

MAG – 039 – Infestation

Content Warnings

- Worms (sfx)
- Graphic injury
- Infestation
- Supernatural impersonation
- Discussions of: gore, death, spatial disorientation
- Mentions of: asphyxiation
- **Discussions of:** Gore, death, spatial disorientation
- **Mentions of:** asphyxiation
- **SFX:** distorted voices, shouting, alarm sounding, high pitched tone, screaming, electrical interference, worms

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill Presents The Magnus Archives Episode Thirty Nine Infestation

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro - Continues]

[CLICK]

[WRITHING WORM SOUNDS]

SASHA

What are you doing?

JONATHAN SIMS

Almost...

SASHA

Leave it, it's not...

JONATHAN SIMS

I got it!

MARTIN

Guys? Is everything... Oh Christ!

JONATHAN SIMS

Shut up and get the extinguishers!

MARTIN

What

JONATHAN SIMS

The CO2 ! Get the goddamn CO2!

MARTIN

Right, right, right, right, right, right, right, right, yep.

[INSECT NOISES AND FIRE EXTINGUISHER SPRAY]

MARTIN

There's too many...

SASHA

Just keep spraying!

JONATHAN SIMS

We need to go!

SASHA

Where?

JONATHAN SIMS

Uh... Uh...

SASHA

Damn!

JONATHAN SIMS

I just... uh... let, let me think!

SASHA

Do you see Prentiss? If we could get her...

MARTIN

I, I, I don't see her! I don't see her! I don't see her! I don't see her!

JONATHAN SIMS

Uhhh...

SASHA

John? John!?

MARTIN

This way! Come on! Come this way! This way, this way!

[SOUNDS OF RUNNING AND PURSUIT BY PARASITIC WORMS]

JONATHAN SIMS

Erm... LOOK OUT!

[CRASH]

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

JONATHAN SIMS

(Screaming)

MARTIN

And... there we go. Recording again. Did you get it?

JONATHAN SIMS

(Cries of pain)

[THE SOUND OF SASHA EXTRACTING A PARASITIC WORM FROM JONATHAN SIMS]

SASHA

There. And I just want to point out that I didn't make this much of a fuss.

JONATHAN SIMS

(Heavy Breathing)

I think your removal was substantially cleaner.

SASHA

I'm still not sure why you have this. Drinking in the archives?

MARTIN

What? No, no, it's for worms.

JONATHAN SIMS

What? **MARTIN**

For pulling the worms out of people. Like now.

SASHA

You, er... what?

MARTIN

I used to carry around a knife, but I started thinking that, well, cutting into someone laterally wasn't really the most efficient way to get them out, and besides which, they seem to be quite slow burrowing in a straight line so, given their size, th-the corkscrew just seemed to be the better option. ... Look, you guys got to go home every day, okay. I didn't! I've been thinking for a long time about what to do when... well, y'know, this happens.

JONATHAN SIMS

Well... thank you.

SASHA

That's why we're here?

MARTIN

Yeah. The room's sealed, I checked it myself when I moved in.

JONATHAN SIMS

Climate controlled, as well. Strong door. Soundproof. [Sigh] These old files are far better protected than we ever were. Alright, I'll grant you it's a good place to lay low, but—

SASHA

They could still come in through the air con.

JONATHAN SIMS

Not easily. And... not en masse. It is actually safe.

MARTIN

Ha!

JONATHAN SIMS

Except, of course, that we're trapped.

MARTIN

Ah... yeah. Sorry.

SASHA

Why record it?

JONATHAN SIMS

What?

SASHA

Before, in the office. It, it was stupid going for the tape recorder like that, and then when you dropped it out there...

JONATHAN SIMS

I said I was sorry. If I'd known Martin had another one stashed in here, I never would have...

SASHA

No, it's, it's fine, just... I just don't understand. I thought you hated the damn thing. You're always going on about it.

JONATHAN SIMS

I do! I did. I just... I don't want to become a mystery. I refuse to become another goddamn mystery.

SASHA

What?

JONATHAN SIMS

Look, even if you ignore the walking soil-sack out there, and the fact that we are probably minutes from death, there is still so much more happening here.

MARTIN

I'm not sure we can really ignore the—

JONATHAN SIMS

Every real statement just leads... deeper into something I don't even know the shape of yet. And to top it all, I still don't know what happened to Gertrude. Officially she's still missing, but Elias is no help and the police were pretty clear that the wait to call her dead is just a formality. If I die, wormfood or... something else, whatever, I'm going to make damn sure the same doesn't happen to me. Whoever takes over from me is going to know exactly what happened.

SASHA

You don't think that would... put them off?

JONATHAN SIMS

[Bitter laugh] I hope so. Only an idiot would stay in this job.

MARTIN

[Chuckles] Wouldn't that make you an idiot?

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes, Martin, that was my point.

SASHA

Can you see what's going on out there?

MARTIN

Ish. When did we last clean these doors?

JONATHAN SIMS

What can you see?

MARTIN

Worms seem to have backed off a bit. There's a few lurking in the corners. Ooh, ooh hey, there's the other tape recorder!

SASHA

Any sign of Prentiss?

MARTIN

No. No, it looks like they're... waiting, I think.

JONATHAN SIMS

For what?

MARTIN

I don't know. Tim, maybe?

SASHA

Oh god!

MARTIN

I think he was out at lunch.

SASHA

Quick, someone call him. Tell him not to come back inside.

JONATHAN SIMS

There's no signal in here. We just have to hope he heard the noise.

SASHA

John, what did you mean by “real statements”?

JONATHAN SIMS

You know what I mean. The ones that have weird wrinkles, or that just seem to have something solid to them. They all have one thing in common.

SASHA

They don’t record digitally.

JONATHAN SIMS

And we have to use the tape recorder. At this stage, if it records to my laptop I almost don’t bother. I don’t— **MARTIN**

There! There, there, there! I see him!

JONATHAN SIMS

What?

MARTIN

Tim. Tim’s outside.

SASHA

Oh god, he doesn’t know. He doesn’t see them.

SASHA AND MARTIN

(Calling out for Tim)

Tim, look out.

JONATHAN SIMS

It’s soundproofed. He can’t hear you!

SASHA

What is he doing? No, Tim, just run! Leave it alone!

MARTIN

Oh no, no, no, no...

SASHA

Turn around. Just turn around.

The Magnus Archives – MAG039 – Infestation

MARTIN

Oh god. There she is, there she is.

JONATHAN SIMS

There's nothing we can do.

SASHA

Ah, screw this.

JONATHAN SIMS

What, Sasha, NO!

[DOOR OPENS]

SASHA

Tim, look out!

JONATHAN SIMS

Watch out for the tape...

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

TIM

still working? Ah, okay. Test, test. What are you doing on the floor? Huh. [Imitates Archivist voice]

Statement of Joe Spooky, regarding sinister happenings in the downtown old...

[DOOR OPENS]

SASHA

Tim, look out!

[WORM SOUNDS INTENSIFY]

TIM

Sasha?

SASHA

Behind you! Run!

TIM

Oh...

[A CHORUS OF WORM SOUNDS]

PRENTISS

Do you hear their song?

SASHA

TIM!

[IMPACTS, WORM SOUNDS AND FIGHTING]

SASHA

[BREATHING HEAVILY AND STUMBLING THROUGH DOORS]

SASHA

Damn it!

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. There we go. Martin, what do you see?

MARTIN

Hm? What?

JONATHAN SIMS

I can't really stand up yet. I need you to describe what's going on. For the record.

MARTIN

Ah, yeah. Sure. So, um, Sasha tackled Tim and there was kind of a struggle, but she made it out of the Archives. That, that was about two minutes ago and she's gone to get help. P-Probably. I mean, she, she couldn't... she wouldn't just run so...

JONATHAN SIMS

Did it look like any of the worms... got her before she left?

MARTIN

No. I don't think so. Tim neither, I think. It was hard to tell after she tackled him. There was just a lot of movement and, and shouting and, and wriggling...

JONATHAN SIMS

Stay with it, Martin. Tim. What happened to Tim?

MARTIN

They got split up and he ran into the office. You said that's where you made the hole. When you were recording. And they all came through, so... he's dead. He's dead in there and he's covered in worms and that's it.

JONATHAN SIMS

We don't know that.

MARTIN

...Maybe Maybe, maybe he found the spare CO2.

JONATHAN SIMS

Spare? What? Where? I never saw any.

MARTIN

Oh, I, er... I, I hid them in old casefile boxes.

JONATHAN SIMS

What, why?

MARTIN

Well, so the worms didn't know they were there! Look, I know it's stupid.

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes. Yes it is. They're just... they're just unclassified parasites. They don't have consciousness, they can't plan, they're just an unthinking infection.

MARTIN

Seriously?!

JONATHAN SIMS

What?

MARTIN

Why do you do that?

JONATHAN SIMS

Do what?

MARTIN

Push the sceptic thing so hard!? I mean, it made sense at first, but now? After everything we've seen, after everything you've read! I hear you recording statements and y-you just dismiss them. You tear them to pieces like they're wasting your time, but half of the "rational" explanations you give are actually more far-fetched than just accepting it was a, a ghost or something. I mean for god's sake John, we're literally hiding from some kind of worm... queen... thing, how, how could you possibly still not believe!?

JONATHAN SIMS

Of course, I believe. Of course I do. Have you ever taken a look at the stuff we have in Artefact storage? That's enough to convince anyone. But, but even before that... Why do you think I started working here? It's not exactly glamorous. I have... I've always believed in the supernatural. Within reason. I mean. I still think most of the statements down here aren't real. Of the hundreds I've recorded, we've had maybe... thirty, forty that are... that go on tape. Now those, I believe, at least for the most part.

MARTIN

Then why do you...

JONATHAN SIMS

Because I'm scared, Martin!. Because when I record these statements it feels... it feels like I'm being watched. I... I lose myself a bit. And then when I come back, it's like... like if I admit there may be any truth to it, whatever's watching will... know somehow. The scepticism, feigning ignorance. It just felt safer.

MARTIN

Well... It wasn't.

JONATHAN SIMS

No. No, it wasn't. Still, it's not my fault we're going to be eaten by worms. Speaking of, can you see anything?

MARTIN

Not much. They're just... there.

JONATHAN SIMS

How many?

MARTIN

Too many. And more keep coming up through the floor. I didn't think they could get through.

JONATHAN SIMS

Prentiss

MARTIN

No, I can't s... Oh, there she is.

JONATHAN SIMS

What's she doing?

MARTIN

I don't know. She's messing with the boxes. She's holding one up and... ahh!

JONATHAN SIMS

What?

MARTIN

She's... She's destroying them. Sort of.

JONATHAN SIMS

Sort of

MARTIN

Well, I don't really know what that stuff coming out of her mouth is, but I think we should probably burn them.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Right. ... Why are you here Martin?

MARTIN

Well, well, Prentiss is out there and you can't run so

JONATHAN SIMS

I mean at the Archive in general. Why haven't you quit?

MARTIN

Are you giving me my review now?

JONATHAN SIMS

No... We're clearly doing a whole heart-to-heart thing and, truth be told, the question's been bothering me. You've been living in the Archives for four months, constant threat of... this. Sleeping

with a fire extinguisher and a corkscrew. Even you must be aware that that's not normal for an archiving job? Why are you still here?

MARTIN

[Considering] Don't really know. I just am. It didn't feel right to just leave. I've typed up a few resignation letters, but I just couldn't bring myself to hand them in. I'm trapped here. It's like I can't... move on and the more I struggle, the more I'm stuck.

JONATHAN SIMS

Martin...You're not, uh... You didn't die here, did you?

MARTIN

What? What? N-No... what?!

JONATHAN SIMS

No, I just... No, just the way you phrased that...

MARTIN

Made you think I was a ghost?

JONATHAN SIMS

No... it's—

MARTIN

No, no... it's just that whatever web these statements have caught you in, well, I'm there too. We all are, I think.

(sigh)

... A ghost? Really?

JONATHAN SIMS

Shut up Martin.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

[FIRE ALARM] ELIAS Right, tell me again, please.

SASHA

You're kidding. ELIAS You did bring a tape recorder. I just thought John would appreciate as many supplementary recordings as possible. For the record.

SASHA

Well, for the record, if we don't do something now, it won't matter either way. ELIAS So... these are the worms he and Martin have been going on about?

SASHA

The ones terrorising us for months? Yeah!

ELIAS

to be honest I always thought they were just... overreacting. Other staff have seen them around, but no-one's reported any aggressive behaviour or anything like that. You know how those two are... John puts on a good show, but sometimes I swear he's worse than Martin.

SASHA

Look, Elias. I don't know what you think is going on, but I have just seen thousands of... fleshworms pouring out of the wall! God knows how long they've been hiding! Tim might be dead, and the others...

ELIAS

Of course. The fire alarm was a good move, but it does mean most staff have evacuated, so we'll deal have to with them ourselves.

SASHA

There are thousands of them, Elias.

ELIAS Not quite what I meant. On John's insistence I recently changed the Archive's fire suppression system to use carbon dioxide. Should have done it years ago, really...

SASHA

So why hasn't it gone off? ELIAS Because there isn't an actual fire.

SASHA

Right, right. Can we set it off manually? I think John's got a lighter somewhere. ELIAS He's not smoking again, is he? Anyway, it shouldn't be necessary. There is a manual release, a few floors down.

SASHA

Wait. Wait. Will it hurt Martin or John? ELIAS Almost certainly. Er, I'm not a doctor, but I know dumping a lot of CO2 on people isn't generally considered a good idea. I really don't want to have to

find another Archivist so quickly after Gertrude, but from what you say... it might be a mercy. You know the situation best, so...?

SASHA

Let's go. [CLICK] [CLICK] [FIRE ALARM CAN BE HEARD... AS CAN SOUND OF BANGING ON WALL]

MARTIN

I thought that wall was meant to be solid?!

JONATHAN SIMS

So did I. We don't have any sort of weapon, do we?

MARTIN

I mean... I mean, I suppose we could use...

JONATHAN SIMS

Don't say the corkscrew!

MARTIN

Okay.

JONATHAN SIMS

How many of them are outside of the door?

MARTIN

I don't know. I can't see because the window is covered in worms.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Right. Damn. Well, Martin I guess this is—

[SOUND OF PLASTERBOARD AND TILE BREAKING]

TIM

Hi guys!

MARTIN

Tim!

JONATHAN SIMS

Tim?! What the hell? I thought... how did you...?

MARTIN

You made it! **TIM** Funny story really. I ran into the office, worms everywhere, horrible death and everything, tripped and fell in some boxes and there were like 20 cans of gas in there.

MARTIN

Are, are you alright? You seem a bit... **TIM** Fine! Fine! Gas... bit light-headed. Not a lot of ventilation in the tunnels. Come on!

JONATHAN SIMS

In-Into the tunnels?

TIM

Yeah! Actually, not that many worms in there anymore. I think they've mostly gone into the Archive. Although the ones down here are faster for some reason. And quieter.

JONATHAN SIMS

You're not bitten, are you? **TIM** No, I don't think so! Have a look!

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes, alright Tim, you look fine. Put them back on, please.

MARTIN

Can can you walk, John?

JONATHAN SIMS

No, I can limp. **TIM** Then let's go!

JONATHAN SIMS

Martin, could you pass me the tape recorder?

MARTIN

Sure. I think it's running out, though.

JONATHAN SIMS

Fine. I suppose I can turn it back on when we're being eaten alive.

TIM

Why do you have a second tape recorder, Martin?

MARTIN

Oh, um... well, I've been using it to record myself. I write poetry and I think the tapes have a sort of... low-fi charm.

JONATHAN SIMS

... I see.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

SASHA

(Echoing) Okay, John. I know you'll want to know what's been happening. If you're still alive after this. The worms are on the upper floor. Not as many as down in the Archive, but enough.

I set the fire alarm off, so everyone's evacuated except me and Elias. I didn't see any signs of the fire brigade, but I haven't been near a window in a while. There was a... I guess you'd call it a... a wave of worms. I got cut off from Elias. I hope he made it to the fire system, but who knows. Maybe everyone's dead already.

I've had to retreat into Artefact Storage. That should tell you something about how bad it is out there. God, I hate this place.

Did I ever tell you I first joined the Institute as a practical researcher? I had to analyse and investigate all the stuff in here. Take notes after sleeping in the rusted chair, write in the memory book, all that sort of thing. I transferred after three months. Would've quit, but couldn't afford to back then. Never understood why they keep this stuff secret. I mean, we've, we've enough here to send any sceptic packing, but it's just locked away. I... I asked Elias about it once, but he just muttered something about funding and mission statements. He's good at changing the subject, isn't he?

Sorry. I'm rambling. No worms, though, so that's good.

Oh, hey. I've found... I've found that table you were talking about. Don't really see what all the fuss is about. Just a... basic... optical illusion. Nothing special... just... just a... wait...

(Panicked Whispering in to Tape Recorder) John! John, I think there's someone here. Hello? I see you. Show yourself.

[AUDIBLE DISTORTION]

[SASHA SCREAMS AND DROPS TAPE RECORDER]

[DISTORTED AUDIO FADES IN TO CRACKLING]

SASHA

(Sashas voice appears different and is warped) Hello? I see you.

[FOOTSTEPS]

SASHA

I see you.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

[WATER DRIPPING]

JONATHAN SIMS

Update. I don't know how long we've been down here. These tunnels are a maze, and we don't know where we are. We have four of the...

TIM

Martin's gone.

JONATHAN SIMS

I'm getting to that. Martin has disappeared. Tim was right about there being fewer worms down here, but they are much faster. More aggressive. None of us have been hit yet but... during one of the more alarming encounters, Martin ran off.

TIM

He thought we were behind him, I think.

JONATHAN SIMS

He didn't think at all. Tim was with me, and my leg slowed me down. He must have taken a turn we didn't see or something. We lost him. But, Tim has managed to find what looks to be an actual trapdoor, so... we won't need to bludgeon our way through any more drywall. I'm recording this in case...

TIM

In case the trapdoor opens back into the Archives and Prentiss is there to kill us.

JONATHAN SIMS

In as many words, yes. Tim?

TIM

Alright

[TRAPDOOR IS PUSHED OPEN NOW WORMS CAN BE HEARD WRITHING AND A FIREALARM]

PRENTISS

Archivist

TIM

Ah.

JONATHAN SIMS

Shit.

[CLICK]

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Outro]

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