

MAG – 040 – Human Remains

Content Warnings

Worms

- **Worm**
- **Infestation**
- **Supernatural impersonation**
- **Discussions of: of: blood, character death, blackouts, memory loss/alteratio**
- **blood, character death, blackouts, memory loss/alteration police, animal remains, guns**
- **Mentions of: blood, character death, blackouts, memory loss/alteration**
- **SFX: Static, high-pitched tones, brief shouting**

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

[Weary] Statement of, uh...

ELIAS

John... as your boss, I'm telling you to go home.

JONATHAN SIMS

I'm fine.

ELIAS

Look. You look like a mummy. You need rest.

JONATHAN SIMS

Our friends in the hazmat suits gave me a clean bill of health, bloody holes notwithstanding. And they seemed quite keen to quarantine anyone showing even the slightest sign of infection. It's just pain.

ELIAS

The paramedics said your lungs need fresh air. Tim's as well.

JONATHAN SIMS

It's fresh enough down here.

ELIAS

A basement filled with a thousand rotting worm carcasses? Surely we could do this in my office?

JONATHAN SIMS

No. I need to be here. Keep watch. I need to be sure...

ELIAS

John! She's gone. I went with the ECDC people when they took her away. I watched her body burn. Jane Prentiss is dead. You can relax.

JONATHAN SIMS

You know why I can't. When Martin found...

ELIAS

That's a matter for the police.

JONATHAN SIMS

Fine! Fine. I'll go home as soon as I have everyone's statements.

ELIAS

Very well.

JONATHAN SIMS

Statement of Elias Bouchard, Head of the Magnus Institute, regarding the... infestation by the entity formerly known as Jane Prentiss. Statement recorded direct from subject, 29th July 2016. Whenever you're ready.

ELIAS

There isn't a lot to tell for my part. This afternoon, just after lunch, I was going over some budgets in my office, as I normally do on a

Tuesday, when the fire alarm started going off. It was annoying, but not too worrying at first. I packed my work away, and began to calmly head towards the evacuation point, when Sasha came barrelling through the door, babbling about worms, and clutching a tape recorder.

I told her that whatever was wrong should wait until we were out of the building, as there may be a fire. She told me she had set off the fire alarm to get everyone out, and that you and Martin and Tim were currently trapped by Jane Prentiss. Obviously this got my attention, and I suggested she turn the tape recorder on, largely so this sort of debrief wouldn't be necessary. Did you not get the tape?

JONATHAN SIMS

No. There was... some sort of problem. Sasha tells me the tape was lost.

ELIAS

Hmm Well, I explained to her about the recently installed fire suppression system, and said that, as there was no actual fire, we'd need to activate it manually. We hurried down, and it was clear everyone else had already evacuated. We... had reached the ground floor when... well...

I... know I have often seemed dismissive of your concerns before, and in fact I was getting ready to raise the issue of Martin's continuing to live in the Institute's basement, especially as I believe he's been stealing fire extinguishers. But... honestly, I didn't fully appreciate what you'd been talking about until I turned that corner and we saw what I can only describe as a... a tidal wave of filth rushing towards us. I feel somewhat ashamed to admit I didn't

really pay any attention to Sasha as I ran, and must have lost her at some point. We became separated.

I composed myself, and decided on a more roundabout route to the boiler room. Luckily it seemed the things were mainly concentrated in that one mass, leaving the other corridors largely vacant. It took me ten minutes, maybe fifteen, but I made it with only one close call. The sight of rows and rows of huge, red CO2 canisters was certainly something of a comfort. I do apologise that it took me quite so long to figure out how to actually work the system. If I'd been quicker...

JONATHAN SIMS

It's fine.

We're alive.

ELIAS

Yes. Well. I turned on the fire suppression system. And... that's when I heard the scream. I can't really describe it but... well, I'm sure I don't need to, you were a lot closer to it than I was.

JONATHAN SIMS

It's the last thing I remember before blacking out. Tens of thousands of... things without mouths screaming as one.

ELIAS

Yes. Horrible sound. Anyway, I called the fire department, ambulance and a contact at the ECDC who had previously been

involved in the Prentiss investigation. Once I was sure most of the gas would have dissipated, I headed down to the Archives to see what had happened. Sasha was already there, but you and Tim were in a bad shape. It looked like a few dozen worms had been going into each of you when the carbon dioxide killed them. Was like bloody Swiss che—

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes... thank you. I remember everything from when the ambulance arrived. Quarantine, bandaging, et cetera. When did Martin get back?

ELIAS

It was about an hour after they'd taken you and Tim away. They were prepping Prentiss' corpse for disposal, when Martin burst out of that trapdoor you found, screaming that he'd found a body. So we called the police.

JONATHAN SIMS

Tell me what happened to Gertrude Robinson.

ELIAS

John, how many times do we need to go over this?

JONATHAN SIMS

We've never got it on tape.

ELIAS

You can barely stand. Just... why don't we just do this tomorrow?

...

Fine.

JONATHAN SIMS

On the 15th of March last year, I had a query about a statement one of our researchers was after and went down to the Archives. Gertrude wasn't there, but her desk was covered in blood. I called the police, and there was a huge search, but there no sign was found of Gertrude, alive or dead. She didn't have any assistants, so there were no witnesses, and no-one saw or heard anything. The police tested the blood and confirmed the DNA matched to Gertrude, though I don't know why they had her on file. They judged there to be almost a gallon of blood spilled, far more than the human body can lose and survive, so I assumed she was dead and left the investigation to the police, for all that good it did me. And I appointed another archivist.

Martin finding her body in the tunnels is as much a mystery to me as it is to you.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Right. Thank you, Elias.

Statement ends.

Can you send in Tim?

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

TIM

[Tired] Do you need much? I'd really like to go home.

JONATHAN SIMS

I sympathise. It won't take more than a few minutes. I just... I need the parts that weren't on tape at the time.

TIM

Sure. Just... quarantine, y'know? Not as much fun as it sounds.

JONATHAN SIMS

You were certainly in there longer than I was. Everything alright?

TIM

Yeah, I just made some joke about itching and suddenly they were doing a whole bunch more tests.

JONATHAN SIMS

Well, itching is one of

TIM

I know! I know. I was trying to lighten the mood. I'm fine, though. Except for the holes. And the pain. And the blood and the nightmares. Could've been worse though, eh? Another couple of minutes and...

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes. Yes. It was... Anyway, statement of Timothy Stoker, archival assistant at the Magnus Institute, regarding the infestation by the entity formerly known as Jane Prentiss. Statement recorded direct from subject, 29th July 2016. Just take it from when you got back from lunch.

TIM

Well, I could tell something was wrong as soon as I got back. It was quiet. I mean, it's normally quiet, but it was dead quiet. I spotted the tape recorder lying on the ground, and went over to, er, see if it was damaged, and as I was checking it I heard Sasha shouting. It's a bit of blur, to be honest, 'cause when I turned around, there she was. Prentiss. Her face so full of holes it's like, "my eyes are up here", but they're not, you know? They're just... She tried to say something, but I don't know, I couldn't really understand her through all the...

So, I could see the worms were coming through the floor, the walls, everywhere. The whole "we're safe inside the Archive thing"? Not so much. I don't know what I was going to do, I think I was going to try and hit her, but that's when Sasha knocked me to the floor. It, it was a good move, actually. Prentiss didn't seem to expect it, and we crushed a lot of worms when we fell. They were slow to react, and we were running before they really went for us. I mean, all this happened in the space of a few seconds, so I'm not exactly certain. Sasha had to basically drag me behind her. I saw the shelf in front of us was about to topple. There were so many worms on it so, being the hero I am, I let go of her hand and told her to get help. She made it out the main door. I turned to run into the office. I was

just trying to get a door between me and Prentiss. I didn't know that's where you made the first hole.

There were loads of them. Some jumped at me as I ran inside so I dodged out the way, but ended up sprawling into this pile of boxes that I thought were case files. Instead, I found myself lying on top of a whole bunch of CO2 canisters, which are damn hard by the way. The worms were still coming, so I used them. I mean, I went full Gas-Rambo. After that... my memory gets a bit fuzzy. I think the paramedic called it 'respiratory acidosis'... from breathing in all the carbon dioxide, rather than your more traditional oxygen. I remember finishing the first few extinguishers killing the things, but they kept coming, so I grabbed a few more, and saw the massive hole in the wall. There didn't seem much point staying, so I went into the tunnels. They were cold, dry. You know that worm smell? That earthy rotten smell?

JONATHAN SIMS

Oh yes.

TIM

Well, yeah. There weren't so many down there. I think they were almost all in the Archives. I have a theory, actually. I think they weren't ready to attack when you found the tunnels. It's like, something in the Institute slows them down, and makes them, um, heh, sluggish.

And that noise they make? That squirming sound? They don't make it when they're in the tunnels. I don't know why. It was only when they came into the Institute. Maybe the light, or the aircon, or

something? I'm not sure, but I think it made them weaker, and they've been down there for months, breeding, building up their numbers until there were enough to properly bury us. Except you found that hidden passage, and they had to act.

JONATHAN SIMS

Maybe. Could you... describe the tunnels?

TIM

You were there.

JONATHAN SIMS

Humour me.

TIM

I remember they sloped down and up and around. I couldn't keep track of where I was. I did see some more worms, though. They were fast. I only saw a couple, but it was still proper jumpscare territory. I got them, though. It was really surreal. I only had my phone's torch, and it was hard to keep an eye out, I was so light headed.

I wandered for, I don't know, maybe ten minutes before I found a wall that seemed different. It looked like someone had just put some plasterboard over an entrance, and I could hear you and Martin on the other side. I broke through and, well, you were there for the rest.

JONATHAN SIMS

Quite. You... you weren't there when Martin found the body, though, were you?

TIM

No. I was quarantined, same as you.

JONATHAN SIMS

And you didn't see it in the tunnels when you were first exploring?

TIM

No. I did see... uh, I mean, maybe...

JONATHAN SIMS

What?

TIM

No, it's just... I think I was still gassed, and it was dark, but... I found a room.

JONATHAN SIMS

Go on.

TIM

I didn't stay long, 'cause it had a lot of worms in, and they weren't acting like the others. They were sort of... wrapping around each other, like they were trying to form a... thing, like a structure or something. A ring.

I was probably still out of my skull, and half-hallucinated the whole thing, but it looked like they were trying to make a doorway.

JONATHAN SIMS

A doorway? Is it still there?

TIM

No. I pumped two full extinguishers into that room. Nothing was getting out.

JONATHAN SIMS

Good. Good. Go home, Tim. Get some sleep.

TIM

Heh.

Yeah.

Sure.

{CLICK}

[CLICK]

JONATHAN SIMS

Statement of Sasha James, archival assistant at the Magnus Institute, regarding the invasion by the entity formerly known as Jane Prentiss. Statement recorded direct from subject, 29th July 2016. In your own time.

NOT!SASHA

Yes... Where do you want me to begin? I was with you until I ran out to save Tim. Then we were separated, and I fled into the Institute proper. I pulled a fire alarm, because the worms were following me, and I didn't want anyone else to get hurt. I went to Elias. We talked. We were going to save you, but the worms came, and I fled into the Artefact Storage room. You know I hate the Artefact Storage room, so it must have been bad.

JONATHAN SIMS

You used to work there, didn't you?

NOT!SASHA

Yes, for three months. It was dreadful. I used to think that it was the most dangerous place in the Institute.

JONATHAN SIMS

Not anymore.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, not anymore. It was safe enough. The worms didn't get in, and I stayed there until the fire system deployed, then I ran out to get to a window. I saw the worms in the main Institute. They shrivelled and died. I don't think I'll ever forget that scream though. I could hear Prentiss screaming even from there.

JONATHAN SIMS

Well, it's thanks to you, to be honest. If you hadn't met that 'Michael' thing...

NOT!SASHA

Yes, Michael... With the bones in his hands. We still don't know much about him, do we?

JONATHAN SIMS

No, not yet. Sorry, getting... distracted. You got as far as Jane Prentiss' death.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, I returned to the Archives, and all the worms were dead. You and Tim were lying there, but you weren't moving. You just lay there, the dead worms still half inside of you. The trapdoor was open next to you, and more were inside. I went over to check, and you were alive, so I pulled you back to where there was more air, and began to remove the worms.

Are you alright?

JONATHAN SIMS

Sorry, just... difficult to hear, you know.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, I understand. That was when Elias arrived with the fire brigade and doctors and the hazmat people. They talked to me for a long time, and I did my best to explain the situation. They checked me for worm-marks, but I was fine. They took you away, so I waited with Elias. He was looking at me strangely, but we were both quiet. It had been a very strange day. After an hour or so, we heard cries from the trapdoor. It was Martin. He was shouting about a body. We got him out, and Elias tried to get him to calm down and explain. He said he'd found the body of the previous Archivist, Gertrude Robinson, and that was when Elias called the police. I tried to calm him down, but he was in bad shape. The police arrived, and I gave them pretty much this same statements.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right... Right. What about the tape? You had the tape recorder, the one I'd just recorded Mr. Ramao's statement on, but when you gave it back, it was empty.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, I dropped it a few times. The eject button must have been hit. I didn't notice until you pointed it out. It's probably around somewhere. Is it that important

JONATHAN SIMS

It's important to me. Are you feeling alright? You seem a bit out of it.

NOT!SASHA

Yes, I'm very tired. It's hard to keep track of things sometimes.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Go get some rest, Sasha.

NOT!SASHA

Yes. I will.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

MARTIN

I mean, I already told the police.

JONATHAN SIMS

Well, now tell me. I need to hear it. I need to record it.

MARTIN

I... alright. Are you okay?

JONATHAN SIMS

Fine. Painkillers are starting to wear off, but... It's fine. Statement of Martin Blackwood, archival assistant, etcetera, etcetera. Go.

MARTIN

Right. Well, I was doing some background checks for case 0081709, when you and Sasha started screaming, so I went to che...

JONATHAN SIMS

Yes, yes, I was there! I was with you for almost the whole time, and that tape survived just fine.

MARTIN

Sorry.

JONATHAN SIMS

Ah, it's fine. I just... I only need from when you got separated. From when you got lost in the tunnels.

MARTIN

No, I mean... I'm sorry I left you.

JONATHAN SIMS

...Oh Martin.

MARTIN

(Tearfully) It was an accident. I thought you two were with me! I mean, the worms came at us, and they were so much faster, and then there was the gas, and the running, and I just... I, I thought you were right behind me. But when I turned round you were gone. You were both gone. It was an accident.

JONATHAN SIMS

I know. It's fine, Martin. Everybody's...

(sigh)

Everyone's fine... I just need you to tell me what happened next, and then it's finished.

MARTIN

Alright. So, um, yeah, we got separated so I, I tried shouting, but you didn't answer. The walls seemed to kill the sound dead and there wasn't any echo. They were old stone, like, really old, and there was no light except my torch. I, I always keep my torch on me, ever since I moved into the Archives, so I had that, at least.

I wandered for a while. It's a, it's a maze down there, John. I don't know how far the passages go. Maybe miles. I think it must be the old Millbank Prison, like Tim was saying before. I even found some stairs at one point, but I really didn't want to go down them. I hadn't seen any worms for a few minutes, and weirdly enough that actually started to worry me, like, if there weren't any worms then I'd gone too far from the Institute. And there was more dust in those corridors too, and dead rats, even some discarded wine bottles. At one point there was an empty packet of mint imperials—

JONATHAN SIMS

Martin...

MARTIN

Sorry. Yeah. Um. I was trying to go back, not that I knew what back even meant down there, when I heard the scream. I don't even know how to go about describing it, but I thought... well I hoped...

Well, when I started to find the shrivelled bodies of worms all over the place, I knew she was dead. So I wanted to get out of there. I was looking for a way up, but it felt more and more like I was trapped. Every turn just led me to another empty corridor. When I finally found a door, I thought it might actually get out, but instead... It was a small room. Square. There was dust on everything. Cardboard boxes were piled around. They were full of old cassette tapes.

JONATHAN SIMS

That's where you found her?

MARTIN

Yes. She was sat in a wooden chair in the middle of the room. No worms. No cobwebs. Just... an old corpse. Gertrude Robinson. She was slumped forward, but I could see her mouth hanging open. So I ran, and I found the trapdoor soon afterwards.

JONATHAN SIMS

Could you find the room again?

MARTIN

I don't know. Maybe. The police certainly expect me to, although I got the feeling they're not too keen to explore the tunnels either.

JONATHAN SIMS

Martin, how did Gertrude Robinson die?

MARTIN

I don't know. Not for sure. It was so dark, and I only saw the body for a few seconds. The police were quite clear that the cause of death could be absolutely any...

JONATHAN SIMS

Martin! How did she die?

MARTIN

She was shot! Three times, that I could see. Three shots to the chest.

JONATHAN SIMS

Right. Right. Thank you Martin.

MARTIN

... Sure.

[CLICK]

[CLICK]

JONATHAN SIMS

Gertrude Robinson, the last Archivist at the Magnus Institute, and my predecessor, was murdered. There were no worms to infest her, no strange, ghostly apparitions to warp her mind, or caves to entomb her. She was killed, in the Archives, by someone who used

a gun, and that scares me far more than any spectre or twisted creature. Because that means someone here is a killer.

The police will investigate thoroughly, I have no doubt, but... given their track record in this matter I am not optimistic.

There is something in these files, in these statements. I know that now, some deeper mystery. I think Gertrude Robinson found it, and I think that is why they killed her.

Some of my tapes are missing. Maybe it was Prentiss, but she seemed more interested in the written files, and the other tapes seem fine. There's no sign of debris, or anything that would indicate they've been destroyed, but, in addition to the tape Sasha lost earlier, the tapes for cases 0051701 and 0160204 are gone.

I don't know why these two specifically, but I cannot trust anyone. I'm going to figure this out, and I'm not going to stop.

They'll have to kill me first.

End recording.

[CLICK]

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Outro]

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