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The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 40
"Public Image"**

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Forty – Public Image

[Music]

1. INT. BERLIN AIRPORT – EVENING, CLEAR (ALICE’S
PHONE)

A quiet berlin arrivals terminal with few people milling about. ALICE stretches then sees DANE waiting for her dressed in full tacti-cool “operator” gear, complete with big beard, sunglasses and a baseball cap.

ALICE
(to herself)
Christ, here we go...

She walks over.

ALICE
Hey, uh, Dane I take it?

DANE
That’s an affirmative, ma’am. Dane
Bowie, Starkwall Services Group.
You’re Alice Dyer, the civilian asset?

ALICE
Uh yeah, civilian asset, that’s me.

DANE
I got a basic sitrep from control.
Possible single unorthodox hostile?

ALICE
Uh... Affirmative?

Beat.

DANE

You ever worked with an operator before ma'am?

ALICE

My brother plays a lot of Call of Duty?

DANE

Well, this here's the real thing, so let me lay it out for you. It's your job to go about your day, do whatever you need to do. Meanwhile, it's my job to accompany you with complete situational awareness, predicting any possible threat vector and zeroing it. So if I say drop, you drop, if I say run, you run. If you understand that, I just might be able to keep you alive.

Beat.

ALICE

Gosh. Well, thank you Dane, I'm glad you've got you to protect me through the dangerous warzone that is Berlin Airport.

DANE

(oblivious)

All part of the job, ma'am.

ALICE

One question. Why the sunglasses?

DANE

Glare kills careless operators. Makes it harder to see the details, especially against camouflaged bogeys.

ALICE

It's seven at night. And we're indoors.

DANE

Can't be too careful ma'am.

ALICE

Right. Speaking of, watch yourself.

TRAVELER

Entschuldigung!

A traveler pushes past DANE who is seemingly caught unawares and covers it.

DANE

'Scuse me.

Beat.

ALICE

Cool. Well how about we head out yeah?

DANE

Affirmative. Stay frosty.

ALICE

(rolling her eyes)
Roger Wilco "Snowman 1"

2. INT. OIAR OFFICE – NIGHT, CLEAR (COMPUTER)

CELIA is working on her terminal. She stops and GWEN approaches.

GWEN

Everything alright?

CELIA

Oh yeah, it just... feels a bit empty,
doesn't it?

GWEN

Alice shouldn't be gone too long.

CELIA

True. Even so you'd think she would
have said goodbye before setting off.

GWEN

It's Alice. I doubt she'd have even
bothered to tell us she was leaving if
she didn't need me to pay for the
flights.

CELIA

Hmmm.

GWEN

(cont'd)

You're right about it being empty
though. With Sam missing, Lena
gone and Colin's... situation, it's
probably time to hire some fresh
blood.

CELIA

And are you going to tell them the
truth about what goes on down
here?

GWEN

The truth is that if people just behave
in a professional manner this is a
perfec- a relatively safe environment.

CELIA

You might want to work on the pitch
a bit.

GWEN

Look I know it's not a pleasant job
but somebody has to do it.

CELIA

(genuine)
Do they though?

Beat.

GWEN

You're behind on your caseload.

GWEN exits.

**3. INT. HIRED CAR/ EXT. DERELICT FACTORY – NIGHT,
CLEAR (ALICE'S PHONE)**

The car pulls up outside a sinister former factory of brick and
cement. **DANE** cuts the engine.

DANE

Got eyes on the AO. I'm not liking
the sightlines, too easy for someone
to get a bead.

ALICE

Yeah, it is a bit spooky. What do you
think they used to make here?

DANE

(ignoring)
Looks standard operating
procedures for a semi-hostile
environment. I'll go in, sweep the
perimeter, check for any hostiles
then establish an extraction route in
case we need a tactical retrograde
for the civilian assets.

ALICE

That's me!

DANE

Affirmative.

Dane pulls out a gun and starts preparing it.

DANE

If I'm not back in five minutes-

ALICE

Jesus, there's no way that's legal!

DANE

All in-country Starkwall field operators hold a special Waffenschein weapons license as part of our contractual work for the German government.

ALICE

Well, put it away. Christ.

DANE

No can do, ma'am. This is an active field operation and I have a duty of protection. Now, as I was saying, you stay here while I-

ALICE

Yeah, no thanks.

Alice opens the car door and hops out.

DANE

Hey! The AO is not cleared!

Alice shuts the door behind her, cutting off his indignant cries. She takes a deep breath then walks off to the building.

**4. EXT. DERELICT FACTORY CONT./INT. HEINRICH'S
WORKSHOP – NIGHT, CLEAR (ALICE'S PHONE)**

Alice pulls open the heavy metal sliding door of the derelict industrial building. Inside she finds hundreds of creepy wooden toys.

ALICE

Woah.

Dane catches up to her and places himself in front of her.

DANE

Ma'am, I need you to stay on my six.

He makes a big show of preparing to enter then ducks in, sweeping his pistol left.

DANE

(cont.)

Clear!

He sweeps right.

DANE

(cont.)

Clear!

ALICE

I don't know if I'd describe this place as 'clear'.

DANE

Wooden puppets don't count as hostiles, ma'am.

ALICE

Uhuh. How much they tell you about this job again?

DANE

(getting nervous)

**I was given a basic sitrep ma'am.
Though I admit it didn't include how,
uh...**

ALICE

Scary?

DANE

**...unorthodox the RV would be. Any
sign of your contact?**

HEINRICH emerges from amongst the toys.

HEINRICH

**You are not the visitor I was
expecting.**

Dane spins in a panic and levels his pistol at Heinrich.

DANE

**Contact! Hands where I can see
them! Hands where I can see them
right now!**

HEINRICH

**Did I frighten you? Entschuldige,
such was not my intention. Your fear
is... unpaletable to me.**

DANE

(scared)

**No-one is scared, now don't fucking
move.**

Heinrich samples the mood.

HEINRICH

(distasteful)

**Eurgh. Yes. Messy. Säuerlich. Too
much bluster and bravado.**

ALICE

Put the gun down, Dane. If he wanted to hurt us, he'd have done it already.

HEINRICH

Or keep it pointed at me. Das ist mir egal.

(To Alice)

You are not Colin.

ALICE

No. Colin's, well... Colin's dead.

HEINRICH

Ah, mein beileid. How did it happen?

ALICE

We're not sure, something to do with the computer program he was investigating.

HEINRICH

Natürlich. A shame. I was looking forward to meeting him face to face.

ALICE

How did you know him?

HEINRICH

Some years ago, I do not how long, I do not follow the time closely, I was contacted by a man doing some programming for die Ministerium für Staatssicherheit. It involved many like me, but I am one of the more... amenable of my kind. He asked some questions, ran some tests and that was the last I heard of it. Somehow, his notes came into the hands of Colin and they contained my details. He wanted to ask me some questions. I agreed.

ALICE

Why?

HEINRICH

Even a monster gets lonely. Also, he offered to help me... develop. I have struggled of late. Computerspiele. Videogames, you understand? I was hoping to get some help adapting. It is hard for something old like myself. But, come, the workshop is not a comfortable place for you. I do not sit but I bought a chair for Colin. Please, follow me.

ALICE

(moving to follow)

Thanks.

DANE

(blocking her)

That's a negatory! We're not going anywhere with you. What are you?

HEINRICH

I am Heinrich Unheimlich. I am the toy that gives the children nightmares.

ALICE

You mean the toymaker, right?

HEINRICH

Toy, toymaker, workshop... Egal. It is all me.

DANE

You're going to start talking sense right now otherwise-

HEINRICH

You want my whole story? Here?

ALICE

Sure, why not.

HEINRICH

You do not want to sit in the chair? I bought it for you. It cost sixty Euro.

DANE

I don't give a shit about your chair!

HEINRICH

Wie du möchtest.

**5. INT. HEINRICH'S WORKSHOP CONT. – NIGHT, CLEAR
(ALICE'S PHONE)**

HEINRICH

Once upon a time – I believe that is how you start them, yes? Once upon a time, some two hundred years ago, there was a toy. A little wooden doll. It did not know who made it, for it did not yet know anything. It was long and crude and blackened from a fire that had once licked its feet. It delighted in giving splinters to all the little girls and boys and it was... wrong. The limbs did not fit, the body was lumpy in the wrong places, and the face... There was no face, except for shallow divots and shadows left from the fire. It would look at you with hunger without any eyes.

The little girl that owned it was a mischievous soul and took joy in seeing her playmates fear. She called it “Heinrich Unheimlich” and made a little rhyme to scare the smaller children. And scare them it did.

(sung)

**Heinrich Unheimlich, wirst du mit mir spielen?
Heinrich Unheimlich, bist du in den dielen?
Heinrich Unheimlich, oh, bist du in sicht?
Heinrich Unheimlich, iss meine Eltern nicht.**

(spoken)

One day, the little girl was gone. Her parents were gone. Their house was empty and the windows were dark and nobody knew what had happened to them. They left everything behind, including Heinrich Unheimlich.

It was left sitting on the windowsill of the little girl’s bedroom, looking out over the street below and all the other children would pass below whispering and pointing.

“Heinrich Unheimlich got her,” they said among themselves. “She said the rhyme, and he came for her family.”

And for the first time in its existence, the toy felt something. It was... happy. Satisfied. It had filled a hunger it did not know that it possessed.

Nobody moved into the old house, as it fell into deep ruin and the children kept whispering, daring each other to go inside, to prove they were not scared of Heinrich Unheimlich, who was not real and could not hurt them.

But when they came into the house, and they crept up into the room, the toy found the most curious thing... It was real. And it could hurt them.

It soon discovered that to kill a child is... A passing rush of fear, acute yes, delicious certainly, but unsatisfying. To scare them, though, to terrorize and taunt, to sit silent and still but with the smallest, tiniest hint of movement... That was delicious and as they fled from the house and told their friends what they had seen, the children's story would grow and grow and the toy would feast.

Then one day, a bold little child who reminded the toy of the little girl from so long before, began to add to the story himself. Heinrich Unheimlich, he said, was not the name of the toy, no. For you see a toy must have a maker and Heinrich Unheimlich, was the name of the toymaker. And he

began to describe him. He was tall and thin, with a long, matted black beard and slender fingers stained with wood varnish and children's blood. His eyes were deep and his teeth were sharp as iron nails. The doll was just one of his creations, each of which was full of malice and cruelty. Each hungry for children's screams.

When it heard the story, what could the toy do but grow such a man? And once the toymaker was real, what else could he do but make more toys?

The little boy, whose name was Hans, was brave when the toymaker came to him. He did not scream or cry or run when he saw the man he had invented to scare his classmates, though I could taste the pure uncomplicated fear of a child rolling off him. He was the first of my chosen. The children who would tell my story.

I made him a hobby horse who bore its nasty teeth when adults could not see and whose mane moved when no one was looking. All his friends were afraid of it, even more so when he told him that it was a gift from Heinrich Unheimlich.

There was one boy however, Klaus, who was not afraid. He did not believe in Heinrich Unheimlich. He said that the hobby horse was just a

stupid piece of wood and at his words, the other children were emboldened, and they began to call little Hans a liar.

That night, when everyone was asleep, the hobby horse went for a ride. It rode through the streets, It rode over the bridge, It rode through the window of the room where Klaus slept. It woke him then, and made him ride into his parents room, where its sharp teeth and horrible mane tore them apart. It bit off their fingers, it bit off their toes, it chewed out their tongues and it spat out their clothes. Klaus screamed, the toymaker smiled, and the children of the town remembered to fear the rhyme of Heinrich Unheimlich.

And so it had been. I gave my toys to the children and they would spread my story and the ones who would not believe... Their parents pay the price.

The story has grown as the years have passed. My workshop has changed the most, I think. It has moved many times as the places children fear to tread have changed. You should have seen it last century, or was it the one before? A dark-wood hut on the edge of a forest. Ilsa, my child at the time, had a refined taste for the gory, and so the empty skins of children hung like sheets from the ceiling beams, my tools were sharpened from bone and

my toys were varnished with human fat bubbling in a cauldron upon the fire. I gave her a set of wooden soldiers: their weapons sharp, their faces full of hatred and their coats wet with blood. So frightful was her telling that the soldiers never even saw combat, for there were none that doubted her.

These latest decades though, they have been... harder. Toys have changed, the children are less... credulous. I have tried a few times, but have found myself without a chosen for many years and those who hear my story now, find it... quaint. This perhaps is why the Heinrich Unheimlich you find is somewhat less fearsome than he once might have been. But we shall see, I suppose. I shall change again, I am sure, I shall adapt. Because change is a strange and scary word for a child. And Heinrich Unheimlich will be there to feast on that fear when it comes.

6. INT. HEINRICH'S WORKSHOP – NIGHT, CLEAR (ALICE'S PHONE)

HEINRICH

So, alles klar?

DANE

(not okay)

You kill children.

HEINRICH

**Ja, it has happened. But it is rare.
Corpses do not cry after all.**

DANE

And their parents?

HEINRICH

**Not often. The tale of a killing
spreads further than the act. A single
dead parent can spark fears to keep
me fed for years. If they were to
happen too often, they are no longer
stories, they are facts. Dull and at
risk of... inconvenient investigation.**

**Beat. DANE remains unimpressed. Alice approaches and
extends a hand.**

ALICE

Alice.

HEINRICH

**Alice. A charming name. Now I grow
weary of your ärgerlich companion. I
would ask we continue our
discussion alone. Kommen Sie mit.**

DANE

**That's a negatory. There is no way in
hell she is moving to a secondary RV
with no escort.**

HEINRICH

**Alice, it will be difficult to continue
whilst he insists on behaving so
vulgar. I had hoped-**

HEINRICH steps forward. DANE blocks him.

DANE

Back off! Right now.

HEINRICH
(calm, threatening)
Remove you hand from me.

DANE
I'm warning you-

HEINRICH
Trottel.

Toys suddenly spring forth and grab Dane. He screams in terror and fires off two shots before the gun is ripped from him, along with the hand holding it. He thrashes in agony as he is viscerally disassembled by little wooden puppets.

Beat. ALICE is terrified but in control.

HEINRICH CONT'D
Entschuldigung fraulein, but I really found that man intolerable. He was not a friend of Colin's, I hope?

ALICE
N-no.

HEINRICH
Schön zu hören. In our conversations he did not seem the sort to tolerate such behavior.

Beat.

HEINRICH
(cont, considering)
Hmmm. You deny your fear very much, but when it bubbles up... still youthful and pure. I think we will get along just fine.

ALICE
What do you want from me?

HEINRICH

I was under the impression you wanted something from me: Answers to your questions. Kommen Sie mit. I have bought a nice chair for you. I wish for you to be comfortable.

Beat.

ALICE

(unnerved)

...‘kay.

[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 Jonathan Sims and edited with additional materials by 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, Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard, and Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley. The Magnus Protocol is produced by April Sumner, with executive producers Alexander J Newall, Dani McDonough, Linn Ci, and Samantha F.G. Hamilton, and

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Thanks for listening.**

CAT3RCA2167-23111762-10062024
puppet (reanimation) -/- fear (children)

Incident Elements:

- Puppets
- Creepy Children
- Childhood Trauma
- Graphic Violence
- SFX: Screaming, gunshots

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Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Derrick Valen as Dane Bowie

Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Robert Vernon as Heinrich Unheimlich

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