

©Rusty Quill 2023

The Magnus Protocol

“Catching Up”

Written By

Muna Hussen

Edited by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall

**12-10-23
v 3.0**

ANNOUNCER

**This episode is dedicated to Sierra Rush -
The world is so rich and vast and
beautiful, and you are here to share your
beauty with it. There are many small
moments in life, but they are quilted
together to be you. You're going to be
amazing.**

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Twenty-Six – Catching Up**

[Music]

1. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE, NIGHT, CLEAR (computer)

CELIA and SAM are both working slowly at the end of the shift.

CELIA

How we looking?

SAM

Pretty much there, you?

CELIA

Close enough.

She quickly rattles off a few keystrokes.

CELIA CONT.

(stretching)

**Right. Let's go, before anything more
comes in.**

SAM
(starting to pack)
Did you just categorize that last one as
“dog”.

CELIA
Got a problem with that?

SAM
No.

CELIA
Good.

SAM
(stops packing)
It’s just... “dog”? That’s it?

CELIA
(shrugging)
It was about a dog.

SAM
Not cross-linked with like “teeth” or-

CELIA
All dogs have teeth...

SAM
I guess, but-

CELIA
Look, do you want to go and meet Helen?
Or do you want to stay here and discuss
dogs because either way I’m happy.

SAM
(packing again)
Yeah all right, all right.

Beat.

SAM stops packing.

CELIA

You ok?

SAM

Ah, you know me – this stuff makes me nervous.

CELIA

Yeah, me too.

SAM

(surprised)

Really?

CELIA

So, anything particular got you worked up?

SAM

No. Yeah. Not sure. ...I just don't think I can face another dead end.

ALICE approaches.

CELIA

Hey Alice.

Beat.

ALICE

Planning another daring heist?

CELIA

The Crown Jewels aren't gonna steal themselves.

ALICE

Oh that's good to hear. I was worrying for a moment that you were Magnussing.

Beat.

SAM

Uh, Magnussing?

ALICE

Magnussing, verb: to insist on poking around stuff to do with the Magnus Institute despite Alice's continued efforts to stop you getting yourselves killed.

Beat. Sam stops from retorting.

CELIA

Alice, we've been over this...

ALICE

No, you're right, it's fine. You know how I feel, but you're both grown adults. You can make your own choices. Just make sure you take protection okay?

SAM

(mortified)

Jesus Christ...

ALICE

Like a big knife or something.

CELIA

Don't worry.

Celia pulls a knife from her bag.

ALICE

Oh, wow, that'll do it- Ok then. Maybe don't get it out at work, though.

CELIA

We'll be careful Alice, I promise.

Alice sighs.

ALICE

Fine. Off you go then, I guess.

Beat. They head off.

CELIA
See you Tonight.

SAM
Yeah, see you later.
(To Celia, receding)
Celia, are you sure that thing's legal??

2. CYBERSPACE

CHESTER

**Witness Statement of Alexander Rumins,
Date of Birth 10th September 2000,
Occupation: Accountant
Address: 17 Gransden Avenue, Hackney**

Dated 14th April 2024

**My name is Alexander Rumins.
I've....I've never done one of these. So I'm
not quite sure what I am meant to say
here.**

**I'm 23. I'm male. I've lived in London my
whole life. I have two sisters, one older
and one younger.**

**My dad died when I was 15, and my
mother still lives in the house I grew up in.**

**And yesterday...
God...even saying it makes me feel
horribly nauseous.**

I saw someone die.

**I saw someone die, right in front of me,
and there wasn't a single thing I could
have done to help.**

**The worst thing is that I know him.
Knew him.
How long does it take until I speak of him
in the past tense? I knew him. And now...I
don't anymore?**

**The dead person is - was - Jarrod Smith.
He was an athletics coach who trained
young runners. I know because I was one
of them. At a very young age I realised I
could run faster than anyone. It was like I
could take a deep breath that spread into
my chest, my legs and shot through me
like an arrow.**

**By the time I was 10, I could outrun most
teachers, and all the older boys in the big
school next to my primary. It became a bit
of a game for them.**

**No one could ever catch me. Except Mr.
Jarrod. I only knew him as my PE teacher
then. The new PE teacher, who had started
in my final year of primary school.
And that was the first time we had
athletics rather than football or rugby or
gymnastics.**

**I won, of course. I was faster than anyone,
no matter how many times he asked me to
race again and again.**

Until finally, he placed himself next to me, and simply shouted “go!” That shot of adrenaline went through my chest, my legs pumping faster and faster - until I realised Mr. Jarrod had passed me. No matter how much faster I tried to push my legs... I lost.

Afterwards, spitting and sputtering, I managed to say: “Can you teach me to run faster?”

It wasn't easy getting permission from my parents. They didn't understand why I needed to train after school, and they certainly didn't have any money for special clothes or shoes.

But Mr. Jarrod had a spare pair of training shoes, and he promised he would bring me home every day after training.

So, my parents, exhausted by their double shifts at Tesco, agreed.

And that's how it started. Three times a week, Mr. Jarrod would meet me at the playground outside the gymnasium, with the track already marked, and his stopwatch at the ready.

If it was raining, we moved inside. If it was cold, I'd wear an extra layer.

But we never, ever missed a session. It was just a few months later that I ran my first race. Only my sisters were there to watch me win. That was the first time I remember feeling proud of myself.

Pause.

It's not a feeling I've had for a long time.

Despite seeing each other almost every day, I knew very little of Mr. Jarrod. All I knew was that he was there, at the track, three times a week and that he knew how to make me faster.

First, I became the fastest in my borough. Then I won the London Athletics Meet. I was the youngest to ever win the Meet, and the sponsors were salivating all over themselves but Mr. Jarrod told me to ignore all of them and just to focus on running.

The next year, just before I was due to run the Meet again, to come back and defend my title - my father died.

I had just completed a personal best at the 100m. I turned and saw my older sister standing at the edge of the track. I will never forget the look on her face.

Her eyes, always so brown, looked darker than ink. And her face was almost entirely slack. I'm not sure how she managed to say the words, but I heard them nonetheless.

"It's dad. We have to go home."

I ran. The streets were a blur as I barely dodged cars and pedestrians. As if by running, I could reach my father and he'd be alive.

I...honestly don't remember the following days.

The funeral came, and went. My sisters went back to school, and to college. My mother picked up more shifts at Tesco.

But I stopped running. What was the point? Running didn't do anything to help my dad.

Mr. Jarrod came to visit once, a few weeks after the funeral, before I went back to school. He knocked only once, and spoke to ask if he could come in.

I didn't answer the door, and he didn't knock again. That was the last time I saw him. Until yesterday morning.

I... haven't run for such a long time, you see. I've been working as an accountant since I graduated.

Don't get me wrong, it's an incredibly boring job but now my mum doesn't have to work at Tesco - and neither do my sisters. I like to take walks in the morning, before work. Just stretch my legs a little. Not run, though. Never run.

I went this morning as usual. Nothing strange about that. Until I saw him.

Mr. Jarrod. I recognised him instantly. His stride, his dark skin glistening with sweat, his pace. I couldn't believe it. Seven years since I saw him, but I still felt that old thrill at the idea of racing him.

"Mr. Jarrod!" I shouted. "Mr. Jarrod, it's me, Alex!" But...he didn't stop. He didn't so much as slow down. He thundered past me, his legs moving smoothly.

I've never been a superstitious person but for some reason, when I looked at Mr. Jarrod run faster than I had ever seen him, a cold and slimy shiver went down my back. He seemed to be running for his life.

I don't have any explanation for why I think that, but he seemed more frightened than anyone I have ever seen.

You know how dogs can smell fear? I don't know how, but I could smell the fear coming off his skin as he thundered past me again. His shirt was completely soaked, as were his shorts and you could see the flecks of sweat fly off his face and arms, even at a distance, even at the speed his legs were moving.

He wasn't being chased. I looked around, but the entire park was completely deserted. It was only moments after 5 in the morning. There was no one to ask for help, and I had a sudden thought that if I took my eyes off him, something truly awful would happen.

I only had one choice.

I'm nowhere near as fast as I was.

I was gasping before 20 metres had passed, and sweating by 50 metres and I just couldn't keep up.

"Mr. Jarrod...please, stop!" I begged, as my legs started to seize up.

But in all the years we trained together, I could never catch Mr. Jarrod. And today was no different.

I grasped at the air as he pulled further away, missing his t-shirt by inches.

I stopped again. I felt as if I would never take in enough air. That's when I realised that he was running laps of the park. I didn't need to catch him. I just needed to

meet him. So I turned and ran the other way.

I drew closer, and closer, and suddenly I was knocked completely off my feet. Mr Jarrod ran me straight over me. I think he ran through me.

I tried to stand up, but had to sit down again, a dizzying rush of pain swooping through my body.

I called to him, but of course he couldn't hear me. I don't think he could hear anyone. A few moments later he ran past me again, his breaths gasping and heaving, as if it was taking every ounce of strength and energy to keep his body moving.

His face was contorted in complete terror, and that's when I could make out what his mouth was moving. Words seemed to tumble out in a cascade, like he was telling some awful story. But they were lost under his laboured breathing.

Our eyes locked for a moment just as he stumbled, and fell. Was there recognition? I don't know. He hit the ground head first, and even at that distance I could hear the sickening sound of his skull splitting open.

Every step sent a shard of horrible pain through my head, but I ran until I reached him.

Mr. Jarrod's forehead had a horrible cut, with the blood freely flowing into his eyes. Even so, he was struggling to get up, to continue running and his mouth kept

forming words.

I dropped to my knees, trying to stop him from moving. Bloody and shaking, he pushed me away, weakly trying to get up again. But he barely made it to his knees before he fell over again. And all the while, he kept muttering.

I could make out a few of the words now. "They're coming now and getting close, so very close and when I slow and when I stop they will catch me and they will hurt me."

There was more, but I didn't hear it, because I saw that we were no longer alone in the park. I don't know how it came up so close without me seeing it. A figure. Tall and thin and still in shadow even in the morning sun. I couldn't make out its face, but I felt it... looking at me. Looking at me from everywhere.

It was holding a tape recorder to Mr. Jarrod's mouth, like it was trying to catch his dying words.

"Who are you?" I asked it.

"An archivist," it replied.

I wanted to ask more questions, to confront it, to strangle it for what I knew it had done.

But that was when he screamed, his mouth tearing wide open. I screamed too. I screamed for a very long time.

And when the paramedics finally brought me to my senses, it was gone.

3. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE, NIGHT, CLEAR (COMPUTER)

The recording ends and we return to the O.I.A.R. Gwen working next to Alice.

Alice starts flicking through the book.

ALICE
(disturbed)
Hmmmm...

GWEN
Huh. I don't remember the last time I saw you bothered by a case.

ALICE
And I suppose you're just cucumber cool about yet another visit from your murderous tape-recording pal, is that it?

GWEN
There are plenty of dangerous monsters out there Alice. It's not worth obsessing over one of them.

ALICE
(defensive)
I'm not obsessed. I'm just irritated because there isn't a code for 'Archivist'.

GWEN
So? Collector, librarian, eavesdropper... Just pick one of those.

ALICE
But it said Archivist.

Beat.

ALICE
(realization)
It said 'Archivist'.

GWEN
I heard you Alice I just stopped caring.

ALICE
It was us.

GWEN
What?

ALICE
The Institute the- the archive... That's why
it's so interested in us. We set it loose...

Beat.

ALICE
I need to call Sam.

She grabs her phone.

4. HELEN'S OFFICE, INT, MORNING, BRIGHT (SAM'S PHONE)

A fancy real estate office. Swanky and soulless. There is traffic
outside and murmured phone conversations within.

CELIA
How you holding up?

SAM
(not okay)
I'm okay.

CELIA

Yeah? I heard you and Alice on the phone.
Sounded bad?

SAM

It is. She thinks one of the Externals, the one with the tapes, The “Archivist”, she thinks we might have let it out. Or at least got its attention, brought it down here. If she’s right... that would mean all those people... they would still be alive if I hadn't insisted on poking around...

Beat.

SAM CONT.

How are you?

CELIA

I don't know. Something's off.

SAM

You can say that again...

CELIA

No, I mean, something isn't right.... The External, the Archivist, it's not acting how I would have expected...

SAM

Got a lot of experience with killer tapes, do you?

CELIA

I just mean-

HELEN enters. CELIA gasps despite herself.

HELEN

Hi! Sorry to keep you waiting!

CELIA

Helen...

HELEN

That's me! I'm guessing you're Celia and so you must be-

SAM

Sam. Hi.

HELEN

Pleasure. So, can I get either of you a cup of tea? Coffee?

SAM

No thank you.

HELEN

How about you Celia?

Beat.

SAM

Celia?

CELIA

Oh no. I'm fine. Thank you... Helen.

HELEN

All right. Well straight to it!

(faffing with brochures)

So, there's a few likely properties that have just come to market, and luckily there's some rather nice new builds that haven't been listed yet so your timing is excellent.

SAM

Oh, er... good?

HELEN

Obviously, we'll need to know a bit more about your budget, but before that, are

there any big no-no's we should know about? "Heavy traffic, eco-warrior neighbors" that sort of thing?

SAM

Well, I mean I don't really have an issue with-

CELIA

(tense)

We're not here for a house.

SAM

We're not?

HELEN

Maisonette?

CELIA

No we're here, because, well, we're looking into the Magnus Institute.

Beat.

HELEN

I'm sorry, I'm... a little confused.

SAM

(defeated)

You haven't heard of it?

HELEN

Oh no no, I remember it very well, I just thought they had closed-up shop years ago after the fire. Some sort of academic outreach thing wasn't it - bit of a quango?

CELIA

Something like that yeah.

HELEN

Yea, I remember I found them a few commercial properties back when I was

first starting out. Surprised anyone is still interested though. Can I ask what this is about?

SAM

We're uh... making a documentary.

HELEN

(intrigued)

Oh really? A proper one? Who for?

SAM

Uh...

CELIA

BBC

HELEN

**Oh marvelous! Why didn't you just say?
Do I need to sign anything, or...?**

CELIA

**No, we're just in the early research stage
at the moment. Might not even go
anywhere.**

HELEN

(enthused)

**Oh well, as I recall they did have some odd
requirements, bloody big basements, lots
of security options, that sort of thing.**

SAM

**Do you have any kind of contact details
we could maybe follow up on? Anyone
specific you used to talk to?**

HELEN

**I'm not really meant to give that kind of
information out, GDPR rubbish - you now
how it is.**

CELIA

Of course.

HELEN

Best I can do is tell you it's been a long time since we've had contact. Twenty-odd years at least. Any details we still have are all very much out of date so wouldn't be much use to you.

SAM

(downcast)

Right.

HELEN

Tell you what, though, I think I still have the old listings filed away somewhere, the ones I sent through to them. Would it maybe help your research to know what sort of properties they were buying?

SAM

That would be great.

CELIA

Didn't you say something about GDPR?

HELEN

(conspiratorial)

Of course, you're right. I have no idea where your production team could possibly have gotten those files.

SAM

You're an absolute gem.

HELEN

Just remember that if you need any talking heads for the documentary, deal?

CELIA

Deal.

HELEN

And make sure you come to me if you're ever, you know, actually in the market for a house, eh?

She laughs. It's very reminiscent of The Distortion. Celia is unsettled. Sam laughs nervously.

5. CELIA'S FLAT, INT, DAY, BRIGHT (CELIA'S LAPTOP)

SAM is playing with baby Jack while Celia looks out the window to the street below.

SAM

(Imitating HELEN)

Yes, young Jack, should you ever have need of a modest chateau or a cheeky little palace do give me a call. Jolly good!

Jack is amused.

SAM

Do you like that?

Jack does.

SAM CONT.

Oh dear. Bad news, Celia.

CELIA

What?

SAM

Your baby's a Tory.

Beat. **SAM** notices Celia's distraction.

SAM

Celia?

CELIA

Hmm?

SAM

Everything all right?

CELIA

Sorry, yeah it's fine.

She comes over and sits beside him.

CELIA CONT.

I just- It felt like we were being watched for a moment.

SAM

We're ok. We were very careful not to be followed. It's just late - well, its early but you know what I mean- and we're both tired.

Beat.

CELIA

Yeah. Yeah you're right. Would, you like a drink while I put Jack down for his morning nap?

SAM

(awkward)

Is that a good idea... I mean...

CELIA

(amused)

I said a drink Sam, not a piss up.

SAM

Right, yeah. A drink sounds great.

CELIA

Beer's in the fridge. I won't be long.

(picking up Jack)

Come on, goblin. Say bye bye to Sam.

SAM
Bye bye Jack! Reexamine your political views!

Jack coos in delight. CELIA chuckles and heads into the bedroom.

Pause.

Sam stands, heads over to the fridge and pulls out a beer.

He opens it and takes a sip.

He hesitates then heads over to look out the same window Celia was.

Pause.

CELIA
(approaching)
Out like a light.

SAM
(Stepping away from the window)
You're welcome.

CELIA
(sitting)
You're very good with him.

SAM
I'm just the cool new toy.

CELIA
Cool's a strong word...

SAM
Ouch.

He yawns.

CELIA
Maybe I should be I putting you to bed?

He laughs then they both realize the connotation.

Beat.

SAM

Celia, I realize I haven't really said thank you.

CELIA

You don't have to.

SAM

I do. Even after we knew how dangerous this might be, you still stuck around. I know you have your own reasons, but...

CELIA

I have a few. But you're one of them. I like you, Sam.

SAM

I, uh, I mean, you know I like you too. That's...

Pause. Sam is awkward. Celia is not.

SAM

I should get going.

CELIA

You don't have to.

SAM

(uncertain)

No?

CELIA

(close)

Not if you don't want to.

SAM

(close)

I don't. I think I want to stay.

CELIA
(close)
Good.

They kiss.

Sam knocks over the beer but neither of them notice.

[Music]

ANNOUNCER

The Magnus Protocol is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share-alike 4.0 International License.

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

This episode was written by Muna Hussen and edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall, with vocal edits by Lowri Ann Davies, soundscaping by Tessa Vroom, 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 McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G. Hamilton, and Associate Producers Jordan L. Hawk, Taylor Michaels, Nicole Perlman, Cetius d'Raven, and Megan Nice.

To subscribe, view associated materials, or join our Patreon, visit rustyquill.com.

©Rusty Quill 2023

**Rate and review us online, tweet us
@therustyquill, visit us on facebook or
email us at mail@rustyquill.com
Thanks for listening.**

The Magnus Protocol 26 – Catching Up

CAT1RBC4463-14042024-02052024
Exhaustion (athletic) -/- compulsion (tape)

Incident Elements:

- **Masochism**
- **Compulsion (supernatural)**
- **Grief**
- **Parental Death**
- **Implied sexual situations/innuendo**
- **SFX: Misophonia (kissing)**

This episode is dedicated to Sierra Rush, thank you for your generous support! You can find 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 Muna Hussen, for more of her work visit

<https://www.thesiltverses.com/>

Script Edited with additional material by Jonathan Sims and [Alexander J Newall](#)

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 Samam

Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard

©Rusty Quill 2023

Jonathan Sims as Chester
Imogen Harris as Helen Richardson

Dialogue Editor – Lowri Ann Davies
Sound Designer – Tessa Vroom
Mastering Editor - Catherine Rinella

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

Support us on Patreon at <https://patreon.com/rustyquill>

Support Rusty Quill by purchasing from our Affiliates:
Phantom Peak – UK immersive experience – [15% discount with this link](#)

DriveThruRPG – [DriveThruRPG.com](https://www.drivethrurpg.com)

Join our community:

WEBSITE: rustyquill.com

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/therustyquill](https://www.facebook.com/therustyquill)

X: [@therustyquill](https://twitter.com/therustyquill)

EMAIL: mail@rustyquill.com

The Magnus Protocol is a derivative product of the Magnus Archives, created by Rusty Quill Ltd. and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Share alike 4.0 International Licence.