

## EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THREE - BURN THEM

*Transcript by Theo and reviewed by Jenah*

*[BEGIN Episode 173.]*

**INTRO:** Hey, guys, quick plugs. Still streaming on Twitch over at [twitch.tv/woebegonepod](https://twitch.tv/woebegonepod), where every Sunday I write that week's episode soundtrack, and then we hang out and play a video game. The spooky season is coming up, and I'm gonna be playing some spooky games. And by spooky games, I do mean that I intend on playing Nancy Drew games. Uh, people love that, I love that, so get excited, go over to [twitch.tv/woebegonepod](https://twitch.tv/woebegonepod). And if you'd like to support the show, you can do so on Patreon at [patreon.com/woe\\_begone](https://patreon.com/woe_begone), where you can get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack album, Q&As, director's commentaries, Movies with Michael, postcards, corkboards, and more. If you missed the announcement on the feed, I recently put out a 75-track vocal album of all the vocal songs from the past year or so of the show called *I Have Been To The Future Volume 2*. It is \$15 on Bandcamp at [woebegonepod.bandcamp.com](https://woebegonepod.bandcamp.com), but it is included as your \$5-a-month Patreon perk. So, if you would like to get that and all of my other soundtrack albums for \$5 a month, that is over at [patreon.com/woe\\_begone](https://patreon.com/woe_begone). Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

***[Warning: This episode contains a depiction of violence. Listened discretion is advised.]***

*[Opening theme plays.]*

*[Time travel noise.]*

*[We hear water occasionally drip.]*

**TXDAWG:** *[Groans.]* That wasn't bodacious at all. My head... *[Exhales.]* Tex, uh— W-Where— Where are— Where are we, where did we go?

**TEX:** I ain't got no idea, pard, 'cept it's hard, wet concrete. Last thing I knew, I was in Latvia. How 'bout you, Old Man? You got any ideas?

**OLD MAN:** I'm just as lost as you are, pard, but that's gonna have to wait. We gotta get somethin' under my MDawg's head. Didn't have no one to break his fall when he transported in; he's still out of it. And we can't leave him laying against the cold concrete like this.

**TEX:** Don't move him, idjit. He could have a neck injury.

**OLD MAN:** I-I'm just gonna take my shirt off, and put it under his head. This ain't right, Tex. He cain't just lay here. TXDawg, you wanna help me out?

**TXDAWG:** I, uh... Would that be copacetic, Tex?

**TEX:** I'm sayin' it's a bad idea.

**OLD MAN:** Goddamnit, TXDawg! He's one o' yours.

**TXDAWG:** Yes, but what if Tex is right? What if we should wait? Uh, [**OLD MAN:** Move!] what—  
Oh!

*[We hear the sound of footsteps.]*

**OLD MAN:** It's gonna be okay, MDawg. We're gonna get all of us outta here.

*[We hear the rattling of a door handle.]*

**TEX:** Well, pilgs, we got us a big, metal door locked from the outside. Worst case scenario.

**TXDAWG:** We could try to induce fundamental frequencies in the door to get it to vibrate?  
Maybe that would open it up?

**TEX:** Naw, that ain't gonna work, pard. *[Strikes door.]* Let! *[Strikes.]* Us! *[Strikes.]* Out!

**OLD MAN:** I don't reckon that hittin' it's gonna work, either, Tex. Simmer down.

**TEX:** We ain't got time to be sittin' around, Old Man. There ain't enough oxygen here for the four  
of us.

**TXDAWG:** I can lead a meditation to help us slow our breathing. Perhaps we can conserve  
oxygen for long enough for someone to find us.

**TEX:** Ain't no one gonna find us, pard.

**TXDAWG:** You shouldn't introduce your negativity out into the world, it could have a material  
effect. I remain hopeful. It's just the four of us here. Me, you, the Old Man, and MDawg. That  
means that MW is still likely back at the apartment. He would notice us missing, and he can call  
for help. Perhaps the Compound can trace where we have been sent.

**TEX:** Emdubya ain't callin' help, ya nincompoop.

**OLD MAN:** I think ya got Emdubya all wrong, Tex. I think you were lookin' for a villain, and you  
figure you found one.

**TEX:** We heard TXDawg call for me afore we ran in there, and they was gone, and then we was  
gone. It don't make sense unless it's Emdubya.

**OLD MAN:** TXDawg, maybe you could do some elucidatin' for us. Did you call out for Tex right afore you got transported?

**TXDAWG:** I agree, Old Man. I think it would be elucidating if all of us told our stories of the last thing that we remember before being transported to this basement. We might be able to piece together some clues about who did this, what their aura is, or what they want from us. Does that sound bodacious to everyone?

**TEX:** Sounds good to me, TXDawg.

**OLD MAN:** You go ahead and start, pard.

**TXDAWG:** I can do that. I would like to begin by taking in a deep breath in acknowledgement and thanks to the cosmos for not sending me back to that mountain overlooking Oldbrush Valley on fire. We appear to be captive here, but we are also much safer. Thank you. *[Breathes in.]*

*[Beat.]*

**OLD MAN:** Get on with it, please, TXDawg.

**TXDAWG:** Very well. As both of you know, MW and I transformed Michael's old room into a makeshift hospital bed for this iteration of MDawg, who I suppose that we are calling MDawg now, turning me into TXDawg. The two of you exited the room with Stinky, and I did not see you again until we arrived here. I noticed that Stinky is not here. I checked to make sure that MDawg was stable and comfortable, which he appeared to be. Luckily, he is not fully unconscious, merely weak, resting, sleeping.

I tried to meet with him on the astral plane, but his outline remained fuzzy. It felt like he was running away from me, like he didn't want to meet. I found that quite odd. I believe he knows something that he does not want to reveal to me yet. I sensed a fear there, perhaps the fear of propagation. He may have been afraid of unwittingly revealing information in the astral plane, because the subconscious is so much stronger there. He needs his strength back more than anything, but I believe he can help us. I was considering asking MW if Boris and the babushkas could get some medicinal herbs for us, since I know that they have a well-connected network and community.

I had my eyes closed during this whole procedure to facilitate the opening of my third eye. Sometime during my stream of consciousness, I felt something reach out and grab me by the arm. At first, I thought that this had been MDawg reacting to me kneeling over him. But it could not have been MDawg, because he was still much too weak. That's when I became startled, and my eyes bolted open, ending my trip to the astral plane. That's when I yelled your name, Tex.

I spun around to see that it was MW who had grabbed me by the arm. He was making a shushing movement with his finger. It was hard to understand the emotions on his face. Concerned, or maybe frustrated? He motioned to shush me, and then he let go of my arm. And that is when I felt the transport happen, and I arrived here at the same time as the two of you did.

**TEX:** Well, that proves it, then, don't it? It's that fake cowboy fuck behind all this. *[Growls.]* I shoulda killed 'im when I had the chance. Shouldn'ta said nothin'. Shouldn'ta let 'im know I suspected 'im, I shoulda just pulled out my six-shooter and ended it right there. I coulda killed 'im 'fore he knew what was happenin'. Instead, I was all talk, and my bluster got us in here.

**TXDAWG:** That is strange conclusion to reach, Tex. I told you, MW grabbed onto my arm, and then he put his finger to his lips in a shushing motion. So he wasn't holding a Calculator. If he had a Calculator, he would not need to get my attention in order to use it on me. It would have been better for him if I was still trying to contact MDawg. I was focused, and my terrestrial eyes were closed. Unless, of course, he was worried that he might accidentally sever my soul from my body while I was in that state. But that doesn't seem like the sort of concern that MW might have.

**TEX:** But we was in his house when it happened. You was alone with him. Me and Old Man was alone with him when it happened to us. He was at the scene of the crime both times.

**OLD MAN:** Emdubya didn't have nothin' in his hands when we were talkin' to him, Tex. It's the same problem.

**TXDAWG:** Maybe it is your turn to share your perspective, Tex.

**TEX:** There ain't much to tell, pilg. We left Michael's room, Stinky and Old Man went down to the courtyard to talk to the crows. I reckon that's where Stinky filled Old Man's head about a bunch of bullshit about me. He decided to send Stinky off on a mission to O.V.E.R. I sat on the couch behind 'im and smoked my pipe and backseat quarterbacked the whole thing. Old Man did what the crows told 'im to do and got Stinky killed. Then he got upset that he got Stinky killed, like some kinda greenhorn. We heard ya cry out for me, and that's when we ran in there. Emdubya was in there alone. We talked about Old Man's mission for a bit, and... and got transported here when the subject of what to do next came up. Emdubya sure wanted to be alone, that's for sure. Guess he got his wish.

**TXDAWG:** So, something happened to Stinky inside of O.V.E.R.? Which means that all of the iterations that entered the apartment are gone, right? All of the iterations in total, except for Mike and Mikey?

**TEX:** Mike and Mikey don't know what's goin' on. They don't even know that we went to Latvia.

**OLD MAN:** Stinky ain't dead, TXDawg. Uh— We don't know that Stinky's dead. And the crows did not tell me to send him on suicide mission! They told us to watch Mikey's first patrol. I sent Stinky in to investigate, and he found somethin'. Some sorta shelter out there in the woods. There was a Calculator in there. He was gonna nab that and hightail it out of there, but someone attacked 'im. Sounded like two someones. He cut out, and I couldn't get 'im back. We decided not to correct the situation until we had more info.

**TEX:** And you'll never believe whose idea it was not to correct the situation.

**TXDAWG:** MW told you not to correct the situation, Old Man?

**OLD MAN:** Yes, but—! [*Stammers.*] We— We've seen this play out all sorts o' times before where we correct somethin' too early, and it ends up bein' a big mistake. So, h-he was— he was right.

**TXDAWG:** I can see the logic in that. It is preferable to go with the flow. If you are going to go against the flow, it should be deliberate and conscious. Even when you're trying to escape a riptide, the correct thing to do is to swim parallel to shore, not towards it.

**TEX:** Emdubya was the riptide.

**OLD MAN:** I've about had it up to here with you, Tex! There ain't evidence of Emdubya doin' jack shit to us! He's bein' set up. It don't add up for him to be doin' this! Why get TXDawg's attention before transportin' 'im?

**TEX:** He was movin' TXDawg into place for a transport in the future. He needed TXDawg to hit his mark.

**OLD MAN:** [*Scoffs.*] Wow. Tex, just— Wow! You— You got an answer for everything, don'tcha? No matter what happens, you'll— you'll put it on Emdubya!

**TEX:** Only if'n it's him that did it.

**OLD MAN:** He wouldn't do that. H-He wouldn't do that to *me*. We was in the Shadow Dome together. ...He's the only one that followed me out to the shed after I got in a fight with all the others. He stayed out there in the freezin' cold with me. He wouldn't get rid of me like this.

**TEX:** He already *did* get rid of you, Old Man. That's not your MW. Your MW is dead. *You are not his Michael*. One o' your new buddies beat his Michael to death with a pickaxe! The Michael MW actually cared about. Your friends did that. I think he might got a bone to pick with you.

**TXDAWG:** I think that it might be time to drop this subject. The negative energy is hanging in the air, and i— I'm finding it hard to breathe. Tex, you're the one who was concerned about wasting oxygen. Maybe we should try... recentering ourselves and then trying to assess paths

out of here. We can be cautious around MW when we make it out, but that is something to concern ourselves with later. What do you say?

**TEX:** There ain't gonna be a way out. Door's lock, pilg. Could be welded shut for all we know. We're trapped underground. There ain't no other ways out. We're surrounded by dirt. We can't bust down the door, and it's locked from the outside. So, we're stuck here until Emdubya is ready for us.

**OLD MAN:** *[Growls.]* If you're tryin' to rile me up, pard, it's workin'.

**TEX:** Never done nothin' easier in my dang life.

**TXDAWG:** Couldn't there be another way out, though? The technology means that we aren't strictly limited to doors. Remember Boris's safe room? Mike said that him and MW solved a puzzle to get out of there. We could be in a room like that, a room with some sort of failsafe.

**TEX:** Yeah, and where's Mike, by the way? ...Right, he's investigatin' a Matt iteration that this lowly cur wouldn't tell us about! Mike had to go there and see for himself.

**OLD MAN:** You're one to talk, Tex! What about Chance? Why didn't either o' you tell us about Chance? What the fuck is goin' on with him? 'Cause that's way more out of control than what Python's doin'.

**TEX:** And what *is* Python doin', exactly?

**OLD MAN:** Hey, TXDawg. You were gonna let Tex hide a whole council from us? You didn't think that Base might wanna know about that? While it was happenin' right under your nose?

**TXDAWG:** It didn't feel like it was my place to speak to Base.

**TEX:** You leave TXDawg out of this.

**OLD MAN:** *[Scoffs.]* Or what?

**TEX:** Or you ain't makin' it out of this tincan alive.

**OLD MAN:** Bring it on, Tex. I already got my shirt off.

**TEX:** You sonuvabitch!

*[Scuffle starts. We hear Tex and Old Man crash into multiple objects in the basement.]*

**TXDAWG:** Stop. Stop. Please. Both of you, find your center. Please. Stop!

**OLD MAN** *[overlapping TXDawg]*: I wish I had my blowtorches! –Burn you.

**TEX**: No skill.

*[Scuffle ends.]*

**TXDAWG**: Stop. *Please*. ...What is that?

**OLD MAN**: Gimme that. ...It's a VHS tape. Says "Michael" on it.

**TEX and OLD MAN** *[simultaneously]*: That's me.

**TXDAWG**: How strange... This location isn't random, then. I propose that we look for something to play it on. Maybe it has a clue as to why we're down here. We haven't gone through any of the junk in this basement. And, while we're doing that, Old Man can look for something to wrap his arm in. Does that sound good?

**TEX** *[overlapping Old Man]*: This is all part o' Emdubya's plot.

**OLD MAN** *[overlapping Tex]*: I have more of a claim to Michael than he does.

**TXDAWG**: *[Louder.]* I said, does that sound good! *[Normal volume.]* I'm taking charge here. Your spirits are vibrating at this awful frequency? It feels like they're cancelling me out into nothingness. So... I'm going to call the shots until you can realign. Alright?

**TEX** *[overlapping Old Man]*: Fine, we'll find your fuckin' VHS player.

**OLD MAN** *[overlapping Tex]*: It's somethin' to do, at least.

**TXDAWG**: Alright, then. Let's get searching.

*[Scene transition.]*

*[We continue to hear water occasionally drip.]*

*[We hear the VHS tape get inserted into the VHS player, and the tape begins to play on a TV.]*

**VHS MICHAEL** *[through TV]*: Hi, Edgar. Thank you for having me remotely. Uh– I'm glad that the paperwork got sorted out with all of the councils and stuff, I know that's usually a mess, I tried to pull some strings on my end. Uh, 'cause I guess this is technically future scouting, which they hate. *[Laughing.]* Uh– I'm pretty sure you hate it, too! But, uh, what good is the future if you can't put it to use, right? Uh, that's a saying... in this time period.

Uh, so... for people that don't know, my name is Michael. I'm 40-*ish* years old, uh, we don't need to go into that. And I'm directly connected to Mikey Bear... If Edgar's showing you this, that's— yeah, that's his Mikey. The Mike iteration that he's betrothed to— W— Not betrothed, but... You know what I mean. Edgar, you know all about this already. I'm just restating the obvious for the camera. Let the sound guy get his levels figured out, and it's important context. You don't know who might need it.

I am giving this interview, because it will soon be time for what we used to call, quote, "Past Base" to transition into what we call "Present Base." Uh, I'm in Future Base, not to be confused with the genre of music, future bass, which, in my time, no one has made in ten years. This transition is always will have happening in the past, uh, from this point of view. But, I'm doing this so that I can sort of control the stream, if you will, and make it so that everything goes smoothly, and that everything, y-you know, sort of loops back onto itself... in a way where everyone's knowledgeable about what happens, so that things don't propagate inappropriately, and so that we end up with the desire that we want, which is to be in this timeline.

This shouldn't be confusing to you by this point; I know it's not confusing for Edgar, and so Edgar, maybe if you could distribute the proper literature if people aren't aware of how this transition works. It was important to establish a Satellite Base along with the original Base at a very specific date, time, and location, which was agreed upon by Future Base (that's me), uh, Present Base (that's gonna be you in not too long), and then a whole buncha councils. If you're not part of the iterative lineage, you might not have a clear recollection of what happened around the time that I'm talking about.

The long and short of it is that Mikey Bear, so-called, was sent to Latvia on behalf of CANNONBALL, because CANNONBALL was running WOE.BEGONE. If left unchecked, CANNONBALL gets Mikey killed, and this sets off a chain reaction that results in Base ceasing existence before it can get a foothold. This result is so much of a mess, the councils don't wanna deal with it. But, on the flipside of that, this is the earliest entryptoint that we can negotiate with the Compound. Uh, trust me, we've tried, they're not budging. Uh, CANNONBALL has some sort of arrangement with the Compound? Uh, we don't know the details. Uh, none of the councils do, as far as I can tell. Not that they tell us everything. But, based on a couple things I've heard CANNONBALL say, it seems like there was a series of favor trading, and that dates back to way before Mikey even started playing WOE.BEGONE.

As with all time travel situations, it is possible to do this without closing a loop. Uh, but in this case, I think that's a really bad idea? Uh, not closing the loop might mean not sending anyone back, or fudging the connectivity of which iterative lineages go back, and this would lead to inevitably different outcomes. And that might sound great. Uh, we don't live in the best of all worlds, obviously. It sounds like you could tweak that to create a better world. But I want to remind you that we do live in a world where we exist, and that 40-ish-year-old Michael here can give you advice, so *[Brief laugh.]* don't screw that up for me? Maybe?



Uh, you really need the cowboy, and you need Mike to go back, or you'll change basically every variable in the equation. Drastically different timelines do not tend to benefit us, especially the Mike iterations. You'd also piss off a bunch of the councils, and I know it's impossible to please them all of the time, or really any of the time, but you don't wanna make them angry on purpose, especially after O.I.

Mike and the cowboy are incredibly important picks for this mission, and it is urgent that you have your connectivity sorted out before you make the call and actually commit them. Uh, malicious actors will try to muddy the connectivity, either by claiming to be them or by using consolidation to conflate their connectivity with Mike and the cowboy, and it's gonna be up to your judgement to sort that all out when the moment arrives. Uh— Edgar, I'm speaking directly to you. I don't think that anyone else is up to that. Uh— And it is life or death for you, so the matter should be in your hands.

The cowboy wasn't our first pick, but all of our previous corrected attempts at constructing a Satellite Base resulted in your long-term and permanent death, Panther, so what can you do. Uh, several key things need to happen in order to preserve you. And we would really love to do that, that's not me being selfish about my husband. Uh, *[Brief laugh.]* I've got a backup, remember? *[Laughs.]* I'm— I'm kidding! I'm kidding, that's the cowboy's thing. Uh...

But, with other Base members having dual allegiances to councils and also varying amounts of interest in pursuing this project, you are our most important asset, Edgar. We need you alive. Certain things are going to need to start happening in preparation for you becoming Present Base. You know all those confusing connectivity problems that swarm around the Base like bees? Uh, you're gonna have to figure out who's who. And that's gonna suck, because you're gonna have to metaphorically use one of those stream things that makes all the bees go to sleep, if you know what I mean. Uh, consider it rigorous experimentation. Like what the Compound does.

You've already had your taste of malicious actors with Lieutenant and Nobody. Uh, those worked out for us in the long run, because they were put in their place, and then they were kept there until their utility was spent, and then they were discarded. An iterative lineage like that *cannot* be put into Satellite Base. It would poison the well, perhaps permanently. That is why you have to be sure of your iterative lineages. If you send Lieutenant and Nobody back to save Mikey from CANNONBALL, *[Brief laugh.]* they're just gonna let him die. Uh, that's an extreme example, I know, but anything between this and that extreme could happen.

I cannot stress enough how important it is to get this right. We talked it over with the other councils and decided to issue a— a little challenge to make sure that things go smoothly. Uh— Tell Mikey it's Challenge Five. Uh, if it doesn't go smoothly, nothing can progress past a certain point. So, it's— it's like a hard cut-off. If you don't have a Satellite Base prepared by a certain date, it's all over. Like O.V.E.R., like Oldbrush Valley Energy and Resources is over. Uh, both uses of the word. Everything will be gone. Uh, all of Oldbrush Valley. Uh, you; uh, Base; your associates; O.V.E.R.; uh, the whole kit and caboodle. You will have no choice but to figure this

out. Find the lineages of Mike and the cowboy, and everything is fine. Root out everyone else. All the pretenders, everyone who doesn't fit, everyone that's just gonna steer us off the rails. And, if you fail to do so, everything is on fire. The councils agree to this because they'd love to watch us burn, but we're— we're capable, we can do this. We did it— Uh, Future Base did it, Present Base did it. And you can, too, because, on the macro level, you turn into us. Remember that.

And yes, we will bail you out, unless someone does something that makes it impossible to bail you out, so don't fuck it up too bad, because w-we can't— we're not m-miracles— Jesuses— Can we do another take? Tha— That—

Look. When it comes right down to it, Base is still the anchor that keeps so many of us grounded even a decade later. You owe it to your future selves to take care of yourselves now. Uh, which is also why you should tell Mikey to start getting some exercise if he's going to be doing patrols in a cart? Uh, for my blood pressure's sake? This will be your biggest challenge yet, both for reasons you anticipate and reasons that you won't. But, I believe in you, Edgar. Panther. I believe in Mikey, and I believe in Base. You'll do me proud. And I'll see you when I see you. This is Michael Walters signing out.

*[Pause.]* Hey, uh, can we get an—? I need to do a cut? I don't— I don— I don't know how to do that—

*[Tape abruptly ends. The three talk simultaneously.]*

**TEX** *[overlapping]*: So, Emdubya *did* do it.

**OLD MAN** *[overlapping]*: So, Edgar's behind this.

**TXDAWG** *[overlapping]*: So... Michael did it.

*[Closing theme plays.]*

**BLOOPER (DYLAN)**: Everyone was, like, "I want Michael back," and I listen to the fans, so I brought Michael back. A different Michael without an accent, and he set the whole Oldbrush Valley on fire. So, I hope you're happy.

*[END Episode 173.]*