

MAG – 117 – Testament

[The Magnus Archives Theme - Intro]

JONATHAN SIMS

Rusty Quill Presents The Magnus Archives Episode One Hundred And Seventeen
Testament

[The Magnus Archives Theme – Intro - Continues]

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ARCHIVIST

Statement of Jonathan Sims, Head Archivist of the Magnus Institute, London, regarding the upcoming... uh, operation. 2nd August 2017. Recording taken direct from subject.

I wanted to get some thoughts down before... everything. We all should, actually; I'll mention it to them. It looks like it's decided. Myself, Daisy, Basira and, uh, Tim are all going to be heading off to this 'House of Wax'. We're to sneak in as best we can; Daisy will set the charges while we, what was the phrase she used, "run interference". Then we set them off once the ritual begins. Gertrude's notes were pretty clear: unless the ritual is underway, any damage we do can be easily repaired. But if we time it right, it'll be... centuries, maybe, before they can try again. Of course, if we time it wrong ...

Daisy's been pretty clear that she thinks the best chance of success would be for her to go in alone and, honestly, I struggle to disagree. But Tim isn't going to sit home and wait, and Elias seems pretty insistent I go along. Part of me

thinks it's just so he can see if whatever this "preparation" he's been trying to do on me works. And you know what? That same petty little part of me rather hopes it doesn't. That all this time all his cryptic nudges and learn-to-fly-by-falling attitude ends up being a complete waste of time. Just to show him. Even so, I, I— It wouldn't feel right not going. I think Basira is the same. She's coming along to back up Daisy, or so she says. I don't quite get those two. I suppose what they've done, seeing what they've seen... It's a hell of a bond. The sort of thing I've mostly done alone. Hm. Still, it does sometimes make it hard to fully trust them.

No. You know what? No. I'm done with that. No more paranoia. It's almost got me killed more than once and Georgie was right. If I am, uh, slipping, then I need people I can trust. And I don't think that can happen naturally for me anymore, so I'm making a decision. I trust them. All of them. Except Elias, obviously, that's not... I mean, I've listened to the tapes. I've listened to the tapes – I know what they talk about behind my back. How much they've... suffered, because of this place. Because of me. God, poor Melanie... And aside from some, uh, office gossip, which, I'm not sure is... necessary, uh, or conducive to a workplace that... hm. It's natural. It's normal. There's no... sinister hidden motives, or... It's fine. It's fine.

So, I guess... Sometime in the next few days, I go on a commando mission to blow up a wax museum. It's not exactly what I was expecting from an archiving job. I do worry about Martin and Melanie, leaving them behind, but I suppose that's part of trusting someone, isn't it? Letting them help how they can.

(Bitter laugh) Oh, yeah. I found something on the other body the circus stole, this “George Icarus”. Apparently he was interred earlier this year. I did a bit of, uh, digging, and it looks like the plot and the headstone were paid for by... the Magnus Institute. And I can think of only one man who died within the last few months who the institute would want buried under a pseudonym, only one who spent his life so close to fear that his skin would be useful in a ritual like this. I don’t know what to actually do with this information, but... God. Jurgen Leitner. I just can’t be rid of him.

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BASIRA

Statement of Basira Hussein, 2nd August 2017, at the request of Jonathan Sims.

I don’t ... I don’t really know why I’m here. I mean, I know how I got here, all the decisions I made until suddenly, yup, this is my life. But not the why, not really. Does that make sense? [Sighing] I don’t want to be here, but by the end I didn’t want to be police either, so ... Guess I don’t really know what I do want, which— Maybe that’s just as well. My options, they’ve gotten a lot narrower over the last year. I don’t know; I feel kind of bad. Everyone seems to be having a much worse time of it than me, but I was meant to be the hostage. It’s amazing how much you can ignore when you keep your head in a book.

My dad would hate me talking like this. He couldn't stand people who just passively moaned about their problems. He always said, "If you don't like something, you accept it and you adapt, or you fight and you change it. Whining doesn't help." I always tried to live like that, but I think sometimes you feel like you're accepting, but it's just denial. Well, not anymore. I'm going to fight and change it. I just hope I'm not heading into the wrong battle. I suppose if John screws up, it wouldn't hurt the others to have a trained pair of hands to help, so waxworks it is. I just wish it didn't feel so much like abandoning Melanie ... and Martin.

But at least Daisy's coming along. I mean, I know she's... difficult. Everything they say about her, it's true, it's fair, but she's solid. She's a ... a fixed point, and if she's there, I know exactly where I stand, exactly what I'm doing, relative to her. She has no doubts. We go in, we plant bombs, we leave, we blow it all to hell. Or we die. I don't think I'll ever have clarity like that. Despite everything she's done, she's still the best partner I ever had.

I just hope John can keep it together. And Tim. God, Tim... I know they've been through a lot, but they've never taken something like this on before, and if it's anything like when we went after Rayner... It's going to get bad, the sort of bad you can only get through if you stay focused and keep a clear head. You choke down the fear, and not because its feeding some weird, horrible god like John thinks, but because that's how you keep going.

I guess ... I guess we're all just going to have to do what we can and see what comes out the other side. How the hell did I end up having to save the world?

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(Click)

(Melanie clears her throat)

MELANIE

Melanie King. 2nd August 2017. 11:23pm.

It's late. I don't know what time the others are leaving. Might be tomorrow morning, I guess. They don't really tell me that sort of thing. They're going to let me and Martin know when they're ready, when everything's about to actually kick off. I should probably wish them luck and hope that there isn't going to be some kind of horrifying apocalypse but... it's rather hard to hope for anything at the moment. Hope isn't really good for anything. It's always been action with me, it's been doing things that helps. Never really seen the point of hope. I know why I'm not a part of this action. I do. I have my own stuff to take care of. They think they're giving me a chance to face my demons by helping to take down Elias. They don't get that the only way to deal with something like him is to watch his eyes go dead with your hands around his throat. I'll play it their way for now, but when it comes down to it, I want to see him dead.

(Sighing) I ... I'm so angry. Sometimes, when John's going off on one about his latest "insight", it's all I can do not to punch him in the teeth. I feel like I've always been fighting. No-one makes space for people like me. You've got to elbow the comfortable idiots out of the way and then claw your way up with

gritted teeth. I've had to struggle for everything. I know it sounds stupid, to call starting a ghost hunting show a fight, but it was. Tooth and nail. And I won. And then I went to that hospital and I met John and it all fell apart. But I'm still fighting.

For all the good it's done me: still stuck; still miserable; still angry. New traumas, but they hurt just like the old ones. Elias thinks he's got this ingenious way to hurt people, but it's just the same old bullshit in a creepy new package. Asshole. God, I want just want to rip his—

(Deep breath)

When did I start to lose the parts of me that weren't just anger?

Hm. So, if you listen to this, John, if you survive, I know you wanted a statement about my trip to India. So... Well...

In 1919, British troops massacred almost a thousand unarmed civilians in Amritsar. You know I was looking into spectres of war and violence, and I found reports that these soldiers' ghosts were still manifesting. I did my research and I figured out where and when I thought it was going to happen next. I told you what I was doing, and then I went to see for myself. I was right, they did manifest, but they weren't what I thought they'd be, they were... fused somehow, all... mixed together. A huge angry mass of dead flesh. And guns. I ran away, obviously I ran away. It wasn't like it could chase me, but... It turned out their bullets were more solid than I'd have guessed for ghostly antiques and one of them got me. I had it sewn up at the hospital, said I'd been

mugged, although the scans couldn't find anything in there. And then I came home.

So yes, that's it. That's all you're getting because it hurt like hell to live through and I didn't do it so you could stroke your chin and call it fascinating.

Good luck, John. I do hope you win. But I also hope it hurts.

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MARTIN

Um. Statement of Martin Blackwood, on the night of his... colleagues' departure. Statement given direct. August 3rd, 2017.

Statement begins.

I, uh... I'm scared. I guess. No, wait, no, no, I mean... **(Frustrated)** Oh, I don't want that to be my last message, the thing that defines me. "Martin Blackwood. He was always scared, then he died. The end." I don't want that. But it's true, isn't it? I mean, if you're right, if these things out there are eating our fear then I'm a, a ... luxury smorgasboard, I suppose? I'm just afraid all the time.

I know, I know, I'm not going to die. I'm not even going on the incredibly dangerous mission. Me and Melanie, well... I don't think death is really the

worry. It's just... This feels like an ending, or something, like nothing can go back to normal after this. But hey, I mean, what's normal, right? Is living in an old document storage normal? Is losing a friend and not even noticing normal? Corridors? Evil all-seeing managers? I suppose you can get used to anything. But this feels different. I need them to be safe. I need him to be ok.

Sorry.

I'm not afraid for me, though. Isn't that weird? I mean, it's not like I'm going to be safe, like my plan's not dangerous. But it's mine. This last couple of years I've always been running, always hiding, caught in someone else's trap. But now it's my trap, and... well ... I think it'll work. I know, it's not exactly intricate, but it felt good, weaving my own little web.

Oh Christ, I hope John doesn't actually listen to these. **(Mimics Archivist's voice)** "Good Lord! Is Martin becoming some sort of spider-person?" **(Normal voice again)** No, John, it's an expression. Chill out. Besides, spiders are fine! I mean, yes, people are scared of them, obviously, but actual spiders, they just want to help you out with flies.

Anyway. I guess I'm just sick of sitting on my hands, drinking tea and hoping everyone's ok. This way, I finally get to do something. It's going to hurt, but... I'm ready. And I want to. Also, I get to burn some stuff so that's cool. I just... really hope everyone else makes it back. I don't want to win on my own.

Oh, and I hope the world doesn't end. Obviously.

Just don't die, John. Or Tim. Or Basira. Or Daisy, I guess. Just everyone please make it back home.

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(Deep, steadying breaths, as a pistol is loaded & holstered, and a combat knife is drawn & sharpened)

DAISY

Okay.

(Click)

(Click)

TIM

All right. I don't know what you are. I don't even know if you're listening. I don't care. Just, if you're there, I want you to know that I hate you. I hate you for witnessing what's happened to us.

I used to blame my brother, for going off on one and poking around where he wasn't wanted. I used to blame myself for not helping him. But now... Now it doesn't matter. I've read through enough of these things to know that this doesn't matter. The only thing you need to have your life destroyed by this stuff is just bad luck. Talk to the wrong person, take the wrong train, open the wrong door, and that's it.

I'm going to hurt them, though. I'm going to hurt the thing that stole my brother and wrecked my life. I'm the 'distraction'. If it looks like any of the... circus folk, mannequins, whatever, are going to see the others, I'm to make the biggest mess I can. Draw them away; keep them busy. I know what it means. They gave it to me because they think I'll get angry and do something stupid anyway. And they're probably right. So maybe it's for the best.

You know, for the longest time I thought the secret was in balance, in some dusty old architect's work on symmetry, but he failed, didn't he? What was he even trying to achieve? He lived like anyone else. He died like anyone else. Whatever he was looking for in his "Balance and Fear", I don't think he found it.

From what I can tell, there's only one person who's managed to hurt them, to really hurt them. And that's Gertrude Robinson. She was cold, ruthless, and she hit them when they were vulnerable, and she sacrificed a lot of people to do it.

Honestly? I hope that John learns something from her, because... because I don't expect I'm going to be coming back from this. I don't know if I want to. And if he needs to pull the trigger, to use me to stop it, well he'd better have the guts to do it.

Timothy Stoker, August 4th, 2017. **(Chuckling bitterly)** Statement ends.

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ARCHIVIST

That's it then, I think. Except ...

(Page flapping)

I, uh, I haven't burned it. Gerard's page. Gerry. I... I know there's more he could tell me. He wouldn't, of course, I know that, but he... It would still be there. That knowledge, it would still exist. I-I-I can't. I want to help, I want to... I'm scared.

Come on. On tape, just do it.

(Ragged breathing as lighter opens)

Do it!

(Ignition and page catches. Archivist cries out in pain)

(Recovering) You owe me one, Gerry. Rest in— Just rest.

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[The Magnus Archives Theme - Outro]

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Today's episode was written by Jonathan Sims and directed by Alexander J Newall.

It featured: Jonathan Sims as the Archivist, Alexander J Newall as Martin Blackwood, Mike LeBeau as Tim Stoker, Frank Voss as Basira Hussain, Lydia Nicholas as Melanie King and Fay Roberts as Alice 'Daisy' Tonner.