

MAG – 047 – The New Door

Content Warnings

- Altered reality
- Disorientation
- Distorted Voices (sfx)
- **Discussions of:** Paranormal encounter, stabbing
- **Mentions of:** Self injury, dehydration, starvation
- **SFX:** Shout, high pitched tone, electrical interference

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill Presents The Magnus Archives Episode Forty Seven The New Door

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro - Continues]

[CLICK]

[PENCIL DRAWING ON PAPER]

JONATHAN SIMS

Statement of Helen Richardson, regarding ... uh, how would you describe it?

JONATHAN SIMS

Ms Richardson?

HELEN

(Startled) What?

JONATHAN SIMS

Your experience, how would you... summarise it?

HELEN

Well, I've been... I've been trying to draw you a map, but it doesn't... it doesn't work.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Statement of Helen Richardson, regarding a new door in a house she was selling. Statement recorded direct from subject, 2nd October 2016.

Statement begins.

Ms Richardson?

HELEN

There were no left turns. Look, look, none.

[DRAWING STOPS, SOUNDS OF PAPER BEING WAVED]

It just, it just turns right. It doesn't make any sense. No, it wasn't a spiral because you couldn't, you could also go forward. I mean I, I did mostly just...

forward and the paths never got shorter, like you were coming to a centre, they just kept going. It doesn't, it doesn't make any sense. Look at it.

JONATHAN SIMS

Ms Richards–

HELEN

(Desperate) Look at it!

JONATHAN SIMS

(sighs and takes paper) You're right. This map doesn't make any sense.

HELEN

After a few turns...

JONATHAN SIMS

It becomes a mess of impossible lines, yes. But it would be very useful for our investigation if you could start at the beginning. Give us some context. Tell me how it got started.

HELEN

What do you want to know? There wasn't a door and then there was.

[TAKES A CALMING BREATH]

I worked for Wolverton Kendrick. I still do, I suppose. I haven't officially quit, but I haven't been back there since this happened. We mostly sell properties around the Wimbledon area, sometimes as, as far out as Colliers Wood. We specialise in well-appointed, family homes for successful professionals looking to move further out of London. We've had a lot of success and these days usually have anything up to 200 properties on the market. Most of them are detached family homes or big, well-appointed flats.

I've been with the agency for about eight years now and I've done thousands of viewings for them, so believe me when I say there was nothing unusual about that house on St Aubyn's Avenue. I mean, maybe the fact the owner was selling it for less than two million? Even though it, it still wasn't suspiciously cheap, it was just a lovely house in a good area, like every other house I sell. When I think back to driving there, the trees seemed darker than they should have been... the other houses sit there, sinister, behind their tall gates and empty driveways, but I think... oh, that's just my memory changing to fit what I know now. At the time, I don't think I felt anything except annoyance that I was going to be two minutes late to the viewing. You know what's funny? Even after everything that happened, I actually have trouble picturing the house in my mind. It was so much like all the others. So unremarkable. And it's not like I've been back.

For most of the morning views it was business as usual. I had the usual stream of bankers and executives asking the standard questions, occasionally livened up by a private dentist or a barrister. I walked around that house for the better part of five hours, and by the end I'd been in every room and opened every

cupboard dozens of times. And I promise you, I swear to you, that door was not there.

He came at the end of the viewings. It was the last appointment and, although he didn't give his name, I am absolutely sure he was not Mr and Mrs Adrian Lombardi. He was tall, maybe six and a half feet? And he had long, straw-coloured hair that fell onto his shoulders in loose ringlets. His face was round and unthreatening, although he stood so still when I answered the door that it rather unnerved me.

I asked him if he was Mr Lombardi and he said no, but that Mr Lombardi wouldn't be coming, so he was here instead. It's not unheard of for some of our clients to send their people to viewings in their place, so it didn't seem like an unreasonable statement, even if it would normally, you know, be arranged ahead of time. I just... I just thought I'd missed an email.

I held out my arm for a handshake, but he just looked at it and laughed, keeping his hands firmly by his side. That was when I first started to think that something might be wrong, because his laugh didn't sound right? It... I don't know how to describe it, but it wasn't... it wasn't a human laugh. I should have stopped there and left, or called the police, but he'd already walked past me and into the house and I'd started to give him the sales pitch, almost as a reflex.

I decided that, since he didn't seem to be actively threatening, I'd just give him a quick run-down of the house and get out of there as soon as possible. He was strange, but I thought that if he did work for the Lombardis that I didn't want to be rude and have to deal with a complaint later. So I took him round the place. He followed me, his... his eyes were also looking where I pointed, but he

never seemed to take anything in, and he didn't ask any questions at all. At least not until we reached the second floor.

We'd just climbed up the stairs to the top of the house. I went into the first bedroom and I started talking about its potential as a child's room or a study. The ceiling was quite low and I thought I'd best warn him to be careful, but when I looked back he wasn't there. I stepped back out onto the landing to find him looking at a new door. He asked me what was behind it and I just stood there, staring. It was a small, unremarkable door, painted dark yellow with a matte black handle and it wasn't there before.

I had been up on that landing dozens of times already and I definitely did not remember it being there. It, it wasn't just that I hadn't noticed it – you have to understand that. It wasn't there. It couldn't have been there. I checked the floor plan I had with me and obviously there was no door shown on it. It was an exterior wall on the second floor. There can't have been anything beyond it but empty air and a significant drop. Except that I had made several circuits of the outside while showing off the garden and there was absolutely no door visible there. It was just a dark yellow door that couldn't be there. The man asked me again what was inside and I just stood there staring at it with my mouth hanging open in shock.

I honestly don't know how long I stood there looking at it. My strange client said nothing and I'd almost forgotten he was there by the time I finally made up my mind. I reached out and gripped the handle. It was warm. I turned it and as soon as I did so, the door swung open. I didn't need to pull it at all. It opened slowly, but deliberately, like it was keen for me to go inside. And beyond that threshold, where there should have been empty air over the garden, there was a long windowless corridor.

It was lit by electric lamps attached to the walls every ten feet or so and the walls were papered over in a swirling green pattern. Running down the middle of the faded yellow carpet was a rug, black and thick, that disappeared off as the path very gradually curved to the left. On the walls were what at first looked like mirrors, but I soon realised that while a few of them were mirrors, most of them were paintings or photographs of that same corridor from various odd angles.

Here's the thing: I don't remember going through that door. I remember standing there, looking down it with this feeling of dread and then I remember feeling a surge of terror as I heard the door close behind me with a click. I spun round, but there was no handle on this side, just a huge, smooth mirror. I saw myself stood in that strange corridor and it looked like I'd been crying for hours. I hammered, shouted, I threw myself against that uncaring face of that mirror, but nothing happened. It didn't even crack.

I took out my phone. My mind was muddy, but I don't know exactly what I was hoping to do. Call the police, maybe? My colleagues? I think I might have wanted just to check the time. I had no idea how long I'd been in there. When I opened the phone, all that was on the screen was another picture of the corridor, just like the paintings on the walls. So I started walking down the corridor. I, I mean there was... there was nothing else I could do.

It dragged on and on, bending almost imperceptibly to the left, while every once in a while there would be another corridor turning off to the right at a sharp angle. At first, I, I'd avoided these branching paths, thinking if I walked along the corridor far enough, it would have to lead somewhere. But after what felt like miles, I finally decided that taking one of the turns, it... it couldn't make things worse.

The branching corridors were identical. Mirrors and paintings that mirrored them were everywhere and when I turned back, I think I must have gotten turned around because the left turn that would have led back towards the door wasn't... it wasn't there anymore. It was another long corridor with paths off to the right. The wallpaper was a different colour though, I think. It definitely changed, but I never noticed it switching. I'd simply realise that it hadn't been red when I'd been walking, or blue, or purple, or whatever colour it was at the time. All the colours seemed to shift in that place. Even the yellow of the carpet and the black of the rug. It felt like I couldn't trust my eyes.

Based on the date of my appointment and the newspaper I found later, I think I was in there for three days. It was... it was impossible to tell from inside though. I don't remember sleeping, or even feeling tired? I did spend a lot of time just slumped in despair though, so maybe I slept then. I had no food or water. I got very delirious by the end. It didn't help it was so warm in there, although often it seemed like I couldn't stop shivering, like I was cold.

I was almost passed out from misery when I saw it. It was stood way off in the distance, a long way down the corridor. It seemed almost human from a distance, but as it got closer, I saw that it was anything but. Its body was thin and limp and when it moved, it shifted like I was watching it through rippling water. Its hands were swollen and bits of them jutted out at annoying angles. It was... it was moving towards me fast and as I looked, I saw that all the pictures on the wall now showed this thing, although each distorted it differently, like a selection of funhouse mirrors. But all of them... all of them showed the hands as bulbous and sharp.

I looked around in desperation, trying to find any hope of escape. The thing was getting closer and closer and I could hear that weird laugh again. And then

I saw it: a mirrored frame that did not contain the creature. I had no reason to think it would help, but I could see no other choice but waiting for death, so I threw myself at this empty mirror.

And just like that I was out. I felt the cold night air on my face and wet tarmac under my hands and knees. It was raining. I'd turned up in Dulwich of all places. I screamed for about five minutes before someone came to help me.

I don't really know what else to tell you. I was hospitalised for a short while until they were satisfied my dehydration wasn't going to cause any complications and I spent a long time at home, not opening any doors. Finally, after the latest bout of nightmares, I decided to come to you and tell you my story. Maybe you can make some sense of this.

JONATHAN SIMS

Perhaps. Leave it with us. We'll do some digging and see what we can find.

HELEN

You believe me then?

JONATHAN SIMS

I... yes. Yes, I think I do. One thing though – you say you don't remember the man's name?

HELEN

I... I think he told me, but I just... I can't...

JONATHAN SIMS

It wasn't 'Michael', was it?

HELEN

(Gasps) Yes! Michael! That was it! Do you know him?

JONATHAN SIMS

Maybe. We'll make some enquiries and get back to you, Ms Richardson. Thank you for your time.

HELEN

Right, well... I'll just leave you to it then.

[DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES]

JONATHAN SIMS

(Calls out) Sasha!

[DIFFERENT DOOR OPENS]

NOT!SASHA

Sorry, did you call?

JONATHAN SIMS

I just had a statement from someone claims they met your 'Michael'.

NOT!SASHA

Michael? The distorted Michael?

JONATHAN SIMS

The very same. I don't think we re-recorded your statement on him, did we?

NOT!SASHA

Did we need to?

JONATHAN SIMS

It was one of the tapes that vanished during the attack.

NOT!SASHA

Oh, well I can give it again if you'd like, but I haven't seen him since.

JONATHAN SIMS

And you can't think of any further insight? Nothing you forgot to mention last time?

NOT!SASHA

I don't think so, no.

JONATHAN SIMS

Hm. What are you doing at the moment?

NOT!SASHA

Re-organising your 'Discredited' section. It's a bit of a mess. If I may say so, John, I feel you've been a bit less conscientious about it since you got back.

JONATHAN SIMS

No, that's fair. Sorry. Let me know once you're finished. I'd very much like you on this case.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, will do.

[NOT!SASHA LEAVES]

MICHAEL

Do you even know they're lying to you?

JONATHAN SIMS

(Surprised voice) I'm... I'm sorry, I didn't... can I help you? This place is off-limits.

MICHAEL

I disagree.

JONATHAN SIMS

Who let you in here?

MICHAEL

Let?

(Strange laugh)

I'm afraid that isn't how this works.

JONATHAN SIMS

You're him.

MICHAEL

Yes.

JONATHAN SIMS

Michael.

MICHAEL

That is a real name.

JONATHAN SIMS

Are you here to kill me?

MICHAEL

No.

JONATHAN SIMS

Oh... why are... why are you here?

MICHAEL

I am simply collecting what is mine, Archivist. The one who enters my domain.

JONATHAN SIMS

Ms Richardson? You own those hallways?

MICHAEL

What a fascinating question. Does your hand in any way own your stomach? In any case, it doesn't matter. The wanderer had a brief respite, but it's over now.

JONATHAN SIMS

Well, you're too late. She's... she's gone.

MICHAEL

(Weird laugh) Yes. Did you notice which door she left through?

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes. It was... wait, no, there was...

MICHAEL

Oh, there never has been a door there, Archivist. Your mind plays tricks on you.

JONATHAN SIMS

Let her go.

MICHAEL

(Weird laugh) No.

JONATHAN SIMS

(More forcefully) Get her back here.

MICHAEL

(Weird chuckle) Are you going to attack me?

JONATHAN SIMS

(Yell of pain) Who the hell are you?

MICHAEL

I am not a who, Archivist. I am a what. A who requires a degree of identity I can't ever attain.

JONATHAN SIMS

So 'Michael' isn't your real name?

MICHAEL

There is no such thing as a real name.

JONATHAN SIMS

What are you talking about?

MICHAEL

I am talking about myself. It's not something I'm used to doing, so I'm sorry if I'm not very good at it.

JONATHAN SIMS

But you've decided to appear down here and stab me anyway.

MICHAEL

I wanted to talk to you. I intervened to save you before. I'm... I'm interested in what happens next.

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes, well, thank you for that, I suppose. And you still haven't told me why you intervened at all.

MICHAEL

I'm normally neutral, yes, but the loss of this place would have unbalanced the struggle too early. I am keen to see how it progresses.

JONATHAN SIMS

You make it sound like there's a... war.

MICHAEL

(Chuckle) Then I will say nothing further. I wouldn't wish to tarnish your ignorance prematurely. Goodbye, Archivist.

JONATHAN SIMS

Wait!

(Cries out in pain)

Ah! M-Michael? Michael?

End recording.

[CLICK]

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Outro]

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