

## EPISODE TWO HUNDRED AND TWO - MIKEBODY NOLTERS

*Original transcript edited by Theo*

*[BEGIN Episode 202.]*

**INTRO:** Hey, guys, quick plugs. I am pleased to announce that the main arc of the ARG has been completed. Shoutout to the members of my Discord who pieced it all together and got the prize at the end. You can check out the channel called "200" over on my Discord if you want a rundown of what happened and what prizes they found. There's still a little bit more to go, but it's sort of post-game stuff.

As far as regular plugs, I'm 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. That is [twitch.tv/woebegonepod](https://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://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, corkboards, morkboards and mor...kboards. I'm pretty sure every episode of this season so far has had a song associated with it, and one of the places that you can hear all of those songs in the same place along with a whole bunch of other songs is on Patreon. So if you like last week's song or this week's song or any song that's been in the show, it might be worth throwing me a dollar to go check that out.

Special thanks to my ten newest patrons: [REDACTED] for supporting the show. Enjoy.

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

*[Nighttime outdoor ambience. A fox is screaming in the distance. Voices pan, distort, and echo.]*

**STINKY:** Uh, w-what? Where am I? *[Starts walking.]* ...E-Ember? Ember? I-Is that you? Ember! Where are you? We need to go! Uh... Nobody's here! Uh- He's- I-I don't know, he did something to 38, we need to go! Uh. Where-... What is- What is going on... Where-... Where's- Where's- Where's Ember...

**LEG:** Many people will revel in your downfall when this doesn't work. You spit the walk[?], but I will celebrate you losing all[?]. **[STINKY:** What did- Where a- Where- This isn't... This isn't the farm, uh...] I am making wine from your blood as we speak, so that made[?] toast will be mine.

**MAGNOLIA and MARISSA:** This has been WOE.BEGONE. **[STINKY:** What did- What did he do?] Next time: a new game, a mysterious contact, and a rekindled past. **[STINKY:** Ember?] Thanks for playin'.

**STINKY:** Ember? 3– 38? ...You're not here, either. Are you, 38. *[Ambience ends.]* 'Cause this isn't the farm.

**MAGNOLIA:** Mike Walters chops his left arm off at the shoulder.

*[Distortion ends. We hear the whirring of a saw for a while.]*

*[Thud. Whirring stops.]*

**NOBODY:** It works.

**LEG:** Great job, loser. You cut the arm off of a dead cowboy. Why don't you try your own arm next, coward coward coward coward coward coward coward **[NOBODY:** That's the best part. I don't need to.] coward.

**NOBODY:** I can shut you up again if you are going to do that during the challenge.

**LEG:** That's the best part. I don't need to.

**NOBODY:** Why would you say that? That's what I just said.

**LEG:** Why would you say that? That's what I just said.

**NOBODY:** Do whatever it is that you think that you're doing. Just stay out of my way. *[Takes a breath.]* Alright. *[Takes another breath.]* I'm ready. Let's do this.

*[The saw turns on, and whirring resumes.]*

**NOBODY:** *[Quietly.]* Ah... *[Gradually getting louder.]* Ah... Ah...! Ah...! Ah...! Ah...! Ah! Ah...

*[Nobody loudly screams multiple times as he pretends to saw his own arm off at the shoulder.]*

*[Thud2. Whirring stops.]*

**NOBODY:** *[Takes a few deep breaths.]* Alright. It's done. ...Let's look at it.

*[Nobody plays back the recording.]*

**LEG:** They are never going to believe that is your real arm. They will figure out what you're doing, and CANDLEBALL is going to show up at your door and kill you dead. You are a nincompoop.

**NOBODY:** They'll buy it. They've bought worse. The video is too low quality. There's no way to tell that that's Michael's arm if you don't already know.

**LEG:** Maybe they do already know.

**NOBODY:** And how would they already know, Leg? Did you tip them off?

**LEG:** I have no way of letting them know. But maybe the information propagated. Information sent backwards through time tends to propagate backwards through time. You know that.

**NOBODY:** That is a Council of Annes guideline. Who told you about that?

**LEG:** A little birdy told me.

**NOBODY:** The birds are going to be eviscerated by the fox before I am done.

**LEG:** You misunderstand who will be devouring whose entrails.

**NOBODY:** I don't think that I do. I have never felt more confident about a plan in my life.

**LEG:** Off he went after him with such a rush that the underwood crackled as he went. He gained on Reynard, and presently was so close to him that he caught hold of his hind foot as he was crawling into a hole under a pine root.

Reynard was fairly in the grip of his enemy, but he nevertheless kept his wits about him, and yelled, "Let go of the pine root and catch Reynard's foot!"

So the bear, in his excitement, released the foot of the fox, and laid hold of the root, while Reynard slipped own into the hole beyond reach.

"I got the best of you that time, grandsire," the fox called back.

"Out of sight isn't out of mind," the bear growled down the hole, and then he went away enraged and disappointed.

**NOBODY:** What are you talking about?

**LEG** [*distorted and echoing*]: Out of sight isn't out of mind.

[*Opening theme plays.*]

[*We hear Nobody typing at a keyboard.*]

**LEG:** You have been checking your email a lot today. This is the third time in ten minutes that you have checked. Is something wrong? Did CANDLEBALL see through your dipshit lies? Where is the third challenge, Nobody? Shouldn't he have emailed you by now asking to meet up with you? Maybe you got disqualified.

**NOBODY:** No. He's just making me wait. I reviewed the video footage. You cannot tell that it's Michael's arm. It looks just like my own. You can tell that it's a real arm. You can see the blood spatter as it hits the ground.

**LEG:** Maybe they could see through that half-ass screaming that you did. You're not a very good actor. You know, if you really cut your own arm off, you would scream like you meant it. You scrump like a little puppy dog.

**NOBODY:** My performance was fine. *[Stops typing.]* It looked realistic. It was a real arm. *[Resumes typing.]*

**LEG:** It's a real arm, but it's not yours, it's Michael's. Just like I'm a real leg, but technically I am property of the TryLeg Corporation. If you read the fine print, you are only renting me for 100 years. When that runs out, a representative will be sent to collect me.

**NOBODY:** I will be dead in 100 years.

**LEG:** I will schedule that on your calendar!

**NOBODY:** The gamerunners are from this time period. They aren't sending iterations back here, so they don't know everything that the Ryan and CANNONBALL from our present know. They were almost as naive as Mike was the first time around. They were obviously learning on the job and using Mike as a playtester. Bonus challenges? Leaderboards? They were making up bullshit as they went along. That's how I know that they aren't onto me. They are not legitimate. They are not like the organizations in our present: O.V.E.R., O.I., C.O.A.

**LEG:** And the Ibis Society.

**NOBODY:** What the hell is the Ibis Society?

**LEG:** The Ibis Society is proof that you don't know everything about everything, you pretentious freak.

**NOBODY:** All I have to do is know more than Ryan and CANNONBALL in 2020. CANNONBALL let his guard down and let Mike hit him over the head with a crowbar in his own apartment. This isn't the big leagues.

*[We hear a digital notification ding.]*

**NOBODY:** *[Stops typing.]* And there is the email. Let's find out if they believed me or not.

**LEG:** I can't see it from down here. Does it expose you for the fraud that you are? Does it tear your world asunder, leaving you no choice but to revert all of these changes and run away, starting a new life in obscurity as a lumberjack?

**NOBODY:** It is the email that Mike got when he did the second challenge. They bought it. CANNONBALL wants to meet.

**LEG:** Well, the thing I said is foreshadowing, then. You can't keep this up forever.

**NOBODY:** I don't have to keep it up forever. I have to keep it up long enough to fix everything. I don't understand where you're coming from, Leg. If you wanted CANNONBALL to know that I wasn't Mike, why didn't you say something in the video? Why didn't you try to sound an alarm like you did for the first challenge? Why didn't you transform my blood or snot or any of the other stuff you keep threatening to do to stop me?

**LEG:** You do know where I am coming from. I am coming from the ball joint in Stinky's hip. Did you forget? I am not going to explain myself or what I do to your snot. You are not worth an explanation. You are Nobody.

**NOBODY:** Don't forget that. ...Let's see. *[Reading, scanning.]* "Do you know history... Charles Thibbideau... take the bread out of my mouth..." Yep. Uh, "Let's get coffee..." There's the fake scoreboard again. "Skip the recorder. Tuesday 5:30pm. The Pantry. CANNONBALL." That's it. That's the email. He wants me to meet him at The Pantry in three days.

**LEG:** Maybe I'll tell him what is going on Tuesday at The Pantry over croissants.

**NOBODY:** I'm not going to actually meet him this time. I will seek out CANNONBALL on my own terms. This time is going to be different. Alright. *[Mikey voice while typing.]* "Hello, CANNONBALL. Interesting to hear from a fellow player. Uh— I will not meet you at The Pantry. Uh— Too crowded, too close to home. I need some time to prepare for what's next. I will contact you when it is finally time for us to meet. It might not be until I can secure a prominent position on the scoreboard. I will reach out when more challenges have been completed. Do not initiate contact again. I will contact you. —Mike" *[Stops typing.]*

**LEG:** I don't think that he is going to like that.

**NOBODY:** Maybe not. But CANNONBALL is playing my game now. There is no need for me to expose myself for no reason.

*[We hear a knock on the door.]*

**LEG:** That could be CANNONBALL right now. He could be here to kill you. I will not help you flee from him, you ratbag.

**NOBODY:** You are all bark and no bite, Leg. That is not CANNONBALL. That's the pig. The third challenge is starting. It should be fairly straightforward to get this half of the challenge out of the way.

**LEG:** I have a tremendous amount of bite force. My mechanical teeth rival an alligator in terms of strength. I thought you would notice by now. I bite you every hour on the hour so you know what time it is.

**NOBODY:** That's what that is? I thought that I was experiencing a neurological issue.

**LEG:** You probably are, but unrelated to the biting.

**NOBODY:** I do not need to know what time it is every hour on the hour. So unless those teeth can pierce [*Opens the door.*] a pig's jugular vein, then cancel the goddamn—

**ROGER** [*warmly*]: Hey, there, neighbor! You're Mike, right?

**NOBODY** [*shifting vocal registers*]: No— Uh— Y-Yes, I am, uh— [*Mikey voice.*] Can I help you? How do you know my name?

**ROGER:** I'm Roger; I live down the hall. It's— It's nice to meet you, Mike. Mike Walters, right?

**NOBODY:** Yeah, uh— Nice to meet you, Roger. How do you know my name?

**ROGER:** Sorry, it's, uh... really funny. I had to get your number the other night from the super. Um... because of the noise.

**NOBODY:** Oh. That was you. Uh... Yeah, that was an interesting night.

**ROGER:** *Yeah.* Real sorry about that. I honestly hate to make a fuss and ruin other people's good times. Or bad times, for that matter. But, uh... I had finally fallen asleep, and I could hear you *all* the way down the hall, so... I called before someone *not-so-nice* got a chance to complain to the landlord aboutcha.

**NOBODY:** Yeah. Sorry about that, I was— I was hanging a painting—

**ROGER:** You sure do yell a lot for someone who hangs paintings alone in their apartment late at night. But, don't worry about it. I was more concerned that someone else would try to get involved. Your pig came in the mail, by the way.

**NOBODY:** Uh— My pig came in the mail?

**ROGER:** You ordered a pig, I presume, or someone sent you a pig? Because there was one wandering the halls this afternoon with instructions to "deliver it to Mike Walters." Which is you, hombre.

**NOBODY:** I-I didn't "order" a pig to my apartment. Uh, I suspected that one might be arriving, but I d— I didn't intend for i— Hey. Look. The reason that there was a pig in the hallway is complicated, and you don't really need to get dragged into it. So, uh. Where's the pig now? I will go get it.

**ROGER:** Well. I couldn't have it wandering the hallway. It could scare the other residents. Heh! There I go again, lookin' out for you without even meaning to. It's just back at my place around the corner here. Come on. I'll make us some coffee like a good neighbor should, show you my place, you can get your pig. It'll be a nice diversion, won't it?

**NOBODY:** Y-Y-Yeah, I-I'll go with you and get the pig. Uh— I-I can't stay, *[Closes and locks the door.]* I-I'm busy with... something.

*[They start to walk. The scene fades out while Roger is talking.]*

**ROGER:** Yeah, no worries, no worries. So glad to meet another neighbor. I'm kind of a social butterfly, and I just moved in. And, well, I don't know anyone at all, and honestly most people around here are pretty standoffish. It's got this New York City vibe with way less to do in town. So, it means you gotta make some friends, right? At least that's the way I see it...

*[Scene transition.]*

*[We hear coffee brewing and a pig making quiet, contented sounds in Roger's apartment.]*

**ROGER:** *[Continuing a story.]* Right, so I've only lived here for a couple of months, and I only plan to stay for a few more weeks. I feel very... in-between things in life at the moment, you know? You know what that feels like? I don't know... I don't know what I wanna do, I just know that I need to do something, right? I've got a degree in advertising, but I'd honestly rather die than use that for anything. But I've got to do something. Something, anything, I'm losin' my mind here. But it all got me thinking: back in the '80s, my dad used to work at the facility out west called Oldbrush Valley Energy and Resources—O.V.E.R. You ever heard of it? O.V.E.R.?

**NOBODY:** N-No. Uh... y— uh, yeah— I mean, m-maybe? ...Yeah, I guess so. Uh, like... that's the place where all of those conspiracy theorists go 'cause they think that the entrance to the Hollow Earth is there, right? They think it's being protected by the government for some reason?

**ROGER:** That's the place! My dad always called it "Area 52" when I was a kid. *[Laughs.]* Very secretive! But I mean of course they are, they're a government agency. But I don't think that it's, like, guarding the Hollow Earth or anything like that. Heh! Still. Whatever reason they have for

building a facility out there, they are definitely out there for some reason. Which is super exciting, in my opinion. So, I don't have anywhere else to be, so I figured, "Hey! I'll apply to work there and name-drop my dad. In the interview!" And guess what? I got the job! In a few weeks time, I will officially be a "Tier One O-V-E-R Patrol Officer"... whatever that means. It had to be Dad's name that got me the job, though. Right? It's not like I had any qualifications to work at a job like that. I'm surprised they considered me at all.

**NOBODY:** That... is... super interesting, Roger. Uh, what did your dad do out there in the— you said the '80s?

**ROGER:** Something similar? I think... I don't know for sure. He was always really cagey about it. I think he wasn't allowed to talk about anything? Even the small stuff? 'Cause, like, the small stuff could be important, too, I guess. Or at least that's what O.V.E.R. thought? He didn't do anything flashy, though. He just... worked there. *[Brief chuckle.]* But I could tell that he'd seen some shit in his day. It— I don't know how to describe it, it was... a— a look. It's wild to think about, isn't it? The government could be doing... anything, or in any number of other places doing any number of things, and we would never know about it! I think that's why there's all those conspiracy theorists out there, monitoring the place 24/7. *Something* is out there, even if it isn't the Hollow Earth.

**NOBODY:** Y-Yeah... I guess, but that— that's sort of a— a Fox Mulder way of thinking about things, right? Like, the government isn't famously transparent and trustworthy. But, honestly, I think the truth is usually fairly mundane. You know, building weapons; uh, doing war crimes; uh, that kind of thing. Uh—! No judgement for going to work there, that's just what governments do. They get propagandistic value from everyone thinking that there's an entrance to the Hollow Earth or aliens or time travel on a secret government base, uh... so they let that perpetuate, because it makes them look powerful and competent even when they're not.

**ROGER:** I dunno, man! If it was nothin', I— I don't think my dad would've been so strange about it. He wouldn't even tell me and Mom what he saw. I was just a kid, though, so maybe that's why he never told me? I don't know... So, what do you do for work, Mike? Do you go by Mike? Michael? Mikey?

**NOBODY:** *[Voice briefly drops in pitch.]* I am, uh... Uh— Mikey's fine. Uh. I-I work at a shitty restaurant, and I hate working there, and I hate everyone that works there, and they hate me. So, that's that.

**ROGER:** That's their loss, then, Mike. You seem like an alright guy! So is that why you had a pig show up in the hallway today? You acquired it for the restaurant? *[Joking.]* Are you makin' some fresh pulled pork sandwiches?

**NOBODY:** *[Brief laugh.]* No, nononono. Uh, nothing like that. Uh— The restaurant is just this run-of-the-mill burger joint. Two stars on Yelp. Uh— I didn't "order" the pig per se. I-I mean, I— I knew that it was— it was coming, but it was... i-it was— it was a prank. I've got this friend that

pulls pranks on me. Uh, her name is, uh, Anne. And she's always up to this bizarre stuff. Uh, this is her idea of a joke. Uh, she is difficult to predict sometimes... She's a wildcard, and when she does stuff like this, uh, I guess I'm along for the ride? It's definitely a story to tell.

**ROGER:** *[Brief snicker.]* It sure is! But, hey, Mike. If you hate your job so much, I mean... I could put in a good word for you at O.V.E.R. It— I mean, it's not like I have any... pull there myself, but saying my dad's name seems to get me preferred treatment of some kind. Might as well use it for some good.

**NOBODY:** Oh. R-Roger, I— I've known you for all of 15 minutes, I couldn't ask you to do that.

**ROGER:** Just a thought. I know I only met you today, *but* it's not like I'm going to know *anyone* once I get out there. Anyone that worked with my dad is long gone. I mean, it was 40 years ago. And I don't know what the other "Patrol Officers" are gonna be like. What kind of guy takes a job wandering around the mountains all day every day? Loners, that's who.

**NOBODY:** Well, yeah, but you clearly make friends easily. You're gonna be fine. Uh, but, uh... Y-Yeah, it's— it's been nice meeting you, Roger. Uh, I told you I couldn't stay long. I was *super* busy when you knocked on my door. Uh, this was just a— a break for me, really. So I should take the— the pig and go, if you don't mind. Uh, especially now since I have to figure out what to do with the pig. So, uh, yeah. I'm just gonna head out—

**ROGER** *[flatly, humorlessly]:* We are not done here, Mike Walters.

**NOBODY:** Oh— What—? Uh, excuse me?

**ROGER:** I wasn't born yesterday. Something is happening. I— I read the note.

**NOBODY:** You read what note?

**ROGER:** "Part one: Kill it. It's just a pig. Video. Signed, W.BG."

**NOBODY:** Uh— That was— U-Uh— There was a note? Uh— Like— Where, like on the pig?

**ROGER:** Cut the shit, Mike. What's with the pig? What is "W.BG"? *Who* is "W.BG"? What are you getting yourself involved with?

**NOBODY:** *[Voice starts lowering in pitch.]* Y-You seem like a decent guy, Roger. Uh, but that's my private business, and it has nothing to do with you. So, thank you for finding the pig... uh, but I'm going to be going.

**ROGER:** I can tell that you're a part of something. This thing that is going on? O.V.E.R., W.BG, you? The mysteries? They're all connected. You're all part of the same schema, the same game. That's it, right?

**NOBODY:** *[Brief scoff.]* You are starting to sound like the Hollow Earth people, Roger.

**ROGER:** You're sweating.

**NOBODY:** *[Drops Mikey voice.]* You have been kind to me, so I will be honest with you. Under no circumstances do you want to involve yourself with what I am doing. You read the note. Killing the pig is only "part one." I know what "part two" is, and you do not want to be around for that.

**ROGER:** You're wrong about that, Mike. I do wanna be involved. I heard you, you know? I heard the yellin'. I could hear it through the door. **[NOBODY:** Through the door?] You're in the middle of... *something*. You're makin' noise, you're drawing attention to yourself. It's like I— I heard you exactly when I was supposed to. Almost as if the universe was calling out to me. And then the pig showed up in the hallway with your name on it! Mike Walters! I am gonna get to the bottom of this. You know things that I don't, so you are going to start *explaining*. You're gonna tell me everything you know. And, by the end of it, you're gonna tell me how I can get my father back.

*[Closing theme starts playing.]*

**CREDITS:** This has been WOE.BEGONE. The voice of Roger was Devin Steffens. Check out his podcast *Dead West* at [deadwestpod.com](http://deadwestpod.com) or the usual places. Additional voices provided by Michelle Kan and Pine Gonzalez. Thanks for playing.

*[Closing theme plays out.]*

*[The Truth Can Sound Contrived plays.]*

*Simple math*

*It's a simple test*

*They'll cut the leg from under you*

*You were using it to rest*

*Terrified*

*Bloodshot eyes*

*Shot in the back, beat in the head*

*One too many times*

*Until you realize*

*The machinations of life*

*Reality's a joke*

*The truth can sound contrived*

*Sometimes*

*I hope*

*That you are comfortable  
And i hope  
I can learn to get comfortable  
Way too many nights  
Laying on my side while i hope  
I can learn to get comfortable*

*Too abstract  
To mark on a map  
You'll wander so incessantly  
And not know if it means anything  
Mollified  
Internal cries  
The phantom pain of losing everything  
When you haven't yet lost anything*

*Dig deep and throw  
The excess from the pit  
I promise you the rest of us  
Are all expecting it  
Dig deep and throw  
The excess from the pit  
Everyone displaces dirt  
The first to dig was scared at first  
And everyone believes it's them and them alone  
Digging out a hole to make it home*

*[END Episode 202.]*