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The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 35
"Terms and Conditions"**

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Edited by Jonathan Sims**

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Draft 5**

ANNOUNCER

This episode is dedicated to Oliver Kaminski. It would be really funny if we gave you a job offer. I mean, we've never met you or even heard of you before in our lives, but you give off this really specific vibe, even though just this message you wrote out for us to read to you. It would be really funny if we offered you an acting position. For the bit. We probably won't, though.

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Thirty-Five – Terms and Conditions**

[Music]

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

ALICE is beyond frustrated and is turning a book page back and forth.

ALICE

(muttering)

Ethernet is a layer 2 protocol in the OSI LAN model that uses frames governed by...

She takes a deep breath and tries again.

ALICE

(muttering)

Ethernet is a layer 2 protocol in the OSI LAN model that uses frames governed by CSMA/CD or CSMA/CA with VLANs using IEEE 802.1Q all of which is monitored by SNMP which is itself...

She starts bashing the book on the table. CELIA approaches unnoticed.

ALICE

(to the book)

This. Is. What. You. Get!

CELIA

Going well?

ALICE

You've got to assert yourself with textbooks. It's the only way they'll respect you.

CELIA

I see.

ALICE

I don't get it. I just don't. Most of it's not even words it's just... stupid... tech... noise!

CELIA

I mean what are you even reading... Ah.

ALICE

I thought it might help.

CELIA

Makes sense. Friend of mine used one to setup a podcast.

ALICE

Windows 95 was the closest I could find. Turns out they don't sell a "bullshit-ancient-man-eating-evil-databases for Dummies."

CELIA

That feels like an oversight.

ALICE

Yeah, well it wouldn't make difference even I did have it. Colin wasn't even writing in English by the end and what I can figure out... let's just say he was a few rams short of a hard drive.

Beat.

CELIA

I don't think works as a-

ALICE

Yeah, I know. How's things your end?

CELIA

Not much better honestly. Did some more digging into the Magnus Institute.

ALICE

And?

CELIA

Just more Alchemy stuff.

ALICE

(skeptical)

What, like Lead into Gold?

CELIA

Amongst other things. Seems like it was their big thing. But... honestly, it feels like another dead end.

ALICE

Keep trying.

CELIA

(tentatively)

Alice...

ALICE

(ignoring)

Did you have any luck with Freddy?

CELIA

(sighing)

Well, I did what you suggested, trawling old cases for anything familiar and I did find something-

ALICE

(hopeful)

Oh yeah?

CELIA

Yeah but... I don't know how helpful it's going to be...

2. CYBERSPACE – N/A, N/A(COMPUTER)

NORRIS

HM Prison Strangeways inmate records

Entry:

PBEW_2023_08_14_M69782TM

Entry reads:

**Parole Board for England and Wales
Inmate M69782TM hearing.**

**Date: 14 August 2023
Site: HM Prison Strangeways,
Manchester**

Transcript as follows:

Chair: Morning all, this hearing is convened as of... 11:06 AM Monday, 14th August 2023 to consider parole for inmate... M69782TM, Mr. Terrance Menke of Strangeways prison held on multiple counts of murder along with various associated crimes and misdemeanours. I am the panel chair Mr. Obadiah Quint. To my left is our psychologist Dr. Lynsey Harris and to my right is Mr. Allen Stolas of the Elric Rehabilitation Initiative, our independent for today.

Stolas: Good morning.

Chair: We're also joined by Mr. Menke's legal representative Ms. Felica Ross along with Ms. Chloe Leahy for the prosecution, Xana Beard as victim support and parole officer... Connors Katsuj. Oh and Rune Laverne is sitting in as stenographer for today. Thank you Mrs. Laverne

Can I get confirmation from the panel before we proceed?

Harris: Confirmed.

Stolas: Looks good to me.

Chair: Excellent. In that case, let's hear opening statements from you Ms. Ross when you're ready.

Ross: Thank you. I must clarify however, that rather than seeking parole today my client has, in fact, expressed a desire not to be released at this time.

Chair: I see. I presume have no objection to that, Ms. Leahy?

Leahy: None at all. That suits the crown.

Chair: And how about our Advocate?

Beard: We would have objected to any parole anyway.

Chair: Understandable. In that case, does anyone have anything else to raise before we consult?

Harris: I do. Since Mr. Menke's arrest in... February of 2000, he has shown no remorse for his actions. In fact, in his most recent psychological evaluation, he was asked if he had any regrets. He replied: "I hadn't finished yet."

Beard: Christ...

Harris: If that's how he views his

crimes, then it seems odd to me that he would wish to remain incarcerated.

Ross: ...I am given to understand that Mr. Menke has been receiving... threatening mail and fears acts of reprisal.

Stolas: There is a record of an investigation in his file...

Leah: That's true but it was found that there was no credible threat.

Menke: No.

Chair: Mr. Menke, you will speak only when directly addressed is that understood?

Katsuj: It was just some kid's drawings.

Menke: That's not it.

Chair: Ms. Ross, control your client or I will have him removed.

Ross: My apologies.

Harris: If I may?

Chair: Proceed.

Harris: Mr. Menke, could you please tell us who you believe has threatened you?

Chair: You may answer the question

Mr. Menke.

Menke: You won't believe me.

Harris: Answer the question Mr. Menke.

Menke: They were sent to me by Mr. Bonzo.

Katsuj: For christ sake...

**Beard: I'm sorry but this is obscene!
We cannot let this hearing be used to
mock his victims and their families!**

**Chair: Ms. Ross, any further
disrespect from your client and he
will be ejected from these
proceedings am I understood?**

Ross: Of course.

**Stolas: Mr. Menke, could you tell us
a bit more about your relationship
with Mr. Bonzo?**

**Beard: Mr. Quint, will you please put
a stop to this!**

**Chair: Where are you going with this
Allen?**

Stolas: Please, humour me.

**Chair: Fine, but this is the last time,
you understand. Answer the
question Mr. Menke.**

Menke: What would you like to know?

Stolas: As much as you care to tell me.

Menke: Okay... Mr. Bonzo used to be everywhere growing up, like God. He was like God in a lot of ways really.

He was always there, always had time for me. He was dancing on the telly when dad lost his job, singing on the radio when things got worse, watching from the billboard outside when mum topped herself...

Dad liked to pretend he went to church but I used to pray to Bonzo. and he'd just smile and wave like normal, but I knew, deep down, that he heard me.

I remember, he was making a huge omelet when I hammered dad's head in. There were smashed eggs all over the studio. I remember laughing because it was just so funny, both of us making such a mess.

It wasn't a real one, though you know? Just kid stuff. But still, I thought maybe he'd be proud of me.

My first proper try wasn't much better of course. I was still finding my feet, barely had a costume. Just a mask, really, with these big wobbly ears. But you have to start somewhere, don't you? And when I

looked on the TV that Saturday night there he was as always. This time he was breaking violins and the audience kept yelling “Practice makes perfect.” That was when I knew that he knew and we both laughed and laughed as the audience cheered us on.

The next one was much better. I did it with a Father Christmas costume I bought in Woolworths, and I put down some plastic to catch the spray. I knew he was impressed because that Saturday he did a double length Christmas special.

We could have gone on like that forever, I think. My costumes weren’t all that, not like his, but they didn’t have to be. You just do your Bonzo best.

But then I went and spoiled it all for a stupid joke. I wanted to surprise him for a change, really give him a giggle. And I guess maybe I thought I’d earned it.

I spent ages on the costume, made it myself from scratch, none of that cheap kids rubbish, I wanted it to be proper.

But it was going to be tricky. This time it wasn’t enough to just do it, I needed people to see it happen, that way they’d think it was him and then I could take the mask off and he would realize it was me all along.

He'd see me, he'd finally see me properly, and we'd laugh and laugh and laugh.

I got it done easy enough.. Don't really remember much about it to be honest. Judge told me I used a crowbar, and I don't think he'd lie about it. Anyway, everyone was screaming and running and I could barely stand for laughing. And that was when the filth tackled me. I mean, what are the chances a couple of random coppers just happened to be walking by at that exact moment? But honestly, if anything it just made the whole thing funnier.

I tried to stand and shake them off but I couldn't stop laughing, besides the suit was really bulky and I couldn't really see very well. It was tight, though, tighter than it had felt when I put it on. I could barely breathe and it was slick inside. I must've been sweating buckets...

Obviously, I didn't get to see Bonzo that night because I was locked up. I asked for a TV but they just told me to shut up. I knew I'd get to see him eventually, though. After all he was Mr. Bonzo. He was everywhere.

Or at least he had been, but as the weeks went by it was like he disappeared. He wasn't on the radio any more, he wasn't on TV and they took down his Billboards. It was like everyone had decided to pretend he

had never existed. I honestly started to feel like I was going crazy!

That was why I yelled at Mr. Dickerson in the trial. I thought if anyone knew where he had gone it would be his best friend. But he just got angry and said horrible things about me. That was when I started to worry. What if he hadn't found it funny? What if he was insulted? What if he was angry?

I wanted to find him, to tell him I was sorry, to let him know I would never do anything to upset him but that was when they put me here. I tried explaining it to them but every time I did I just ended up back in solitary so eventually I just stopped trying.

I did get some letters from fans at first but that soon stopped. I don't know, it was weird. I don't think they wanted to talk about Mr. Bonzo.

Eventually I got to being in here. It's not so bad at the end of the day. Didn't have much of a life outside anyway.

But then the letters started again only this time it wasn't from fans.

At first I thought it was something from the lawyers, maybe to do with Parole since it had my name and number on the envelope but the paper was yellow with orange flecks and it had a massive thumbprint on

the corner in purple ink.

I saw that and I knew what it was. Who it was from. I was shaking so much I couldn't even open it. Just holding it felt like, I don't know, like blasphemy but the guards had already opened it so after a while I peeled it apart and looked inside.

It was an old Mr. Bonzo card but I couldn't tell what type because everything was scratched off the front apart from his face which was staring up at me. I was so happy to see him after all these years, to finally be seen again but... his face was wrong. Instead of his happy googly eyes these were fixed in place, staring at me and he wasn't smiling. He looked... angry.

The card was warped so it took a moment to prise it open but once I had I found a message scrawled inside in childish letters with viscous and smudged purple ink. Just one line: "Mr Bonzo's on his way..."

I wanted to tell someone, but last time I said his name they had put me in solitary. So I kept quiet didn't I?

The next one arrived a few weeks later. This one was larger and got a bit of attention when it came through. It looked like it was one of those big cards for a big birthday, the kind where someone's friends and family would be there.

I didn't want to take it but they insisted so I carried it back to bed and opened it in there alone. The same paper, the same purple ink on the envelope even more smudged this time and it was difficult to pull the card out as it was so bent as if it had been wetted then dried.

Mr. Bonzo was there again, staring at me through the scratches on the cover with those fixed angry eyes. A bigger card meant I could see all the details. I could see that Mr. Bonzo wasn't just angry, he was furious. .

I was trembling all over when I opened the card and found that childish scrawl inside. "He wants to stay."

The last one came a few days ago, it was enormous, I had to sign a special form to get it and everything. It felt like I was looking at one of those big charity cheques he used to give out and hit people over the head with and there was so much purple ink that looked like spilled paint.

I needed help to pull the mangled card out and our hands were covered in the purple ink which was somehow still wet. Almost the entire front of the card was destroyed leaving only those eyes and his huge mouth which was open unnaturally wide and deep.

I didn't need to open it to know what was written inside but the people helping insisted. The paper was gouged with the force that it had been marked, more stabbed than written, but I could still make out the words: "He wants to play with you."

Since then I've been trying to stay in solitary as much as possible. It's better there, thicker walls, stronger gates but it won't help. I love Mr. Bonzo with all my heart but I don't think he likes me anymore.

Mr. Bonzo's on his way, he wants to stay, he wants to play with me.

Chair: Right. Well. Uh... Ms. Ross, is any of this true? The cards I mean?

Ross: I'm not entirely sure. I was informed he'd received some strange mail but nothing like that.

Stolas: Thank you Mr. Menke that's all I needed to hear.

Chair: Right well in that case-

Stolas: I would like to formally recommend Mr. Menke for referral to the Elric Rehabilitation Initiative as soon as possible.

Chair: Allen-

Stolas: He's a perfect candidate, and I think we could do a lot with him.

Beard: I'm sorry, but this is completely unacceptable-

Leahy: The crown cannot condone this-

Menke: No!

Ross: Sit down Mr Menke-

Menke: He's on his way!

Chair: I warned you Mr Menke-

Menke: He wants to play with me!

Chair: Get him out of here-

Katsuj: Watch out, he's got-

Ross: Mr Menke what-

Transcription ends due to interruption.

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

CELIA and ALICE are sat mid break, mid coffee, mid conversation.

ALICE

I'll tell you the same thing I told Sam. Some bureaucrat misfiled some paperwork a hundred years ago and now we're just running out the clock every night, trapped in some weird, overlooked legacy department.

Beat.

ALICE

(cont.).

It's funny... I used to take comfort in that, knowing that we were on our own.

CELIA

But there must be patterns?

ALICE

Nope.

CELIA

What? No commonalities between cases or something?

ALICE

I mean, the system has, what, two or three thousand classifications. Some of them must come up more often, I guess.

CELIA

Sure, but they're all so precise. Have you never tried to sort them into... themes? Like darkness or disease or being buried alive or something?

ALICE

(lost)

Why would I do that? Besides I'd say being buried alive is pretty bloody specific.

CELIA

Okay but not just literally buried alive, metaphorically too. Like, stuff about being crushed in a vice or... in debt, maybe?

ALICE
(legitimately baffled)
I don't know what you want from me
Celia. I've never noticed anything
like that. Until recently it was just
pointless admin all the way down.

GWEN enters.

ALICE
(cont.)
Speak of the devil.

GWEN
(guarded)
What now?

Beat.

GWEN
(begrudging)
Sorry. I'm a bit...

ALICE
Repressed?

GWEN
(unamused)
Stressed.

Beat.

ALICE
Pull up a pew.

GWEN
(genuinely surprised)
What?

ALICE
Bum. Seat.

GWEN comes over and sits.

ALICE
Coffee?

GWEN
(Wary)
No. Thank you.

Pause. ALICE drinks her coffee

GWEN
So, what happens now?

ALICE
This is pretty much it. Misery,
company, etc.

GWEN
Right.

Beat.

CELIA
So what is wrong?

GWEN
(reluctantly)
It's Lena's handover. I was able to
recover some old emails but they're
not exactly... helpful.

CELIA
No?

GWEN
Not really. It's just going on and on
about how important it is to "balance
the books." Alice, do you know if a
guy named William Price ever
worked here?

ALICE
If he did it was before my time.

CELIA

Hang on... “Bill Price” and he wants to balance the books? That’s got to be a fake name Right?

ALICE

I don’t know, there was this woman who worked at my local Barclays called “Laura Money”.

GWEN

Either way I don’t think they’re actually talking about budgeting.

ALICE

Gwen, listen. There’s absolutely no shame in struggling with a new role...

CELIA

Exactly.

ALICE

-unless of course you just weaseled your way into it by betraying the one person who might actually have known what was going on and are now slowly going mad trapped in your office as everything collapses around us... In that case, there’s probably quite a lot of shame.

ALICE sips. **CELIA** doesn’t approve.

GWEN gets up.

GWEN

(leaving)

Good talk.

ALICE
(calling after her)
Just a big steaming pile of shame!

GWEN leaves. Beat.

ALICE
(cont.)
What?

CELIA
I don't think that was helpful.

ALICE
It helped me.

CELIA exits. Once she is out of earshot Alice sighs sadly.

**4. EXT. O.I.A.R. MAIN ENTRANCE – NIGHT, CLEAR (BROKEN
CAMCORDER)**

ALICE steps out the main door with her headphones in. She walks into a heavy trolley, bashing her shins and knocking a couple of items, including the camcorder we're listening through.

ALICE
Ah! Mother-[fucker!] Hmmmm. Ow.
What the hell is- Teddy?

TEDDY
Oh, uh hi Alice. Sorry.

ALICE
(still hurting)
Good! That hurt! What are you doing here? I haven't seen you in weeks!
There's been so much going on, and-

Beat.

ALICE rubs her shins whilst TEDDY replaces the equipment on the trolley.

ALICE

(cont.)

And you don't need to hear about that right now. How have you been? What's with all the uh...

TEDDY

Tech?

ALICE

I was going to say shattered effigies of twentieth century hubris but sure, let's go with "Tech".

TEDDY

Yeah, it is a bit out of date isn't it?

ALICE

You look like you're scrapping my primary school's computer room.

TEDDY

It's just stuff for the new job. You know.

ALICE

You found something then?

TEDDY

Oh yeah.

ALICE

Anything exciting?

TEDDY

It's fine. Lots of fetching and carrying with a bit of tech support but it pays all right.

(changing the subject)

How's stuff back at the old haunt?

ALICE

Honestly? Pretty bad. You got out at the right time.

TEDDY

New guy still holding up?

ALICE

He uh, he moved on.

TEDDY

That's a shame. I kinda liked him.

ALICE

Mmmm.

Beat. It's awkward.

TEDDY

Well listen, I should probably get going. Don't want to keep people waiting on their... uh... equipment.

ALICE

No yeah. Of course. Look after yourself Teddy.

TEDDY

You too.

ALICE

Sure.

ALICE walks off. The Camera zooms in on TEDDY. His tension transitions into fear once she is out of sight.

TEDDY

(To camera)

I'm Sorry! I'm on my way okay? It won't happen again!

The Camera cuts out.

[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, Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley, Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard, Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn with additional voices from Alexander J Newall. 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 35 – Terms and Conditions

CAT1RB4778-14082023-22052024

mascot (incarceration) -/- retaliation (imposter)

Incident Elements:

- **Mascots (Bonzo)**
- **Murder**
- **Graphic Violence**
- **Scopophobia**
- **Stalking**
- **Mentions of: Suicide, Child Neglect,**

Transcripts available at <https://rustyquill.com/transcripts/the-magnus-protocol/>

This episode is dedicated to Oliver Kaminski. 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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Alexander J Newall as Norris
Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn

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Art by April Sumner

**SFX from Soundly and Freesound: kyles,
deleted_user_21043670, deleted_user_2104797, poqdaavid,
FlorsTristi, collacot, maisonsonique, StefanoPTesta,
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