

MAG 179 — Accomplice

Content Warnings

- Prison & Police brutality
- Fire & burning (including SFX)
- Trauma
- Human remains (including blood)
- Body horror
- Graphic animal attack (including SFX)
- Direct & gun violence (including SFX)
- Arguments
- Character death
- Grief
- Explicit language
- Mentions of: child abuse, substance abuse, murder, kidnapping

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill presents... *The Magnus Archives*. Episode one hundred and seventy-nine: "Accomplice."

[Theme finishes]

[Tape clicks on]

**[Wind swirls, while in the distance there is a chorus of industrial
furnace noise]**

**[Footsteps crunching on gravel; pause for a moment; then continue
until finding a shelter]**

(Deep breath)

[Hissing static starts]

ARCHIVIST

Right.

**[Machinery noise, like conveyors, carts and scoops, and the fiery
processing of waste]**

[A person shovels into a nearby furnace]

[Hissing static ends]

ARCHIVIST

The heat of the furnace curls the hair on Derek's arm. It burns in a way that is as familiar as it is stomach churning, like the end of a cigarette, or the flush of a childhood face as it tries to block out the noises, the shame of being told to stop lying by the policeman who plays poker with his dad. He tries not to touch the metal parts of his small workspace, as it is hot enough to raise blisters. But everything is metal here. His spade is metal. His hammer is metal. The tracks are metal that lead the rusted metal carts towards his furnace.

This load is full of children's toys. Not the sad and mouldy wooden ones he threw at his sister as a boy, but bright, colourful plastic that he recognises from his own daughter's birthdays, Christmases... happier times. The sight fills him with dread. Where did they get these? What has happened to Tilly? He wants to run, disappear into the night calling her name, but he remembers what

happened the last time he left his post, what the overseer took from him. His shovel digs into the pile of happy memories, and he tosses it into the flames, one gruelling motion after another. The burning plastic fumes hit him, and for a moment he staggers, reaching out a hand to steady himself. His palm sizzles as it comes to rest on the furnace, and he draws it back with a stifled yelp. He knows what happens in this place if you draw attention to yourself by screaming.

His shovel goes back into the pile, and meets an unexpected resistance. Something soft and almost spongy. He knows the texture well, and as he pulls the spade away, the bright blood on it confirms his fears. Another sharp sting of panic washes over him, electric pulses of fear causing his muscles to lock in place for a moment. Then he begins to load the furnace faster, frantically hurling away anything blocking the view of the body, desperately hoping to see—

It's not her. It's someone else. Derek doesn't know the man who lies in the cart, lifeless eyes staring at him from a head split in two by a careless shovel-blow. He pauses for a moment, then goes to his task, hacking up the corpse, and loading it into the hungry flames. The smell hits him, sickening him as it always does, tinged with that cloying, greasy nostalgia.

'I got you.' That's what Colin had always said to him when they were kids. And he had always meant it. When Derek needed somewhere to stay when his dad was on the warpath. 'I got you.' When Derek needed a little something to take the edge off. 'I got you.' When the lifeless body of Derek's father lay at the bottom of the stairs, limbs folded around the cricket bat he had hit him with. 'I got you.'

And Colin was right. He had.

Words can't really express the gratitude Derek felt as the body disappeared into the furnace of the junkyard where his friend, Colin, worked. No, friend wasn't a strong enough word. They were family in that moment. And they would always have each other's backs. When the police came hassling them, he had Colin's back. When some little dipshit didn't show the proper respect, he had Colin's back. When Colin needed someone by his side for a smash and grab, Derek had his back. And when one of them had to go down for three years... well, it seemed only fair.

[Metal bangs and rumbles as a cart moves away]

[Shovelling pauses]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

The rumble of wheels on old metal rails brings Derek back to himself as he sees the now empty, bloodstained cart rolling back and away from him.

Disappearing into the field of red-hot glowing metal. Another one would be coming soon, rolling inevitably towards him. What part of his life would he have to burn then. What thing he loved would he have to hurl into the flames. The apprehension is as familiar to him as the scent of burning hair. He knows what it means to wait, and see what he has lost.

The first time he got out he had lost his job and his home. The second time he got out he had lost his daughter. The third time he had lost the ability to walk the streets without being hounded by some bored cop, turning out his pockets, desperate for him to throw a punch. But it changed nothing. He always had Colin's back.

Something is coming. Derek can feel it. It's not the next cart, he knows *that* sound. It's quicker, more vicious. Panting, snarling, bloody feet speeding quietly over through the heat of the yard. A hatred, a deep, self-righteous loathing charging before him.

It is the sharp end of the violence that has wanted him all his life, and Derek has less than a second to recognise her face before she begins to tear him apart.

[A launched attack with animal snarling, followed by rending violence, then snatches of eating and animal grunts]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Another victim. Another hunt.

The pain and terror courses through him.

Derek is still aware as she toys with him, pulls bits from his torso, and chews them with a hundred sharpened teeth. He is aware, though not, perhaps, alive.

[Metal bangs and rumbles as a cart moves past the scene]

[Hissing static starts]

[Swirling wind and distant furnace noise resumes]

[footsteps on gravel]

BASIRA

She's here, then?

[Hissing static ends]

ARCHIVIST

(Surprised) Basira? I... I-I didn't hear you, uh...

BASIRA

No. I figured you wouldn't when you were... busy.

ARCHIVIST

I thought you were keeping watch.

BASIRA

I was. *Watched* you sneak away.

ARCHIVIST

Sorry.

BASIRA

You apologise too much.

ARCHIVIST

(Chuckling) Martin says the same thing.

BASIRA

(Chuckling) Like he's any better.

(Long beat)

Why didn't you want me to hear this one?

ARCHIVIST

What?

BASIRA

You weren't this cagey about the other ones, meaning you wanted to keep this one secret.

ARCHIVIST

Uhh... Hm.

BASIRA

Because this one was Daisy's victim?

(Beat)

ARCHIVIST

Yes.

(Beat)

BASIRA

Didn't think you knew what the statement was going to be before it happened?

ARCHIVIST

I just had a sense of it.

BASIRA

So... what? You thought I'd hear he was a murderer, and I'd agree with her? Maybe I'd figure she was doing the apocalypse a *favour* by taking him out?

ARCHIVIST

I don't know what I thought.

BASIRA

Sure.

ARCHIVIST

I don't know alright! I was... I was worried that if you listened, it might feel like an accusation. After everything we've already talked about, I-I mean... What good would it do for you to hear? What's in this one that you don't already know? People have their reasons for doing wrong? The system hurts everyone?

Just seemed kind of pointless.

BASIRA

Yeah. I guess.

ARCHIVIST

Huh, honestly, I just wanted to avoid this conversation.

BASIRA

Should've been sneakier, then.

ARCHIVIST

Yeah.

...Never been my strong suit, has it?

BASIRA

How many times have you been kidnapped at this point?

ARCHIVIST

That depends if you—

...Huh.

BASIRA

Say it.

ARCHIVIST

Depends if you count Daisy.

(Basira sighs)

So... You did hear it, then?

BASIRA

Yeah.

ARCHIVIST

What, uh... What did you think? Did it... help?

BASIRA

With what?

ARCHIVIST

I don't know.

(Beat)

BASIRA

Me neither.

[Martin — with backpack jangling — comes running]

MARTIN

(Breathless) Hey, she's- she's, she's here!

BASIRA

Wha-what? Now?

MARTIN

Yeah, yeah, she just, she just tore into a guy!

(Shaken) It was... He was, urgh...

ARCHIVIST

Yes, we understand, Martin.

BASIRA

You didn't think this was worth mentioning!?

ARCHIVIST

I didn't notice. I was talking to you!

BASIRA

Fine, whatever. Let's go.

(Sound of frustration from Martin)

[Tape click off]

[Tape click on]

**[Faint roar of furnace flames; sounds of chewing and cracking bone,
with rough bear-like breathing, that is stopped every so often so as
to sniff the air]**

[Tense movements as Basira takes aim]

ARCHIVIST

(Hushed) Is this a good enough angle? We can try and sneak round to the other side of the furnaces, but then the smoke wouldn't cover us—

BASIRA

It's fine. Shut up. I just need to focus.

ARCHIVIST

Alright.

[Basira shuffles and re-aims]

[Meat sounds, then Daisy removes a limb]

(Distressed martin sound)

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Take your time...

BASIRA

I will do as soon as you... Shut. Up.

[Basira re-aims, again]

(Martin gasps)

[A tin and glass are knocked over]

[Daisy pauses, sniffs the air, then resumes consumption]

(Beat)

BASIRA (CONT'D)

(Hushed, angry) The hell was that!?

MARTIN

Sorry! Sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

ARCHIVIST

What happened?

MARTIN

I-I thought you were about to fire.

BASIRA

So you gasped just in case?

MARTIN

Look, it's a tense situation alright? I don't know what I'm doing here. I'm not a sniper—

BASIRA

Goddamnit.

**[A growl comes from Daisy's direction; before recommencing
rendering noises]**

ARCHIVIST

Basira, are you sure you're up to this? It doesn't need to be right now. W-We can always back off, regroup, wait for a better situation. One where she isn't... elbow deep in some poor sod's corpse.

BASIRA

Don't do that.

ARCHIVIST

Sorry.

MARTIN

What am I missing here?

BASIRA

He knows as well as I do that the **only** reason we're even able to get this close is because she's busy with a kill. There isn't going to **be** a better opportunity.

MARTIN

Now or never then.

BASIRA

Yeah.

I made her a promise.

ARCHIVIST

You need to be certain.

BASIRA

I am.

[Basira takes aim again, hesitates again]

BASIRA (CONT'D)

Would you stop staring at me like that?

ARCHIVIST

Like *what*?

BASIRA

Like you've looked inside my head, and you don't like what you see.

ARCHIVIST

If that's an accusation, then you're wrong. I don't do that.

[Feasting sounds stop]

BASIRA

Right. Like you're suddenly given infinite power and no consequences, and *that's* when you decide to start respecting people's privacy.

ARCHIVIST

Is that really so hard to believe?

MARTIN

Uh...

BASIRA

Yeah, John. It is.

MARTIN

Guys, guys...

BASIRA

If you have something you want to say god-boy, just say it.

MARTIN

Guys...

ARCHIVIST

Look. I know it's hard and you have your reasons, but it is not *my* fault that you can't bring yourself—

MARTIN

(Exasperated, hushed) Shut up! Both of you!

BASIRA

What?

MARTIN

She's *gone*.

ARCHIVIST

Wait, what? Oh. Oh no.

BASIRA

Get down!

[Daisy leaps with a growl]

**[Physical struggle ensues between Daisy & the Archivist, growling
throughout]**

ARCHIVIST

Daisy, no!

BASIRA

Out the way!

MARTIN

Let him go!

BASIRA

Get out the way!

ARCHIVIST

Take the shot!

MARTIN

No, you'll hit John!

ARCHIVIST

Take the shot Basira!

BASIRA

Uh...

ARCHIVIST

Basira! Do it!

MARTIN

Don't!

BASIRA

I can't...

[Teeth and claw contact flesh, bone crunches; the Archivist is caught]

Daisy! Stop! Please.

(The Archivist whimpers)

**[Daisy's speech is low and guttural, expressed with difficulty
through a jaw unfamiliar to human words – some consonants
elongated, some vowels slurred]**

DAISY

Basira?

BASIRA

Oh god. Daisy...

ARCHIVIST

Daisy. Please let me go.

(Increased growling from Daisy and pained Archivist sounds)

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Ah... Or not. Or not.

MARTIN

Basira...

BASIRA

I know.

MARTIN

But John—

(Pained Archivist sound)

BASIRA

I know! Just give me a second...

[Daisy moves]

DAISY

Basira.

BASIRA

She knows who I am! She recognises me!

MARTIN

B-Basira!

BASIRA

Daisy, come back to us. You can come back. Please.

DAISY

Basira... C-come. Come on...

[Basira takes a step forward]

BASIRA

What?

DAISY

Come. Got to get them.

BASIRA

I... Sure. Just...

[Basira takes a step forward]

BASIRA (CONT'D)

...let him go.

[Daisy drops the Archivist with a low snarl]

(The Archivist collapses with a grunt)

MARTIN

Oh John! Oh shit. Shit, shit, shit. Okay, okay, okay, I've got you. I've got you.

[Martin rushes over to begin first aid]

ARCHIVIST

Argh! Ah! Ah!

MARTIN

I'm sorry! Sorry! Sorry! You j— You need to keep pressure on that leg while I-I sort this...um...

[Martin drops his backpack]

[Basira takes a step]

BASIRA

Daisy, please.

John, can you... Can you do anything?

DAISY

Basira...

ARCHIVIST

I'm sorry. I told you. She's too... too deep. I can't do anything, not without killing her.

BASIRA

(Pleadingly) Daisy. It's me. Come on, please...

DAISY

Partner. C-Come.

BASIRA

(Beat)

[Hissing static starts]

Oh. I see.

MARTIN

What?

BASIRA

She... she wants me to join her. In the Hunt.

MARTIN

What? Could... Is that even possible?

BASIRA

Yes.

I can feel it. In the blood.

ARCHIVIST

(Weakly) Basira...

[Basira takes three more steps]

BASIRA

I can't leave her like this. She's always had my back. Always.

MARTIN

Basira don't, please...

DAISY

Partner... Come...

[More footsteps]

BASIRA

Not now. Not after everything.

DAISY

(Impatient) Basira! Now!

BASIRA

I... can't.

DAISY

Basir—

[Gunshot]

(Daisy snarls)

[Two rapid gunshots]

[Daisy collapses into the rubble, dead]

[Hissing static ends]

[The distant rumble of machinery and furnaces continues]

(Breathing; there is nothing to say for a while)

MARTIN

Basira, I—

BASIRA

Shut up.

(Beat)

MARTIN

I'm sorry. I know—

BASIRA

(Dangerously) Shut. Up.

[Basira starts walking away]

MARTIN

No, Basira, wait! J-John's leg... Basira!

ARCHIVIST

(Emphatically) Let her go.

(Beat)

Is it... Is it awful that I wish she'd recognised me?

MARTIN

Daisy?

ARCHIVIST

Yeah. I mean, she was... We were friends there, sort of, near the end. We went through so much and it just... I wish I could have actually said goodbye.

MARTIN

Would it have made you feel any better about any of it?

ARCHIVIST

I don't know. Maybe? It's hard to know how I feel about anything these days.

(Beat)

MARTIN

We said our goodbyes to Daisy after the Institute. This was just... This was just dealing with all the stuff she left behind.

ARCHIVIST

...I suppose.

(Beat)

[Martin unzips a backpack and begins patching up the Archivist]

MARTIN

Come on, I need to patch that leg up properly. The last thing we need is a limp slowing us down.

(The Archivist winces)

Of course, that's assuming the bandages haven't transformed into snakes or something.

ARCHIVIST

Hmm? No, they're, they're fine.

MARTIN

I'd forgotten we had them to be honest. I packed them before I realised what a celebrity you were out here. I was starting to think I'd never need them. I'm surprised she could hurt you at all.

ARCHIVIST

Yes, that came as a bit of a shock to me as well, actually.

MARTIN

You didn't know?

ARCHIVIST

I didn't think to check. Just, sort of, assumed it was safe.

MARTIN

That's a pretty big assumption, John.

ARCHIVIST

Hmmm. Apparently. I mean I know it sounds strange but it... it felt right for Daisy to be able to hurt me.

MARTIN

Dream logic again?

ARCHIVIST

Mmm. The... resonances from our relationship before the change carried over and—

(Pained sounds from the Archivist)

MARTIN

Hold still.

[Returning footsteps]

MARTIN (CONT'D)

How're you doing?

BASIRA

(Weary) How do you think?

MARTIN

Sure.

BASIRA

I'm... going to stay here. Burn the body.

ARCHIVIST

Of course. We can wait. I still need to, uh...

BASIRA

No. You go on. I'll make my own way to London.

[The backpack is zipped up again]

MARTIN

What? No, don't be daft, it's not a problem for us to wait while you deal with this.

BASIRA

Please. Just go.

(Beat)

MARTIN

Wait, seriously?

ARCHIVIST

Basira, if you travel on your own, if you're not with us... I can't guarantee your safety.

BASIRA

Good.

MARTIN

Basira, getting yourself hurt isn't going to help anyone.

BASIRA

It's just... something I have to do.

You said follow the tower, right?

ARCHIVIST

Right.

MARTIN

No, no, this is ridiculous. You could die.

BASIRA

I'll do my best not to.

MARTIN

(Crosstalk) This isn't a joke, Basira!

ARCHIVIST

(Crosstalk) Martin, this is what she needs.

MARTIN

No, no! It's... it's complet—

BASIRA

It'll... It'll help me. All going well, I'll meet you both in London. *He'll* know where to find me.

ARCHIVIST

So, you won't mind if I check up on you sometimes?

BASIRA

If you must. But don't overdo it. I *don't* like being watched.

ARCHIVIST

Understood.

Come on then, Martin.

MARTIN

Wh-What? So that's it, we just head off, and hope you make it?

BASIRA

Yeah.

MARTIN

Why don't we rest on it, hmm? I know we all need a moment, and John can barely stand—

ARCHIVIST

Honestly, I'm starting to feel better already.

[The Archivist stands up]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

I just need to stretch it out a bit.

(Grunt from Archivist as he stretches)

[Martin rises up to standing]

MARTIN

We're not doing this.

BASIRA

(Softly) Martin. Please.

(Beat)

[Martin pats dust off himself]

MARTIN

You'd better look after yourself.

BASIRA

I will.

ARCHIVIST

(Gently) Come on.

[Footsteps as Martin walks away]

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

For what it's worth... I'm sorry it had to work out like this.

BASIRA

I'm not.

[Tape clicks off]

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Outro]

JONATHAN SIMS

The Magnus Archives is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Sharealike 4.0 International licence. Today's episode was written by Jonathan Sims, produced by Lowri Ann Davies, and directed by Alexander J Newall. It featured: Jonathan Sims as The Archivist, Alexander J Newall as Martin Blackwood, Frank Voss as Basira Hussain, and Fay Roberts as Alice "Daisy" Tonner. To subscribe, buy merchandise, or join our Patreon, visit rustyquill.com. Rate and review us online, tweet us at [TheRustyQuill](https://twitter.com/TheRustyQuill), visit us on Facebook, or email us via

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