

MAG – 100 – I Guess You Had to be There

Content Warning:

- Spiders
- Mental instability
- Isolation

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Into]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill presents: The Magnus Archives. Episode one hundred. I Guess You Had to be There.

[Tape clicks on.]

MARTIN

Sorry again that the Archivist isn't actually in today, um... but I should be... absolutely fine to take your statement if it, um, if that's okay with you?

LYNNE

Er... yeah.

MARTIN

O—kay. Um. Are you, are you comfortable?

LYNNE

Yeah.

MARTIN

Right. Right.

(Martin clears his throat) Statement of Lynne Hammond, er, recorded 2nd of May 2017, regarding... Uh, what, what's this one about?

LYNNE

I saw a ghost.

MARTIN

O—kay... Regarding a... a ghost. Statement begins.

LYNNE

... Sorry. What happens now?

MARTIN

Oh, er... **(nervous chuckle)** Well, I mean, you, you tell us what happened.

LYNNE

Well, yeah, I did. I saw a ghost.

MARTIN

Er, no, I mean, I mean, you, sort of, tell the story of—

LYNNE

Yeah. The story is: I saw a ghost.

MARTIN

Okay. But what, what was it like? How did it make you, er, feel?

LYNNE

Erm... it was... scary and it made me feel... scared. I'm sorry. Am I doing this wrong?

MARTIN

Ah... no, no, no, it's okay. Erm... Let's, let's try this again. Try this again... When did you first see this ghost?

LYNNE

Oh... god. Erm... about a year ago.

MARTIN

Anything more specific than that?

LYNNE

Er, I mean it's been a while. I can't really remember—

MARTIN

Er... okay, okay. Er, where? Where, where did you see the ghost?

LYNNE

Uh, my old flat.

MARTIN

Okay, okay, great. Which ... where's that?

LYNNE

Clapton.

MARTIN

Clapton. Clapton, okay. And, erm, what, what were you doing when you saw the, when you saw the ghost?

LYNNE

Well, I was asleep.

MARTIN

... You—

LYNNE

Well, I mean—

MARTIN

...saw a ghost when you were asleep?

LYNNE

No, no, obviously I woke up.

MARTIN

Right, right.

LYNNE

And... ghost.

MARTIN

Right. Erm...

LYNNE

Well, first it was, like... a burning smell.

MARTIN

Oh! Okay, okay. So... Did this happen a lot?

LYNNE

Yeah, yeah. A few nights.

MARTIN

Okay, right, so, like you're, you'd wake up in the night, and you'd smell burning, and... what did you do?

LYNNE

Well... I first checked that my house wasn't on fire.

MARTIN

Yeah... And then?

LYNNE

Go back to sleep.

MARTIN

And when it happened again, you would...?

LYNNE

Well, after a few times I realised, my house wasn't on fire, so I'd just go straight back to sleep.

MARTIN

O-kay.

What, what happened the first time you saw the ghost?

LYNNE

I mean... **(sigh)** she was there...

MARTIN

Oh, it's a 'she'. Okay, okay. So describe the ghost to me. It's, it's a woman? A girl? A...

LYNNE

Yeah, yeah. A young woman.

MARTIN

And, and what was she doing?

LYNNE

I mean, she was on fire.

MARTIN

... O—kay.

Erm, so, so she's on fire. So what did you do? You've, you, you, you're waking up in the night, and you're seeing a... a woman is on fire in your flat, so you...?

LYNNE

I mean... what can you do? She wouldn't be there for long.

MARTIN

Okay. Er... so, you didn't call the police or...?

LYNNE

(Snorts) Well, no. I mean, it sounds a bit crazy, doesn't it?

MARTIN

Okay, so.... So what is it that, sort of, made you... erm... **(sighs)** Why are you here?

LYNNE

My friend told me that, y'know, this is where you report stuff like that, so...

MARTIN

O—kay.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

TIM

(Tiredly) Right, so... tape's on. Who are you?

SMITH

Er... I'm, um, I'm Smith.

TIM

Just Smith?

SMITH

Um, John... John Smith. John Smith.

TIM

Your name's John Smith?

SMITH

John Smith.

TIM

(Very softly) Right, okay, good. And... **(sigh)** why are you here, Smith?

SMITH

Er... well, um, I'm, I'm here coz, er... coz I have something to report. I'm, um, I'm worried.

TIM

Shouldn't you be going to the police potentially?

SMITH

Ah, I don't think they can help with this. Um...

TIM

Right. And so... what, what brings you here? What do you need help with?

SMITH

Well, I've, um, I've... er, I've seen some things.

TIM

Right.

SMITH

I think, er, I've, I've heard, er, er, your, your, er, your field... Found a few web pages, er... long time ago.

TIM

And can we talk about why it is specifically that you're here Mr. Smith.

SMITH

Sure, sure. Um, so, so you know Aldwych Tube station?

TIM

I do.

SMITH

Um, it's not, it's not a Tube station any more, obviously, it's abandoned now.

Um, but I was, I was there with, er, an, an associate, er, we'll call him...

Jeremy...

TIM

Right.

Good.

SMITH

And, er... we, we broke into the, the Tube station— **(Tim sighs)** —coz we wanted to, have a, have a look around, coz y’know—

TIM

What drove you to break into a Tube station, Mr. Smith?

SMITH

Well... It’s... It’s part of, part of London’s history, y’know. It’s public transport, it’s interesting.

TIM

And you wanted to see the interesting things?

SMITH

Yeah. I mean, y’know, there’s still trains running though at the platform level but there’s no... there’s no, the station isn’t running any more, it’s been abandoned. So much of the things there are all in original condition. Like they’ve still got the original adverts up and things like that.

TIM

Right... okay.

SMITH

From when they shut it down. coz they’ve never been removed.

TIM

But why specifically there Mr. Smith?

SMITH

Oh, well, I mean, we had, we had some ideas about what, what might be down there. Y’know, it’s not, not just the, not just the, y’know, the public transport stuff and the adverts. We thought... might be something a little bit, a little bit more... I dunno, something, something worth investigating.

Um. We were down there, in the tunnels, and... and then the torches went out. And I think...

(Sniffs) I think they took him.

TIM

“They”?

SMITH

Yeah, them. Them.

TIM

Okay. And who are they?

SMITH

Well, I mean, you, you must know? I mean, like, this is the Magnus Institute. I mean, like, you know this stuff, right? You know, the people who are down in the tunnels, y’know...

TIM

What people are down in the tunnels, Mr. Smith?

SMITH

The Government.

TIM

(Sighs) The Government?

SMITH

Yeah, yeah, the Government.

TIM

Wonderful.

SMITH

They're down... they've got, they've got a holding facility down there. It's a secret holding facility.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

BASIRA

Right. Statement of... Robin Lennox?

ROBIN

Well... my friends call me Rob, well, some of, some of my friends call me Rob. Er... a lot of my friends, I guess some of them call me Robin. You can call me... er, if it makes it easier for you, then, yeah, that's—

BASIRA

May 20th 2017. About a stone circle, I think. That's what you said?

ROBIN

Erm, so it started, it started on, er, a day, when me and, er, me and Jackie, we were walking – Jackie's my dog.

BASIRA

Okay

ROBIN

We were, we were walking down the South Downs, which is what we normally do, er, before we go visit my mother for a, for a roast. Um. We were walking down and, er— Are you much of a dog person?

BASIRA

What day was it?

ROBIN

Um, so, this... when would this have been, now? Now, this was about, about two weeks ago, so what would, would, where are we now? Um, that would put it at, maybe, maybe the 6th, I think.

BASIRA

Okay.

ROBIN

Perhaps... So, so, me and Jackie were walking down, down our usual trail, down the South Downs, and, er, in Lewes, er, which, er, like I said, is where my

mother lives. Um, so were walking, walking along just – er, Jackie just loves to run off the lash and just run, scour around the fields and—

BASIRA

Okay. So you were walking, a couple of weeks ago—

ROBIN

Er, that's right, yes.

BASIRA

—it was about noon—

ROBIN

In the South Downs, yes.

BASIRA

—yes, in the South Downs.

ROBIN

And... off in the distance, something just caught my, something just caught my eye, and I, I have pretty good eyesight. I, er, I had them... had, had an eye test a few days ago—

BASIRA

Yes.

ROBIN

Y’know, one of those free ones that you get, you go along just for the sake of it—

BASIRA

What... What did you see?

ROBIN

Okay, right, so, I, I thought to myself that, that stone circle, that wasn’t there before. At least, I thought it was a cir— a stone circle. So, so, me and Jackie went off to investigate – Jackie’s quite a curious dog. Um, it’s quite a normal thing for Jack, er, Jack Russell terriers to be curious animals—

BASIRA

So you went to investigate that?

ROBIN

Right, yes. So, so, we, we were, we were walking towards this, er, this, what I thought was a stone circle. So, I was, sort of, walking towards it, and I, I really noticed it got, it got quite a lot chillier.

So it was quite a sunny day—

BASIRA

Okay

ROBIN

—erm, I hadn’t, I hadn’t taken a jacket. Y’know when you sort of look out the window and you’re like ‘Today’s a jacket day’—

BASIRA

So you thought... you saw this stone circle?

ROBIN

Oh yes, yeah.

BASIRA

Started walking towards it?

ROBIN

That's right.

BASIRA

And then..?

ROBIN

Okay, so, so, yeah, it's like I said, it was definitely, definitely a bit, definitely a bit chillier. Um, I don't think there was any wind or anything that day, but it, yeah, just sort of, as I was walking towards it, felt, felt the chill. And I felt Jackie, sort of, start to walk closer to me. She started to run off a lot less, as if she sort of – I don't know, maybe I just sort of noticed th— y'know when you sort of get a feeling for what mood a dog's in, um, when you sort of spend a lot of time around them—

BASIRA

So, what about this stone circle?

ROBIN

Oh, the stone circle. So, so, I got closer, and I realised that, although I hadn't seen, I hadn't seen the stone circle before, but the, the, sort of texture of the rocks and, maybe a bit of, er, I dunno, they looked quite old. They, they definitely looked like they had been there for a long time, but that they, but I recall them definitely not being there, 'cause, 'cause, I've taken that route maybe five or six or... **(mumbles)** a few times now. When was the first time I took that route? I think that was with—

BASIRA

So you don't remember seeing this before, but the rocks looked old?

ROBIN

Let me start again.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

MELANIE

Alright then. Statement of... Brian... er... 'Fentinson'?

(Brian stammers significantly throughout. He and Melanie's dialogue often overlaps.)

BRIAN

Oh, um, it's, it's, it's... it's Fin- Finlinson.

MELANIE

Ah, right, sorry. That's the... the handwriting here. So. Statement regarding...

BRIAN

Sp-Spiders. B-B-But, I mean, lot, a lot of spiders!

MELANIE

Ah. Good. A spider one.

BRIAN

What?

MELANIE

Date: May 26th. And, er, go on... ah, let's, let's get this over with.

BRIAN

(Confused) Is... Look, is everything okay?

MELANIE

(Sighs) Yes. Yes, it's, it's fine. Sorry, I just, I just don't hold out a lot of hope for... coherence.

BRIAN

What?

MELANIE

Our Archivist is on leave.

BRIAN

I don't really. Look. I don't really like staying in one place too long.

MELANIE

Fine. Statement begins.

BRIAN

Oh, um, I...

MELANIE

That means get started.

BRIAN

Oh, um, so... The spiders, they're just, they're all over my flat. Hundreds of spiders, and it's freaky, like they just don't act like spiders. And they're leaving, like, web all over, all over my stuff, like on the sofa, and on like, on like, the microwave. Like, that's weird, right? It's not how spiders normally are.

MELANIE

(Interjecting) So... let's, let's, let's, er, take this from a bit earlier. When did this start? When was the first "weird" spider?

BRIAN

A couple months? Nah, maybe a bit longer. Like, it, it started gradually, I guess. Like, y'know, I don't like spiders, and sometimes, sure, there's one in the bathroom, a little web or something, but that's normal. And I just, y'know, asked a friend to deal with it or something. And, and then... Suddenly there were more spiders! Like the corner of every room. And it's freaky 'cause there's, like, different types of spider. And different...

MELANIE

Right.

(As Brian speaks, Melanie interjects with sounds of agreement.)

BRIAN

And they don't normally, like, gather in groups of different species. It's different species of spider, isn't it?

MELANIE

(Stuttering somewhat) I-I-I-I'm not familiar...

BRIAN

I feel like they're watching me!

MELANIE

What do you mean? Are they looking... at you?

BRIAN

They, they, they sort of move when I move. And, like, when I, when I go into a different room, I feel like there's a, there's a flow of spiders to the same room, or— But they don't me touch them, or, or, if I try and whack 'em with a newspaper, they don't let me get near!

MELANIE

Right.

BRIAN

And then... and the weirdest thing was when I asked an exterminator to come and look at the problem. They all disappeared! It's like the first time I'd been, there'd been no spiders in weeks. And then suddenly, as soon as he leaves, they all come back! It's like suddenly they're there again!

MELANIE

(Trying to interrupt) Was... was... was that maybe the first time there had been another... person... looking at, at your flat?

BRIAN

Um. Well, I mean, I guess so? But no, 'cause like—

MELANIE

Trying to pick this apart...

BRIAN

—I haven't, haven't invited someone to come over 'cause there's spiders and webs everywhere. But like— but there's— I mean—

MELANIE

And the webbing...?

BRIAN

—Just think it's the other day, they webbed, they webbed my bedroom door shut. I mean, that's weird, right? Like, enough spiders leave enough web to seal the door. And they trapped me in there with the, all those spiders. That's not normal, right?! That's freaky! That's supernatural!

MELANIE

But—

BRIAN

That's what you guys do, isn't it?

MELANIE

It does sound unusual...

BRIAN

Like, the supernatural, right?

MELANIE

Um... I mean, we're, we're an investigative... unit, but we're...

BRIAN

I just wanted some help! Like, I heard you guys like... I thought if you know about the supernatural, maybe you could help me deal with this!

MELANIE

I... really wish that was the case.

BRIAN

(Distressed) Oh god!

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

LYNNE

Yeah, and then... she... er, reached out to me.

MARTIN

Oh, okay. Okay, right, so she reached out, um, and then... what, what happened? She reached out to you, so what did you do?

LYNNE

Er... Well, not a lot.

MARTIN

Right. Um, and, and then she just... disappeared like normal?

LYNNE

I mean... she burned me a bit.

MARTIN

Oh! Oh wow! Okay, er, like, are you okay? Did you—

LYNNE

Oh.

MARTIN

Was there, was there a lot of damage? Are you— Is there...?

LYNNE

No, no, no. It's... er, just, just a few hairs. My right arm. I mean they, they've grown back.

MARTIN

Like, like a few hairs? So then...

And then she disappeared and you...?

LYNNE

I went back to sleep.

MARTIN

Right. Erm...

And, well, then what happened? So, y'know, y'know, you've been burned by this, mys-mysterious ghost, so what did you do?

LYNNE

I mean, I moved out.

MARTIN

And nothing... nothing since then?

LYNNE

Well, no. I've, I've moved.

MARTIN

Right. Erm, I'm— I don't suppose you've looked into the, the history of the building, or anything?

LYNNE

Why?

MARTIN

O—kay. Erm... Statement ends. I guess. Er... okay, yeah, great, um.

LYNNE

Cool.

MARTIN

Thanks so much for coming. Really appreciate it. Erm, yeah, if you... yeah, if you head out, um, by the way that you came in, there's a woman at the front desk, she'll take your details down...

LYNNE

Great.

MARTIN

...and then we might, y'know, might be in contact about it in the future if we, if we do any follow up, and need, need to talk to you about any specifics again, but... that probably won't...

LYNNE

Oh. You, you got everything then, yeah? That's...

MARTIN

Erm... Yeah. Yeah. Y'know what, yeah. I think, I think that's basically it, y'know.

Th-Thanks so

much for coming in, though. We do appreciate it.

LYNNE

Cool. I know. Cool. ... Er...

MARTIN

S-Sorry, is there, there is something else that, um...?

LYNNE

No, I just, just thought that maybe you would...

MARTIN

Er...

LYNNE

I mean, do I get... a... piece of paper or something? To...

MARTIN

No, no, it's fine. It's, it's, it's fine.

LYNNE

...say that I've done it?

MARTIN

We, we, we keep an internal record.

LYNNE

I mean, do I... Is there, like... an invoice or something? I...

MARTIN

(Confused) In...? An... invoice?

For...?

LYNNE

I mean, just, just, my friend Gav said that, y'know, you guys... you need stories, and you need people to come forward, so...

MARTIN

Yeah, yeah...

LYNNE

And you... kind of...

You pay up people for their ghost stories, so...

MARTIN

Oh! Er, ah... **(Nervous chuckle)** I, I think there might be a bit of a, er, er, miscommunication here—

LYNNE

Oh! Oh, right, okay.

MARTIN

Yeah. Yeah... We don't actually, um... er, we don't pay for, pay for statements.

LYNNE

Right.

MARTIN

This is, this is more, a, er, documenting process than... er, we don't use these for, um, for stuff outside of—

LYNNE

Okay.

MARTIN

—r-r-records. Ahh. I'm really sorry. Er...

LYNNE

Oh. I mean, I mean, that's why I—

Er, no, y'know, okay, but that's fine.

MARTIN

Er...

Um...

Y'know what... Sorry. Um. Let's see what I've got...

[Sounds of coins.]

I mean, I've got... I mean... get a coffee, I...

LYNNE

Y'know what? You're, you're alright.

MARTIN

No, no, please, please? I...

LYNNE

Oh, alright.

MARTIN

Y'know, er...

LYNNE

Thanks, thanks.

MARTIN

...like, like a macchiato, or...

LYNNE

Mm.

MARTIN

I mean, maybe not that much.

LYNNE

Okay, so, um... just the way out...

MARTIN

Yeah.

LYNNE

...the way I came in?

MARTIN

Yeah, please. If that's... yeah.

[Door opens & closes]

(Martin sighs.)

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

TIM

(Wearily) Mr. Smith...

SMITH

(Angry) Look, Jeremy, is somewhere, under London, right now, having... bioweapons tested on him! Yeah! Like, and I know that, 100% certain, coz it's a fact!

TIM

I think you might possibly be looking for a different agency...

SMITH

Well, I, I think so! I came here, because I have uncovered, like, a massive government conspiracy, yeah. And what are you doing? You're like... you're what? Just frowning at me sceptically.

TIM

It's possible you should take that to someone else, Mr. Smith.

SMITH

Well! Well probably! Probably I should do that! Coz that's a fat lot of use you are! Mendacists!

You're rubbish!

(Tim sighs)

TIM

Statement ends.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

ROBIN

Yeah, people have always said to me that Jack Russells can be difficult dogs, but I've always found that, that, as long as you, sort of, treat them right, and, you know, give them lots of treats, and it's, it's really quite—

BASIRA

(Getting exasperated) So you were in the spiral, and you heard an old man crying?

ROBIN

As I was meandering around, and you know when you hear, you, you hear someone crying, but you, you, but you definitely sort of say that's, that's... that's, there's an age in that voice. Like it sounded... like, if you, have you heard many old men crying?

BASIRA

(Sharply interjects) So you were following...?

ROBIN

Yes, that's right. So, you know how, sort of, at places like Hampton Court, where they've got those little hedge mazes, and rather than, sort of, bounding straight into the middle of them, where you can just sort of walk over all the hedges, you have to, you have to, sort of, follow it through, er, I've, it sort of put in me in mind of that. As, er, as I sort of imagine myself in... exploring that maze—

BASIRA

So you followed the maze?

ROBIN

So I followed the, so I, yeah, so I followed the spiral, the spiral round and, er, I could definitely hear this sort of old man crying. And it d-d— It was definitely an old man, 'cause it really reminded me of, er, this old chap I met once on a train, er, going, going to Liverpool. Er, he was, he was—

BASIRA

Mmmm, so... So what happened?

ROBIN

So, so... as I was going round, and, and hearing this old man, erm, I suddenly, suddenly realised that I was going to be late for... I was going to be late for my mum's dinner that she had planned, er—

BASIRA

You... But... didn't you say it was, it was about noon?

ROBIN

Well, that was the funny thing. So, you see, I, I looked at my watch, and I realised that six hours had gone by.

BASIRA

Six... Six hours?!

ROBIN

Yes, that's right. So, er, at that point, I, I left.

BASIRA

...I'm sorry?

ROBIN

Yes, so I would, I would have been late for dinner, so...

BASIRA

So you left?

ROBIN

So I got out of the spiral, and went to dinner.

BASIRA

... (Baffled vocalisations)

Statement ends... I suppose.

ROBIN

Is, is, is that all you need from me?

BASIRA

(Emphatically) Yep.

ROBIN

Are you sure?

BASIRA

Yep!

ROBIN

You don't, you don't need anything—

BASIRA

Absolutely!

ROBIN

You want any more details—

BASIRA

Nope! Thank you Mr. Lennox.

ROBIN

Okay.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on.]

BRIAN

(Very distressed) ...and I just, I dunno what to do anymore! I think they were following me. I think they followed me here! I saw a spider in the basement outside. And, and the webbing, it just... it had this webbing, the sticky kind... and I just... I don't know how I can keep... I just need... This is the first time I've been in a room where I haven't seen a spider—

MELANIE (Overlapping)

I... Please, just... There's, there's tea there. Okay. Right. Yes. Okay, breathe. Yeah... well... Drink, drink the tea

BRIAN

—and maybe this is safe—

MELANIE

(Laughingly strangled) No-o-o-o-o. No.

BRIAN

—or maybe they're outside. I just don't know!

MELANIE

It's really...

BRIAN

I don't know how else—

MELANIE

It's really not safe.

BRIAN

(Wheezing distressedly) --carry on!

MELANIE

I'll, I'll get you some biscuits. I'll get you, I'll get you, I'll get you... something...

Just breathe!

Breathe for me...

(Brian takes some deep breaths.)

Okay, yes. Good. Good.

[Door opens & closes as Brian continues to breathe deeply]

BRIAN

Sorry. I know I shouldn't... I guess that's... that's everything. I, I just don't... Oh.

[Chair scraping on floor]

(Calling out) H-Hello?

Sorry. Did I...? I don't, don't know...

[More chair scraping]

Should I just... go?

Hello?

[Very sharp squeal of distortion]

PETER

Excuse me?

BRIAN

Woah.

PETER

Do you work here?

BRIAN

Oh, er... no, I... Hi.

PETER

I'm looking for Elias Bouchard? He runs this Institute. I do have an appointment.

BRIAN

I don't, um... I'm, I'm sorry. I was just, um... but everyone... just went.

Sorry. 'B-Brian. B-Brian Finlinson.

PETER

Peter Lukas. Lovely to meet you, Brian. Now. Am I to understand you don't work here?

BRIAN

No... I was just, um... making a statement, or, or whatever. Um...

PETER

That's probably for the best. Elias can be quite... 'protective' of his people. Never really understood why. I mean, in the end, the only person that you really have is yourself.

Wouldn't you agree, Brian?

BRIAN

(Confused) I don't... What?

PETER

Well. Plenty of time to make your mind up, I'm, I'm sure.

Now... If you'll excuse me, like I said, I have an appointment to get to. You are sure you don't know where Elias Bouchard's office is?

BRIAN

No.

I'm, I'm sorry.

PETER

Not to worry. I'm sure I can find it.

And I'm sure you need some time to get used to your new situation.

BRIAN

(Softly) What?

PETER

Good luck Brian.

[VERY SHARP SQUEAL OF DISTORTION]

BRIAN

Yeah... Thanks... Uh... I— Oh.

Hello?

H-Hello?

[Tape clicks off.]

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Outro]

JONATHAN SIMS

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