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The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 28
"Interruptions"**

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

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ANNOUNCER

This episode is dedicated to Nathaniel Shawver - Fear has shaped my perspective and actions for so long, but the immersive descriptions of the fears in Magnus showed me that I can choose to accept what I Fear as part of myself rather than feeling shame. There is so much in this world to be afraid of, but in examining that Fear we can find wonder.

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Twenty-Eight – Interruptions**

[Music]

1. INT. OIAR OFFICE – NIGHT, RAINING (COMPUTER)

SAM, CELIA and ALICE are sat typing (or at least, pretending to type). LENA enters, followed by TREVOR HERBERT MP and GWEN

LENA

And here, minister, is the main office, where the majority of the processing takes place.

TREVOR

So I see.

GWEN

And this is Sam, Alice and Celia our primary processing team.

Trevor goes round, they all awkwardly stand and shake his hand.

TREVOR
Good to meet you.

SAM
Uh, thank you, minister.

TREVOR
Fine work.

ALICE
Mmm. Cheers.

TREVOR
Lovely to-

He is cut off by a massive yawn.

TREVOR
Pardon me, sorry. I honestly don't know how you manage to get anything done on such late shifts.

CELIA
You get used to it.

TREVOR
Clearly, but it does seem unnecessary...

LENA
(jumping in)
The data processing and amalgamation tools are locked into a 24-hour cycle. The crawlers scrape online sources during the day then once the nationals pre-publish the data is incorporated into the caseloads meaning we're locked into this schedule. We could amend the

**system, but the required
infrastructure overhaul would be
very expensive and-**

TREVOR

**Best leave it as it is I think. If it isn't
broken don't fix it eh?**

ALICE

(muttered)

Ha...

TREVOR

**Besides I wouldn't want to upset
your Team dynamic. And such a
diverse team it is too... I wonder if
we should get in a photographer, put
you all on some civil service
promotional material.**

LENA

(slightly strained)

**Oh I doubt that won't be necessary,
minister. We're hardly the most
interesting department.**

TREVOR

**Oh well, I don't know about that.
So anyway, uh-**

GWEN

(quietly)

Sam.

TREVOR

Sam! How are the er accident-

GWEN

(quietly)

Incident.

TREVOR

-incident numbers looking? Going down, I hope!

SAM

Uh...

LENA

Our numbers have been steadily improving ever since you took charge, minister. It's all detailed in my reports.

TREVOR

Glad to hear it. The ONS has been sniffing around again, same old rubbish about overlapping responsibilities and “synergistic fulfillment objectives”

LENA

Well hopefully our latest metrics should assuage any concerns in that department.

TREVOR

Just as long as it keeps Gorman-Smith off me back...

He yawns again.

LENA

Was there anything else you wanted to see, minister?

TREVOR

No, no, no, I think we can move on.

LENA

Excellent. Gwen?

GWEN

If you'll follow me minister.

Trevor, Lena and Gwen leave. There is a moment of silence.

CELIA

Was that it?

ALICE

Oh for f-[ucks sake]

The recording stops.

**2. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE – NIGHT, RAINING (MANAGER'S
LANDLINE)**

LENA enters with Gwen and Trevor. She sits behind her desk while Gwen stands awkwardly.

LENA

**Thank you very much for joining us
this evening, minister. I do hope it
met your expectations.**

TREVOR

Mmmm.

LENA

Something the matter, minister?

**He takes a deep breath as if to enter a pre-prepared speech,
which it is.**

TREVOR

**Look, Lena, I've know you've had a
lot of leeway running of this
department with previous ministers
and god knows I prefer a hands-off
approach-**

LENA

Glad to hear it.

TREVOR

But it's reached the point where I am forced to intervene.

LENA

May I ask why?

TREVOR

Because I am hearing from reliable sources that one of your subcontractors has been implicated in a recent death, possibly even as a murder suspect.

Beat.

LENA

Gwen can I ask you to wait outside please.

Gwen starts moving to the door slowly.

LENA CONT.

Minister, if I may, we both know that the rumor mill surrounding-

TREVOR

Skip it. I went to Eton with Daniel Turner, the Commissioner. He keeps me in the loop.

GWEN

(hand on the door handle)

Do you know which, uh, subcontractor it was?

TREVOR

I'm sorry, do you hire a lot of murderers for contract and consultancy work?

LENA

(intervening)

She simply means that outside of their specific work with us we don't keep close track of our external workers and hadn't been made aware of this.

TREVOR

So you're telling me you know nothing about an OIAR external contract being found with the bodies of two tattooed thugs who met rather grisly ends?

Gwen and Lena realise he's talking about Ink5oul. Trevor doesn't notice.

LENA

I'm afraid not.

TREVOR

Then you're either lying or woefully out of touch. Neither fills me with confidence.

LENA

Minister-

TREVOR

I was able to talk to Danny and keep this quiet for now but I need to know that there's no liability here, either legal or, uh, reputational.

LENA

**You have my absolute assurances
that-**

TREVOR

**No. Not good enough. I need
someone's head to roll, so if it does
come back to bite me I can say that
those responsible have been
removed from their post.**

GWEN

W-who would that be?

LENA

Gwen, outside.

GWEN doesn't move.

TREVOR

**If you can find out who that contract
came from then fire them
otherwise...**

GWEN

Otherwise?

LENA

Gwen.

TREVOR

**Otherwise, I leave it to your
discretion.**

LENA

(pointed)

I'll see what I can do.

TREVOR

**Good. Now if you'll excuse me, it's
very late.**

3. OIAR BREAKROOM – NIGHT, RAINING (CCTV)

SAM, ALICE and CELIA are stood around, drinking coffee and laughing.

CELIA

Good grief.

ALICE

I told you. I told you.

SAM

You did.

ALICE

**But you didn't believe me, did you?
Oh no! You all thought "oh, Alice is
joking, she's exaggerating, she's
indulging in touch of comic
hyperbole-"**

CELIA

I admit I was... skeptical.

ALICE

**But I was right wasn't I? I. Was.
Right.**

CELIA

**I was sure he'd at least have a vague
idea about what we did. Just, like,
the faintest inkling.**

SAM

**At least this way we don't need to
talk to him.**

ALICE

**Oh, that's not very fair, Sam. Not
when he was so keen to spend time
chatting with such a *diverse* group of
folks.**

SAM

Oh my god, I almost forgot!

ALICE

I personally love to be diverse and think they should absolutely send a photographer down to capture me diversing all over the place.

SAM

(laughing)

Ew.

ALICE

What about you, Celia? You feeling a little diverse?

CELIA

Ooooooh I dunno. Does being a woman still count?

ALICE

I mean, it's hardly centrefold of Civil Service Weekly.

CELIA

Pan?

ALICE

I mean it's better. Are you from anywhere particularly exciting? That might do it.

CELIA

You have no idea...

ALICE

Ah of course, I forgot your mysterious origins.

The good humour fades a little.

ALICE

(cont'd)

Anyway, I reckon Gwen and Lena are going to be cleaning up after Mr. "minister" for a while yet, so I'm gonna bounce.

CELIA

Bit early isn't it?

ALICE

(Standing and grabbing her stuff)

I've earned it. Besides, I'm grabbing some drinks with Teddy.

SAM

In the morning?

ALICE

Ask not for whom the insomnia tolls, my dear. Cover for me if Lena asks?

SAM

Always.

ALICE

Alright. Peace!

Alice leaves. Beat.

CELIA

Well, we should probably be heading back to work.

Sam reaches out to her.

SAM

Wait a second.

CELIA

What's up?

SAM

I know you value your privacy and I respect that-

CELIA

Good.

SAM

But at some point you're going to need to stop deflecting anytime your past comes up. Don't get me wrong, it's your business, you don't need to tell me anything you don't want to but... I can only get so close with you when you keep so...

CELIA

So...

SAM

...locked down.

CELIA

Right.

SAM

All I ask is you think about it.

CELIA

I will.

SAM

Take your time, I'm in no rush and like I said, if you decide you don't want to share then I won't pry.

CELIA

Good to know.

SAM

Now if you'll excuse me, I need to go check what car the right honorable

dickhead is picked up in. Alice bet me a tenner it's going to be a Bentley.

CELIA

You're lucky you didn't bet more.

SAM

I know right? See you in there.

CELIA

Sure.

SAM exits. Celia remains.

4. OIAR MAIN ENTRANCE EXT. – NIGHT THUNDERSTORM (GWEN'S PHONE)

TREVOR HERBERT MP is getting in his Bentley as the storm grows thunderous. GWEN walks up behind him beneath an overwhelmed umbrella.

TREVOR

-complete bloody shambles. Home, Wilson before anyone else-.

GWEN

Uh, minister?

TREVOR

Oh, right, hello, uh...

GWEN

Gwendolyn. Bouchard.

TREVOR

Boucha- Not Jeremy's granddaughter?

GWEN

That's right.

TREVOR

Ha! Right, I see the resemblance now. How is the old bastard?

GWEN

He's all right, I think. We haven't spoken in a few years.

TREVOR

(trying to duck into the car)

I see. Well, I wouldn't say it's been a pleasure but it's good to know there's at least one person here with some quality.

GWEN

Thank you minister. Actually, I was wondering if I could talk to you for a moment.

TREVOR

(reluctantly)

Well you have my office number, so you just call up and the admin girls will-

GWEN

Lena's lying to you.

Beat.

TREVOR

(suddenly focused)

About what? This contractor business?

GWEN

It happened because she made a mistake. And it's not the first time either. Here.

She hands him a flash drive.

GWEN

I've compiled a dossier of confidential files stretching back almost twenty years detailing Lena's incompetence and malfeasance as head of the OIAR. It's all on this drive.

TREVOR

And how exactly did you happen to stumble across these "confidential" files?

GWEN

They were sent to me by a... concerned third party who wishes to remain anonymous.

TREVOR

I see. These are serious accusations.

GWEN

I'm aware.

TREVOR

Very well. Thank you for bringing this to my attention Ms. Bouchard. Good to see the apple hasn't fallen far from the tree.

GWEN

Oh, yes. Thank you.

TREVOR gets into the car.

TREVOR

**This is my direct number.
(he hands her a card)
Don't bother with the office, I'm
never there. You see anything else
"malfeasant" you give me a call.**

He goes to close the car door.

GWEN

Understood.

TREVOR

I'll be in touch.

**He shuts the door and the car pulls away leaving Gwen standing
in the rain. She takes a deep, steadying breath.**

5. EXT. OIAR – NIGHT, THUNDERSTORM (TAPE RECORDER)

**A tape recorder clicks on in the rain. SAM opens the main door
and stands in the doorway.**

SAM

**(getting soaked)
Oh Christ! Alright, Trevor Herbert
MP, what do you drive...**

He sees the car driving off.

SAM

**(cont'd)
Ah, dammit.**

He notices Gwen.

SAM

**(cont'd)
Gwen?**

(calling)
Gwen!

He takes a step forward.

The door slams shut behind him.

SAM
(cont'd)
Dammit!

He bangs on the door a couple of times.

There is a deep indrawn breath near the recorder which SAM doesn't notice.

SAM
(cont'd)
Brilliant. Absolutely- The first time I ever heard of the Magnus Institute was from my parents.

He stops gasping for breath confused.

There is another indrawn breath beside the tape deck.

SAM
(compelled)
I remember they were beaming, full of pride and satisfaction as they read out the letter: "selected to apply for our gifted child program".

He again gasps for breath panicking.

THE ARCHIVIST emerges.

ARCHIVIST
MORE.

SAM

(fighting it)

I... Was... so happy... that I had pleased them, that I was what they had wanted...-

ARCHIVIST

MORE.

SAM

...that I was... special...

The world recedes as Sam's statement is pulled from him leaving only his voice and the Archivist's indulgent breath.

SAM

I was so excited. It was my first ever train trip alone. Alone apart from Saul and Joy, the two other children invited from my school and Mrs Leng who was supervising us for the trip to Manchester.

The journey from London was magical. A whole two days off school with nothing to prepare or study or revise since the Institute wouldn't say what kind of tests we were going to be doing. I talked about Spider-man with Saul on the way and compare pogs, although the train was too bumpy to actually play. Joy wanted to play as well, but she was a girl and that was big deal. I still feel bad for that but it wasn't like we were mean to her or anything.

The thrill of the journey vanished the moment we arrived at the Magnus Institute. My school and the estate I grew up on were both built in the

sixties, all decaying concrete and decayed optimism, but this, this felt old like I had only seen in movies. I had learned a new word that week. Austere. This felt austere. And as we stepped into the building's shadow, tried to hang back, so Mrs. Leng had to gently pull me by the sleeve to get me to go in.

It smelt funny, sort of like my local library but more proper and the tall, barred windows let in little light. The place weighed on me like a heavy winter coat.

We were met at the entrance by a man called Gilbert. He was very thin, with mousy brown hair and a youngish face even though he dressed like a headmaster. He spoke with a big fake smile, like a kid's TV presenter and led us into a large room full of big chairs and old sofas, which was packed full of other kids. It seemed so strange to me that such a grand room would be filled with so many screaming, running children and I think all the adults felt the same. Gilbert left as quick as possible after showing us in.

I was one of the first to be tested, and I was especially nervous when I met the pair of stern-looking older women. They looked me up and down with thin lips and arched eyebrows, and I felt like I'd already failed without even taking the test.

They sat me down on a carved wooden chair that was far too big for me, my feet dangling over the edge uncomfortably. Then they began to ask me questions. But not like I was expecting at all. It wasn't maths or reading or history or science it was more like when I was sent to the school nurse in year two after biting another kid in an argument. "Was I happy at home?", "What do I do when I feel angry or upset?", "When is it okay to lie?"

I answered as best I could, but the women looked unhappy and it felt like I was getting it all wrong and I started feel cold and small and stupid. Then I started to cry.

I couldn't help it. I knew I shouldn't, that I was messing it up but all the bad feelings that had been growing inside since we arrived just burst out. The women looked even more annoyed and so I leapt out of the chair, still crying and ran out of the room before they could yell at me.

I ran and ran through the winding corridors, with no idea where I was going or what I was going to do. I didn't want Mrs. Leng to see me like this and tell my parents I'd been bad, but I didn't want to be on my own in this strange, horrible building. Finally, I stopped in a dark corridor with no windows, no sign of the overcast day outside. I was lost. I was lost and I was alone and I was in

so much trouble. I had to find a grownup.

So I started trying doors but they all seemed locked. Then I turned a corner and found an open door with the name Dr. F Welling engraved on a brass plaque and bright light spilling out from the inside. I should have known that the colour of the light was wrong. I should have known from the chanting inside that this place wasn't for me. But I was alone and I was afraid and I needed a grownup.

There was an old man in a tweed suit stood muttering in front of a table and on the table was a person. I couldn't see their face but they were naked and pale and still. Beside the table was a pile of weird machines and strange shaped beakers bubbling and hissing and whirring. Large chunks of stone and metal hung slowly twisting in the air and the sickly yellow light seemed to come from everywhere. I stepped forward and spoke with my smallest indoor voice:

“Hello?”

That was all I said. That was all. I couldn't have known.

He wasn't expecting any interruption and I could see the surprise run through him, disrupting his

concentration and making him stumble over his words for just a moment. It was just a moment, but in that moment the glass exploded the rocks fell and the yellow light vanished, sucked away as though into him.

We were thrown from dazzling brightness into deep darkness but I could just make him out as he turned towards me. He looked at me and opened his mouth, and I cowered, waiting for the yelling, for the punishment, but no words came out. He just opened his mouth wider and wider as if to scream, then reached out towards me.

But the flesh of his arm, the skin and muscle, it didn't move. It was the bones, the bones that pushed and strained against from inside as though there were a person trapped inside a fleshy suit. His skin strained for a moment, then erupted in a spray of blood that swept across the floor with a single drop landing on my new Velcro shoes.

The skeletal arm flailed outwards held together by a few dripping ligaments and leaking that awful yellow light from the joints. Then it bent and reached back and dug its bony fingers through the man's clothes and into his chest, ripping off a gorey chunk and hurling it to the floor. In the silence of the room I heard the wet slap of the meat on the

polished wooden floor and looking up I could see in the man's eyes that he could feel everything even though he didn't make a sound.

I stood there, frozen in shock and terror, and watched as the other arm thrust itself free from its meat, reached up and tore away his face in a single swift yank to reveal the ecstatic skull within. The last thing I saw was it's dripping red smile before I turned and bolted from the room.

The thunderstorm slowly begins to return.

I don't remember much after that. The stern ladies found me crying in a corner and pulled me back to the room with the other children. They gripped me too tightly but I didn't say anything. I never told anyone what I saw. My parents just assumed I was upset after being rejected from the program same as them. They were so disappointed, so sad to realize that I wasn't Magnus Material. Just me, nothing special. I couldn't look at them but not just because of the shame, but because whenever I saw their faces I could see the outline of their skulls beneath, still grinning at me.

And now, I- I'm going back... to find... find....

The sound of the thunderstorm comes back into focus as Sam is finally overcome and slumps to the floor. The archivist steps forward takes one last breath of Sam's memory then recedes leaving the tape recorder to flounder in the rain and stop.

[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 Jonathan Sims and edited with additional materials by Alexander J Newall, with vocal edits by Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese, 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, Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley, with additional voices from Beth Eyre

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 28 – Interruptions

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Transmutation (human) -/- ceremony (academic)

Incident Elements:

- Childhood Trauma
- Graphic Injury
- Ostectomy
- Supernatural Transformation
- Body Horror

This episode is dedicated to Nathaniel Shawver, 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](#)

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Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Sarah Lambie as Lena Kelley

Ian Hayles as Trevor Herbert MP

Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Beth Eyre as Archivist

Dialogue Editor – Lowri Ann Davies and Nico Vettese

Sound Designer – Tessa Vroom

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Mastering Editor - Catherine Rinella

Music by Sam Jones (orchestral mix by Jake Jackson)

Art by April Sumner

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