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**The Magnus Protocol**

**Episode 17  
"Saved Copy"**

**Written by Alexander J Newall  
Edited by Jonathan Sims**

**01-11-2023  
Draft 2**

**ANNOUNCER**

This episode is dedicated to Saiorse Killigrew open square brackets, ad lib, close square brackets, fullstop. The “ad lib” was that they didn’t write a fullstop.

**[Intro Theme]**

**ANNOUNCER**

Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.  
Episode Seventeen – Saved Copy

**[Music]**

**1. EXT. TRAIN TRACKS – AFTERNOON, CLEAR (CELIA’S PHONE).**

An overland train is powering down the tracks towards CELIA. The horn wails.

**CELIA**

(groggy)

Hmm? Wha?

The train thunders closer and the horn sounds again.

**CELIA CONT.**

**JESUS CHRIST!**

**CELIA** scrambles to her feet and dashes away from the tracks moments before the train speeds past her.

**CELIA CONT.**

(panting)

For gods sake! Not again. Not today!

She pulls out her phone and tries to call someone whilst hurrying away from the tracks.

**2. INT. O.I.A.R. BREAKROOM– NIGHT, CLEAR (CCTV)**

**SAM is making coffee, CELIA is beside him. They are clearly mid conversation.**

**SAM**  
(not okay)  
It's fine.

**CELIA**  
No honestly, I am so sorry! It was so sudden, and by the time I sorted a sitter...

**SAM**  
I said it's fine. I just would have appreciated it if you could have called.

**CELIA**  
I know...

**SAM**  
I mean, you didn't even let me know you weren't coming until the trailers had started...

**CELIA**  
I know, I know. I promise I didn't mean to miss it. I tried to get back in time but there weren't any trains and I didn't have any signal.

**SAM**  
It's okay. I do understand just...  
Don't make a habit of it yeah?

**CELIA**  
Of course. Tell you what, next time we go out, it's my treat.

**SAM**  
You don't have to-

**CELIA**  
I want to.

**Beat.** The mood is lighter.

**SAM**  
So where did you have to run off to?

**CELIA**  
(reluctantly)  
Oxford.

**SAM**  
Sounds nice.

**CELIA**  
It really wasn't. I'd have much rather  
been at the cinema with you.

**SAM**  
Next time I guess.

**CELIA**  
Yeah. Speaking of, what did you  
think of the film in the end?

**SAM**  
Oh I actually really enjoyed it!

**CELIA**  
Yeah?

**SAM**  
I'm not a big horror fan, but it was all  
right! Not sure how romantic it would  
have been though.

**CELIA**

**(flirty)**

**I'm sure we'd have found a way to  
make it work.**

**SAM finishes making coffee.**

**SAM**

**[chuckles awkwardly-flirty] We'll  
have to find out next time won't we?**

**CELIA**

**Absolutely.**

**SAM**

**(heading off)**

**I'll see you in there.**

**CELIA**

**Sure thing.**

**SAM exits.**

**CELIA lingers for a moment and takes a deep steadying breath.**

**CELIA**

**(to herself)**

**You're okay. It's ok.**

### **3. CYBERSPACE – N/A,N/A (COMPUTER).**

**CHESTER**

**Statement and Research assessment  
for candidate PD553**

**Magnus Institute – Oxford Outreach  
Centre.**

**Private and confidential.**

**Viability as subject – low**

**Viability as agent – low**

**Viability as catalyst – low**

**Recommend continued incarceration as part of Welling Mutare Materia research program.**

**Statement follows:**

**I know how this looks but it wasn't me. Well, it was me but it wasn't me you understand?**

**Of course you don't, how could you?**

**Okay, so I'm just going to tell you everything that happened, everything I know. What you do with it after that is none of my business, all I ask is that you don't hold me responsible for what he did.**

**Right. Where to start? Anger Management I guess.**

**Now let me explain before you go jumping to any conclusions. I'd been going to therapy for a while, ever since the arrest, so coming on sixteen months, and I was making real progress. It sounds like rubbish at first but all that counting to ten, gratefulness and compassion work, they do work. From the look of you, you'd probably benefit from it.**

**Anyway, it was my last session. I'd met all the terms of the court order**

and I was due the rubber stamp, upstanding member of the community and all that. So that's what led me to my normal seat in Dr Dumfries's waiting room.

It was a terrace townhouse and I'd always found it uncomfortable, like the walls were so thin you could almost hear what people were saying on the other side. I never did though. At some point I'd chalked it up to just being antsy waiting for therapy.

Anyway, there was a new receptionist behind the old front desk, some big, soft looking guy who stumbled over every word. A year ago, it would have probably wound me right up but what can I say? Therapy works.

There was another patient too, some bookish-looking guy with serious city miles. I used to play the game "what are you in for" where I would pass the time guessing... well, you know. In my head he was definitely some kind of weird pervert, really into stroking orchids or something. Thinking back, I almost wonder if the same thing happened to them... Do you know? Would you even tell me if you did?

So my turn comes up and in I go. Dr Dumfries said hello in that cheery way that always used to set me on edge and we get down to it. Now his office was pretty much the most

**boring room in the world. No pictures, no clock, not even a window. Just the front door, the office door, the desk and some chairs. It must have been deliberate. It drove me up the wall.**

**I'd been trying meditation in the last few sessions and it had always been a struggle but this time, when I closed my eyes and went into myself... It was different. I remember sitting there that last time and realizing that this was what she had been on about. Just sort of... having a sit... going away for a while... just being...**

**Pause**

**CHESTER CONT.**

**I don't really know what happened then. I felt like maybe I was dreaming, but I don't really remember. I wasn't asleep, though. You can't feel pain like that in a dream. It was the migraine that brought me back. All at once this deep throbbing pain, and my eyes were so dry I couldn't open them. My neck was stiff and I was dizzy, cold and trembling. Finally, I tried to stand up and fell forward onto my knees.**

**I could barely move, couldn't focus over the pain, I just knew I needed to get out of that room, into the fresh air. It was dark now, with no sign of Dr. Dumfries, and I had to make my way up a flight of stairs and through**

**an office space I didn't recognise before I saw daylight. I collapsed again, but I remember two things before I lost consciousness: I was in some kind of shopping centre. And a sign reading "Magnus Institute Outreach Centre". I assume that's how I first came to your attention.**

**I came to for a bit in the ambulance. They seemed really worried, kept asking me what had happened. I tried to tell them I'd felt fine earlier... then I saw my arms. They were withered with paper thin skin hanging from my emaciated wrists. My aching eyes traced their way up to my sunken chest then down past my protruding ribs to the swollen belly below. I passed out again.**

**The next few days are a blur. I know they kept me in for "malnutrition with complications" but when I told them I didn't know how it happened they didn't believe me. I reckon they had me pegged as bulimic or something but they seemed satisfied once they got me on solids and I scoffed everything I could get my hands on.**

**I had plenty of time to think about what had happened but I just couldn't wrap my head around it. All I knew was that I needed some time away from the quarry to get my head on straight. I couldn't afford another "incident" there.**

**I tried to phone in sick but the call wouldn't go through. The hospital asked for an emergency contact but obviously that was a non-starter. Finally, they just looked my address up on my NHS records and bundled me into a drop-off bus. Honestly, I think they were just keen to get shot of me since I wasn't infected or anything and I've never been exactly the easiest to get along with.**

**At first, I thought the driver had managed to get himself lost. I certainly didn't recognize the route and eventually instead of heading to Balfour Road he tried to drop me at some ridiculous place off Banbury. They'd obviously given him the wrong address. I admit there may have been some harsh words between us once I realized but even so I was still feeling pretty hard done by when he drove off into the darkness swearing at me.**

**So that's how, with no money, no bags and just the shirt on my back, I ended up knocking on the door of Harcourt House. Well, technically I rang the bell, some huge, overdone brass ring pull like you'd see in Downton Abbey. I felt like a right prick, but I figured at this point what was the harm? I should warn whoever lived there about the mix-up if someone came checking on me and you never know, they might even help me get home, god knows they could afford it. Besides, it was**

**cold.**

**It took a while for someone to answer, long enough for me to start seriously considering how I was going to make it home in my current state. I had just decided to call it when they pulled open the door, spilling golden light out into the cavernous porch and that was when I first met myself. The other myself.**

**I don't recommend it.**

**We both yelled, then we both laughed, then we just stared. He took it better than I did. He even invited me inside once he realized how bad a state I was in. He sat me down and made me a tea, four sugars, just how I like it. I was so grateful, anything to stop that feeling that I was somehow falling through the cracks.**

**He was my height obviously and had my eyes but I actually noticed the differences more than the similarities. He wore glasses, no grey in his hair and had white, almost glowing teeth and no beer gut. I realized that whatever this was, I was definitely the worse version and that is not a good feeling. Thankfully, he didn't say anything. In fact, he looked thrilled, kept telling me how "amazing" this was, in his fancy house and designer clothes.**

**We talked and after a bit we figured we must have been half-brothers, as**

**we definitely had the same piece-of-shit dad. I'd grown up with a mum, though, so I guess I got the lucky side of that particular coin-flip. Didn't feel it at the time, though.**

**I'd always hated my old man, the vicious bastard had put me through hell and now here was proof that he had a whole second life, a better, richer life without me and mum. He even called this son Darrien too. That hit hard.**

**But the other Darrien was good about it, changed the subject, asked me what brought me here. I started explaining my side of things. The hospital, the ambulance, the weirdness in the waiting room. He was a good listener and I ended up telling him way more than I meant to. Even about therapy and the arrest, all of it... The only time he interrupted was to check the little details: dates, times, that sort of thing.**

**That was when things got really weird because if the other Darien was right, that meant at some point Dad had been at his own funeral at the same time that he was in surgery for the tumor that killed him.**

**We talked for hours without coming to any conclusions but I was still in a pretty bad way and I was nearing my limits. Darrien noticed and insisted I stayed, after all "we're sort of family." I was too exhausted to argue**

**so I kipped in the spare bedroom. It was bigger than my whole flat.**

**The next day I was properly sick. I'd definitely overdone it and I felt horrendous. Darrien was really great about it though, insisted I stay longer; he had the space and the housekeeper was used to cooking for guests. Besides, we still had so much to talk about. I didn't argue. It was a comfy bed.**

**Darrien came by later with some spicy leek soup and we talked again. He was just so eager, he kept telling me how amazing it was, how he might finally have someone to talk to who would "get it" how happy he was to have me around. I'll admit it did feel good to talk and he was right, he did get it. When I talked about the anger and what it had caused, he immediately understood with no judgement. He just smiled and said he knew just how to help.**

**I stayed another couple of days getting my strength back. We spent the time talking, eating and just generally hanging out. He was really good company, and incredibly generous, letting me have the full run of the place.**

**The only thing that made me pause was how the housekeeper, Sharon, was around us. It wasn't that she was judgmental or anything, she was afraid, maybe even terrified... I**

**assumed she was just weirded out and tried to get to know her, talk to her when Darrien wasn't around but the whole time it was like she was ready to run, like she was waiting for me to suddenly turn on her.**

**Eventually, I had to just give up and let her hurry off. I didn't want to upset her or anything but it worried me. The last time I'd seen people look at me like that was after the fight and I hated it. I had sworn I would never give someone reason to look at me like that again.**

**That evening Darrien and I were sat smoking in his massive study. Sharon had left an hour before having cleaned up after dinner and Darrien was telling me all about his time at university. I'd never been but it seems like he had done the whole Eton and Oxford thing and even done some competitive boxing while he was there. I saw my moment and asked him if that was how he managed to stay so chill? Venting the anger, that kind of thing?**

**He gave me a look then. A very direct, very calm look over the tops of his expensive horn-rimmed glasses. "I was waiting for you to ask" he said in a tone I hadn't heard from him before. Then he smiled, stubbed out his cigar and walked off without another word.**

**I followed, still a little unsteady on**

my feet, but he wasn't hurrying. He walked through the house without a word, winding his way down to the basement. I had been there before, seen the gym and the home cinema and all that but we walked past all of it to a locked door at the end. I had assumed it was a cupboard or utility room, something unexciting but necessary, and when I looked closer I could see the hinges were heavy, reinforced, the edges of the door had a thick rubber seal and the lock was excessive for such a generic-looking door.

Darrien placed a key in the lock and turned to me with a smile. "It's so nice to finally share this with someone" he murmured before turning the key, opening the door and gesturing for me to enter.

I looked inside, seeing a spotless sharp-edged steel staircase leading downwards into a harshly lit, stainless steel space. Most of the room was out of view from the doorway but I could hear something, right on the edge of my hearing, in the quiet, past Darrien's measured breath and the distant hum of the boiler. There was another breath, a slow and ragged rattle creeping up from below. And a smell: the tang of disinfectant over a faint, coppery undertone. That was when I noticed a single spot of color on the otherwise pristine stairs. A single, crimson spot.

**I didn't need to take a single step down to know exactly what this place was. Darrien leaned in close to my ear to whisper "Trust me, you'll enjoy it" as another rattle clawed its way up the stairs towards me, asking weakly for mercy. For death..**

**I tensed, I couldn't help it. Darrien's secret, his solution to the anger that had been burning my own life to the ground for as long as I could remember was down there. And if he really was the same as me, if he really had all that rage trapped inside him then whatever he had done to the man who was down there... I didn't want to see it. I couldn't.**

**Darrien frowned at me then. I could see the disappointment bleed across his face like a stain, souring that boyish eagerness and replacing it with an anger I recognized immediately. We were so similar and yet... I couldn't join him down there with our father in that horrible halogen light.**

**He hesitated. I shoved him, more instinct than anything else. He grabbed for me as he overbalanced, his face contorted in rage but he was snatching at air. He never broke eye contact as he fell. Even as his arm broke on the first impact, even as his knee wrenched as he tumbled, even as his temple cracked into the bottom step and he slumped onto**

**the stainless steel floor. He just stared at me with pure venom in his eyes whilst I looked back sadly.**

**He wasn't dead. Not at that point. Maybe it would have been merciful to finish him off. Maybe if I had done, I could have saved whatever tortured soul he'd kept down there. But the idea of walking down those steps was too much. I just couldn't do it.**

**The door was solid, soundproof and had a firm lock on the outside. I haven't opened it since.**

**Pause**

**CHESTER CONT.**

**I've lived Darien's life for four years now. It wasn't as hard as you'd think, turns out your world and mine are pretty similar. Then I sent Sharon on an expensive package holiday and lied to her about my "half-brother" having to leave in a hurry. She knew what I had done, I'm certain of that. She never called the police or anything, but she never came back after that holiday either. I think she just wanted done with the whole mess. I don't blame her.**

**Oh. I bet she's the one who tipped you off, isn't she?**

**Yeah, I thought so.**

**So where does that leave us? I suppose you could call the police but I don't see that that would do anyone any good. And I've had enough practice living this life now that I could make it pretty unpleasant for you. Besides, all I'm really guilty of is killing a killer and not helping someone who was likely dead either way. Is that really so bad, in the scheme of things?**

**We could just call it quits? I'm really not a bad person. I give to charity, I pay my- his taxes. In a lot of ways I'm a better Darrien than he ever was. So let's call this a happy ending.**

**4. INT. O.I.A.R. OFFICE - NIGHT, CLEAR (COMPUTER).**

**The Case finishes and CELIA considers it for a moment. ALICE is sat nearby working with headphones on.**

**CELIA**  
**(to computer)**  
**Thanks, I guess. Not exactly the same is it?**

**ALICE**  
**(removing earbuds)**  
**What's up? Got a good one?**

**CELIA**  
**Nothing useful.**

**ALICE**  
**(returning earbuds)**  
**I mean when are they ever?**

**CELIA**

**True.**

**Beat.**

**She sighs.**

**CELIA CONT.**

**(to herself)**

**True.**

**5. INT. O.I.A.R. OFFICE - NIGHT, CLEAR (COMPUTER).**

**GWEN** is working on Alice's computer, she is slightly hesitant and it is clear that she doesn't have Colin's skills.

She clicks something, and a rather nasty error sound answers her.

**ALICE**

**See? Not my fault.**

**GWEN**

**It would help if your keyboard didn't have an entire pack of digestive crumbs wedged between the keys.**

**ALICE**

**It's shortbread.**

**GWEN**

**It's disgusting is what it is. It's no wonder you're having PC issues.**

**ALICE**

**Are you seriously suggesting that a "jnj error" is actually an issue with the... cookies?**

**Beat.**

**GWEN**

**Shut up.**

**ALICE**

**You set 'em up, I knock 'em down.**

**GWEN**

**I bet you don't even know what cookies actually are...**

**ALICE**

**Oh and you do? Look forget it. Celia said she's seen Colin about. Maybe I can grab him so he can kick it into submission again.**

**GWEN**

**Then Celia's wrong. He hasn't been in for weeks so unless you've secretly been learning ethernet protocols-**

**ALICE**

**Now you're just making stuff up-**

**GWEN**

**I'm the best you've got right now.**

**Beat.**

**ALICE**

**Jesus that's depressing.**

**GWEN**

**Trust me, I hate it just as much as you do.**

**Beat. GWEN continues to work on the PC as it keeps throwing up errors.**

**ALICE**

If we had a real HR department, they'd probably tell us that we all need to sit down and talk things out. Work through everything that's happening to us in a "safe environment."

**GWEN**

Look, Alice, if there's something you want to talk about...

**ALICE**

Me? No. ...Unless there's something you need to share?

Gwen considers.

**GWEN**

No.

**ALICE**

Oh thank Christ, me neither.

The PC gives a begrudging tone and seems to be working again.

**GWEN CONT.**

Right, that's the best you're going to get until Colin gets back.

**ALICE**

Any word on when that might be?

**GWEN**

(packing up)

I wouldn't hold your breath.

**ALICE**

Great.

Pause.

**ALICE CONT.**

**What?**

**GWEN**

**(pointedly)**

**You're welcome.**

**ALICE**

**Am I? Oh good.**

**GWEN gives a frustrated grunt then walks off.  
Alice sits, stretches then gets back to work.**

**[Music]**

**ANNOUNCER**

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**The series is created by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall, and directed by Alexander J Newall.**

**This episode was written by Alexander J Newall and edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims, 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, Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley, with additional voices from Jonathan Sims.**

**The Magnus Protocol is produced by April Sumner, with executive producers Alexander J Newall, Dani**

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**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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**The Magnus Protocol 17 – Saved Copy**

**CAT2RC1147-30111997-04042024**

**Doppelganger (interdimensional) -/- murder**

**Incident Elements:**

- Murder
- Existential Horror
- Temporal Distortion
- Identity Crisis
- Graphic Injury
- Captivity/Torture
- Mentions of: Therapy (Anger Management), arrest, malnutrition

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

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

**Created by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall**

**Directed by Alexander J Newall**

**Written by Alexander J Newall**

**Script Edited with additional material by Jonathan Sims**

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**Executive Producers April Sumner, Alexander J Newall,  
Jonathan Sims, Dani McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G.  
Hamilton**

**Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole  
Perlman, Cetius d’Raven, and Megan Nice**

**Produced by April Sumner**

**Featuring (in order of appearance)**

**Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley**

**Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid**

**Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer**

**Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard**

**Jonathan Sims as Chester**

**Dialogue Editor – Nico Vettese**

**Sound Designer – Meg McKellar**

**Mastering Editor - Catherine Rinella**

**Music by Sam Jones (orchestral mix by Jake Jackson)**

**Art by April Sumner**

**SFX from Soundly and previously credited artists**

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