right now.

MW: I told y'all, ya don't gotta talk to him! He's gonna talk to ya until he gets bored, and then he's gonna stab ya in the gut.

EAGLE: Let 'em talk, MW. We'll discuss potential organs for stabbing later.

SKINNER: Okay, Eagle wants us to think that something's up with the church mouse for some reason. What's the deal, Eagle? *[Brief chuckle.]* Have you even met Magnolia? They wouldn't hurt a fly, not even a fly that bit them.

MW: Like a horsefly.

SKINNER: Yeah. Yeah. Exactly, MBoy. A horsefly. And I bet they've been bitten by a horsefly before. I mean, you don't end up making Youtube videos about horses without growing up as a horse-person first. That's just science!

EAGLE: The Magnolia that you know loves horses. What about the other ones? How many of them have you met?

SKINNER: You're— talking about iterations. *[Scoffs.]* You think there are iterations of Magnolia? Our Magnolia.

EAGLE: Don't play dumb, Skinner. You're watching that house for exactly this reason. Something is attracting... let's call them "high level players" in the time travel scene.

SKUZZ: The scene? Oh, my god. Do you get together, and swap mixtapes?

EAGLE: We try to sabotage each other, mostly. But I think you know that. It's all just business, though. Let's stop beating around the bush. I know about Magnolia. I know that there are about a thousand of them out there, maybe more. You don't arrive at that many iterations without a systematic plan to generate them. You can't expect me to believe that the two spies set up in that house weren't looking for exactly this sort of activity, and that they didn't notice it when it was right in front of them.

SKINNER: Oh, come on! Why is everybody calling me that? I'm not a spy, I'm just, you know—! ...Wait. *[Brief laugh.]* Wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. Skuzz. Buddy. Are you a spy?

SKUZZ: Well, definitionally, no, I'm, well. It's complicated, but Old Man—

MW: Don't talk about this in front of Eagle!

SKINNER: No. I don't buy it. There's no fucking way that there is a thousand iterations of Magnolia out there. That would be... *[Huffs.]* That would be an enormous operation.

EAGLE: Exactly. So what do they want from you?

SKUZZ: Legit, dude, I don't know the answer.

EAGLE: I'm doing the two of you a favor. It might be too late for you, but at least a couple of the people in that house are innocent. I can protect them from whatever Magnolia is planning to do

with them, but we need more information. I can't put Operose's ass on the line, not against a thousand people. It could be a deadly situation.

MW: It's all lies, folks. Eagle don't do favors.

EAGLE: Would you shut up, MW? I'm trying to conduct business here!

MW: Go ahead and kill me already, Eagle.

SKINNER: MW, shut your fucking mouth.

MW: Don't tell Eagle one more thing. Even if he's telling the truth about Magnolia, he has no intention of helping y'all or us or anyone you know. It's all a trap, even when it's not.

EAGLE: You know what, big guy? I think I will kill you. I was going to save you for Lieutenant, but he's running late. You're not contributing anything to this conversation, so I think it's time for you to go.

MW: Do it, Eagle.

EAGLE: If you insist.

[We hear Eagle stab MW several times. MW groans in pain.]

SKINNER: Fuck.

MW *[strangled]*: Don't tell him anything.

EAGLE: This is what your big talk gets you—

[We hear an odd noise, with outdoor ambiance snapping into place.]

EAGLE: ...What the hell?

SKINNER: Uh... What? ...What is this? Is this— Is— Is this another fun security hallucination...? Uh...

EAGLE *[terrified]*: Uh... Uh... Come in, Lieutenant. Come in... Anne? Come in, anyone! Hello!? The interrogation room just evaporated! Come in! Come in, security!? Anyone!? ...We've got four prisoner—

[Eagle blinks out of existence.]

SKINNER: ...And he's gone.

MIKE: I don't think this is a security program. Eagle seemed legitimately confused before he, uh... popped out of existence.

SKUZZ: And I'm getting cellphone reception again. Also, and I don't mean to alarm anyone, but my hand is, like, burning? Like, it feels like it's on fire, and it started when the room vanished. It—It... It really hurts!

MIKE: Skuzz, maybe stupid question. Did someone implant something into your hand?

SKINNER: Skuzz...? Buddy? Did you just make the room vanish? ...Wait, is this what you meant when you said you weren't exactly a spy?

SKUZZ: I... think I made the room vanish? Old Man... I think he put something in there? I... thought we were doing some sort of blood brother ritual, but it's burning in the same place he cut open.

SKINNER: W-Wait. Wait, wait, wait, wait. Did Old Man set you up for this?

MIKE: I would advise you from interfacing with the blood of any Michael iteration, but that's for later. Uh, I think the security is down. I-I think we can get out of here.

MW *[raspy]*: Can we, please—? *[Grunts.]* I'm holdin' in my guts in...

MIKE: Hang in there, MW. We will get as far away from here as we possibly can, and then we'll call Base for an extraction. So, uh, let's get the hell out of here.

SKINNER: Fine by me. But we're not telling a soul that Eagle said there are 1,000 Magnolias, right, Skuzz? We need to figure out what's going on without tipping them off.

SKUZZ: My lips are sealed, dudeski. Did you know about Magnolia?

SKINNER: I had no fuckin' clue, dude.

SKUZZ: Same. *[Brief laugh.]* Magnolia's not why I'm at the house.

SKINNER: Yeah, same... Fuck... You know, it's always the one you least expect.

[Scene transition.]

[We hear outdoor ambience.]

EDGAR: So, Oldbrush Valley has always looked like this, huh? I never would've guessed this was 1980.

CHARLIE: *[Giggles.]* Yeah, it does kinda have a small-town charm to it, doesn't it.

EDGAR: Are you sure this is the right place, Charlie?

CHARLIE: Yup! I remember that there was an address listed for Ty Betteridge in his file, and this was definitely the place. And, based on his employment records, he is gone from O.V.E.R. after tonight, so if something happens to him, it's going to happen right now. Should we, uh... go in, and introduce ourselves? Maybe let him know that he's under attack? Eh, I'm... not really sure what the proper protocol for this is. I haven't really been on that many missions...

EDGAR: No. It's not enough to warn him. We need to stop Nobody. And I think the best way to do that is to catch Nobody by surprise.

CHARLIE: Okay, um, *[Sighs.]* I'm gonna ask the question. Are we really going to be able to kill Nobody, Edgar? He's a Mikey, after all.

EDGAR: It isn't going to be easy.

CHARLIE: Uh—! *[Huffs.]* No, okay... Maybe... Ugh. I dunno, maybe we should... we should have invited someone from the other house? They don't know him. They've got a Michael, sure, but I don't even know if they recognize them as the same person.

EDGAR: Don't let Mikey catch you calling them the "same person." He's adamant that they are not.

CHARLIE: Oh! No. No, no. I know. I'm... *[Exhales.]* I'm sorry. But... I think you know what I mean.

EDGAR: I do know what you mean. *[Serious pause.]* You should let me kill him. He's a Mike. He's my responsibility.

CHARLIE: What's that supposed to mean, Edgar?

EDGAR: I don't know. Nobody is branched off from Mikey in some way, so I wonder if there's anything that I could have done to prevent this.

CHARLIE: No! Edgar... No. I assure you that nothing you could have done would have prevented this. Really. Everything is way too complicated. If we found an Evil Marissa, it would—it would never even have occurred to me that it was my fault. You know? It's not your fault. We aren't responsible for this.

EDGAR: Would you kill an Evil Marissa?

CHARLIE: *[Ponders.]* Um... It pains me, but... I'm gonna say yes, but it's really only because I need you to be strong right here, right now.

EDGAR: I appreciate the honesty—

CHARLIE: Shh! *[Quietly.]* Wait. There he is.

[We hear Nobody knock on the door. Ty answers.]

NOBODY: Hello, Ty. It's over. You're the last one. Now, if you don't put up a f— Oh—!

[We hear Nobody struggle as Charlie handcuffs him.]

NOBODY: Get—! Charlie. What—! What are you doin' here?

TY *[overlapping Nobody]:* What's going on? Who are you people? Wh...Where's Helen? And where did you get those handcuffs?

EDGAR: Helen isn't here right now. Nobody is trying to erase you from the timeline. None of us remember you.

TY: Well. I can't say that I remember you, either. Well, what are you going to do?

CHARLIE: We're going to kill Nobody.

NOBODY: You can't kill me here, idiot. You think that killing me will do anything?

CHARLIE: I'll hold him still. Are you ready with the device, Edgar?

EDGAR: Yes. Implanting in three... two... one...

[We hear a time travel blip.]

NOBODY: Oh. Fuck. ...Edgar, did you just... put that inside of me? Oh! Oh, it's wedged. What—What the fuck was that.

EDGAR: Transporting for disposal in three... two... one...

NOBODY *[overlapping Edgar]:* Disposal? You're just gonna do to me what he di—?

[Time travel noise.]

TY: ...What is going on? What did you just do to him!? What was that... thing?

CHARLIE: You didn't even hesitate, Edgar.

EDGAR: Things would have been much worse if I had hesitated. Hello, Ty. Sorry to interrupt your evening. Nobody has been sent somewhere that he will no longer be a problem... *[Pause.]* Wow. Ty Betteridge. I remember you now.

CHARLIE: Oh, my god! ...Ty Betteridge.

TY: I must say that I'm quite confused to see all of this play out on my doorstep at this time of night. Helen and I had our own plans with Nobody later this evening. I still don't remember either of you, by the way.

CHARLIE: We're from the future, and I don't wanna scare you, but... you'll remember us later.

TY: Ah. Yes. I remember tomorrow like it was yesterday. ...Did you say that Walters was going to erase me from the timeline?

CHARLIE: Yeah, I did. And, uh... he almost succeeded. You weren't the only person he was trying to erase, either.

TY: That's... extremely interesting. Does this mean that, uh... that I have access to time travel in the future? Ho— Ho— How far in the future, and what do I do with it? I've been thinking up some plans ever since Helen first came across Walters. Do you... Do you— Do you know if I accomplish any of them?

CHARLIE: Uh... Well, you're, uh... The Compound—

EDGAR: Don't tell him, Charlie. Information this far back can be extremely dangerous. It could propagate all the way back from here to 2024.

TY: 2024? I'm still doing time travel in 2024? Am I an old man? How many Doctors are we up to now? ...Then.

CHARLIE: *[Sucks in a breath.]* Ugh. I'm sorry, I don't... think I'm supposed to answer that.

EDGAR: Sorry, Ty. You'll know everything soon enough. We need to go.

TY: Eh. The long way around. It's always the same. ...You don't want to come in for a cup of tea?

CHARLIE: Ugh, no... We can't... I'm sorry, I would love to, but... In the future, someday, I owe you a tea party.

TY: Thank you, Charlie, that would be absolutely charming. I'll bring the earl grey.

EDGAR: Transporting back to Base in three... two... one...

[Time travel noise.]

TY: Okay, then. "Base"... Hmm... I need to remember that. 2024. Base, and the Compound. ...It's very Interesting. ...I bet we're up to 15 Doctors.

[Scene transition.]

EDGAR: Alright. Great job, team. Is everybody back?

SAX: Uh, let's see... Old Man, Magnolia, Skinner, Skuzz, Britches, Robert, and, uh, myself. That's everyone from our house.

BRITCHES: Except for Python.

ROBERT: Python is why we were doing this in the first place.

MAGNOLIA: Don't forget that you promised to help us with Python, Chris.

BASE CHANCE: Of course. It shouldn't be too hard.

MARISSA: And we've have Troy, Mike, MW, MDawg, the three Chancesketeers, Mikey, Stinky, and Hot Lips. Looks like that's everyone from Base.

SKINNER: Wait, I am a hundred percent sure that Eagle told us that you died, Old Man.
[Exhales.] You too, MDawg.

OLD MAN: I don't know what happened. I thought I died, too.

MDAWG: I do not know how to ascertain what is real and what is a hallucination anymore...

MIKE: But what else is new? ...It's good to have you back, MDawg.

CHRIS: Very good. Happy fun times all around! We did it, gang! Can you take off these fuckin' handcuffs off me, please?

CHANCE: Yeah, can I finally go home?

TROY: Oh, hey, Charlie. Do I still need to finish my shift at O.V.E.R.? I'm... really tired.

CHARLIE: Uh, Troy... I'm pretty sure it's my shift at the gate, actually. You were already off work when everything started.

TROY: Right. So I can go to bed?

CHARLIE: *[Brief laugh.]* Yes, goofy. You can go to bed.

TROY: Okay. Thanks. I'll— I'll see you all in the morning.

MIKEY: Uh. Troy, are you... going to bed... here? ...And he's gone.

STINKY: Uh. I... Is— Is it okay if I stay here, too? Uh— Uh, Troy's kinda my ride...

EDGAR: Anyone that wants to can stay here, but there aren't enough beds for everyone.

SKUZZ: Okay, wait. Hold on. We need to figure out what happened before everyone leaves. I understand that there was some big mission that everyone went on, but something has been altered.

[Time travel noise.]

TY: Ah, I think that I can help explain everything. Hello, everyone!

[Multiple people boo Ty.]

CHARLIE: You're all so mean!

SKINNER: Welcome back, Ty.

MARISSA: Sorry, Ty. We already sold all your shit. Get the fuck outta here.

BASE CHANCE: Wait. I remember who Ty is now, so... I guess it worked?

TY: It did work, Chris. Thank you all for your very valiant efforts! I didn't know that Base wanted so badly to rescue me. What can I say? I actually feel appreciated!

EDGAR: This was mostly about Mike, actually.

TY: Nevertheless, I have returned. And you have all done quite the number on Operose! *[Chortles.]* Gives me chills even thinking about it. Without going into too much detail, it is as though you have blown a gigantic hole in the side of their operation. That's how you were able to get out. Once the connectivity strike had been lifted and Nobody was out of the timeline, I was able to reestablish my role at the Compound, and got to work exploiting that new flaw in Operose security. I undid most of the damage that they did to Base. The rest of my team got to work dismantling as much of Operose as possible. You won't have to worry about Anne or Eagle or Lieutenant any more.

MARISSA: Uh. Sorry. We won't have to "worry" about Anne? ...What did you do?

TY: That is for the Compound to know, and for you to never worry about again.

MW: Uh. Where's Helen?

TY: Helen is safely back in 1980. She's got everything to come: the royal wedding! Well, all of them. Uh... Thatcher! Stealing milk! Yuh! Huh!

MW: Alright, follow-up question: If you're back, then why is the Base still here in Oldbrush Valley?

TY: Oh, that was my decision. The goal of bringing you into the Compound was to protect you from O.I., and for you to aid us in combating them. *[Exhales.]* And you have done that with aplomb! So, there's no real reason for you to remain in the Compound. Consider it a token of my appreciation. Base... is back. The king... has returned.

MARISSA: Wow. I'm so overwhelms with gratitude right now.

TY: Well, I'm sure you all have some settling in to do, uh, paperwork to fill out, all that fun stuff. I just wanted to pop in and let you know the situation as it stands. I'll get out of your hair now. I'll check back in later. But consider your debts completely, one hundred and— p— twenty five percent paid! It's a good day for The Compound and for Base. Stoke me a clipper, I'll be back for Christmas. Toodle pipski!

[Time travel noise.]

SKUZZ: So Operose is completely gone now?

MIKE: Yeah, Operose and Eagle and Lieutenant and... Anne? Alarmingly?

MARISSA: Alright. I got first dibs on Ty fucking Betteridge. What, does he really think we're just gonna let him erase Anne from the timeline?

EDGAR: That's a project for another time. We're done here now.

MAGNOLIA: What do you mean, you're done? What about Python?

MIKE: We haven't forgotten about Python. Uh... We should really do that before everyone goes to bed. Uh, should I head over there, and do the honors?

SKINNER: Eh. I have a Calculator. I can do it, Mike.

MARISSA: Uh, we have your Calculator, actually. And I'm not giving it back until I have answers and assurances about everyone's character.

MIKE: A more diplomatic way of saying that might be that we think it would be wise to establish a friendly relationship with all of you. We will start with Python, and then work our way out from there. How does that sound?

SAX: I think that would be a lovely start.

ROBERT: It would certainly put my mind at ease.

MIKE: It is a plan. First order of business, resurrect Python.

[Scene transition.]

SAX: So... he's under that tarp there. Do I need to pull it back and show you, or...?

MIKE: No, uh, no, that won't be necessary. Uh, all I need is the time that the incident occurred. And we don't even need to send a person back. We're gonna send a note.

ROBERT: I'm on it. "Dear Robert, don't use the Calculator on Python. It kills him. -Robert." I'm in for quite the surprise.

MIKE: *[Laughs.]* My first note to myself was so much like that. *[Sighs.]* I miss the early days of time travel. I mean, not enough to go back to them, 'cause I totally could, but... the memories are fond. Okay. Are we ready?

ROBERT: Won't this create a paradox? Python is the reason we ended up at your Base. So if he doesn't die, doesn't that mean that we don't go?

MIKE: You'd think so, but no. Uh, paradox resolution is the key part of this technology.

ROBERT: Okay, then.

SAX: Yeah, I'm ready.

MIKE: Don't worry, this will all simultaneously make more and less sense the more that you work with us. Okay. Uh, we are transporting the note in three... two... one...

[Time travel noise.]

PYTHON: Uh... Hi, Sax. Hi, Robert. I guess... you killed me? Who is this? He looks like Old Man. But not... Old.

MIKE: Matt?

PYTHON: Who—? No, I— I'm Python. Nice to meet you.

[The Itch plays.]

*(Fleeing from the others
I've got so much ground to cover)*

*Hey now
There's no shelter from the
Fallout that you wanted
Come here
Scratch my back
I'll protect your neck
If you
Lack the motivation
Dig in deep
It's in your skin
Pull it out
And we'll begin
To scratch the desperation*

*The itch is just a punishment
You'll fall behind because of it*

*Beast in your gut
I warned you enough
You planted the seed
Now it's coming up
Feast on the glut
Luxurious stuff
You wanted to to bleed
But not your blood*

*Hey now
Dignity could never
Be enough to save us
Focus on the present
Make a offering to*

*Shrieking gods
Met with aplomb
Their leaking tongues*

*That leave their mark
All down your side
While you are trying
To suss forbidden secrets out*

*The pitch is just velocity
You'll fall behind because of me*

[Scene transition.]

MIKEY: Hello? Francis, where are you? *[Clicks tongue.]* Come 'ere, Francis! *[Clicks tongue.]* Here, boy! *[Clicks tongue.]* Here, boy, I'm back! Where are you? *[Relieved sigh.]* There you are. I was scared that those iterations hurt you, are you okay?

[Francis the Salamander chirps.]

MIKEY: Oh, I love you, too. *[Pause.]* ...What the hell is that?

[Extended closing theme starts playing.]

CREDITS: This has been WOE.BEGONE. Believe it or not, I voiced all of the characters in this episode. But if I didn't, hypothetically...

The voice of Chance and Chris and Chris was Taylor Michaels. You can check him out in [The Department of Variance of Somewhere, Ohio](#), or in [The Grotto](#).

The voice of Eagle was Steve Anzalone. Check out his podcasts [Maeltopia](#) and [The Sleep Wake Cycle](#).

The voice of Magnolia was Pine Gonzalez. Check out their podcast [Tales From the Fringes of Reality](#).

The voice of Python was Jamie Petronis. Check out his podcast [The Cellar Letters](#). Get well soon, Jamie.

The voice of Britches was Cody Heath. Check out their band [Elsewhere!](#) and their single [Keeper](#).

The voice of Sax was Shaun Pellington. Check out his podcast [Wake of Corrosion](#).

The voice of Robert was Alex Telander. Check out his podcasts [Circè](#) and [Ostium](#).

The voice of Skinner was JustJenah. Check out their podcast [400 Words A Horror](#).

The voice of Flash was Jesse Syrat. Check out her podcast [Nowhere. On Air.](#)

The voice of Skuzz was Rat Grimes. Check out their podcast *The Department of Variance*, which can be found at [somewhereohio.com](#).

The voice of Marissa was Michelle Kan. Check them out on Twitter at [fswrites](#).

The voice of Edgar was Jeremy Enfinger. Check out his podcast [The Storage Papers](#).

The voice of Charlie was Lyssa Jay. Check out their podcast [400 Words A Horror](#).

And the voice of Troy was Athan. Check out his podcast [The Grotto](#).

[Rapping.] The voice of Ty Betteridge was David Ault. Check out his podcast [Shadows At The Door](#), or go to [davidault.co.uk](#) for more. *[Stops rapping.]*

Thanks for playing.

[Extended closing theme plays out.]

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): Oh, god. Dylan! *[Laughs.]* "Prosopagnosia"? Pros– Proso– Pr– Proso...pagnosia. Prosopagnos– I'm gonna google it. *[We hear mouse clicking.]* Okay... proso– prosopagno– control– control, copy... What is this word...

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): *[Inhales.]* I don't like that they keep calling themselves the good guys! What does that mean? Clearly, they know they're not the good guys! Are they just being silly-ironic, or is this actually a thing!? Oh-ho, god! *[Sniffs.]* I'm stressed. *[Brief laugh.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (LYSSA): "...Stinky, technically, Hot Lips" Hot Lips!? Who the fuck is Hot Lips? Me!? Oh! Is "Hot Lips" Charlie? *[Laughs.]* Wait. *[Laughs again.]*

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TAYLOR): "This is teachable moment." Oh, I can't wait to say that! I just noticed that *[Laughs.]* in the other one.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (BASE CHANCE): No, I've been at Base all day. Ryan's in there somewhere running errands, but I've been here the whole time. *[Pause.]* I've been here the whole time!
[Laughs.]

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (SKINNER): Yeah. Yeah! Exactly, MBoY, and I'm thinking that if you've been bitten by a horsefly before, these are not the lines that I'm supposed to be saying. What the fuck am I doing.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (SKINNER): Just gonna... Just gonna leave everyone behind, and let a— Eagle stab you? What are you, bored? Is this how bored you are, MW? Jesus fuckin' Christ, you idiot cowbaby. ...You have been spending way too much time with Michael.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (SKINNER): Oh, MW, I have other hobbies. Killing is just my way of— That doesn't sound like something I'd say, 'cause it's not my line. 'Cause it's not my line. That's why.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (MAGNOLIA): It's a lot... It's a lot jankier than I thought it's be. *[Breaks character.]* Reading this line, now that I've r— like, read the whole thing...?

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (PINE): I would love to be scarier than Eagle. Eagle's terrifying. ...I'm obsessed. Okay.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): I know how you feel, MDawg. I had a pet when I was a kid, and my parents made me kill it, because it was— it was a black widow spider, and it kept biting me because I kept poking it with a stick, and then the doctors were scared my fingers were gonna fall off. But I squished it, and I cried for two weeks. But I'm better now.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): I know how you feel, MDawg. I had a pet when I was a kid, and my parents made me kill it, because it was, like, this possum-rat thing, and I rolling him up in a ball like Sonic the Hedgehog and bowling him around the house, but whenever I tried to roll him up, he'd just scratch my legs a ton, and I started, like, foaming at my mouth a little bit? And I went to the

doctors, and they said that I was gonna turn into a possum if I didn't get rid of him, and so I laid him out in front of a car, and it was really sad, and I cried for a couple of weeks.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): I know how you feel, MDawg. I had a pet as a kid, and my parents made me kill it, because it was just this ball of dirt almost, but I'd, like, throw it around the house 'cause I thought it was cool? But whenever I threw it, these little guys would come out and sting me a bunch, and I started swelling up, and I looked like Sloth from *The Goonies*, and my parents brought me to the doctor, and the doctor said that I was gonna turn claymation if I did it too much, and so I had to smash it and spray it with this— weird spray, and then all the little guys were gone, and I felt better, but, like, also it was really sad, and I cried for two weeks.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

BLOOPER (TROY): I know how you feel, MDawg. I— I had a pet growing up, and my parents made me get rid of it. It was actually just 15 rats in a ball? Um, they ran around the house all the time, and, like, alone, they weren't really cool, but when they were all together, they were like this really fun pet, and I would play with them all the time, but, like, they bit me a bunch, and the doctor said that if I kept doing it, I was gonna be the first case of the bubonic plague in, like, hundreds of years, and apparently the bubonic plague does not make you a pirate, and so I ended up throwing them all outside into a field, and it was really sad, and I cried for a couple weeks.

[Brief start-stop of the closing theme.]

[END Episode 168.]