

MAG – 103 – Cruelty Free

Content Warnings:

- Mild language
- Animal cannibalism
- Body horror

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro]

JONANTHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill presents: The Magnus Archives. Episode one hundred and three.
Cruelty Free.

[Tape clicks on]

ARCHIVIST

Statement of Dylan Anderson, regarding an unusual pig he acquired on his farm near the Marlborough Forest, New Zealand. Original statement given July 2nd 2014. Audio recording by Jonathan Sims, Head Archivist of the Magnus Institute, London.

Statement begins.

ARCHIVIST (STATEMENT)

Pigs are tricky. They are very intelligent animals. But I've found I can never completely bring myself to trust them. They can be your best friend, then tackle your legs from behind if they're feeling mean. And when a pig hits you,

you know you've been hit. It doesn't help matters that I am acutely aware that a pig would be more than happy to eat me if the opportunity came up.

They're true omnivores, and they wouldn't necessarily even do me the courtesy of waiting until I was dead. I've heard more than one grisly story of a farmer passing out drunk in a pigpen, and in the morning there's only bones. I had my cousin, Melinda, visiting a few years back with her son, and I told her to make sure and keep the baby away from the pigs. I still remember the dawning look of horror on her face when I told her why, like she couldn't believe that a pig would just... eat a baby. But most pigs would. Most pigs will eat just about anything that doesn't stop them.

I feel I may be doing pigs a disservice here, to be honest. When I say a pig can be your best friend, I'm not exaggerating. They can be tremendously affectionate creatures, and I've known more than one pig that I'd put in the running against any of my human friends. But it's hard to get past the idea that if my human friends would draw a cock and balls on my face when I'm sleeping off the drink, my pig friends might just... eat me. They probably wouldn't. 'Cause we're friends. But they might.

It's not even like I run a proper pig farm, I just keep a few at a time, since they're quite handy to have about. A couple of pigs are a great way to dispose of waste, and their manure is great for composting. And, I can't deny, when it's their time, they are... quite tasty. And I do sell the meat, though I take a lot of pains to make sure people know it was raised cruelty free. I take care of them. The point is, I certainly have never had so many pigs that I would lose track. And I know I never bought or birthed the monster pig.

When I first called it that, it was just because it was huge. I never got a chance to properly weigh it, but it must have come in at around three or four hundred kilos. I don't know if you know about pigs, but that's big. Bigger than big. It's a monster pig. I didn't find out about the rest until... well, I didn't know.

I don't know when it came from. I didn't buy it. I didn't take delivery of it, and as far as I can tell, no-one else did either. It's a bit hard to tell as this was back in March, so the Merlot harvest season was well underway. As you've seen, while I do have a few pigs, this is a vineyard. We supply grapes to a lot of the bigger winemakers around here, and I'd been toying with the idea of starting my own label but haven't really done anything with it yet. Oh, uh, when you're writing this up, make it's clear that we're near the Marlborough Forest, but that's not the same thing as the Marlborough region, which is famous for wine. That's on the South Island. I just don't want there to be any confusion.

Where was I? Yeah, it was the height of the Merlot harvest, so most of us, myself included, were out in the vineyard for pretty much the whole day. I hadn't checked on the pigs in a while, but the next time I headed into the sty... there it was, sat in the corner, just encompassing the corner, its bulk filling the place out as the other, smaller pigs, tried to find somewhere to be that wasn't next to it. It just sat there, and stared at me. I didn't like staring back at it. It made me feel strange, like it was sorting me into cuts of meat. There was more in those eyes than I'd ever seen in another pig; hidden among the rolls of pink flesh, they had malice in them. The pig wanted to hurt me. I'm sure of that.

I-I didn't know what to do. I just— I asked around to see if anyone knew where it had come from, but no-one had any idea. They were just as baffled as I was. Though they could see it, which was, you know, a relief.

Or not, since it being real meant it had to be fed. Part of me did consider immediately trying to send it for slaughter, but... but something about the way it looked at me, almost daring me to try it, a thin trickle of pink saliva glistening around its mouth. I'm absolutely sure if I'd asked Manawa, or any of the others, to bring it out for that, they would be dead. In fact, the more I think about the whole situation, the more certain I am that the monster pig wanted nothing more than to kill and eat me. It just didn't want the hassle of breaking out of the sty. Though I'm sure it could have if it really wanted to.

I tried to feed it, but it was so huge, it ate so much, and there wasn't enough for all the others as well. It wouldn't need to be violent. It would just shift its mass towards the trough, and the other pigs would just be moved aside. When it ate, I got a closer look at that mottled body. It was covered in small lumps and marks that at first I thought might have been ticks or some other sort of parasite. But as I got closer, I saw that they were scars. Shot scars, most of them, with some that looked like they might have been from spikes or axes. One of them... looked like finger marks. As I stared at it, still stood in the pen, my eyes darted again to the gate and the lock that was now looking far too flimsy. It could just leave and-and attack; there was nothing I could do to stop it. I just watched it eat all the food.

Not enough food, apparently, since after a few days of this, it decided to supplement its diet with poor Toby. I'd looked after Toby since he was born. I'd helped birth him. He was my friend. So when I saw what was left of him lying in the pigpen on that damp Tuesday morning, I'm not ashamed to say that I cried. He was the first of my pigs to go, but I was sure he wouldn't be the last. I tried to get the other pigs out a couple of times, move them to another pen, but the monster would start to shift its weight towards me with alarming speed, and I

would always run away like a coward. The only time I seemed to be safe was when I was bringing food.

This went on for months. My brother, Kurt, came for a visit at one point. He said he planned to stay a couple of weeks, but the very first night I was woken up by the sound of movement outside of the farmhouse. I grabbed a torch, popped on my boots, and headed outside. I didn't even consider not checking the pigsty first. Sure enough, as I got close, I heard something, though it wasn't entirely clear what it was. It wasn't the sound of a colossal pig eating my brother though, so that was encouraging. It was him, though, stood there, staring into the darkness. He was muttering something to himself. I think the words were, "Long pig. Short pig. Wide pig. Narrow pig." Over and over. "Long pig. Short pig. Wide pig. Narrow pig." He didn't seem to be entirely conscious, so I was reluctant to wake him. I didn't think it was a nice situation to become aware of all of a sudden. That said, when he reached over and started fumbling with the latch, I quickly changed my mind, and shook him awake. His eyes snapped open properly and immediately focused on something behind me, in the sty. I didn't need to look around or ask him what he was looking at. His pale, stricken face told me plain enough what it was.

To his credit, he managed to stay another three days before he had to return to London on a 'business emergency'. For context, I'm pretty sure he works as a traffic warden. And still the pig just sat there. Waiting.

I believe it was the circus that got your attention though, wasn't it? That's what you were asking about when you turned up. So, the Carley Brothers Circus mostly tours around Australia, but every couple of years they do a New Zealand tour as well. They do a few other spots around the Pacific, but the important point for this story is that this is one of the years they're doing New

Zealand. Now, generally they need anywhere between a couple of weeks and a month of moving things over, setting up, and getting all the right permissions and arrangements in place before the tour begins in earnest. I went to school with the brother of the guy who runs it, so the last couple of years they've done this, I rented out one of my larger, unused fields to them for their staging area. It's pretty easy money, and they don't need to use my facilities, and tend to be almost entirely self-contained. The first year they did it there was a lot trash left behind we had had to clean up, but apparently someone bashed the right heads about it, since last year there was barely a cigarette stub left.

So the arrangements are all made, and the Carley Brothers Circus moves onto one of my fields for a month. I get drunk with the ringmaster and a couple of acrobats. So far, so normal. I almost forgot about the monster that lived in my pigpen. Almost.

A few weeks passed without anything happening. Then one of the clowns disappeared. A man named Angus Dale. He's been a member of the circus for almost ten years now. No drink or drug problems, and no issues with his personal life, nowhere particular else to go. Exactly no reason to up and vanish from his job without telling anyone where he's going. They started a search of the Marlborough Forest, they informed local police, they started discussing the best ways to publicise the disappearance.

I'm sure you can guess where this is going. Through it all there was this dark little suspicion growing in my mind. I never saw any evidence for it, not really. Nothing that would stand up in court, but even so, the suspicion grew into a theory, which grew into a certainty. That pig, that monster still squatted in my sty. The lock hadn't been damaged or left open, so it was hard to see how it

could have gotten out to attack a clown, or even how Angus might have gotten in. But I know he did. I know that thing killed and ate him.

I keep having this dream. I used to watch the rehearsals for the Carley Brothers' performances, and I can clearly remember Angus Dale's voice, or at least his clowning voice. I was watching him perform, but instead of a comedy skit or a bit of slapstick, he would sink his teeth into his limbs with this crunching, cracking sound, gradually eating himself. But even with a mouth full of meat, his laugh was still clear as a bell, his jokes and pleas for mercy clearly articulated. He never gave any sign he was in pain, but every few seconds he would stop laughing or chewing, and just repeat the words, "Long pig. Short pig. Wide pig. Narrow pig," before starting up again.

When I finally managed to drag myself out of bed the next morning, there was a bright, white, human femur on the ground in the pig sty, lying in front of the enormous fleshy form that just gazed at me in horrid triumph.

I didn't want to tell anyone. That would have brought investigation, the police, efforts to exterminate the man-eating thing that looked so much like a pig. It wouldn't go how they expected, I was sure of that, and I didn't know what to do. Would it kill more people if I just left it alone, or if they tried to kill it? I never had much call for ethics before really, it was just... grapes and pigs. And when faced with that choice, I found myself completely paralysed.

After about ten minutes standing there in silence, staring at that bone, I walked into the pen, and I lay down motionless in front of the monster pig. Thinking now, that decision seems alien to me, but I think I just couldn't stand the thought of going any further in the story that was playing out in front of me. It smelt awful on the floor, and as the pink form began to move towards

me, my resolve started to waver. It was far too heavy to be supported by its skinny, twig-like legs, but something still propelled it slowly forward, inch by inch, that familiar pink drool leaving a thin path for the enormous body to follow, until it was right on top of me.

I closed my eyes and gritted my teeth, waiting to feel the pain of it starting to tear into my flesh. But instead, I felt it settle next to me, the meat of it sinking into the spaces left by my position. It was pressing up against me, and let out the most contented sound I have ever heard from a pig.

The message could not have been clearer: ‘Friend’.

I don’t know how long I lay there in that stinking pig sty, listening to the calm, relaxed breathing of the murderous thing that had chosen to spare me. Eventually it retreated to its corner, and I stood and walked back into the house.

If you hadn’t turned up that evening, I don’t know what I’d have done. I know a monster pig wasn’t what you were looking for, but I do appreciate your advice. When you explained the situation, I hoped you’d have some special trick for dealing with it, but I suppose welding scrap metal around the pen and filling it with cement just about works, even if I do owe Mason a favour for borrowing his mixer. I’d have thought the thing would at least try to break free while I did it, but... thank heaven for small mercies, I suppose.

A huge block of solid concrete. What ought to do with it? Some sort of engraving, maybe? “In memory of Toby”? I can’t very well put it up “In memory of Angus”. That’s what really gets me, to be honest. Those pigs didn’t deserve what that thing did to them. Tearing them apart and eating them. Neither did Angus, of course. The circus is still around if you want to talk to

them, but the search for Angus Dale is still going on, so I'd appreciate it if you didn't bring my name up. Oh, and if you're hungry, I've got some bacon in the freezer I'm going to cook up.

What?

Statement ends.

ARCHIVIST

Another dead end for Gertrude, it seems. Assuming it was Gertrude Mr. Anderson was talking to, but I feel that's a safe assumption as the tickets to Wellington were only for one. Perhaps Gerard joined her later? I can only imagine her frustration upon chasing down a mysterious disappearance with a circus connection, only to find herself instead trying to help contain an evil pig. Too much meat.

The disappearance of Angus Dale is still an open case though, no leads have been found since a possible reported sighting in 2016 that didn't amount to anything. Martin attempted to make contact with Mr. Anderson himself, but after a few unanswered emails and calls ringing out, I think we can safely abandon that hope.

There is one loose end I'm hoping might amount to something though. Mr. Anderson mentioned his brother, Kurt, emigrated to the UK, and works as a traffic warden. At least, as of 2014. Melanie's seeing if she can hunt him down. If he's still around, there's a possibility he might be able to fill in a few of the... missing pieces. I currently have nothing to indicate where Gertrude might have travelled next, but I... I have a hunch Kurt Anderson might be able to help.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on. There is the noise of a street.]

ARCHIVIST

Er, excuse me, are you Kurt Anderson?

KURT

Yeah, why?

ARCHIVIST

Dylan Anderson is your... is your brother?

KURT

Yeah... Why is he in some kind of trouble?

ARCHIVIST

Oh no, I-I-I want to... I just have a couple of questions.

KURT

Look buddy, I'm not sure about—

ARCHIVIST

It's about a pig he owned back in 2014.

KURT

Woah. No, I don't know anything about that.

ARCHIVIST

Well, it's kind of a weird one— No, look, I know we haven't met...

KURT

I don't know what you're talking about.

ARCHIVIST

(Sighs) Fine... What do you know about the pig?

KURT

I only met it once, and it freaked me right out. I haven't been back since. But Dylan says he managed to get rid of it.

ARCHIVIST

Did he mention an old woman who helped him?

KURT

Yeah, but he didn't say how. Told me some weird guy turned up afterwards, and she went off with him in a real hurry. Left heaps of stuff behind and all.

ARCHIVIST

Er, w-w-what, what stuff did she leave behind?

KURT

I don't know, papers, letters, a couple of old plane tickets. Now listen, dude ...

ARCHIVIST

No, no, did he say what he did with them?

KURT

He sent them to me, asked me to get them back to her.

ARCHIVIST

A-And did you?

KURT

No, couldn't be bothered. Then I forgot. I've still got them somewhere, I think.

ARCHIVIST

I, um, I, I work with her. Could I ... could I collect them?

KURT

No! I don't know even know you! Just get away, dude. Weirdo. Leave me alone.

ARCHIVIST

B-B-B-But those papers are very important.

KURT

Get away from me.

ARCHIVIST

Fine, fine, just... What's your darkest secret?

KURT

I don't know. Er, sometimes I take little bribes, and not give people a ticket.
Oh, what the hell?

ARCHIVIST

Right, okay, I imagine Lambeth Borough Council would be very interested to know that, and I have it on tape. So... let's go get those papers, shall we?

KURT

(Scared) What are you?!

ARCHIVIST

Let's go.

[Tape clicks off. Tape clicks on. The sounds of the tunnels – the voices in the following conversation echo.]

ARCHIVIST

Thank you for coming.

DAISY

Sure. Why down here?

ARCHIVIST

I, um, E-Elias, I-I think... I think he has a hard time seeing things down here.

DAISY

I.e. he's not watching?

ARCHIVIST

Maybe? I'm, I'm pretty sure it takes him actual effort so ... and it's Wednesday afternoon, when he does his scheduling. So I'm hoping he's distracted. He, er ... he loves scheduling.

DAISY

Right. So, if he's not paying attention, and I kill you down here ...

ARCHIVIST

I mean, I wouldn't... I wouldn't risk it.

DAISY

Hm.

ARCHIVIST

Look, I'm... I'm going away for a while. The, the things I'm, I'm looking for they're... they're not in England, not in the UK, I don't think. So I... I just wanted to, to ask, make sure you were going to look after the others.

DAISY

That's my job. Now. Apparently.

ARCHIVIST

I-I-I I don't just mean Basira. E-Elias...

DAISY

I'll keep an eye on them. That all?

ARCHIVIST

No. No. I was, I was... I was thinking. This... Section 31 unit that, that you're a part of—

DAISY

Not a unit! Just paperwork.

ARCHIVIST

Right but, but... what do they think about Elias?

DAISY

Best avoided. Pretty harmless. Um, crimes involving the Institute get people sectioned, but he's not an active threat.

ARCHIVIST

If we had evidence that he was an active threat, that he was killing people, he, he was the one threatening to make all of your stuff public, do you think they'd move against him?

DAISY

Maybe.

ARCHIVIST

I mean, he's got knowledge, but I-I don't know how much that would help in—
What?

DAISY

You sure you want to talk with that thing running?

ARCHIVIST

Oh. Um, I-I... I didn't ... didn't realise I'd turned it on.

DAISY

Huh. We don't know how he's watching. No evidence.

ARCHIVIST

R-Right.

[Tape clicks off.]

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Outro]

JONATHAN SIMS

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