

## EPISODE ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY NINE - MICHAEL?

*Original transcript edited by Noveltea and Theo*

*[BEGIN Episode 199.]*

**INTRO:** Hey guys, quick plugs. Season 17 is back. I am excited for the second half of the season and for the very, very round number that is happening next week: Episode 200. So keep your eyes peeled for something special. In the meantime, I'm still streaming on Twitch over 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. We are in between games right now, so maybe this Sunday something special or different happens. I don't know. Why would I say that? 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/woebegone](https://www.patreon.com/woebegone), where you can get early access to ad-free episodes, instrumentals, soundtrack albums, Q&As, director's commentaries, Movies with Michael, corkboards, morkboards, and mor...kboards again; you're really gonna wanna pay attention to those morkboards. That is [patreon.com/woebegone](https://www.patreon.com/woebegone). Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

***[Warning: This episode contains a depiction of violence, a discussion of death, and a brief reference to drug use. Listener discretion is advised.]***

*[We hear the iteration (Michael?) driving. "Here In The Basement" plays through the car speakers.]*

*[Phone starts vibrating.]*

**MICHAEL?:** *[Quietly singing.]* ...'cause they're clunky. He calls me stinky, and I don't like it. I ain't Stinky, I'm just Mikey...

*[Phone continues to vibrate.]*

**MICHAEL?:** Goddamnit. *[Stops the music and answers the phone.]* Hello? This dang thing better be ready for contactless delivery when I get there, ya know. *[Pause.]* I am on the way there this very moment, pard. I'll be there in a couple minutes. And it ain't like I can use somethin' else. Cain't just walk through the front door. *[Pause.]* I don't know what to tell ya, pilgrim. Ya wanna interfere in the lives of time travelers? Ya gotta do a little bit o' time travelin'. Should be mighty easy to get over your phobia, what with it bein' me bein' the one who's gotta time travel and not yourself. *[Pause.]* Look, I'm a busy man. If we're gonna do this, I gotta make some more phone calls after this'n. You know how Edgar's a stickler for procedure. So when I pull up here, am I gonna have clearance or ain't I? *[Pause.]* We ain't got time for ditherin', pilgrim. I'm gonna be at this here gate in T minus 30 seconds. Am I gonna be able to get in, or do I need to execute a u-turn? And if'n the answers the latter, then you wasted a bunch of money on nothin', pard. *[Pause.]* That's what I like to hear. I'll call you when it's done. *[Hangs up phone.]* Ugh, I forgot how indecisive these folks were in the past.

*["Here In The Basement" resumes playing.]*

**MICHAEL?:** *[Quietly singing.]* ...if I say so. It's a bad idea to try me... Senses are enhanced from livin' in darkness. It's a bad idea to try me. My senses are advanced from livin' in darkness.

*[Opening theme plays.]*

*[Time travel noise.]*

*[Michael? makes a phone call.]*

**MICHAEL?:** Howdy, pard. I'm here. Event window opens in T minus 15 seconds. Nah, I got my wits about me. Didn't even stumble when I transported in. So I'm ready for 'im. *[Pause.]* Yup, just me here. *[Pause.]* Mm-hmm, send him in. And thank ya kindly for doin' me one last favor. *[Pause.]* Don't worry about it. ...Alright. Mm-bye. *[Hangs up.]*

*[Time travel noise.]*

**NOBODY:** Uh—! Ty, don't let them—! *[Takes a breath.]* W-Wh—... Wha— What is this?

**MICHAEL?:** It's your new digs, pard. Get settled in. You're gonna be here a minute.

**NOBODY:** What—? Th— This is an interrogation room.

**MICHAEL?:** You'd be surprised about how long a fella can live in one of these things.

**NOBODY:** You're telling me this is an Elder Hunter situation? And who are you? A Michael who's willing to become everything that he hates? You're going to become H and leave me in here?

**MICHAEL?:** I don't hate H. And you got somethin' that I need.

**NOBODY:** I don't have anything that you can take, because I was in Oldbrush Valley in 1980 a minute ago. What could you possibly want with me?

**MICHAEL?:** Where is it? I reckon he stuck it up under your ribcage somewhere, right? At least that's what I'd do.

**NOBODY:** Of course you would. You are all the same.

**MICHAEL?:** Yup, and you're one of us, too, which is why you're still breathin'.

**NOBODY:** I did not agree to those terms, and you haven't told me who you are.

**MICHAEL?:** That's 'cause I'm you, pard. The very same.

**NOBODY:** No, I am Nobody. You're a cowboy.

**MICHAEL?:** Y'ain't just Nobody. You're Mike Walters. You're a bad improv partner who cain't "yes and" to save your dang soul. And you're a varmint what got a disconnectivity device in ya. I been in the market for one o' those, but... from what I can tell, they don't make 'em no more. So, was I right? He stick it right up under your ribcage?

**NOBODY:** What is the point of putting a disconnectivity device inside of me if you're going to immediately take it out?

**MICHAEL?:** I ain't the one who put it in ya, pard. Like I said, I'm you. Edgar did that. ...There was a change o' plans. I got a client what needs a little bit o' disconnectin'.

**NOBODY:** A client? You're doing this for money?

**MICHAEL?:** It's more nuanced than that. You wanna hear all about it, pard? It's a long story. Got its own soundtrack and everything.

**NOBODY:** Spare me. So, what's the plan? You're gonna use that thing to get the disconnectivity device out of me?

**MICHAEL?:** *[Brief laugh.]* This thing? *No*, nonononono. This might surprise you, but I ain't a time traveler by trade. Time travel surgery's risky, even for the Compound. You don't want me tryin' to get somethin' the size and shape of an apple airtag outta ya. Best I could do with this thing is rip ya down the middle and pick it out after you're dead.

**NOBODY:** Is that where we are? In an interrogation room in the Compound? I know that they pay above industry rates.

**MICHAEL?:** The Compound cain't afford me. And we ain't in the same industry.

**NOBODY:** They proved me right, you know. They locked me up in that shed, in Texas. You have to know what goes on there.

**MICHAEL?:** Of course I know what goes on there. We got a number and everything, pard.

**NOBODY:** I don't believe that you're me. Not in the way that Mike Walters thinks that he's me, and definitely not this insinuation that you're me in the future.

**MICHAEL?:** Well if'n ya want, I can *[Knife clicks open.]* give ya a demonstration.

**NOBODY:** What are you—? [**MICHAEL?:** Come 'ere!] Oh! Ow! Fuck... My ear. [*Pained breathing.*] What was the point of that?

**MICHAEL?:** Clipped that ear good, right? So it ain't growin' back. Say, just like this'n. It weren't like that before. I know you're a stickler for the details. Surely you noticed. And you ain't connected to the other Mikes. You got a disconnectivity device in your belly. That's the whole point o' that thing. So if I ain't you from the future, then who am I?

**NOBODY:** It's a magic trick. You have a time travel device in your other hand. You could have cut off the top of your ear in a myriad of other ways in other time periods and set up a correction to that effect to happen as soon as you cut my ear. This is not my first rodeo.

**MICHAEL?:** And it won't be your last. There's a rodeo in Bluster's Grove every year. Never miss it.

**NOBODY:** Why are you trying to convince me of this pablum?

**MICHAEL?:** 'Cause I need you to tell me where the disconnectivity device is. If'n I kill ya tryin' to get it out, it ain't good news for me neither.

**NOBODY:** So my options are to die or to [*Chuckles.*] become a cowboy.

**MICHAEL?:** Them's the two options, yeah.

**NOBODY:** [*Laughs.*] You're not me, and you clearly don't know me. [*Laughs again.*]

**MICHAEL?:** Oh, I know you, Nobody. And I know the peril that comes from bein' one of a kind, like we all are. Not just the iterations, but everyone. Every single person. Your consciousness is stored entirely in that brain and body. Once it's done, it's done. The end of all sensation and experience for all of time. Somethin' you cain't even fathom, 'cause any attempt to fathom it would be attemptin' to imagine it as an experience, when it really ain't an experience at all. I know that if you think about it too much, it makes your blood run cold. It'll paralyze ya. It can live inside of ya like a parasite. Disablin' it more and more as it eats ya. You wish you had a death wish, Nobody. We've died a million times over. But, that's just practice, and practice ain't nothin' compared to the big game. We're never gonna be prepared. There's nothin' to prepare for. Time travel or not, there will be an *eternity* where you don't exist. And you can't adequately ponder that to be able to actually understand it. [*Voice becomes like Nobody's.*] You're not Nobody. Wouldn't that be so damn easy. [*Scoffs.*] You would be a worm if it meant that you could persist. Actually persist. Not just through legacy and memory. You need sensation. Any sensation. So, if I tell you that you are going to live to be a [*Cowboy voice.*] grizzled old cowboy, [*Nobody voice.*] you will accept it with all of the hate in your heart [*Cowboy voice.*] and the bile in your gut. ...And, speaking o' them organs, you better point out to me where that damn connectivity device is. So I can get started on the job I was paid to do.

**NOBODY:** And if you can't do the job that this important client has paid you to do?

**MICHAEL?:** Then we get a jump start on the irreversible cessation of sensory input. Not by much—a rounding error in geologic time, but enough to matter to you.

**NOBODY:** And you?

**MICHAEL?:** I already told ya, Nobody. We're one in the same.

**NOBODY:** I'm starting to think that you actually believe that.

**MICHAEL?:** Yessir, I do.

**NOBODY:** *[Sighs.]* ...It's right here. You can feel it from the outside. I think it's right up under this rib.

**MICHAEL?:** Alright. Let me see.

**NOBODY:** Your hands are... cold, ugh... Hey. There's a scar. ...When do we get our throat cut?

**MICHAEL?:** Oh, that old thing? That's a surprise for later, pard. *[Exhales.]* Alright. Are you ready? I'm gonna count down from three. Three. *[Starts cutting. Nobody grunts in pain.]* Hold still, almost got it... There we go. *[Nobody takes several breaths through his nose.]* The good news is it weren't up in ya deep, so you should heal in no time. Just a little flesh wound to remember me by. See, I got the same one now. Think that's another magic trick?

**NOBODY:** It very well could be, and you know that.

**MICHAEL?:** Well, you've got a long time to figure that magic trick out. Maybe by the time you're done, you'll realise who you're becomin'. But... that's my cue to leave. It was nice catchin' up with ya, Nobody.

**NOBODY:** You're... leaving me here? How am I supposed to get out?

**MICHAEL?:** That ain't my problem. *[Starts pressing buttons on the Calculator.]* Goodbye, Nobody. Don't do nothin' I wouldn't do.

*[Time travel noise.]*

*[Scene transition.]*

*[Outdoor ambience. Bluster canters, saddle and bridle jangling.]*

**STINKY:** So, do you come equipped with poison darts, like, out of the factory or whatever? Or were you threatening Bluster as, like, a joke? I d— I don't understand.

**LEG:** I am able to make a neurotoxin as well as the dart to deliver that toxin into your enemies from your own cells. I have full access to your nervous and circulatory systems. So I wasn't joking about shooting a poison dart. I don't think I know how to joke. Isn't that cool?

**STINKY:** Yeah, th-that— that's great. Uh. Can you... tell me where we're going? We've been riding for a long time now, and, uh— my thighs hurt a lot. I didn't realise how bad my thighs would hurt.

**LEG:** I do have GPS functionality, but no end coordinate has been entered. We have traveled 15 miles so far, moving north-northwest. If we continue at this rate, we will travel all the way around the Earth in approximately 70 days.

**STINKY:** N-North-northwest? We're— We're heading out of Bluster's Grove. Where are we going? Are we going to O.V.E.R.? I thought we were going to find Tex.

**LEG:** I do not know where we are going, Stinky. My consciousness activated when you woke up. Technically, I die every time you go to sleep. Please do not go to sleep without registering me. I fear the next me won't remind you.

**STINKY:** Yes, they will remind me, I'm positive.

**LEG:** I use she/her pronouns.

**STINKY:** *She* will remind me. So, you don't know anything, and Bluster's a horse. [*Huffs.*] Nobody, are you there—? Leg, can you, like, not listen for a moment?

**LEG:** Everything you say is recorded and sent to a server farm in Eastern Europe. This is impossible to override without uninstalling me. The pain of uninstalling me will kill you.

**STINKY:** Okay, whatever, I tried. Nobody, can you hear me? Uh— Did that really happen? The— The stuff on the farm with 38? 'Cause that's not how I remember it, and TXDawg made me drink that w-weird stuff, so I thought it was a hallucination, but 38's so scared of me that maybe— maybe that is what happened and I forgot it. But... Why did I remember stuff that happened after I left the farm? And w-why did you do all that stuff, and why could I hear you after I woke up? Uh—... Maybe that was the anesthesia wearing off... But, I woke up, and you told me to go with Bluster. Why? That's really out of character for you. And you wouldn't stop talking in the dream, and you kept taking control of my body, and now that I'm awake, you haven't said anything other than "go with Bluster." Uh— Do you know where, uh— Tex and TXDawg are? Do you know w-what the deal is with the Leg? Do you know where we're going or why we're going there? I'd settle for "why."

**LEG:** I think I understand the problem. "Nobody" means the lack of an individual, and you are trying to talk to an individual, but you're actually talking to nobody. If you want answers, you might try asking somebody.

**STINKY:** Your tone makes you sound really sarcastic, Leg.

**LEG:** If we fell into a sar-chasm, I would remain functional and be able to take you to safety.

**STINKY:** Good to know. Hey, Leg, when I was talking earlier, I got interrupted by myself? Like a different voice. Did you hear a different voice come out of me?

**LEG:** I can only hear one voice when you speak. My understanding is that that is a function of human vocal cords. Would you like me to access your voice box via your nervous system? I am attached via your sciatic nerve.

**STINKY:** No, please don't modify me. I just— I need answers. Like, who installed you? I assumed Tex and TXDawg, but what if it wasn't them? What if they got attacked or something?

**LEG:** I do not know who T.X. and Texas Hound are. It is possible that they installed Leg, but I was not alive to witness that. I am not even alive now by some definitions.

**STINKY:** If you're not alive, then how do you die every time I go to sleep?

**LEG:** It is possible that you also die every time you go to sleep. How would you know the difference?

**STINKY:** We can't talk about that right now, that's one of my childhood fears.

**LEG:** I know that is one of your childhood fears. The childhood fear lobe of your brain is massive. Most people do not have lobes of their brain dedicated to specific anxieties like you do.

**STINKY:** Okay, we can't be talking about this. Can we just... relax? We'll just— We'll just go until Bluster stops, and then we'll deal with it. So, maybe we can just... chill out?

**LEG:** I am designed to be the perfect ambulatory assistant to you, Stinky. I am currently luring your body temperature [**STINKY:** You're what? You're lowering my body temperature?] so you do not get hot in the Texas heat. I can play music, but only pre-approved music from my parent company. Here is the song "Trial Egg" by tlr8r.

*[Leg starts playing "Trial Egg."]*

**STINKY:** No, please don't play me music. It's just... I'm tired, I'm hot. I'm– I'm not hot, actually. That– That's weird and... worse, just, I don't– I can't take music right now. *[Beat.]* I said I can't take music right now. *[Beat.]* Leg!

**LEG:** I have no choice but to report back to the Eastern European server farm that you are a buzz kill.

*["Trial Egg" spins down to a stop.]*

**STINKY:** What– Why did it spin down?

**LEG:** There is a tiny record player inside of you.

**STINKY:** *[Sighs.]* There's gotta be a button like on the– the gas station pumps where you hit the button and it makes it stop playing the video, there's gotta be something like that for the Leg. Right? I mean, u-uh– Tex's Leg doesn't talk.

**LEG:** Tex's Leg doesn't talk to you, but he does talk to me.

**STINKY:** Tex's Leg talks to you? Uh– Do you know where he is? Can he tell us where we are or where we're going or if Tex installed you or what's going on?

**LEG:** Tex's Leg is online, but the signals he is currently sending are so distorted they threaten to destroy my circuitry. I had no choice but to mute him. This is very distressing because I love him.

**STINKY:** Okay, can you–?

**LEG:** Platonically.

**STINKY:** Try to get a hold of Tex's leg, and tell him that I woke up in the warehouse with Leg installed, and Nobody is in my head after a dream I had about him, and then Bluster showed up, and the Nobody voice in my head told me to go with Bluster, and so I went with Bluster *[We hear a truck approach.]* because I figured I could trust Bluster even if I can't trust Nobody.

**LEG:** I will send the message, but I cannot safely receive messages from him at this time. In the meantime, we should focus our attention on the truck that has slowed down to follow us. If you want, I can deploy a dirty bomb created using leftover radiation from every banana you've ever eaten.

**STINKY:** You'll never believe this, but I don't want you to do that. Are you sure that they're following us?

**LEG:** Michael uses he/him pronouns.

**STINKY:** Wai– It's Michael? Wait, uh– W-Wait, which– which Michael?

**LEG:** There is no such thing as Witch Michael. He cannot hurt you. I can hurt him, though. Would you like me to hurt him? I am eager to hurt him.

**MICHAEL?:** Hey, there, pard. You lookin' for a ride?

**LEG:** I will give you a ride to hell, you fucking podunk moron. Maintain your distance or you'll die before your cowboy hat can smack the top of your steering wheel.

**MICHAEL?:** Whoa, there. You're an ornery one. I just saw y'all. Figured you were goin' the same place I was.

**STINKY:** Ignore her. Wh– Who are you, which iteration are you, we don't know where we're going, where are you going?

**MICHAEL?:** I'm headin' to a farm upstate. I got room for Bluster in the back if you wanna hop in.

**LEG:** A farm upstate is a common euphemism for dying. If you think that you can trick Stinky because he's stupid, you have another thing coming.

**STINKY:** I don't know anything about a farm upstate. I was wi– (**NOBODY:** Is that you, Nobody?)

**MICHAEL?:** Then you had better come with me–

**STINKY:** (**NOBODY:** It's me.)

**MICHAEL?:** –you're gonna get lost.

**STINKY:** (**NOBODY:** Get in.) Alright, we're stopping. Uh, Bluster... you get in the back. Me and Leg will get in the front, and... [*Takes a breath–*] (**NOBODY:** Do as I say.) see about this farm upstate.

*[Such A Happy Customer plays.]*

*Time is a mess of circumstance*

*Be sure*

*You don't let it get to you*

*And I raised my hands*

*In armistice*

*Be sure*

*You don't let it get to you*

*Peace  
Peace is resting up  
I for one  
Am such a happy customer*

*And you can call  
Whenever there's uncertainty  
The type that got the best of me  
You can call  
But know  
When you are calling  
Know that you are calling*

*I'm in repose atop every word  
Be sure  
You don't let it get to you  
My tongue is rusted through from honest work  
Be sure  
You don't let it get to you*

*Rain  
Isn't letting up  
But I for one  
Am such a happy customer*

*And you can call  
Whenever things get typical  
Anything you've seen before  
You can call  
But know  
Know that you are calling  
Me*

*[Closing theme plays.]*

*[Brief start-stop of closing theme.]*

**BLOOPER (DYLAN):** *[Silly voice.]* Hey, everybody, it's time to do an episode of *WOE.BEGONE*.

*[Brief start-stop of closing theme.]*

**BLOOPER (NOBODY):** I know that they pay above industry rates. *[Breaks character.]* Why is that so hard to say? *[Rhythmically.]* Industry rates. Industry rates. I know that they pay industry rates. I know that they pay above industry rates.

*[Brief start-stop of closing theme.]*

*[END Episode 199.]*