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The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 9
"Rolling With It"**

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Edited by Jonathan Sims**

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ANNOUNCER

This episode is dedicated to Sofia Eickstedt, statement regarding their entrapment in The Podcast. Oh please god if anyone can hear this please send help. I haven't been a physical being in so long. I'm losing myself to this podcast. Wait what's that over there? An episode of a sequel? It's so intriguing. I can't help but reach out my non-existent hands to it. O-oh no not again! Oh the horrors! Noooooo-

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Nine – Rolling With It**

[Music]

1. INT. O.I.A.R. OFFICE – NIGHT, CLEAR (COMPUTER)

**SAM is sat at his desk filling in a huge pile of paperwork and singing tunelessly under his breath.
Celia enters.**

CELIA

Evening.

SAM

(distracted)

Hey.

Celia puts her bags down, sits and turns on her PC. Sam just keeps scribbling away with his paperwork.

Pause.

CELIA
So. How's the novel?

SAM
Hm what? Oh right, yeah.

He returns to his paperwork

SAM CONT.
Just filling in some more onboarding paperwork. You know what it's like.

CELIA
Do I? No-one's given me anything since day one...

SAM
It's my own fault. I checked a box for a Response department one-to-one.

CELIA
Yeah... Alice mentioned something about that. Also, that there hasn't been a Response department for years now?

SAM
(still writing)
That's what I was told.

Beat.

CELIA
Sorry am I missing something?
Because otherwise this seems pretty-

SAM
Pointless? Yeah. Completely.

CELIA
You lost me.

SAM

Well, I refuse to give it the satisfaction of giving up.

CELIA

You don't want to give the automated bureaucratic system any satisfaction?

SAM

Exactly. And honestly, it's kind of compelling by this point. Like its deliberately weird and pointless y'know?

CELIA

How so?

SAM

Look.

(He pulls some paperwork across. CELIA pulls in closer)

CELIA

(reading)

Please list your earliest four negative memories associated with school or an equivalent childhood educational institution, then rate each from zero to seven with zero being neutral and seven being traumatic.

(laughing)

I'm sorry what?

SAM

It gets better.

CELIA

(digging through pages)

Please list every dead creature you have seen in the last three months... how many blood transfusions have

you had within the last ten years...
“Why?” Why what?

SAM
(smiling)
Just “Why”.

Beat.

CELIA
Well, that’s... something

SAM
Isn’t it? And even better, I know no-
one will ever read it.

CELIA
I’m glad you’re having fun.

SAM
Sometimes it’s nice to just have an
excuse to sit quietly for a while and
think about things.

CELIA
Things like “why”?

SAM
Why- See? You do get it.

CELIA
Well, I’m glad you’re in a good mood,
‘cause I’ve got some bad news. I
can’t find anything more on the
Magnus Institute and honestly, at
this point I am out of ideas.

SAM
That’s all right. I really appreciate
you humoring my little crusade but
maybe Alice is right. Maybe I should
pack it in.

CELIA

I'm sorry.

SAM

Life's too short right?

CELIA

(standing)

Isn't it just. Fancy horrible coffee?

SAM

Nah I'm good. Besides these bad boys won't fill themselves in.

CELIA

(smirking)

Don't have too much fun while I'm gone.

CELIA exits as SAM chuckles to himself.

Extended Pause as SAM continues to file paperwork.

The computer gives a slight ping and SAM looks up at it.

CHESTER

**Statement and Research assessment
for artefact CD137 -**

SAM

What the hell?

2. CYBERSPACE – N/A, N/A(COMPUTER)

CHESTER

(cont)

**Magnus Institute – Manchester.
Private and confidential.**

Viability as subject – none

Viability as agent – low

Viability as catalyst – Medium.

Recommend referral to Catalytics for Enrichment applicability assessment.

Statement follows:

Yeah, I see you not touching them. Smart. But gloves aren't going to be any protection if your hand slips and they go clattering across the table. I'd put them in that box real careful, because let me tell you, those babies are due for some serious bad luck.

So yeah, I tell you all about them, how I got them, all that crap and you just... You take them away, right? You *accept* them? Good. I think. I'm pretty sure that's how it works. It's how it worked for me, at least. Put them in whatever vault you like, bury them, drop them in the ocean, for all I care. All that matters is that they're yours now.

It was Gary who roped me into all this. He was one of those hardcore nerd types, and right from when we were at school together he'd try to get me to play in his stupid games. I mean, Advanced Dungeons and Dragons was the big new thing, but I never saw the appeal. I tried it once to shut him up, but you just sat around saying stuff that's not real. Where's the game in that? And after

school me and Gary drifted apart. No surprise, it happens, right?

But then last year, Carl leaves me. It wasn't a huge deal. It's not like we were engaged or anything and we'd barely seen each other since he moved to Doncaster but it still hurt y'know? So when Gary contacts me out of the blue begging me to join his group I think screw it, why not? Gary wasn't that bad, at least, I thought so, and god knows I needed a pick-me-up. A bit of harmless fun.

So I turn up at his apartment and I realize Gary has been doing seriously well since school. He's got this sweet place over in West Didsbury. That said, when he invites me in, I notice he's looking kind of haggard. He's wearing this obviously expensive long-sleeved turtleneck but he's got bags under his eyes, his trousers are torn and he's walking with a limp.

I ask if he's okay and he mumbles something about a mugging so I leave it alone but I do notice that a bunch of the bulbs have blown and there's a huge leak over his massive sound system. I don't say anything though. I mean, it's not like my tiny rented studio was any better. That said, I do notice a slight stain on his wall that I think might be blood.

There's no-one else there yet, just me and him, and I'm feeling pretty

awkward. Then he starts talking about this game we're apparently going to be playing and I feel an entirely different kind of awkward 'cause I have no idea what he's on about. Then he says to me that he *assumes* I don't have any dice of my own and I tell him no— I'll have to use his. That puts a smile on his face. I know why now of course.

I was expecting him to give me a bunch of those cheap little plastic dice with all the different points, but instead he reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pair of normal ones. Six sides, off white, little black dots, you know what dice look like. I mean, you're looking at them right now. I ask him if we need, you know, weird dice and he shakes his head, saying this game just uses "two dee six". He holds them out for me to take them, so I do. God, they felt heavy.

It's been a while since I played the tables but I've played with enough bones to know they were too heavy... And there was something else too. From that point on I own those dice. And I know it.

Gary doesn't bother waiting after that. He immediately claims he got a call from someone else in the group. They can't make it, game's cancelled, sorry you came all this way, blah blah blah. And just like that I'm back outside, waiting on a taxi to get me home.

Do I really need to give you the whole lowdown on the next bit? I mean, you said you're specifically looking for, what was it, "supernaturally active items" right? I feel like when I tell you I'm giving you a pair of cursed dice you can probably put the pieces together.

Look, long story short, I start rolling them and notice that they make stuff happen. I roll high, good things happen: job offers, free coffees from hot baristas, tax refund; I roll low, bad things happen: Broken tech, lost money, bad moods all around. And when I roll really low... Well, you've seen the scars.

The thing is though I still don't really know if they ever made me roll them. I mean, I did. A lot. And I knew that the risks probably outweighed the rewards but I don't think I ever felt them like "calling" to me or anything y'know? It always felt like my choice. Even if it was a shitty choice. Besides, I've never gotten anything good in my life except by blind chance, so why should this be any different?

After a while, though, I did notice that... it's not actually random. You get a few high rolls, your next one's is probably going to be low. And if you've gotten all the bad luck out, you've got good things coming. I know, I know, that's meant to be 'superstition, but I'm telling you, I

kept track and I've got enough maths in me to be sure of the odds. They're not random, it all balances out eventually. So that's when I get to thinking, what if the person rolling doesn't matter just as long as the rolls balance out overall... Well, you see where I'm going with this.

The weirdest thing, nobody ever said no. Some stranger approaches you slides a pair of dice over to you and tells you to roll them, you say no, right? But they always did. Sure, they'd give me weird looks, tell me to get lost, treat me like the creep I absolutely was, but they still rolled them. And sure, I know better than most everyone loves rolling dice but it does make me wonder how much control I ever really had...

I did spread good luck as well as bad. After all, even when you stacked the odds, plenty of people got high numbers and then a letter arrives right there and then with welcome news. I hated them for it though. Those stupid damn grins as they robbed me of my good luck.

But when they rolled low, when you could see the misfortune dropping over them like a shadow, or better yet when they rolled real low and you could be certain that the next throw would be a good one. There was a dark joy to that, I'll admit.

And my system worked. It wasn't perfect, I'd still get a few dud rolls here and there: a broken down car, a missed payment, once I even went through a plate glass window, but for the most part I'd really turned stuff around for myself, offloading all the crap to someone else for a change. Clearly something that idiot Gary had never even thought to try.

And then it started to change and the luck was... different. Not in whether it was good or bad, but *how it* was good or bad. At first, it had all been pretty normal stuff, sometimes even predictable but gradually it started becoming more... I don't know, abstract? Like it used to be getting an extra hashbrown or whatever and then it became just being in a good mood and then finally you couldn't even pin down what had happened you just knew something had. And as my luck kept getting better and better I started to feel less and less... connected to the world. Like I was a lucky ghost, or something, walking with normal but not really one of them anymore. I was just this figure stepping into their lives long enough to gift them fortune or, more often, misery before moving on.

I started to enjoy *that* more than the luck. I was rolling for myself less and less, focusing more on being some mysterious stranger. I even began dressing for the part: I got hold of this long dark coat, a wide-brimmed

hat, grew a proper goatee, the works.

This was up until about a week ago. That's when I see Gary, sat in a coffee shop just down the road from the fancy uptown flat I was living in (thank you double-six). And he looks normal. Not happy, exactly, but certainly not the miserable shell he'd been when I saw him last. And a vicious little idea comes to me. So, I walk up to him and say hello.

You should have seen his face. Guilt at first sure but then it slides into confusion when he sees the outfit. He starts to stammer out some half-baked apology when I hold up my hand to stop him. I put on "the voice" and tell my old friend thank you so much for the gift and that I want to pay him back. He knows what's coming then even before I take them out and place them on the table between us.

He doesn't want to roll them. He wants to be anywhere that isn't sat across from me in that grotty little cafe but he picks them up anyway, and grimly throws them.

I'd never seen snake eyes come up before. Never in all the thousands of times I'd seen them rolled, clattering across someone's future. Maybe they'd been saving themselves for a special occasion, an honor for an unworthy keeper. Or maybe Gary was just really, really unlucky. Either

way, there's this moment of silence as we both stare at the table and the dice stare back.

When the truck barrels through the wall, it isn't the grill that hits Gary first. It's the bricks that are crushed in front of it. Half of one slams into his jaw, ripping it from the top of his face and spraying me with a clatter of dislodged teeth. Another hits the side of his head, collapsing his eye socket and opening his skull, like an overripe grape. Maybe that's what kills him. I hope so. Because I don't want to think about what it must have felt like as the wheels of the massive vehicle roll over him and ground his body into the lino.

Apparently the driver was asleep at the wheel. The building is wrecked but somehow nobody else was hurt except for Gary. Just unlucky, I guess.

I stagger out of there before the police and ambulance arrive and I throw up. I don't know what I expected to happen, what satisfaction I thought I might get from seeing Gary get screwed over by the dice, but that... it's too much and I know I can't keep them.

And that brings us about up to date. They're yours now, and I never want to see them again. Don't get me wrong, it's a blow but I'm just not the right guy to carry them. Besides I've

seen how they treat people who give them away.

It's a damn shame, though.

Well, maybe just once more. For old time's sake.

[Transcription ends due to interruption. Statement giver declared dead by paramedics at-scene.]

3. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE – NIGHT, CLEAR (LANDLINE)

GWEN knocks at the door.

LENA
Come in Gwen.

GWEN enters.

LENA
Sit.

Beat. Gwen sits.

LENA
(cont.)
I have your first assignment for you.

LENA passes an envelope across the desk.

LENA
You are to visit a man by the name of “Nigel Dickerson” and hand him this envelope which contains a name and address. Take note of anything he says or does in response, especially

**his stress levels and emotional state,
as well of those of any companions.**

Beat.

GWEN

I'm sorry, I'm confused.

LENA

**Was there something unclear about
my instructions?**

GWEN

**Nigel Dickerson. As in the Nigel
Dickerson? From tv?**

LENA

Possibly. I don't watch television.

GWEN

**You must know him. He was huge in
the 90s. Saturdays on Six? Mr
Bonzo? The Prank Tank?**

LENA

**That seems feasible, given what I
know of the man.**

GWEN

And why not just email him?

LENA

**Because I have found over the years
that anything less than the personal
touch in these situations often leads
to... misunderstandings. Besides, I
thought it might be informative for
our new Externals Liaison.**

GWEN

**Is all this... theatricality really
necessary?**

LENA

I can assure you it is. Consider it an audition if you like. And try to keep calm while you're there.

Gwen sighs heavily.

GWEN

(Sarcastic)

I'll try not to get too starstruck.

LENA

Very good.

4. INT. THE PUB – EARLY MORNING, CLEAR (ALICE'S PHONE)

TEDDY sits and hands a drink to **ALICE**.

ALICE

Cheers me dears.

TEDDY

Cheers.

ALICE

So, what are you doing here Teddybear?

TEDDY

I mean, I can go if you like.

ALICE

Sure. Just leave your wallet, yeah?

TEDDY

Ah, in the market for an unpaid overdraft, are we?

ALICE

Seriously though, I'm surprised you can make it on a weekday morning.

TEDDY

Yeah well, let's just say I'm currently free as a bird from nine to five.

ALICE

Ah shit Teddy, what happened?

TEDDY

Redundant. They actually started plans to downsize the day before my interview and it turned out their hiring department didn't get the memo. Last in, first out. You know how it goes.

ALICE

Bastards! You deserve better than that.

TEDDY

(shrugging)

Yeah well, since when does anyone get what they deserve eh?

ALICE

French Revolution? There were some pretty just deserts there?

TEDDY

Yeah yeah.

(he drinks)

So, how's things back in the crypt?

ALICE

(hesitant)

I mean, uh... Lena's just hired a couple of...

TEDDY

You hear me asking for a job? I only just got out, I'm staying well-shot of that creepshow.

ALICE

(relieved)

Fair enough!

(she drinks)

It's all right. You met Sam obviously and then we had Celia join on top of that so we're all staffed up for a change which is... nice.

TEDDY

Nice?

ALICE

Yeah?

TEDDY

Alice, I've known you what? Four years? I don't think I've ever heard you describe something as "nice". "Wicked" maybe, "sick nasty" sure, you even unironically used "tubular" a few times but "nice"? Never.

ALICE

(unconvincingly)

Ok, first, I was being super ironic, and second it is "nice". We're more or less on top of the case-load and Sam and Celia get along great-

TEDDY

Ah. There it is.

ALICE

What?

TEDDY

What?

ALICE is unimpressed.

TEDDY

(cont.)

I'm just saying I could understand it if the office felt crowded.

ALICE

(sarcastic)

Oh you know me, I just love to turn work into a minefield of interpersonal tension.

TEDDY

You guys were together for years. It's understandable.

ALICE

You know, people drown in the Thames all the time, Teddy. I've seen the statistics. It would look so much like an accident.

TEDDY gets a text.

TEDDY

Oh hold that death threat. Looks like I've actually got an interview nearby so...

SAM enters and starts walking over.

ALICE

Say no more, you head off and I'll sit here working on my weepy alibi. "I'm sorry officer, it all happened so quickly. One moment teddy was stood over the water, talking nonsense about-

TEDDY

Sam! Hey!

SAM arrives just as Alice chokes a little.

SAM
(to Alice)
Hey! You okay?

ALICE
Fine. Thanks.

SAM
Teddy right? Mind if I join you?

TEDDY
Afraid I'm actually just heading off
so-

SAM
Hey no worries-

TEDDY
I'll have to leave you in Alice's tender
care.
(leaving)
Help yourself to my pint, if you like - I
barely touched it!

SAM
Oh, uh... Cheers!

Teddy exits. SAM picks up the pint.

ALICE
I wouldn't. Teddy's rife with diseases
of the mind.

SAM
I think I'll risk it.

SAM sips happily.

Beat.

SAM CONT.
So. You and Teddy.

ALICE
Me and Teddy what?

SAM
How long have you two...

ALICE
What?

Beat.

ALICE
(cont. realizing)
Oh my god! What is it with people today? Teddy? No! Nooooo.

SAM
Harsh.

ALICE
Don't get me wrong Teddy's a good lad but he's not...

SAM
(joking, oblivious)
Lurking in the woods, eluding hunters and appearing only in occasional blurry photos?

ALICE
Look, mate, Bigfoot's a good lay, but he's got some real abandonment issues. But yeah, Teddy was in the area for a work thing, that's all. Anyway, why are you here? You only usually swing by at the end of the week.

SAM
I was actually hoping to talk to you.

ALICE

You talk to me all night at work.

SAM

(leaning in)

Well, I wanted to ask you something.

ALICE

Oh yeah?

SAM

(quietly)

Something private.

ALICE

(leaning in despite herself)

Yeah?

Beat.

SAM

I want you to come to some ruins with me.

Beat.

ALICE

Come again?

SAM

(leaning back)

Listen, I know that you said I shouldn't pay too much attention to the cases and that, but I genuinely think there might have been something_really weird going on at the Magnus Institute and then there was this new case that came up and-

ALICE

Hang on, hang on, you already managed to talk Celia into all this

guff. Why not take her on your little Scooby Doo adventure?

SAM

I mean, I do like Celia-

ALICE

But?

SAM

But... I'm not sure we're quite at the "going-to-Manchester-to-dig-through-a-burned-down-building" stage.

ALICE

Right. And we are?

SAM

(sheepish)

Well, we used to be.

Beat.

Alice sighs then takes a deep gulp from her pint.

ALICE

When do we leave?

[Music]

ANNOUNCER

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This episode was written by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall, with vocal edits by Nico Vettese, soundscaping by Meg McKellar, and mastering by Catherine Rinella with music by Sam Jones. It featured Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer, Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid, Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard, Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughan Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley, with additional voices from Jonathan Sims.

The Magnus Protocol is produced by April Sumner, with executive producers Alexander J Newall, Dani McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G. Hamilton, and Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole Perlman, Cetius d'Raven, and Megan Nice.

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Thanks for listening.**

The Magnus Protocol 9 – Rolling With It
CAT3RB3354-14101998-08032024
Dice (bone) -/- fate [Magnus Statement]

Incident Elements:

- **Addiction (Gambling)**
- **Vehicle Accident**
- **Graphic Violence**
- **Mentions of – superstition**

Transcripts: <https://shorturl.at/gzF15>

This Episode is dedicated to Sofia Eickstedt, thank you for your generous support! You can a complete list of our Kickstarter backers <https://rustyquill.com/the-magnus-protocol-supporter-wall/>

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Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)
Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid
Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley
Jonathan Sims as Chester
Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley
Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard
Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer
Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughan

Dialogue Editor – Nico Vettese
Sound Designer – Meg McKellar
Mastering Editor - Catherine Rinella

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**Music by Sam Jones (orchestral mix by Jake Jackson)
Art by April Sumner**

**SFX from previously credited artists.
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