

EPISODE 83: Ride

[INTRO THEME PLAYS.]

[The squeaking of saloon doors opening, the clacking of pool balls, glasses clinking, barstools scooting, and faint blues rock music playing.]

Mikey: You think that we could get uh, saloon doors for the Base?

Mike: Mikey, what?

Mikey: I don't know they just—they swing open and it— [Splutters] it's cool...

Mike: I don't live there with you. [Laughs] Anne's gonna say no.

Mikey: Look at Mr. Pessimist over here.

Mike: Okay, then tell Anne that you're going to install saloon doors in her house and let me know how that works out. [Pause] Let's just sit down, okay?

Mikey: Yeah, maybe I can ask him about what saloon doors to get.

Mike: Please don't do that.

[The sound of glass clattering and barstools scooting as Mike and Mikey sit down.]

Mike: Barkeep.

August: [Distracted] Yeah, what can I get you gentlemen?

Mikey: Uh hey, August.

August: Oh... you two. Mike and Mikey. [Pause.] And I suppose you're looking for Michael. I had a sneaking suspicion he ran off somewhere.

Mike: Yeah, we *are* looking for Michael. Do you know where he is?

August: *I* don't. But I think if I tell you what he told me, *you* will. I'm thiiiiis close to figurin' it out, I just need a little extra push. Gimme a moment and I'll get us some quiet and rustle you fellas up a couple drinks while I'm at it. Double whiskey neat, water back? That's Michael's usual.

Mikey: Yeah, sure.

Mike: Works for me.

August: Coming right up. [Calling out in the distance] Hey, Bill. I'm gonna need ya to skeedaddle, alright? I got important business with these gentlemen. You understand? See ya tomorrow. Take care now.

[The sounds of a barstool scooching out and the saloon doors opening as Bill leaves.]

August: Welp, that's everyone. Those two playin' pool back there won't bother us. I don't even know if they know we sell drinks here. They're here for the pool tables. And here you are: two double whiskeys, water back. You caught me at a good time. Not a lot of folks looking for a drink on a lazy Monday afternoon. You fellas got questions for me or do ya just want me to launch into the story? It's a ramblin' one. Michael is quite the adventurer, I tell ya.

Mike: I do have some questions, if you don't mind.

August: Shoot.

Mike: Okay so, my understanding is that the day we showed up and got in a shootout with the Flinchites was the first time that you ever met Michael. Is this correct?

August: Yes sir.

Mike: And have you seen Michael since that day?

August: Uh, I'm s'posed to say "no" to that. [Quietly] But Michael's in hot water, ain't he? Might be too late to cover his ass.

Mike: We believe that is the case, yes.

August: [Apprehensively]...He ain't dead, is he?

Mikey: No, no, no, we don't think so. We think he's been captured by someone.

August: [Sighs in relief] Guess you wouldn't be lookin' for 'im if he was dead. [Sighs] That man worries me.

Mike: [Laughs weakly] You and me both, August. How many times have you spoken to him since that day?

August: You kiddin' me? Michael's been in this here bar every day since those Flinchites shot up the Sidewinder. At first he said it was 'cause he wanted to make sure that it went back to business as usual 'round here, but he quit even pretendin' after a few days. He was here for the company. And I don't mean Bill the regular.

[Saloon doors squeak.]

Mikey: So, he'd sit here and talk with you? In the bar?

August: For hours. We'd play pool if it was a slow night. That fella can do anything he sets his mind to, but he cannot hit a pool ball to save his life. [Laughs fondly] Speakin' of, looks like our friends back there are headin' out, too.

Mike: When Michael was here did he ever talk about... well, okay how do I ask without telling you—

August: [Listing] About the Base? The Flinchites? Mustardseed? Latvia? Edgar? [Mike: [Sighs] [Under his breath] Yep.] Boris? The compound? Bruno? Oldbrush Valley? Alaska? [Brief pause] Woe-Be-Gone?

Mikey: Ugh, Michael...

August: Is that what you're askin' about? That's just what I remember off the top of my head.

Mike: Yeah, that's what I mean.

August: Couldn't get 'im to *stop* talkin'. Like he got a huge weight on his shoulders he needed help liftin' off. Heh. He'd do this thing where he'd finish one glass of whiskey and act like he was all drunk and loosened up. Swayin' and slouchin' and talkin' too loud and talkin' with his hands and all that. Now, I'm a damn bartender and Michael ain't no actor. I knew he weren't as drunk as he acted. He was lookin' for an excuse to spill the beans. Y'all got me out of that gunfight, so I knew the most important detail. Time travel. Once that cat's out of the bag, it don't make much sense to keep everything secret. But Michael filled in the lion's share of the details. Very little left up to the imagination.

Mikey: No kidding. That was a pretty comprehensive list of our history.

August: He started to get in a bad way here a little while ago. Got actually drunk at the bar, not just pretend drunk. I could see in his eye's somethin' happened. He stayed past closin' and I didn't have the heart to kick him out, so I gave him a ride to my place on my motorcycle and he slept there that night. Didn't trust him holdin' onto me so I had to break out the sidecar for him. [Laughs softly] Poor fella. [Sighs] If what he told me ain't a tall tale, that breaks my heart. Y'all were there, he said. Did he really—?

Mike: Yeah, yes. Yes, he did, and that was the same night that he told me that his Edgar was dead. I assume that he told you, as well?

August: That he did. My condolences. I'da been worse than that, if it was me. I ended up takin' the day off work the next day and takin' him out to my folks' place and teaching him how to ride. Where did he tell ya he was those couple days when he was here?

Mike: That's the thing about time travel. He didn't have to make an excuse he just went back to where he left. I figured out that he was traveling but not to where, and he was keeping the whole thing a secret.

August: Welp, glad I could help you solve at least one of your mysteries. I seen him every night up until a couple days ago. I was worried, especially after what he said, but I didn't know how to get ahold of anyone. He kept saying he was "turnin' himself in." [impersonating Michael] "Keep the drinks comin' Sly. I'm turnin' myself in tomorrow. Sure, I can play pool with ya after closin', I don't go nowhere to be, Sly. I'm turnin' myself in. I'm gettin' Hesburger on the way—

[Mikey and Michael whisper to each other while August continues on.]

Mikey: Does he mean...

Mike: [Exasperated] Yeah.

—and then I'm turnin' myself in and that's how we're gonna find Mustardseed." [impression ends] Stuff like that ya know. Beats me what a "Hesburger" is, but I figured y'all would know. I reckon he didn't mean he was turning himself in to the police. Sounded like he was being vague on purpose so I wouldn't try to talk him out of it. And there was no stopping him. He had that time travel thing so he could blink outta here faster than I could tell him to hold his horses.

Mikey [Exasperated]: Michael, you fucking idiot. You wouldn't.

August: Wouldn't what?

Mikey: Hesburger is a fast-food restaurant on the way to the Flinchite compound in Latvia. He traded himself in, presumably after filling up on Latvian cheeseburgers. [Sighs] I bet Ty told him that he could get Mustardseed for him.

Mike: Hesburger is actually a Finnish fast-food restaurant, Mikey.

Mikey: I know that, but this particular Hesburger was located in Latvia. So those are Latvian cheeseburgers.

Mike: No, that doesn't make sense, idiot. You wouldn't call sushi American food because you ate it in America, would you?

Mikey: You know what? Maybe I would.

Mike: If you mean that you would to win a stupid argument, then yeah I agree.

August: Gentlemen, I am losing my patience! Michael wouldn't hand himself over to the Flinchites like that... would he?

Mike: Of course, he would and of course, he *did*. He wanted to sacrifice himself for us, so he took off in the middle of the night without telling us and of course the Flinchites have the

ability to keep us from correcting it because their power is so much more advanced than ours. [Sighs] I thought this was where this was all going but I didn't want to be the one to speak it into existence because it is going to be next to impossible to get Michael out of that compound.

Mikey: That's not an understatement either. I escaped but I saw an opening, and made a break for it, and you guys were there waiting for me. If Michael *wants* to be in the compound, and that's what it sounds like, then I don't see how we can ever get him out.

Mike: If he's in the compound that explains why Boris said that Michael was talking about going quote "back to the forest". He could have been speaking figuratively since the forest is beside the compound.

Mikey: And English *is* Boris's second language. He might not of picked up on it.

Mike: Fourth, actually. Ukrainian, Russian, Latvian, English. French is his fifth language.

Mikey: Huh. You know, I never took him for the type—

August: [Clearing his throat] So it really *was* the compound, huh?

Mike: I don't see any other possibility. He thinks that he can use Ty to find Mustardseed. The Flinchite Compound is more equipped than we are.

August: Well Ty better hope he finds Mustardseed before I do. Y'all've seen that I'm pretty handy with a shotgun when I need to be.

Mikey: August, have you been looking for Mustardseed?

August: Nah, just been thinkin' on it. Michael's sure it ain't this Ty character?

Mikey: Apparently he's sure enough to ask Ty to get rid of Mustard seed for him.

Mike: I can see why Michael ruled him out. Ty's got this odd capitalistic transactional code of honor. I don't think he'd let Michael turn himself in and actually give him nothing in return. That feels like it would cross a line for Ty, even if [humorless laugh] you know, uh torturing Michael doesn't.

August: What are they doin' to him in there?

Mikey: You don't want to know that.

August: Like hell I don't!

Mike: August, you actually don't.

August: Are they doin' the same shit as they did to the Mikeys that Michael had to kill?

Mike: He told you about that?

August: [Sighs] I'll level with you boys... Mustardseed has been sending me messages, too. I deleted them all after the first one. I know what they're tryin' to do and I ain't interested. But that first one... was a doozy. It's uh... I still have it. Do you wanna hear it?

Mikey: No.

Mike: Yes, we do Mikey. We should hear it.

Mikey: [Shakey] Listen to it if you want to that's your choice. If it's a Mikey then I'm um... I'm gonna go get some fresh air. So, call for me when you're done listening, okay?

Mike: Alright, Mikey. I do need to listen to this. I'll see you in a few minutes.

Mikey: Yeah...

[Mikey gets up and the saloon doors squeak again.]

August: Alright, here goes.

[The recording of Michael and ?Mikey is slightly distorted as it plays out of August's phone speaker.]

Michael: [Viciously] What did you do to Edgar, you goddamn Flinchite spy!?

?Mikey: [Voice trembling] Whatever they told me to.

Michael: And *what* was that?

?Mikey: [Stuttering] Medical experiments. They'd fry his brain with consolidation over and over again and they made me report everything that changed.

Michael: [Growling] And why are you here?

?Mikey: They kicked me out. I kept trying to break the one-way mirror. According to Ty, I broke my hand—I almost made it through, I almost saved him. I—I broke the glass. T—they reset everything. Edgar saw me. I know he did.

Michael: Kicked you out, my ass. You're a *spy*.

?Mikey: [Breathing hard] I'm not. I'm *not*. I swear. They have a million Mikeys in there. They didn't need me anymore. *Please*, Michael. [Whimpers] Untie me. I'm—I'm not here to spy on you. I want to help. [Struggling] Where are you taking me?

Michael: I'm draggin' you into the kitchen, so you'll bleed out on the tile and not the carpet. I learned my lesson about that already. Mike's gonna be back in an hour and not much of the blood transports with the body.

?Mikey: You don't have to do this, Michael.

Michael: I do very much do have to. Tell the other 3 Mikeys that I'm sorry when you get there.

?Mikey: Other—other 3 Mikeys? That escaped?

Michael: [Softly] I'm sorry, Mikey. Don't hang on, please.

[Michael stabs Mikey. Mikey groans and struggles for a moment before everything becomes quiet.]

[A distorted recording of August's voice from episode 73 plays: "ROT IN HELL FLINCHITES! TELL 'EM AUGUST BAXTER SENT YA!"]

August: And that's the end of it.

Mike: Jeez, did you tell Michael that you received this?

August: Hell no. That would tear him up.

Mike: Yeah, and then some.

August: I know what they're tryin' to do to him and I'm not playing ball. That's why I deleted the rest before I even heard 'em. [Yelling to Mikey outside.] Mikey, we're done! Come back in.

Mikey: 10-4!

[The saloon doors squeak again as Mikey returns.]

August: Of course, that means this place is bugged.

Mikey: [Faintly] Oh, hey the jukebox is turned off. I got some quarters. [The sound of coins.]

August: We ain't said anything in here that ain't been said before, though. Michael made it sound like it was bugged wherever y'all went. I doubt we're breaking news to Mustardseed if they're listenin'.

Mikey: The apartment and Base are definitely bugged. We've heard recordings from everywhere that we frequent at this point...Mike, was it bad?

Mike: Only if you're not a fan of grisly murders. To sum it all up: August got sent a recording of Michael killing another Mikey from the compound and in the recording Michael says that this is the fourth one that he'd killed, and I feel like I need to lie down but there not time for that.

Mikey: Sounds like I made the right choice then. The fourth Mikey? Is he counting Alaska Mikey?

Mike: There's no telling. I don't know when any of this happened. It sounded like after I found blood in the carpet. He kept this one perfectly hidden.

Mikey: August, Mustardseed has been sending messages like this to everyone. I wouldn't blame you if they were successful but they're trying to turn you against Michael, and us by proxy.

August: Don't you think I know that? [Sighs] It didn't work. I was just explainin' that I didn't listen to the messages after that one. No one pulls the wool over the eyes of Sylvester August Baxter. *No one.*

Mike: Well, thank you for being such a close confidant to Michael, August. It really paid off you've been a tremendous amount of help. I guess the next step is... breaking him out? Pulling him out of there kicking and screaming, I guess? I'm sure that Michael will check in with you after we get him back.

August: Waitwaitwaitwaitwait. Y'all really think [Laughs] that you're just gonna get a story out of me and then hit the trail? No, no, no, no, no! You misunderstand. I'm part of this now. You're not saving Michael. *We're* saving Michael.

Mikey: That is awfully kind and courageous of you August but—

August: But nothing. That's not a request. I'm comin' along and that's final. Michael [Suddenly sheepish] Michael is... uh... is very important to me. I can't lose him. So, I'm comin'. I'll lead the charge if you want.

Mikey: Mike, Base is already pissed at me that I told Matt that he could join the Base. We can't just let any old stranger—

August: [Adamant] Not an old stranger! *Sylvester. August. Fuckin'. Baxter.* At your service.

Mike: Mikey, if he wants to volunteer, then we could really use the extra hands.

August: He's right, Mikey.

Mikey: Fine. I concede. Look, I'm literally throwing my hands up in concession.

August: You're damn right you concede, pilgrim! Now, I think we've said all we can say here. Let's hit the road. I got a sidecar for the VMAX back in storage somewhere. We can do our talkin' on the road. I got somethin' of a one-man compound of my own, ya know. We'll talk shop on the ride there where we definitely won't be heard and then roll our sleeves up and get to work. How's that sound?

Mikey: I'm in. Let's do it.

Mike: Hell yeah. Hell yeah, August we're doing this!

Mikey: Hell yeah!

August: Hell yeah! Time to haul ass, boys.

[SCENE CHANGE.]

[The sound of metal as August tinkers with the motorcycle.]

Mike: Mikey, have you ever ridden on a motorcycle before?

Mikey: No, I haven't. Have you?

Mike: Once, so I'm calling the spot behind August and you're stuck in the side car, okay?

Mikey: I prefer that, actually.

August: You boys are in for one hell of a ride. Your helmets, gentlemen.

Mike: Oh shit, helmets, duh. Uh, what do I do with my cowboy hat?

August: There's a trunk on the sidecar.

Mike: [Doing a faint Michael impression] Hell yeah, yeehaw. Let's ride.

[SCENE TRANSITION.]

[Outdoor ambiance and the sound of the motorcycle engine.]

[Everyone is shouting over the sound of the motorcycle.]

August: So, I suppose that traditional firepower won't be much good, huh?

Mike: Right, it would take an actual army to storm the Flinchite compound with guns and even then I'm not sure that would work.

August: Bummer. I've got my fair share of hardware. We should still load up while we're at my place. Can't ever be too armed and ready.

Mike: Right. Time travel first, but guns blazing second.

Mikey: I can't hear anything you guys are saying!

Mike: What, Mikey?

Mikey: I SAID I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING THAT YOU— [Frustrated sigh] fuck it.

August: Have you seen this place before? How do we break into it?

Mike: Yeah. No idea. It's guarded. Michael's got a map of it in his journals, I think.

August: Michael keeps a journal? ...Does he talk about me in there?

Mike: I don't read them.

August: Oh, okay. So, this time travel thing y'all have...can you set up some sort of trap? To make sure that if things get western we can start back at square one?

Mike: I think so. They have the same tech as we do but better, so whatever we do we're just going to have to be more clever.

August: Then that's what we'll work on when we get to my place. It's only a couple minutes away now.

Mikey: I wish that I could hear any of this. Stupid sidecar.

August: Is your Base going to help with this?

Mike: We haven't talked about it. Mikey, are we contacting Base?

Mikey: What?

Mike: TELLING? BASE?

Mikey: Base would stop us. We're pissing off the Flinchites. They'd tell us to cut our losses.

August: Just the three of us then. We're gonna make a surgical strike, gentlemen. Get in, nab Big Bear, and get out of there.

Mikey: Did I—did he just call him “Big Bear”?

August: What, Mikey? I can't hear you! Do we have a plan if he don't wanna come quiet?

Mike: Yeah, Michael shoot-on-sight with the Calculator. He doesn't get a say.

August: What about the rest of the Mikeys and Edgars?

Mike: A project for later. Maybe we can bust them out with the practice that we get from this.

August: 10-4. Uhh...we're home... but we got trouble, fellas.

[The motorcycle slows down and conversation returns to normal volume.]

Mikey: [Still yelling] TROUBLE?— uh... trouble?

August: See that truck? That ain't mine and I wasn't expecting company. You think that's a coincidence we got trespassers the same day I pick you two up?

Mike: Are you saying that you think it's the Flinchites?

August: I don't believe in coincidences. Stay behind me. [Yelling] HEY! COME OUT HERE WITH YOUR HANDS UP OR AUGUST BAXTER IS GONNA TURN YA INTO SWISS CHEESE.

[Gun shots and the sound of tires being blown out.]

August: YOU AIN'T GOING ANYWHERE NOW. OUT OF THE TRUCK, HANDS UP.

[The truck door opens and there are several more shots.]

Mike2: August! Jesus. You almost hit me.

August: ...Mike?

Mike2: In the fucking flesh.

Mikey: One of you, Mike?

Mike: Looks like it. You know as much as I do.

August: I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE MIKE, MIKEY, OR MICHAEL. THE GUN ONLY GETS LOWERED WHEN YOU START TALKING.

Mike2: I'M A FAILSAFE! FLINCHITE COMPOUND FAILSAFE! AS IN, WE FAILED AND I SHOWED UP TO MAKE THINGS *SAFE*. Holster your weapon, please and thank you.

Mike: A correction? [Calling out to Mike2] Mike, what happened?

Mike2: We got our gunslinging, tire popping friend here shot dead in cold blood among other things.

August: I—I... died?

Mike2: Sure did. We we're all in the splash zone. Front row tickets. Brave of you to step in, though. I wouldn't have made it back to issue the correction if you hadn't. You're kind of a hero, Sly.

August: You called me Sly...

Mike2: Yeah, combat brings people together like that. We need to restrategize. The plan didn't work *but* I know a lot about the compound now that I didn't going in. And I've got the maps from Michael's journals.

Mikey: So, what went wrong?

Mike: Let's just... go inside and write down some strategies. I'd rather not poison the well with the plans that got Sly killed.

Mikey: Fair enough.

August: Mike, you...you trust this guy? I know Michael didn't trust the Mikeys.

Mike: Tentatively, yes. This is exactly how a correction would look like if one were being issued.

August: Alright, but I'm patting you down before we go in. Only Sly has a gun in Sly's house. Those are the rules.

Mike2: Yeah, that's fine.

[The sound of August patting down Mike2.]

Mike2: Oh, and while I'm at it one more big important thing. The Flinchites held up their end of the bargain. Mustardseed is taken care of.

Mike: Wait, really?

Mike2: Yeah, it's actually kind of scary that they we're actually able to use the technology to get to the bottom of this so fast.

Mikey: Wait, but who was Mustardseed?

Mike2: That's not important right now.

August: Not important, my ass. Who is Mustardseed, pilgrim?

Mike2: Look, we haven't even finished eating *this* can of worms. Let's dig in before we open a whole new can of worms.

Mike: I feel like we've said that before.

August: You don't eat a can of worms, pilgrim. You go fishin' with 'em. [Sighs] Michael would know that. Anyway, you're good to go. Step inside.

[The door opens and closes.]

August: Welcome to home sweet home.

Mikey: That...is a lot of weapons.

August: I live in the middle of the mountains in Montana, Mikey. You're welcome, by the way. The generous August Baxter is hereby loaning the troupe of Mikes any weapons necessary to get the job done.

Mike2: Oh! While we're on the subject of any weapons. Don't. Bring. The. Grenade.

Mike: We brought a grenade?

Mike2: It wasn't even our biggest problem, just an average-sized calamity. It's just too close-quarters in the compound.

August: I'm surprised I even showed you the grenade.

Mike2: You didn't. I read about it in Michael's notes.

August: He wrote about me in his journal?

Mike2: Extremely fondly and at considerable length, yes.

August: Can I... can I see it?

Mike2: *Absolutely* not. We're going to survive the Flinchite raid. So, I need to survive the wrath of Michael after that. He's already going to be furious that we broke him out. He might actually kill me if he knew that I let his buddy Sly see his journal.

August: So, you confirmed that he doesn't want out?

Mike2: A deal is a deal and all that, and he doesn't want to bring negative consequences down on Base or us. Same old self-sacrificial bullshit as always. He said Ty is gonna let him go one day, as if. I'm not gonna hold my breath. Not that it matters. We're breaking him out. Sly, you know how to hogtie a person.

August: I sure do. Why do you ask?

Mike2: Oh, I wasn't asking so much as making an observation. The Mike that corrected *me* noted that you need to hogtie Michael *before* we transport him out of the compound or things get nasty back at the apartment and everything gets ruined all over again.

Mikey: The Mike that corrected *you*?

Mike2: Yes Mikey, the Mike that corrected me. How many times do you think this takes? Were you thinking "two"? And not, for instance... I don't know... 87? To pick a completely arbitrary number.

August: We've done this... 87 times?

Mike2: No, Sly of course we haven't. *This* is attempt number 87. We've only done this 86 times. At about 12 hours between prep and the mission itself that's...

Mike: 43 days.

Mike2: Well, this Mike is obviously a mathlete, so I don't know even know what we're worried about.

Mike: Yes, a state-level mathlete actually, in middle school.

Mike2: August, are you impressed?

August: I mean, kinda. Math's hard.

Mike: So, what is plan number 87?

Mike2: We do a little bit better each time. So, if we can overcome these last few hurdles, I think that this one might be the closer. Clean up some coordinates, run some practice drills. Practice makes perfect. According to the Mike that corrected my team, it took 24 tries before we even thought of giving Sly the Calculator. I think that we've ironed out all the big kinks like that at this point.

August: The time travel thingy? Why would I have it? Y'all are the experts on that. I don't wanna mess anything up. Y'all want me on shotgun duty.

Mike2: Yeah, that is exactly what we thought and that's exactly why we didn't try it until attempt number 25. Turns out that you're natural in getting yourself and the Calculator into the right place at the right time.

Mikey: I don't know about that. He got himself right into the middle of this. Doesn't seem like the right place, right time to me.

Mike2: Uh-huh, and every Mikey that's made that joke at one of these meeting has died. [Pause] I'm—I'm joking. Not that it matters. As long as we do a little bit better every time, at least one of us will make it back to start the process over. Speaking of shotguns: hearing protection. We forgot that the first time. Turns out that firing a shotgun inside is extremely loud.

Mike: Alright then, [Claps hands together] I'm ready. Let's do it.

August: Let's get to work, gang. For Michael.

Mike: For Michael.

Mikey: For Michael.

Mike2: Yeah, for Michael.

August: Let's get you home, Big Bear.

[END THEME PLAYS.]

[End credits.]

This has been WOE.BEGONE. The voice of Sylvester August Baxter was Harlan Guthrie. Listen to Harlan's podcast Malevolent wherever you get your podcasts. Two weeks ago, I asked David Ault to do a cowboy impression. This week I asked Harlan to do a Michael impression because his character was already doing a cowboy impression.

["Panoply" begins playing.]

I thought it wouldn't hurt to try things out
So I started taking stabs at myself
And I'll let you know if the bloodletting quits
Wouldn't it be such a sight to see
A song without some irony?
Sorry, with me
This is as good as it gets

We'll be doing fine

Just over the state line
But we can pretend
That we're farther away
And if our panoply
Decides it's done with you and me
We can make our split
And claim that it's in self-defense

You know, I wouldn't call what I've got "hate"
But I don't ever stay up too late
Pondering semantics that aren't easily solved
But I'm still good as a last resort
(Hey, don't sell your own self short!)
Okay, maybe I'm also good for a self-defeating
Self-serving retort

We'll be doing fine
Just over our state of mind
But we can pretend
That we're farther away
And if our panoply
Wants to be buried with me
We can make our split
And claim that it's in self-

...defense