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The Magnus Protocol

Episode 52 "Oversight"

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER

**Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Fifty-Two – Oversight**

[Music]

**1. HIGH IN THE SHARD RUINS (TAPE DECK), INT. NIGHT,
RAINING**

WARDEN KANE flees through the rusting hulk of what was once the London Shard.

He bursts out of a stairwell, panting, and shoves some metal debris across the door behind him before casting about for his next escape route only to realize...

There isn't one.

He has climbed the splintered peak and now there is nowhere left to run. It's just him, the elements and the precipitous drop to the Zone far below.

KANE

(muttered)

Oh shit... shit, shit, shit, shit, shit!

That is, until he hears a voice on the wind.

ARCHIVIST

I... see... you...

KANE blanches then struggles to reload his jammed weapon.

THE ARCHIVIST materializes just as **KANE** reloads his weapon. **KANE** spins, gasps and sprays the area with automatic fire.

THE ARCHIVIST laughs and sweeps forward. **KANE** gasps and

drops his weapon before backing away closer to the exposed edge.

ARCHIVIST
(drawing closer)
Grimsley... Kane... Your story is mine...

KANE
No, no wait! Wait! You don't need to do this-

ARCHIVIST
(and closer)
Need? Yes...

KANE
No! I- I can, I can help you! I can help you!

The Archivist hangs, seemingly intrigued.

ARCHIVIST
Help...?

KANE
Yes! Yes, let me help you! What do you want? Tell me, anything, and I- I'll make it happen. Just tell me what you want!

ARCHIVIST
(confused)
What I... want...?

KANE
Yeah! I know people... Captain Barker! She'll listen to me! I can- We can make a deal! Whatever you want!

ARCHIVIST
(Approaching again)
I want your story... your fear...

KANE
I can get you fear! All the fear you
could ever want!

Beat. The ARCHIVIST hesitates, wind whistles through the ruin
tugging at its form.

ARCHIVIST
Speak.

KANE
I uh- well I-

The ARCHIVIST starts to approach.

KANE
(terrified)
There's still something down there!
There's still something down there.
The, uh...

He struggles to recall the word in the face of the ARCHIVIST's
impatience.

KANE
(cont. pressing on)
Panopticon! The Panopticon, some
of it's still down there! I can show
you! I've been there, beneath what's
left of the old tower! Just... Let me
live...

Beat.

You're, you're him right? 'The
Archivist?' All the Dreamers say the
same thing. You're him and you're
back to finish what you started. To
get your revenge and then give

everything back to the nightmares?

Beat. THE ARCHIVIST considers KANE.

KANE

(cont.)

I used to be like you! Okay!? I kept a domain before Towerfall. Noone knows it but I, I fed the darkness and... and I could do it again, for you! I want to!

Beat. The ARCHIVIST pulls back slightly and from this high vantage surveys the zone far below, the Warden's perimeter and beyond it, the world outside.

ARCHIVIST

I have felt it... A splintered throne of stale fear and faded nightmares... far below the silent city...

KANE

Yes! It's where you- where we belong. I can lead you there.

Pause. The ARCHIVIST considers.

ARCHIVIST

You shall lead me...

KANE

(relieved)

Ok! Ok, so-

ARCHIVIST

....when I have drunk your story and I know your mind.

KANE

(afraid)

What?

ARCHIVIST

**I will visit this place that festers in
your memory but not before I feed.**

KANE

(terrified)

No...

ARCHIVIST

(compelling)

SPEAK.

**2. CONT. HIGH IN THE SHARD RUINS (TAPE DECK), INT.
NIGHT, RAINING/ STATEMENT**

KANE

They say everyone is afraid of the dark, that it's one of those in-built survival things from birth, but that's nonsense.

You're only born after spending months in a dark womb. The average person spends something like 45 minutes a day in the dark behind their blinking eyes. Hell, we spend a third of our lives in the dark sleeping!

So people think they're afraid of the dark but they're not. It's the helplessness they're afraid of. It's knowing that there could be something there and you couldn't do anything about it, might not even know if it was right beside you.

So that means if you want to make people afraid, if you want to really get under their skin, what you want is them to know they're about to be helpless. You want that, that last moment of the sunset when you notice the figure watching you from the horizon, that quick dart of movement just as you turn off the light, that moment of silence just after you hear what's hunting you in the night.

It's no wonder they would scream when I burst into their tent and beg

them to turn out the light.

I would only get a glimpse of them before the darkness descended. Mostly it was hobbyists or company retreats, once it was military. Never any kids though. Six people, now seven, crammed into a tent without enough space to sit up, let alone stretch out. They would all ask questions but I would just hush them into silence just as the figure was outlined on the tent wall.

That always shut them up. These people had no idea who I was, why I was there, what was going on, but it didn't matter because right then there was the shade of something they couldn't understand just on the other side of the canvas and that meant they had already split the world into "us" inside and "them" outside.

The moment would hang, the figure poised outside in the rain, unnaturally still and silent and no-one would move, no one would even breath inside and then... it was gone. It didn't move off or duck away, it just simply wasn't there any more. A trick of the light, or should I say the dark, nothing more.

The tent's canvas would flutter as everyone began to breath again. Then would come the questions, who was I? What was that? What did it want? Why was it here? What was

going on? I would give them the same answers as always: “I don’t know but it’s after us.”

One of them was a sceptic. One of them was always a sceptic, and it was almost always a man. He would insist this was ridiculous, there was nothing to be afraid of. The others would agree but none of them ever suggested turning on the light and risk exposing themselves to “them” outside. Eventually, I would invite him to step outside and see for himself, since there was nothing to be afraid of. He would hesitate but then pride would win out as it always does and he’d step outside into the rain and the dark.

They’d wait quietly for him to return. They’d be ready for him to scold them and mock them for their fears but by this point there was already a seed of doubt and you could tell that part of them was waiting for something else: a scuffle, a thump, a cry in the dark. Instead, they’d get nothing but the rain.

“I warned him”, I would say. I had told them, and they hadn’t listened, but they would be listening now. With one down and only six of us left they had to. It didn’t matter how I got there, who I was, what I was doing, all that mattered was that whatever was outside stayed outside and they would do anything to keep it that way.

I would normally start them off with taking an inventory. It was pointless of course, all their gear was outside and they were all too terrified by this point to risk reaching out and grabbing it, but they needed a distraction, a moment to pretend it was all going to be okay and I was happy to oblige them since it only made the realization that they would have to go outside that much worse.

Then on cue, the figure would return and this time they weren't alone. There'd be a moment of tiny futile hope in the tent that maybe we were wrong, maybe it was the Sceptic back with help but it would pass just as quickly. The figures would be stood a little closer this time, somehow a little more visible despite the deepening darkness, and it would be clear that whatever was stood outside wasn't one of "us." Not anymore. And it wanted inside.

But we all agreed that couldn't be allowed to happen so someone else would have to go outside. But who?

Often someone would suggest a lottery at this point but that's easy enough to deal with, you just say how it's about survival and you can't risk losing essential skills picking people at random! They all jump at the chance to hide in a system rationalizing grudges, shoring up alliances and pushing prejudices, all to make sure they aren't last on the

list.

Soon enough they pick their victim and inevitably it would be the Quiet One that never really belonged. But everyone else would be satisfied, after all it was done logically, objectively, impersonally and we all agree it's for the best. "It's only fair". Even in the dark you can see the white of their bared teeth when they say it

So out would go the Quiet One to "find help" and everyone else would be feeling smug in their system, until we hear something outside even over the rain, a tiny movement, a small gasp, just enough to let you know there were only five of us left and three of them outside.

Often the next one facing the outside proposed a vote or similar, anything other than the system that's already damming them. There'd be a discussion and if they were particularly persuasive everyone would vote. Naturally we all voted them out anyway since none of us wanted to risk making enemies. The Talker would try to get out of it but they'd know it was too late, they'd been chosen twice over. They have to step outside. "It's only fair".

This time when they step outside there's no sound but the tent moves, just that little bit more than the rain or wind could manage, just enough

to remind you it's just canvas after all.

When the four figures return the air in the tent is running thick with fear. Each of the four of us inside has a counterpart waiting hungrily outside. This is where things would turn ugly. The next one on the list is already expecting it. They know they can't hide in a system, can't talk their way out of it, can't convince the others to take their place. They spoke the loudest when we'd all agreed the list, they have to go. It can get quite vicious before the Middleman is forced outside but "It's only fair"

Things normally slow down after that. The Three of us inside would be outnumbered by the five outsiders and it's too risky to talk. So we all just sit in silence, listening to the drumming rhythm of rain on canvas and trying to watch one another, the next on the list tightly gripping the blade they've readied for this moment.

You'd think it would be the same as before, two on one, majority rule but that's when I make sure to stay out of it. They both know they never would have made it this far without me, after all I'm the one that warned them. This is between the two of them.

The next on the list normally wins that fight. They were ready for it

whereas The Leader was over confident expecting my help. Either way, we push the loser out together. It's the least I can do after they got rid of them. "It's only fair."

It takes a while for the six figures to reappear outside. Enough time for us to think about what happens next. Two of us left inside, outnumbered three to one. Neither of us wants to risk another fight, and if another one of us goes outside the last one won't stand a chance.

I remember, there was one person who came over all noble and stepped outside on their own, no idea what happened to her but for the rest of them... it's only a matter of time until they suggest we go outside together and watch each other's back. After all, we've made it this far together.

I'd pretend to think it over but I'd already know it's the only way it could go. Besides, the truth is I was afraid to go out on my own. I knew what was waiting for me out there.

We'd take some time to prepare, psych ourselves up. More time than we really needed but finally they'd step out first. I always made sure of that. They'd step out and I'd have their back.

Only I wouldn't. As soon we were outside I would run, hard as I could, not looking back. Sometimes I'd hear

a cry of betrayal over the hammering storm, most of the time I'd hear nothing at all but it didn't matter because I knew they'd already been claimed by what was waiting for us.

I always hated that bit. That mad dash in the darkness on my own. It was all I could do to keep running and keep my eyes focused on the next tent, that little triangle of light in the oppressive dark and the shadows of the people moving inside, oblivious to what was following me to their door.

I only looked back once. Just as I got to the tent flap and readied myself to dive inside. I don't know what possessed me that time, there was nothing to see but I sneaked a glance, just a glance, and when I did there was a single stab of lightning down from the roiling sky and for a moment I could see. There were tents dotted across rolling grasslands disappearing into the horizon and amongst them stood the figures, thousands upon thousands them watching me, perfectly still, waiting for the darkness to return. And I recognized them, every one. After all, I was the one who put them out there.

Then the light failed and the thunder came, and I dove inside the tent begging for them to turn out the light. Turn out the light...

There is a peal of thunder as KANE whimpers, trapped in the memory of his domain and slumped on the very edge of the ruined tower.

THE ARCHIVIST flows forward and leans down to his ear.

ARCHIVIST
(quietly)
It's only fair...

WARDEN KANE falls backwards into the night. We hear him clip something hard on the way down and impact the ground far below.

THE ARCHIVIST considers his body for a moment before dissolving away leaving us with the wind, the rain and the dark.

3. THE WARDENS FIRING RANGE (TAPE DECK), INT. NIGHT, RAINING

**Semi-Automatic pistol gunshots, single fire with poor rhythm.
It's hesitant, clumsy and amateurish.**

Finally:

SAM
(loudly)
Clear!

**SAM extracts the clip, clears the chamber then puts the pistol
down before taking his ear defenders off.**

BASIRA
All right, one second.

**BASIRA checks the weapon then steps back and takes off her
own defenders.**

SAM
How'd I do?

BASIRA
Better.

SAM
Yeah?

BASIRA
**Yeah. You managed to shoot down
range this time.**

SAM
(Unimpressed)
So should I fetch the target or...

BASIRA
No need.

SAM
Right.

BASRIA

I can see you missed from here.

SAM

(furious)

Dammit!

BASIRA

-and I think I can guess why.

SAM

Again.

BASIRA

No.

SAM

I want to try again.

BASRIA

I said no Sam.

SAM

Just give me another clip!

BASIRA

Not a chance.

SAM

(shouting)

Goddamit!

Sam roars in anger then kicks the cubical hard.

He stomps off to a bench and Basira follows.

BASRIA

Feel better?

SAM

Piss off.

BASIRA

You're the one who begged me to
teach you to shoot at
(she checks her watch)
two in the morning, so maybe reign it
in yeah?

Beat. Sam is fuming.

Basira sighs.

BASIRA

(cont.)

Look, you want to learn how to
shoot?

Then pull your head out your ass
and talk about what's up, then
maybe we can get some more
practice in. Or I can go to bed. Your
call.

Beat.

BASIRA

(cont. prepping to leave)

Cool. See you later-

SAM

We're wasting time.

BASIRA

(stopping)

You think so?

SAM

The Archivist is out there right now.
It killed Alice and it's still out there
doing god knows what and no one is
doing anything about it!

BASIRA

And what do you want us to be doing?

SAM

(shouting)

Something! Anything!

(catching himself)

Alice is dead. She's dead because everyone was so busy worrying about whether The Archivist was your old mate and now the zone is pulling me back in and I'm- I'm afraid.

BASIRA

Of course you are. I would be too.

SAM

No. Not for myself, I'm afraid that I'm going to get sent back before I get to put The Archivist in the fucking ground and worse it'll be straight back into the shit with the person who sent me here in the first place, so I'm sorry if you think I've got an attitude problem, but from where I'm standing it's all of you who need to get a grip and step up.

Beat.

BASIRA

I agree.

SAM

(thrown)

Wh- ...What?

BASIRA

If this was back at my commune we would have gone in hard from the start before it could find its feet.

SAM

Exactly!

BASIRA

But this isn't my commune. It's Georgie's operation and she wanted to protect her people and play it safe. Maybe that was the wrong call, or maybe I would have gotten even more people killed. The stakes are higher here. It's one of the reasons I didn't stay.

SAM

So what? We just do nothing?

BASIRA

No. We train, we prepare and we make sure next time we face this thing we're ready for it.

Beat.

SAM

Not gonna lie, I was kinda expecting the whole "vengeance won't bring you peace" talk from you.

BASIRA

(sadly)

Depends on the vengeance. But either way you're not going to make the shot if your hands are shaking.

SAM

Sure.

BASRIA

Too much anger will kill you. I've seen it happen.

Beat.

SAM

Want to talk about it?

BASIRA

No.

Pause.

SAM

(thoughtful)

It's funny, I'm not angry at Celia.

BASIRA

Really?

SAM

Yeah. I probably should be, she's the one that sent me into this mess but I dunno... It's just not there. I just want to understand why y'know?

Beat. BASIRA studies SAM.

BASIRA

You're a good person Sam.

SAM

Thanks.

BASIRA

-but you got a weak grip and you flinch on every shot.

SAM

Then aren't I lucky you're teaching me to shoot?

BASIRA

(sighing)

Fine. One more clip, but then I'm
done for the night.

SAM chuckles and they move over to the firing line.

BASIRA

(picking up the pistol)

Right, you reload this time and
remember "slow is smooth, smooth
is fast"-

GEORGIE enters.

GEORGIE

Hold fire!

GEORGIE walks over.

GEORGIE

(cont., exasperated)

What the hell are you two doing
down here in the middle of the
night?

SAM

What's it look like I'm doing?

GEORGIE

I've had wardens out looking for you!
We thought you'd shifted into the
zone again!

SAM

Well, I haven't.

GEORGIE

Clearly.

(to Basira)

Is there a reason you're teaching him
to shoot in the middle of the night?

BASIRA

Couldn't sleep?

GEORGIE

We talked about this Basira, you shouldn't be down here without a Warden.

BASIRA

What, you don't trust me?

GEORGIE

You know I do.

BASIRA

Just not as much as a Warden?

GEORGIE

I'm not doing this again. You had your chance to join-

BASIRA

Yeah and I told you, I don't do cop shit anymore.

GEORGIE

It's not 'cop shit', someone needs to-

She recenters.

GEORGIE

(cont.)

You have to have a Warden with you when you're down here, it's procedure. If only to keep track of how much ammo you're blowing through.

BASIRA

Yeah well, that would be easier if there were any about. I thought you said you were halting patrols in the

Zone until we figure out what the plan is?

GEORGIE

I did. Everyone's on the perimeter keeping the Dreamers back.

SAM

What Dreamers?

GEORGIE

More and more people have been turning up, trying to get into the zone. Seems like it's not just more active, it's... calling to them and the stuff we've got locked in the vault.

BASIRA

What stuff?

GEORGIE

(impatient)

I'll show you later.

SAM

(incredulous)

Why didn't anyone tell me?

GEORGIE

You were off brooding.

SAM

I wasn't brooding-

BASIRA

you were.

SAM

Whatever. So how does that affect us going after The Archivist?

GEORGIE

Well it means we don't have the numbers to try again in force-

SAM

Dammit!

GEORGIE

-but we'd basically already ruled that out.

SAM

What? Since when?

GEORGIE

Since we lost three Wardens and a civilian in the last attempt? We were lucky to get out of there alive Sam.

SAM

(incredulous)

But-

BASIRA

So what is the current plan?

GEORGIE

We're still figuring out logistics. I've been trying to arrange for back-up from some of the other warden posts but they're in the same boat.

Beat.

SAM

Cool. Well in that case I'm sure you don't mind me and Basira keep shooting. Since there's nothing else going on?

GEORGIE

Look, you've both made it pretty
clear you don't like how I run things
but I'm not about to risk-

Georgie's radio squawks for attention.

GEORGIE

(cont. frustrated growl)

Eurgh!

(exiting)

Just stay out of trouble, both of you.
We'll move as soon as we can-

Her radio squawks again.

GEORGIE

(cont. to Radio)

For god's sake I'm coming!

GEORGIE exits.

Beat.

SAM

So how long to do we wait for them
to get their act together?

BASIRA

Long enough for you to learn how to
shoot. Unless you fancy going in
there and beating it to death with
your bare hands?

SAM

(picking up the pistol and
starting to reload)

Let's call that plan B.

[Music]

ANNOUNCER

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The Magnus Protocol 52 – Oversight

CATXXXX-XXXXXXXX-XXXXXXXX
ERROR (Unknown Source)

Incident Elements:

- **Being hunted**
- **Cleithrophobia (fear of confinement)**
- **Nyctophobia (fear of the dark)**
- **Death**
- **Grief**
- **Manipulation**
- **SFX: gunshots**

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Directed by [Alexander J Newall](#)

Written by [Alexander J Newall](#)

Script Edited with additional material by Jonathan Sims

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

Produced by April Sumner

Featuring (in order of appearance)

Peter Bramhill as Warden Kane

Beth Eyre as The Archivist

Shahan Hamza as Samama Khalid
Frank Voss as Basira Hussain
Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker

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

SFX by Soundly, Catherine Rinella, and
Freesound: contramundum, C-V, serötōnin,
Anthousai, breadparticles, martian,
Department64, freemusicpromo, vataaa,
Pjkasinski3, pawsound, ondondvo,
sonicmariobrotha, BlondPanda, egomassive,
danhelbling, addison42, SEF7, luksifox, kmash,
as well as previously credited artists

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