

## **The Magnus Protocol**

### **Episode 1 "First Shift"**

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**Show-Notes are available at the end of the Transcript.**

**Draft 1.6**

**[MUSIC]**

**ALEXANDER J NEWALL**

**Hi, this is Alexander J Newall,  
founder of Rusty Quill, and co-  
creator of the Magnus Archives. And  
I am here to welcome you to this first  
episode of the Magnus Protocol.  
Maybe you're a brand-new listener  
who has never heard anything we've  
made before. In which case,  
welcome!**

**Although The Magnus Protocol  
follows on from the original Magnus  
Archives, it's absolutely fine to start  
here then go back to earlier episodes  
if it tickles your fancy.**

**You have picked literally the best  
episode to start on. So great work!  
We hope you enjoy it.**

**Alternatively, you might be one of  
those really weird people who listen  
to all of the tragic horror from the  
Magnus Archives and are back for  
more. In which case, welcome, glad  
you're still listening.**

**Either way, thank you for joining us  
as we embark on this together. We  
could not have done it without you,  
the listeners, and the terrifyingly  
organized fan base who pushed our  
kickstarter way beyond anything we  
dared hope for**

**Thanks to them, you can expect  
extra episodes, bonus content,  
events, and more.**

**Speaking of, we will be holding a  
little shin-dig over on  
[twitch.tv/rusty\\_quill](https://twitch.tv/rusty_quill) on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup>  
of January 2024 at 6pm UK time.**

**So make sure to come along and meet the cast, and celebrate the launch with us. We'll be giving more info on upcoming events and other news close to the time. But feel free to join our Patreon and follow our socials if you want to be sure not to miss anything.**

**Anyway that's all for now, apart from saying thank you, one last time, and telling you that it is a privilege and an honour to be horrible in your ears once again.**

**Enjoy.**

**[Intro Theme]**

**ANNOUNCER**

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.**

**Episode One – First Shift**

**[Music]**

**1. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT, RAINING (COMPUTER).**

**A decrepit computer turns on in a dated and dingy shared office in Royal Mint Court. There is the hum and whine of an old PC - the sort of mid-90s oversized, slightly yellowing plastic tower that still has a floppy disk drive. A tinny digital fanfare accompanies its awakening, then the PC settles into the quiet whirr of its fan.**

**There is a slight stutter of digital distortion and then the computer's aged microphone abruptly begins recording. It is eavesdropping on an anemic work party. SAM, LENA and GWEN can be heard quietly talking in another part of the office.**

**ALICE**

**What are you looking forward to the most?**

**TEDDY**

**I mean, occasionally seeing the sun  
could be nice?**

**ALICE**

**Boooo! Your pathetic addiction to  
vitamin D will only make you weak.**

**TEDDY**

**But Alice, my bones! They're ready  
to snap like twiglets!**

**ALICE**

**Listen to me: bones are a lie peddled  
by Big Milk to keep you buying. No  
such thing.**

**TEDDY**

**Right, so what keeps your body  
upright?**

**ALICE**

**(grinning)  
Spite and coffee.**

**TEDDY**

**(*laughing*) Well, I'm afraid we can't  
all subsist entirely on coffee and  
social media drama.**

**ALICE**

**Not with that attitude. I reckon you  
could crack it in another 4 years...**

**TEDDY**

**Another 4 years of you and cracked  
is exactly what I'd be!**

**Small laugh.  
Beat.**

**ALICE**

**I'm gonna miss you Teddy.**

**TEDDY**

**Nah, we'll stay in touch, right?**

**ALICE**

**(unconvincingly)**

**'course. I mean, yeah, if you think you can escape my iconic brand of nonsense by getting a boring, normal job you're going to be sadly disappointed, my friend.**

**TEDDY**

**You know most people would consider civil service a boring, normal job.**

**ALICE**

**Yeah, well, most people don't work here.**

**COLIN**

**(approaching)**

**Ain't that the truth.**

**COLIN shuffles up, a touch worse for drink.**

**ALICE**

**Colin! There's my guy! How's it hanging? Is it an app yet? Do we have a minimalist logo? I assume you've finished all the social features?**

**COLIN**

**Don't you start. I swear I'm going to shove a cable down that prick's throat, pull it out his ministerial anus and floss him to death.**

**ALICE**

**Is that what you mean when you go on about things being “backwards compatible”?**

**TEDDY/COLIN**

**Booo!**

**ALICE**

**Don't boo me! I created you, and I can destroy you!**

**Laughter.**

**COLIN**

**So are we just leaving Sam to the wolves then?**

**ALICE**

**He's a big boy, he can look after himself. Besides, he's going to be working with them.**

**COLIN**

**Sure but you know how Gwen and Lena can be...**

**TEDDY**

**- awful?**

**ALICE**

**He's fine. 'Course it wouldn't have been an issue if we'd just done this at the pub like normal...**

**TEDDY**

**You know Lena.**

**(imitating)**

**"Proper procedure requires any provided food and beverages to be**

consumed on site." Fair play,  
though, Sam's been a good sport.  
God knows you wouldn't have got  
me to a stranger's goodbye party at  
six in the morning.

**ALICE**  
(moving away)

Eurgh. Fine, I'll go rescue him.

**Beat.**

**COLIN**  
So... Insurance?

**TEDDY**  
It's reliable.

**COLIN**  
True. Just let me know if they need  
an IT guy, yeah?

**TEDDY**  
Colin, mate, you know you're never  
getting out of here.

**COLIN**  
Christ, don't say that.

**TEDDY**  
Even if his nibs lets you off the hook,  
which he won't, you couldn't bring  
yourself to just leave. Not 'til you've  
figured out all these fun little errors.

**COLIN**  
Or they finally kill me.

**TEDDY**  
I mean, sure, that too.

**Beat.**

**TEDDY**

**Heads up, looks like they're all coming over.**

**COLIN**

**(morose)**

**Great.**

**ALICE, SAM, LENA and GWEN come over.**

**TEDDY**

**Hey!**

**LENA**

**Enjoying the party?**

**TEDDY**

**Colin was just saying how much of a blast he's having, isn't that right?**

**LENA**

**(sardonic)**

**Oh really.**

**COLIN**

**Uh, sure.**

**TEDDY**

**-and how he'd love to take the afterparty to the pub.**

**ALICE**

**What a great idea, Colin.**

**LENA**

**Nonsense. Sam is the only one who has had any cake so far.**

**GWEN**

**And that was only because you practically forced it down his throat.**



**SAM**

No, no, it was... nice.

**LENA**

People like chocolate cake.

**GWEN**

(sullen)

People *like* being treated like adults...

Beat. Gwen may have overstepped there.

**LENA**

Thank you for you feedback, Gwen. I will take it under advisement. Now I was just telling Sam that he can expect supportive co-workers here at the O.I.A.R..

**ALICE**

Oh yeah, we're a real family. I'm your cool sister, Gwen's your uncool sister, Lena's your emotionally distant mother, Teddy's the uncle that just got another job, and Colin's the family's grumpy IT manager.

**GWEN**

You'll have to forgive Alice, Sam. She's convinced that she's funny.

**SAM**

It's alright, we actually go way back.

**LENA**

Alice recommended Sam for the job.

**GWEN**

Oh? Nepotism, is it?

**ALICE**

**(acidly)**

**I learned from the best.**

**GWEN**

**People are trying to enjoy themselves, Alice. Could you please just turn it off for a moment?**

**TEDDY**

**(gently steering)**

**Soooo! I think we might all be done on cake, so I'm going to call it and suggest anyone who wants to can decamp to the pub, ok?**

**COLIN**

**Plan.**

**LENA**

**If that's the consensus, I will accept it. Although I'm afraid I won't be able to join you at The Steward-**

**ALICE**

**Shame...**

**LENA**

**-but do take Sam along and enjoy yourselves. Just remember it *is* a work night.**

**SAM**

**Oh, er, sure. I'm down.**

**TEDDY**

**Great!**

**LENA**

**Oh, and Teddy?**

**TEDDY**

**Mm?**

**LENA**

**I understand you're leaving us, but that's no excuse for being sloppy. Please ensure you shut down your workstation before you depart.**

**TEDDY**

**Hm? Oh I already d- Oh. That's- uh... Right, hang on, I'll just-**

**Teddy pushes the power button. The recording ends and the internal fans spin down as the computer is shut down.**

## **2. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT, RAINING – (COMPUTER).**

**The computer boots up and the microphone switches on. SAM is sat at his desk, filling out paperwork. ALICE approaches.**

**ALICE**

**Right then. Ready?**

**SAM**

**Hang on, I've still got the last page to fill in. Do I really have to put "Samama Khalid" at the top of every single page?**

**ALICE**

**Yeah, they're pretty big on paperwork around here.**

**SAM**

**There has to be a way to do this online.**

**Beat.**

**SAM CONT.**

**What?**

**ALICE**

**(chuckling)**

**You'll see. Anyway, hurry it up, time to mold you like clay into the perfect government drone for the Office of Incident Assessment and Response.**

**SAM**

**Speaking of, there's this box for a "Response 121" on the form. Do you know what that is?**

**ALICE**

**Oh, you can ignore that. There used to be a separate "Response" department, I think, but now it's just us. Guess they never updated the onboarding.**

**SAM**

**Ah. I already ticked it - is that a problem?**

**ALICE**

**I doubt it since no one actually reads that stuff.**

**Beat.**

**ALICE (CONT.)**

**Right pens down, eyes front, class is in session.**

**SAM**

**Right.**

**Sam puts the paperwork away on the desk.**

**SAM CONT.**

**Lead on, sensei.**

**ALICE**

**So, this cutting-edge device is known as a personal computer, or "PC" for short-**

**SAM**

**Alice, I know you're joking, but how old is this thing? It has a floppy drive.**

**ALICE**

**Patience young one. You've got your login details from Colin, right?**

**SAM**

**Sure.**

**ALICE**

**(faux portentous)**

**Then bestow them unto the device that you may gain its ancient wisdom...**

**SAM**

**Right.**

**Sam types in his login. There's a beep and the computer starts to spin up with very retro fanfare.**

**SAM**

**What-?**

**ALICE**

**(sweetly)**

**Something wrong sweetie?**

**SAM**

**Is this... *Windows 95*?**

**ALICE**

**Of course not - don't be ridiculous!**

**Beat.**

**ALICE**

**(cont.)**

**This is a modified version of Windows NT 4.0, the business-focused predecessor to 95.**

**SAM**

**H-How is that even-? There's no way this is still supported...**

**ALICE**

**I think a good half of Colin's job is just making sure the workstations don't all try to update and instantly brick themselves.**

**SAM**

**But... I mean, why?**

**ALICE**

**See that symbol?**

**Alice double clicks something on the screen.**

**SAM**

**(reading)**

**FR3-d1?**

**ALICE**

**Meet Freddy. The program doesn't really have a proper name. Bespoke software from the mid-nineties, I think. It's the bedrock that the whole system is based on, and it's been at least fifteen years since anyone actually knew how it worked.**

**SAM**

**What does it do?**

**ALICE**

Crashes, mostly. At least it does if you try to update it, breath too loudly or link it to anything developed more recently than the Bronze Age collapse.

**SAM**

So what's it supposed to do, then?

**ALICE**

It searches online databases, newspapers, forums or whatever for incidents, flags them, then passes them through to us for assessment.

**SAM**

What sort of "incidents"?

**Beat.**

**ALICE**

(slightly hesitant)

You'll see.

**SAM**

Right, so this list is...

**ALICE**

Today's case files. Just double click on the top one.

**Sam double-clicks.**

**ALICE**

Ok, so looks like it's an email.

**SAM**

And I just... read it? Is that even legal?

**ALICE**

**Probably. We do work for the government. Sort of.**

**SAM**  
**What about GDPR?**

**ALICE**  
**Look, Sam, I don't know what to tell you. This is the job. I've been doing it for years and there's never been any problems. Maybe ask Lena? - She'd probably know.**

**SAM**  
**Fine. Sorry. Ok, so...**

**He starts reading. Pause.**

**SAM**  
**This is-**

**ALICE**  
**Yeah, they're all like that. At least this one is short, nice easy start for you. So, once you've read it, you get out the binder-**

**She slaps an enormous ring binder on the desk and starts paging through it as she speaks.**

**ALICE CONT.**  
**And look up whatever's mentioned most in the case. Looking at this one we go to "D" and... Sam, eyes on me now. We go to "D" and, right, would you say this is more "Dolls comma watching" or "Dolls comma human skin".**

**SAM**  
**(a bit shell-shocked)**



I- Uh- I mean- I guess the human skin bit is only implied, so... both?

**ALICE**

Nah you can only pick one, Freddy's dumb as rocks. Right, so, after each entry there's four numbers. That's the DPHW. So, "dolls comma watching" is... 1157. Then you cross reference with the table here, that would be a 2-C, and then you type that into the box here, along with date of incident if there is one and today's date. Which gives us...

Alice's quickly types.

**ALICE CONT.**

CAT2RC1157-12052022-09012024  
and then we hit submit.

Beat.

**ALICE CONT.**

Well go on then.

**SAM**

Oh, right!

Sam double clicks. There's an 8-bit chime.

**ALICE**

Excellent work. We'll make a wage slave of you yet.

**SAM**

Where does it go?

**ALICE**

**If I were a betting woman, I'd say  
some long dead database that no-  
one will ever look at or care about.**

**SAM**  
**So why do it?**

**ALICE**  
**Because that's what they're paying  
us to do.**

**SAM makes an incredulous noise.**

**ALICE**  
**Welcome to civil service.**

**SAM**  
**What the hell sort of job have you  
gotten me Alice?**

**ALICE**  
**One where you get paid to hang out  
with the coolest person left in  
London all night, every night. You're  
welcome by the way.**

**SAM laughs despite himself.**

**ALICE**  
**Now you try the next one.**

**SAM**  
**Right, so...**

**He double-clicks the next case. NORRIS's voice blares from the  
speakers abruptly. They both talk over his monologue.**

**NORRIS**  
**(computer)**  
**To: Darla Winstead**  
**(dwinny@mailpod.com)**

**From: Harriet Winstead  
(hpw332@mailpod.com)**

**Date: May 12 2022.**

**Subject: Re: Re: checking in**

**SAM  
(talking over)  
Alice, what is this?**

**ALICE  
(talking over)  
Hey! You got Norris!**

**SAM  
(talking over)  
What?**

**ALICE  
(talking over)  
It's... Hang on, you can pause it by  
hitting space.**

**She hits spacebar and NORRIS abruptly stops speaking.**

**ALICE  
Sorry, didn't think you'd get one of  
those so soon.**

**SAM  
One of what? Why is it reading it  
out?**

**ALICE  
Started about a year ago. Best Colin  
can figure, something broke and  
whichever genius made the program**

ran some redundancy through the sound card.

**SAM**

Right...

**ALICE**

Yeah.

Lena won't authorize Colin's proposed solution: Smashing it with a hammer. All it really means to you is that it'll read out maybe one in twenty cases and won't let you do the next one until it finishes.

**SAM**

But- No hang on, that doesn't make any sense. If Freddy's a search program from the nineties, why would it have text-to-speech?

**ALICE**

Great question. I asked Colin the same thing a while back.

**SAM**

And what did he say?

**ALICE**

Nothing. He just snapped a pencil in half and walked away... Look Sam, it's a completely knackered system that's old as balls. Dangly, grey-haired old man balls. And until it finally collapses forever, we just have to put up and shut up.

**SAM**

So how do we stop it reading them out?

**ALICE**

No idea. So now, when we come across a chatty case, we generally take that as a cue to get coffee. Then we come back and read it through once the computer's done waffling.

**SAM**

Right. Okay. And who's Norris?

**ALICE**

So, there are three voices it reads them in. I call them Norris, Chester and Augustus, although Gwen doesn't like it. This one here is Norris, he and Chester are the most common.

**SAM**

But it's okay if I do hear it? Like, I'm just thinking I can finish up this onboarding here while it's running.

**ALICE**

Knock yourself out. Just grab me in the break room when it's done. We've got a load more to get through.

**SAM**

Gotcha.

Sam hits spacebar again.

### **3. CYBERSPACE**

**NORRIS**

**(computer)**

**To: Darla Winstead  
([dwinny@mailpod.com](mailto:dwinny@mailpod.com))**

**From: Harriet Winstead  
([hpw332@mailpod.com](mailto:hpw332@mailpod.com))**

**Date: May 12 2022.**

**Subject: Re: Re: checking in**

**I'm so sorry. I should have listened. I just couldn't face the thought of the rest of my life never hearing him again, I had to try. It wasn't a scam, not like you said.**

**He sounded different when he called. He was all eager with an off-putting sort of excitement, not like our earlier face-to-face consultations. He just gave me an address and told me to be there that night: Grantham Cemetery. I started to wonder if this was all just another messed-up sales pitch. Some preachy lesson about acceptance and letting go before asking for more cash. But I had to know, so I went to the cemetery.**

**I used to love the night. When Arthur couldn't sleep we would just walk for hours under the lampposts, just us and the occasional headlights streaking past. It frightens me now. I look at the shadows, not the lights.**

**They hide whatever it was that took him away from me.**

**The cemetery gates were wide open. I don't know if I would have had it in me to break in. I was so nervous that the smallest obstacle might have sent me running home. But they were open. So in I went. Slowly, towards the grave.**

**It's not a big graveyard, and spacious enough that I could see the figure standing there before I got too close. For a moment my heart skipped and I thought it might be Arthur but no, the shape... The shape was all wrong. Then my step faltered, because I had no idea who else it could be. They were too short for the consultant. Maybe someone else entirely, some innocent mourner? In the middle of the night? I doubted it.**

**I was scared, Darla. I was so scared. I was certain I'd been set up, that I was going to be grabbed. I turned to leave, hoping I could get back to the main road lights but then the figure began to speak from where it was stooped in the dark.**

**It was his voice. It was Arthur's voice. I know you won't believe me but he called my name and I know it was his voice. I froze in place.**

**It came closer, and as the moon escaped the clouds for a moment I**

could make out the discolored skin, the mismatched features. It moved slowly, shuddering towards me with a jerky, ungainly step. Something was pressed against its skin, from the inside.

I said the only thing I could think:

“Arthur? Is that you?”

And that voice I have loved for twenty years answered: “Some of him.”

And then it laughed. Great heaving gasps and wheezes that seemed to leak out as if through a rotten bellows. It laughed and laughed, violently throwing its head back and forth, faster and faster, impossibly fast. So fast I could hear bones snapping.

I ran, and it didn’t chase me.

I don’t know what to do now. I’ve not left the house all day. I keep thinking I see something at the bottom of the garden, but I can’t bring myself to check. Do I call the police? What could I even tell them? I tried calling the company helpline but no one answers. Are you free tonight? I don’t want to stay at the house. I know you warned me that it was too full of memories but this isn’t that. I’m afraid Darla and worse, I think it’s Arthur I’m afraid of. Or what’s left of him. Please get back to me a.s.a.p.



**H**

**4. INT. OIAR main office - NIGHT, RAINING – (COMPUTER).**

**Sam is sitting there, slightly freaked out by what he's just heard. He exhales slowly. Alice comes up behind him and he jumps as she speaks.**

**ALICE**

**You didn't come get me?**

**SAM**

**I... Yeah, sorry. I got distracted. Are they all like that?**

**ALICE**

**What? Upsetting and horrible? Yeah, more or less. That one seemed pretty tame, to be honest.**

**SAM**

**Great. Can't wait for a bad one.**

**ALICE**

**So, ready to score it?**

**SAM**

**Sure, so, uh...**

**He starts leafing through the massive binder.**

**SAM**

**"Zombies" would probably be under Z, right?**

**ALICE**

**Yeah, it's mostly alphabetical.**

**Gwen, who has overheard this, calls over from her desk.**

**GWEN**

**(calling)**

**It's not zombies.**

**ALICE**

I'm sorry, Gwen, I thought Sam was shadowing me today since you're so busy with your own massive backlog.

**GWEN**

(Standing and coming over)

And you're just going to let him put "zombies"? He'll get a misfile on his first case.

**ALICE**

No he won't.

(To Sam)

You basically never get a misfile. No-one's checking this stuff-

Gwen starts leafing through his binder.

**GWEN**

Here. "Reanimation". I'd probably go with "partial" cross linked with "regret", but you could also go with "amalgamative" subsection "semi".

**ALICE**

Zombies would have been fine.

**GWEN**

A) no it wouldn't and B) there's at least three pages of sub-classifications for Zombies. He'd be here for hours.

**ALICE**

And I'm guessing this dedication to detail is why you're so behind?

**GWEN**

**It's why I have the highest accuracy rate in the office.**

**ALICE**

**Which, and it's absolutely crucial you understand this Sam, means exactly nothing.**

**SAM**

**I'm going to put "reanimation", ok?**

**ALICE**

**Fine, whatever. Like I say, none of it matters, so arguing about it is a waste of everybody's time. And none of us have much of that going spare tonight do we Gwen?**

**GWEN**

**Just making sure he's taught properly. If you want to be picking up after him for the whole year, be my guest.**

**ALICE**

**Gwen?**

**GWEN**

**What?**

**ALICE**

**Looks like Lena wants you in her office.**

**Gwen looks over.**

**GWEN**

**Oh joy. Just what I need tonight.**

**She stands and starts heading off.**

**GWEN CONT.**

**(departing)**  
**Don't let her teach you too many bad**  
**habits Sam.**

**SAM**  
**(chuckling)**  
**I'll do my best.**

**ALICE**  
**(goodnatured)**  
**You traitor...**

**5. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE- NIGHT, RAINING – (MANAGER'S SPEAKERPHONE)**

Lena's office is pristine, sterile and has nothing that might indicate its occupant would be brash enough to have a personality. GWEN enters.

**GWEN**

You wanted to see me?

**LENA**

Yes, Gwen. Please sit down.

GWEN does so. It is clear from her tone she knows what to expect and has been here several times before.

**GWEN**

Another "performance review"? Can we make it a bit quicker this time?

**LENA**

You're aware you are significantly behind your caseload?

**GWEN**

Because I'm actually trying to process them correctly. You can have it right or you can have it fast.

**LENA**

Regardless, that's not what I wanted to talk to you about.

**GWEN**

I see. So what else have I done wrong, then?

**LENA**

Last night. At Teddy's leaving party-

**GWEN**

"Party"

**Beat. The room gets a little colder.**

**LENA**

**Last night at Teddy's leaving event  
you were openly disrespectful  
towards me in front of the new hire.  
This is not acceptable.**

**GWEN**

**Seriously? You're calling me in here  
because I backtalked you in front of  
the new guy?**

**LENA**

**I'm well aware you dislike me, Gwen,  
and that's entirely your prerogative  
but I am still your manager and  
undercutting my authority in front of  
a new team member is deeply  
inappropriate.**

**GWEN**

**(Standing)**

**Understood. Now if that's all-**

**LENA**

**It's not. Sit down.**

**Gwen sighs and sits.**

**LENA CONT.**

**If you hate working here so  
completely, you are perfectly within  
your rights to resign. No one is  
forcing you to stay here.**

**GWEN**

**You'd like that, wouldn't you?**

**LENA**

**Honestly, it more or less balances out. You are difficult to manage, but hiring new staff member is always something of a pain.**

**Beat.**

**LENA CONT.**

**What do you actually want, Gwen?**

**GWEN**

**Your job.**

**Beat.**

**LENA**

**You think you could do it better?**

**GWEN**

**I do.**

**LENA**

**Hmmm. I've always known you thought you were slumming it down here, but I never actually considered you might think of this as the first step of a career. Most people simply move on within 12 months or so.**

**GWEN**

**I'm not most people.**

**There is a pause as LENA considers this.**

**LENA**

**No.**

**GWEN**

**No?**

**LENA**

**No. Unfortunately, I know what climbing this particular ladder**



entails, and you don't have what it takes.

**GWEN**  
Surprise, surprise.

**LENA**  
I'm sorry to put it so bluntly, but I really do fear your ambition is misplaced here.

**GWEN**  
(leaving)  
Well, good talk as always. Excellent use of my time. Let me know if you have any other gems of wisdom you want to spit in my face.

**LENA**  
Gwen, that's- [exactly the kind of attitude...]

Gwen is already out the door and slams it behind her.

LENA sighs.

**6. INT. OIAR BREAK ROOM- NIGHT, RAINING – (CCTV).**

COLIN is sat in the corner, grimly drinking a cup of tea. SAM enters and heads over to the coffee machine.

**SAM**  
Hey! Colin, wasn't it?

COLIN grunts an affirmative.

**SAM**  
Hey.

Beat. SAM starts to make his coffee

**SAM**

**So. How's the app going?**

**COLIN**

**(Immediately furious)**

**So that's it, is it? Lena's hired another smart-mouthed prick to just piss around and cause problems?**

**SAM**

**Wow, okay-**

**COLIN**

**I already have to explain to some chinless inbred politician that we're running on something as old as the goddamn Atari Falcon, now I've got some green little smartarse giving me lip for it too? Well you can take your funny little lines and shove them up-**

**SAM**

**Alice told me to say it! Okay? It was Alice. I have literally no context for this. At all.**

**COLIN**

**Oh.**

**SAM**

**I said you seemed kinda scary and I didn't know how to say hi, so she said to ask about the app.**

**COLIN**

**'Course she did. Well, tell Alice it was funny. Yeah.**

**COLIN makes a noise that is probably meant to be a laugh.**

**Awkward beat.**

**COLIN CONT.**

**Scary?**

**SAM**

**A bit, yeah.**

**COLIN**

**Huh.**

**SAM**

**So like, how *is* it going?**

**Beat.**

**COLIN**

**Mate, I've been banging my head against this system for almost two years and I've got nothing beyond a bug list as long my arm.**

**SAM**

**So not great then?**

**COLIN**

**'Bout a year ago I figured out it was written with some kind of propriety German source code, so you know what I did?**

**SAM**

**What?**

**COLIN**

**I learned German. But do you think it helped? At all?**

**SAM**

**Nein?**

**COLIN**

**Nein.**

**SAM**

**Well... At least it'll help if you ever  
go to Germany?**

**Beat.**

**COLIN**

**Why would going to Germany help?**

**SAM**

**I don't- no I meant like, as a Holiday?**

**COLIN**

**A holiday?**

**SAM**

**Yeah, like time off? I hear they have  
good... sausages?**

**COLIN**

**I'm a vegetarian.**

**SAM**

**Right.**

**Awkward Pause. Sam finishes preparing his coffee.**

**SAM CONT.**

**Well, this was great and all but I  
should get back to it.**

**COLIN**

**Sure thing. Good luck mate.**

**SAM starts to leave.**

**COLIN**

**Tell Alice I laughed.**

**SAM**

**...sure.**

**7. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE- NIGHT, RAINING – (COMPUTER).**

**SAM** gently taps on the keyboard occasionally giving a perturbed mutter as he tries to input scores.

**GWEN**  
You met Colin, then?

**SAM**  
Yeah. He's, uh...

**GWEN**  
A grumpy weirdo?

**SAM**  
I don't know. I think he's having a bad night.

**GWEN**  
Then it's a night that's lasted since he got here. I'd ignore him. Alice is the only one he tolerates. God knows why.

**SAM**  
Right.

Pause. Some more typing.

**GWEN**  
So you and Alice go back?

**SAM**  
Yeah, we knew each other at uni.

**GWEN**  
That how she tricked you into working here?

**SAM**

To be fair, she did say the office  
vibes were- uh- “a bit bleak”.

**GWEN**

That’s one way to put it, I guess. So  
how did you end up here? You don’t  
seem like the usual hopeless  
wasters Lena hires.

**SAM**

Heh. Maybe I’m just better at hiding  
it?

**GWEN**

You know how to work a keyboard,  
so you’re already better than most of  
them.

**SAM**

Ha.

Pause. More typing.

**GWEN**

So what is it then?

**SAM**

Hmm?

**GWEN**

The awful, terrible thing that landed  
you here?

**SAM**

Does it have to be awful and terrible?

**GWEN**

Usually.

**SAM**

**Maybe I just like creepy monotonous  
data entry instead of sleeping at  
home?**

**GWEN**

**Maybe.**

**Beat.**

**SAM**

**Honestly? I'm just trying to get back  
on my feet. You?**

**Beat.**

**GWEN**

**None of your business.**

**SAM**

**Now hang on-**

**He hits a key and CHESTER's voice starts to speak from the  
computer.**

**CHESTER**

**(computer)**

**Forums.lostcityurbex.com  
Board index. Spelunking. Sites.  
New topic: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Sunday April 10.  
2022. 3:31pm**

**SAM**

**(speaking over)**

**Eurgh never mind. Got another  
talking one...**

## **8. CYBERSPACE**

**CHESTER**

**(computer)**

**Anyone know what the deal is with the Magnus Institute? Recently moved back to Manchester and I've been keen to keep up my spelunking, so was looking at the lists here of good sites to check out.**

**There's some great ones one there (I have got to check out the old Hippodrome at some point!), but I'm a bit confused about the Magnus Institute. It's listed under "cleared", but there's no pictures or info. I get that it's useful to have a way of saying a place has been explored to death, but usually when that's the case there's at least a few photos that can be found online. Is it worth me checking out? It's only a half hour from me, but I don't want to bother if it's genuinely a solved site and there's nothing there worth seeing.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By BadGrav31 on Sunday April 10 2022 4:51pm**

**Not sure. I don't think ArcherK has updated those lists in a while. Don't remember it, though. I say go for it – if there aren't any pictures about, seems like a good reason to see for yourself.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By ArcherK on Monday April 11 2022 1:27am**



**I do update them when people send me through stuff, but it doesn't happen all that often. I'm mainly just adding stuff to Devan's old lists from when he left. I don't know why he put the Magnus Institute on the Cleared list. Never really thought about it. Maybe it's been a self-fulfilling thing, and no one's been checking it out because it was put on there by accident.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Monday April 11 2022 12:39pm  
Thanks guys – think I might check it out after all!**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By ArcherK on Monday April 11 2022 11:13pm  
Awesome! Look forward to reading the report!**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Wednesday April 20 2022 12:10am  
Just got back. Definitely not cleared. Really weird place. Kinda cool. But. Really weird. Full report tomorrow.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By FlowersUnderground on Friday April 22 2022 4:07pm  
Any news on this? Really keen to see some pictures.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Friday April 22  
2022 6:33pm**

**Sorry, yeah, that's the problem.  
Having a really tough time actually  
uploading any of the pictures I took.  
Plus not been feeling super well.  
Forgot how weirdly paranoid I can  
get after spelunking. But yeah, the  
building's an odd one. Looks like it  
hasn't been touched since the fire,  
and that was, what, 20 years ago?  
Structure itself is in pretty good  
shape – a lot of damage and  
scorching, plus the third floor is  
pretty much gone, but the rest of the  
building is safe enough. There was  
one spot where my foot went  
through the floor, but tbh that was  
mostly me being careless.**

**It's got a really cool vibe, though.  
Like, if you'd told me it was a  
Victorian asylum or something  
before the fire I reckon I'd have  
believed you. Lost of austere old  
furnishings that are still in decent  
nick, and a bunch of offices like little  
cells. Kept getting this sense like  
doors were going to slam shut and  
lock behind me, even though half the  
frames didn't even have actual doors  
left in them.**

**Big surprise was no old papers. I  
mean, they'd be mulch by now,  
obviously, but all the old filing**

**cabinets were still rusting in place, and there was clearly what used to be a massive library or archive or something in the first basement layer. Was really expecting a bunch of paper pulp, but there wasn't really any. Maybe that's why it was listed as "cleared"?**

**Also, I don't know how to describe it really, but there was a bunch of old graffiti. I don't mean tags or anything, I didn't see any tags at all, actually, and it wasn't your standard "YOUR SOUL IS FORFEIT" spooky ruins graffiti, it was like... symbols and stuff and some pretty suspicious stains on some floors. I don't really know occult or whatever, but I dunno. Felt legit in a way most of it doesn't. I know a few of you do graff stuff, so I wouldn't mind picking your brains about it later.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By BadGrav31 on Saturday April 23  
2022 11:28am**

**Quote: I know a few of you do graff stuff...**

**While I can neither confirm nor deny my involvement in the tagging of freight cars near Brighton, I wouldn't mind getting a look at it.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Saturday April 23  
2022 12:17pm**

**The photos from the spelunk seem properly gone, but I did find an old wooden thing with a bunch of similar symbols on. Some kinda empty box, not really sure what for, though. Gonna see if I can get the light right for a decent pic.**

**Edit: No dice, I'm afraid. Must be something up with my phone camera. Really not helping the whole paranoia thing either. Anyone know anything about photographic distortion? Gonna see if I can borrow my dad's SLR tomorrow.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By ArcherK on Saturday April 23  
2022 2:24pm**

**Quote: I did find an old wooden thing...**

**Just to be clear, theft from explorations is not endorsed by this site, so I trust you were simply remembering something you saw, and not admitting to taking souvenirs.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By RedCanary on Saturday April 23  
2022 5:21pm**

**Sorry. I know the rules. I'm going to go put it back, ok? So you can call off the dogs. I don't need anonymous DMs calling me a thief or threatening me. I can dox people too, you know. It's just a hobby, a bit of fun. People don't need to get all bent out of shape about it.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins**  
**By ArcherK on Saturday April 23**  
**2022 6:01pm**  
**Quote: I don't need any more**  
**anonymous DMs...**  
**I don't know where this aggression**  
**is coming from RedCanary, but to be**  
**clear, this forum does not allow for**  
**direct messages to be sent**  
**anonymously, and no one is**  
**threatening to dox anyone. This is**  
**your formal warning.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins**  
**By BadGrav31 on Friday April 29**  
**2022 1:19pm**  
**Still waiting on pics of that graffiti, if**  
**you've got them, RedCanary.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins**  
**By RedCanary on Saturday April 30**  
**2022 2:01am**  
**[Image removed by moderator]**  
**Canaries should stay above ground.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins**  
**By FlowersUnderground on Saturday**  
**April 30 2022 2:27am**  
**Gross! Can we get some Mod action**  
**over here?**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins**  
**By BadGrav31 on Saturday April 30**  
**2022 3:11am**  
**What the hell is that? Are those**  
**eyes? Are you alright?**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By ArcherK on Saturday April 30  
2022 7:33am**

**RedCanary, you have been warned,  
our terms forbid posting explicit  
images including gore. I'm sorry it's  
come to this, but you brought it on  
yourself.**

**[RedCanary has been temporarily  
banned]**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By FlowersUnderground on Saturday  
April 30 2022 12:07pm  
Quote: [RedCanary has been  
temporarily banned]  
Shame. Good job mods.**

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins  
By BadGrav31 on Monday May 09  
2022 7:07pm  
Any more word on this? Is canary  
still banned? Kinda worried about  
them after those pics.**

**[Thread locked by moderator]**

**9. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE– NIGHT, RAINING – (COMPUTER).**

**Sam sits there still, obviously shaken. Gwen stops typing.**

**GWEN**

**Sam? You ok?**

**SAM**

**Uh - yeah.**

**GWEN**

**Look, it doesn't matter to me but if you're going to stick it out here you're going to need a stronger stomach.**

**SAM**

**What? Oh no, I'm fine it just threw me. Have you ever heard of the Magnus Institute?**

**GWEN**

**Like from the case? No. Why?**

**SAM**

**Nothing. Just a bit of a blast from the past, that's all.**

**ALICE approaches.**

**ALICE**

**How we doing over here? Clear your cases yet?**

**SAM**

**Not quite. I had another talker.**

**ALICE**

**I heard. Sounds like you met Chester.**

**GWEN**

**Must you name them?**

**ALICE**

**I don't name them. The universe  
names them. Through me.**

**GWEN**

**It's a bad name.**

**ALICE**

**So's Gwendolyn. Anyway, it's your  
first night, so I'm sure Lena will let  
you catch up tomorrow.**

**GWEN**

**Because Lena is so very  
understanding.**

**SAM**

**No it's fine, I can probably push on.**

**Beat.**

**ALICE**

**Alright. You are looking a little pale  
though, so don't overdo it. We're not  
really monitored with breaks, so if  
you need to step away after a bad  
one, that's fine. Just don't fall too far  
behind or anything.**

**SAM**

**Sure.**

**ALICE**

**Ping me when you're done. I'll have a  
pint waiting.**

**SAM**

**At six thirty in the morning?**

**ALICE**

**I'll send you the address.**



**10. INT. A QUIET PUB- MORNING, LIGHT RAIN – (ALICE'S PHONE).**

**ALICE plonks a beer down in front of SAM.**

**ALICE**

**To the first day of the rest of your nights!**

**SAM**

**(exhausted)**

**Cheers.**

**ALICE**

**Was it really that bad?**

**SAM**

**No worse than you warned me.  
Although setting me up like that with  
the IT guy was-**

**ALICE**

**Hilarious, I know. It's win-win - you  
get a job, I get a fresh victim. It's all  
in your contract.**

**SAM**

**Don't remember signing that  
particular bit of the paperwork.**

**ALICE**

**Gotta read the fine print, kiddo.**

**Sam takes a sip of his drink.**

**SAM**

**I didn't even know pubs opened this  
early.**

**ALICE**

**Six am to nine am. It's mostly for  
market traders who set up in the wee  
hours but there are a few of us**

nightwalkers who frequent. Cosy,  
innit?

**SAM**

It's not bad.

Another tired sip.

**SAM**

Thanks, by the way.

**ALICE**

It's fine, next one's on you though.

**SAM**

No, I mean for the job. I don't know if  
I've actually said it. Thanks for this.

**ALICE**

Don't worry about it. It's not really  
the sort of job I'd expect to be  
thanked for hooking you up with.

**SAM**

It's something to focus on. And I  
need that right now.

**ALICE**

And it's not too awkward working  
with an ex?

**SAM**

Only if she won't stop bullying me.

**ALICE**

Ah. Guess it'll always be awkward  
then..

**SAM** snorts goodnaturedly.

Beat. They drink.

**SAM**

**Alice...**

**ALICE**

**Yeah?**

**SAM**

**These cases...**

**ALICE**

**(Sighing)**

**Yeah.**

**SAM**

**Do you- Is there- What's up with them? You think they're real?**

**Beat. Alice exhales.**

**ALICE**

**I don't see how they could be?  
Mostly I try not to think of them like that, like, things that might or might not have really happened. They're just words on the screen.**

**SAM**

**I've no real idea what the OIAR even is.**

**ALICE**

**You and everyone else. I've checked and there's not really much info on it. My current working theory is that maybe it got set up in the 70s, back when everyone was off their tits on LSD and giving ghost-hunters massive grants to wave crystals in graveyards. I reckon at some point they must have put together a small government department to, like, oversee the spending and monitor**

**this stuff and no-one's noticed it's still going.**

**SAM**

**Makes sense.**

**ALICE**

**As long as you don't pay too much attention.**

**Beat.**

**ALICE CONT.**

**Try not to dwell on it. Besides, it's worth the paycheck, right?**

**SAM**

**Yeah.**

**ALICE**

**And a Civil Service pension...**

**SAM**

**True. I could be cleaning toilets.**

**ALICE**

**You wish. Cleaning toilets actually helps people. Besides, you wouldn't last a night. Stick with scoring horrors until you hit the gym and fix your noodle arms.**

**SAM**

**Noodle arms?**

**ALICE**

**Just a pair of waggling vermicellis. Surprised you can lift that pint.**

**SAM**

**Well thank goodness you helped me get this night job to help with my health.**

**ALICE**  
(singsong)  
What can I say? I'm the patron saint  
of cute wimps.

**SAM raises his glass.**

**SAM**  
To new beginnings.

**ALICE**  
With old friends.

**They clink their glasses together.**

**The recording cuts off abruptly.**

**11. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE. MORNING. RAINING (COMPUTER)**

**The office is quiet as the computer boots up again. Someone is searching through desks. There is a slightly frenzied desperation to it.**

**There is a pause, as the figure spots the activated terminal. They move through the office towards it. The voice reveals it to be COLIN.**

**COLIN**  
(slightly manic)  
You're not as clever as you think you  
are. You think you've got us all  
fooled, that no-one knows you're  
listening, But I do. I know. I'm going  
to find you and then...

**COLIN turns the computer off.**

**[Music]**

**ANNOUNCER**

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**This episode was written by Jonathan Sims and edited with additional material by Alexander J Newall, with vocal edits by Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese, sound scaping by Katharine Seaton, and masting by Catherine Rinella with music by Sam Jones.**

**It featured Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer, Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid, Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard, Ryan Hopevere-Anderson as Colin Becher, Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn, Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley, with additional voices from Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall.**

**The Magnus Protocol is produced by April Sumner, with executive producers Alexander J Newall, Dani McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G. Hamilton, and Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole Perlman, Cetius d'Raven, and Megan Nice.**

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**Thanks for listening.**

## **The Magnus Protocol 1 – First Shift**

**CAT1RBC5257-12052022-09012024**

**Reanimation (Partial) -/- Regret [Email]**

**CAT23RAB2155-10042022-09012024**

**Transformation (eyes) -/- Trespass [chat log]**

**Incident Elements:**

- strong language
- jump scares
- themes of grief, guilt
- implied eye damage
- Thanatophobia Scopophobia
- SFX: loud noises, digital distortions, drinking

**Transcripts: <https://shorturl.at/gzF15>**

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**Directed by Alexander J Newall**

**Written by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall**

**Script Editing by Alexander J Newall and Johnathan Sims**

**Executive Producers April Sumner, Alexander J Newall,  
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**Produced by April Sumner**

**Featuring (in order of appearance)**

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**Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn**

**Ryan Hopevere-Anderson as Colin Becher**

**Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley**

**Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard**

**Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid**



**Alexander J Newall as Norris**  
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**Art by April Sumner**

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