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The Magnus Protocol

Episode 54 "Human Resources"

Written by Alexander J Newall

Edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Fifty-Four – Human
Resources

[Music]

1. MANAGER'S OFFICE (LANDLINE), INT. NIGHT, CLEAR

HARVEY is sat opposite **GWEN** in her office. He is chipper in a distressingly normal sort of way.

HARVEY
So yeah, I'd have to say- uh,
optimism, uh, teamwork and uh- Did
I say optimism?

Beat.

GWEN moves to speak.

HARVEY
Work- hard work!

Beat.

GWEN hesitates before pressing on.

GWEN
Thank you Harvey. Now-

HARVEY
You're welcome!

GWEN
Now at this point I'd like to take a
moment to explain a bit about the
nature of our work.

HARVEY

Wicked.

GWEN

So, as detailed in the job listing, your role here at the O.I.A.R. would be focused on the categorization and assessment of incident cases into a digital database.

HARVEY

Yup. That's the 'I' isn't it? Incidents. I looked it up!

GWEN

Right, yes. But it's worth noting that the incidents themselves mostly focus on... unusual circumstances...

HARVEY

Cool.

GWEN

(struggling)

...yes, well, some previous employees have had quite... strong... negative emotional responses to some of the more... extreme elements.

HARVEY

Better than it being boring though, am I right?

GWEN

...Sure. I should probably also warn you that there's a... ah... non-zero chance of you having to engage in ah... face-to-face interactions with some of our more... colorful External Contractors as part of your work duties.

HARVEY

Not a problem. I'm a proper people-person, gift of the gab, everyone says so.

GWEN

Good to know-

ALICE enters without knocking.

ALICE

Right, sit down and shut up, because I've got some news that will blow your ti-

ALICE sees **HARVEY**.

ALICE

Uh Hi.

HARVEY

(unfazed)

Hi! I'm Harvey!

ALICE

Uh Alice.

HARVEY

Cool! Cool.

Beat.

ALICE

(awkward)

So...

GWEN

(restrained)

As you can see Alice I am busy at the moment, so if you could just go outside and wait I will talk to you once we're finished here.

HARVEY

Please, don't mind me, I'm happy to wait if-

ALICE

Yeah that'd be-

GWEN

(simul.)

No that won't be necessary.

Beat.

ALICE

I'm sorry who are you again?

HARVEY

Harvey. Harvey Liew, I'm here for the-

GWEN

It's really none of your concern Alice.

Beat.

ALICE

Oh I see. Well sorry to disappoint you Harvey-Harvey Liew but we're all staffed up at the moment.

HARVEY

(pleasantly confused)

Oh?

GWEN

I'm sorry?

ALICE

You heard.

GWEN

Just yesterday you were complaining about how difficult the workload was!

ALICE

Yeah because we're still missing Sam, remember him? The guy who also works here? What I was saying was that we should be working to get him back not shoving fresh meat into the grinder.

GWEN

Mmmm. And remind me how's that going again?

Beat.

GWEN

Right. Well in that case I'm going to go ahead and keep interviewing for new staff members as I see fit but I'll tell you what, I'll leave Sam's desk free. That way if you manage to rustle him up he can get straight back to work. Sound good?

Beat.

ALICE

Bite me.

ALICE storms off and slams the door behind her.

Beat. **GWEN** settles herself.

GWEN

I'm sorry you had to see that Harvey. I can assure you that is not how we like to do business here at the O.I.A.R.

HARVEY

Hey, I get it. There's always some drama around ex-employees. It's like this guy Carl at my old office, nice guy but after he retired he just wouldn't leave y'know? Always had opinions on how things should work and who should be doing what and eventually Tanya, you'd like Tanya, she was amazing, she was just like "Carl, enough mate, we all just need to move on with our lives yeah?" And then there was this whole thing about his old keycard and anyway he lives in Majorca now with his missus so it just goes to show, it all works out in the end.

Beat.

GWEN

...yes.

2. OIAR BREAKROOM (CCTV), INT, NIGHT, CLEAR

ALICE is wilfully banging her way around the kitchen making a coffee whilst Celia looks on nursing her own cup from a distance.

ALICE

It's just not right, y'know?

CELIA

Uhuh.

ALICE

Like, Sam's trapped right now probably fighting for his life against devils and demons or whatever and she's got the- the-

CELIA

Nerve?

ALICE

The Audacity to sit there all like "rah rah I can't help I'm too busy stabbing everyone in the back and pretending I'm Lena" Except Lena actually knew what she was bloody doing!

She slams a cupboard door in frustration.

CELIA

I mean... we do need the help.

ALICE

(muttering)

I'll tell you who needs help...

CELIA

And it would be nice to have an excuse to clear Sam's desk from all that paperwork.

ALICE
Are you actually serious right now?

CELIA
I just think you're overreacting.

ALICE
(ridiculously)
Am I. AM I?

Beat.

ALICE
(cont.)
Okay, I hear it. But I'm serious. We can't trust Gwen ergo we can't trust anyone Gwen hires.

CELIA
You keep saying we can't trust her, but... Look, I'm not saying she didn't have anything to do with Lena leaving, and she's clearly struggling with the pressure...

ALICE
Struggling is one word for it.

CELIA
But I've not seen any evidence she's actively lying to us.

ALICE moves over to **CELIA** and sits beside her sighing.

ALICE
Look, you don't know everything about Gwen all right?

CELIA
(exasperated)
Look, if this is some old drama from years back...

Beat. ALICE makes a decision.

ALICE

Something came up after I got back from Germany. I was telling her about the Schweitzer stuff and... well... it turns out she knew more than she'd been letting on.

CELIA

(more serious)

What do you mean?

ALICE

She'd seen him before.

CELIA

What? Where?

ALICE

In a video-

CELIA

Oh well-

ALICE

-that showed Lena shooting his guts out.

CELIA

What?

ALICE

Yeah, turns out that's what she used to blackmail Lena out of her job.

CELIA

Jesus...

ALICE

It gets worse.

CELIA

Go on.

ALICE

She... she says Augustus told her to do it.

CELIA

Augustus? What, as in Freddy's old man voice?

ALICE

Yeah... apparently he's been talking to her... telling her stuff about her family and I got the impression... Let's just say that between us, Freddy and the Externals, I don't know who's side she's on right now.

CELIA

Why didn't you say anything earlier?

ALICE

I...

CELIA

You don't trust me.

ALICE

No! I mean yes, I do, it's just...

Beat

ALICE

(cont. small)

I thought you might bail.

CELIA

(surprised)

What?

ALICE

(genuine)

You have a kid, Celia. A life, friends. I had to push so hard to get you to revisit the Magnus leads, and you've got so much guilt over what happened to Sam... I thought this might be the last straw.

CELIA

(a bit hurt)

You thought I'd just abandon you?

Beat.

ALICE

I wouldn't blame you.

CELIA

No, but you'd keep vital information secret to make me stay?

Beat.

ALICE

I'm sorry.

Beat.

CELIA

(standing)

I should get back to work.

ALICE

Celia-

CELIA

I'll see you in there.

CELIA exits.

Beat.

ALICE sighs wearily.

3. OFFICE(PC), INT. NIGHT, CLEAR /CYBERSPACE

CELIA enters and sits with her cup, frustrated. She activates a case.

NORRIS

Email From:

SpokaneYosef@Tigertrapproduction.s.co.uk to TailorNataly@Tigertrapproductions.co.uk

CELIA

(simul. weary)

Brilliant.

NORRIS

RE: Where the hell is my Tech Recce? Sent 11-11-2023 10:17pm

You missed your deadline. Again.

I've got the EP's on my ass and legal won't even let us pick our noses without insurance which I can't get because you apparently can't do your goddam job and file a basic Recce on time.

Stop pissing around and get it done or I'll use someone who can.

Email From:

ParfolloLevi@tigertrapproductions.co.uk to: SpokaneYosef@Tigertrapproduction.s.co.uk

CC:

TailorNataly@Tigertrapproductions.co.uk

**RE: Where the hell is my Tech
Recce? Sent 12-11-2023 09:08am**

Hey Yosef,

**So I'm guessing you haven't cleared
your inbox yet.**

**Sorry to be the one to tell you this
but Nataly passed while you were in
LA.**

**She was visiting the site on her own
and apparently she just... lost it;
started stabbing herself with her pen
and by the time they found her she'd
already bled out.**

**They're worried it was workplace
stress.**

You might want to make some calls.

Email From:

SpokaneYosef@Tigertrapproduction.co.uk to:

ParfolloLevi@tigertrapproductions.co.uk CC:

TailorNataly@Tigertrapproductions.co.uk

**RE: Where the hell is my Tech
Recce? Sent 12-11-2023 09:28am**

This is the last thing I need right now.

I'm gonna need you to dig up that Recce and send it over Levi, we can't afford to miss the booking window.

Email From:

ParfolloLevi@tigertrapproductions.co.uk to:

SpokaneYosef@Tigertrapproduction.s.co.uk

CC:

TailorNataly@Tigertrapproductions.co.uk

RE: Where the hell is my Tech Recce? Sent 12-11-2023 10:47am

You're such an utter asshole Yosef.

Attachment reads:

Location Scout Report – Cameo Pictures (semi-derelict B&H Cinemas outlet)

Address:

233 Derby Rd, Nottingham NG7 1QN

Production: *The Projector* (Working Title, Horror Feature)

Scout: Nataly Tailor (Freelance)

Date: 03 November 2023

General Description:

Small, semi-derelict 1930s dual-screen independent cinema. Brick

building with damaged art deco frontage including marquee. Abandoned retail space attached on right side, private driveway on left. Minor defacement on frontage, significant defacement on driveway wall.

Public spaces (foyer, toilets, corridors etc.) retain undamaged period appropriate furnishings and features.

Staff spaces derelict and unfit for usage.

Primary auditorium inaccessible (structural damage)

Smaller secondary auditorium intact with undamaged furnishings.

**Access:
Good road access via Derby Road (A6200 with M1 nearest motorway). Private driveway and sufficient on-site parking for Secondary Production Convoy.**

Frontage includes public access, additional staff entrance on driveway side and goods entrance in rear.

Local bus service and Nottingham central as nearest train station (2 miles).

No accommodations for special mobility.

Hazards:

Significant structural damage in inaccessible primary auditorium.

Standard historic building fire safety risks. Note Staff and goods entrances both locked during examination.

Staff areas unfit for usage, severe floor and ceiling damage, heavy mold, major trip and slip hazards, non-functioning electrics.

Active power supply in public areas and secondary auditorium but portable generators or batteries recommended.

Likely asbestos in public areas. Independent assessment advised and PPE recommended when cleaning or set dressing.

Minor signs of rodents. Traps visible.

Permissions

Grade II listed structure with Independent owner. Recommend local council engagement for filming permits etc.

**Suitability for Filming:
It's perfect...**

Notes:

I understand now. The beautiful

people... they really are glamorous... glamoured and garlanded and I can finally join you among them Birdie... the pictures are moving and sweeping me off my feet, and look Birdie, the carpet... the carpet is so very red... and all it took was one cut to-

Cinema Foyer, interior, day. An elderly Usher is unlocking the entrance doors. He's hunched from long years of service but somehow still manages to stand tall with pride as he throws them open.

"It's what's on the inside that matters" he says and of course he's right.

The outside is tattered, ravaged by relentless time but inside... It's perfect: velvet ropes, golden plaster and a chandelier worthy of the Picture Palace it once was. A moment of pristine stillness, captured as though on film. And why not, what is film but a series of moments stitched together, each one a still-life in itself. They should never have been called movies, after all they never move and they never change.

The Usher smiles at me, he's behind the counter now and I'm not sure how he got there. Something is wrong but... he makes such a pretty picture in his bright red coat holding out the Popcorn; another perfect

frame right down to the buttery
smell. It would be rude to refuse... so
I take a piece and place it in my
mouth then feel it dissolve to-

A comfy lounge, interior, night. A
small girl cuddles up to her grandma
as they watch the beautiful people
on the tiny, curved glass screen
together: "*An Affair to Remember*",
classic. It's Birdie's favourite,
(always Birdie, never grandma!).
They've watched it more times than
either of them can remember but
every time is the first time for Birdie.
"After all, anything can happen,
don't you think?"

The little girl cuddles in close, she
doesn't really understand it but that
doesn't matter. Birdie is warm and
kind and one day Birdie will teach
little Nat everything there is to know
about movies. But not now. No, now
is for cuddles and warm popcorn
with butter that dribbles down your
chin. Birdie smiles and reaches out
to wipe to-

Cinema auditorium, interior, day. The
Usher is talking again and it takes
me a moment to remember why I'm
here. The screen is surprisingly big
and the curtains either side are
lustrous and again, it's perfect. But
just like before, something is...
wrong. For some reason all I can
think is that it's hungry. I can tell, it
wants to be used and the Usher is
the same. He's so neat and prim and

exactly what we need, exactly what I expected and I can see how glad he is that I'm here, that he's here... but I can't help wondering who he is without this place. If an Usher serves an empty screen, are they still an Usher? I wonder for a moment if he just disappears? It's a strange thought, a distraction, and we mustn't get distracted. There's too much to do and if this place is going to transition to:

Premier, exterior, night. The photographers are all yelling "Ms. Elliot! Ms. Elliot!" And Birdie smiles to each of them like an old friend even though that's not her name. The cameras love her and she loves them. She looks so beautiful in her gold dress and her sparkling shoes but the little girl is distracted. The carpet was meant to be red, not white. She's disappointed, she can't help it, Birdie promised it would be red but it isn't.

Birdie looks over and sees the little girl with her little frown and makes a little frown of her own. Then she strides over and before the little girl realizes what is happening she sweeps her up into bare arms that hold her close and warm and she whispers "don't worry, it's only pretend, it's all just pretend."

Birdie stands like that for a moment, then gently lowers the little girl down and with a parting smile moves back

to join the other beautiful people and their camera flashing friends.

The little girl wants to follow but she isn't big enough yet. She has to stay behind. Her eyes fall, dejected, to the stubbornly ivory carpet once more only to notice a spot of red and another and another leading off in a speckled trail towards her golden grandma who staggers, then suddenly falls, clutching her head as the light in her eyes fades to:

Projection booth, interior, day. The Usher smiles as he listens to me whilst threading celluloid onto the spools. I tell him about Birdie, about my work in the industry as an intern then as a scout, laying out a series of moments that run together and then give the illusion of a life lived.

He takes it all in and just smiles and nods in his wrong way. Then he asks me how I think the story will end and I don't have an answer. How could I? So he just nods again, smiles again and offers me a ticket: "would you like to find out?"

I hesitate, then reach out but my hand freezes for a moment of it's own accord, as though it expects the card to be red hot. It's not hot though, it's heavy, inlaid with golden filigree and so large that as I take hold of it, it makes my hand seem small, childlike. The lettering shines in the half light and I can read in

**elegant cursive “Tonight’s Premiere:
Nataly Tailor.”**

**I look up and he’s smiling again,
holding the clipper out ready. My
hand is shaking as I hold the ticket
out to him but I’m ready. It’s time to
join Birdie on the red carpet. He
nods and whispers “Enjoy the show”
and the clipper presses down and
cuts to:**

**Cinema Foyer, interior, night. The
lights are shining and the
photographers are calling my name
but I only have eyes for Birdie. She’s
waiting for me at the doors, she’s
wearing the golden dress and the
glittering shoes and she’s smiling
and holding her arms open for me. I
rush to her and we embrace and it’s
just like before. I want to tell her
everything: how much I love her,
how much I’ve missed her, all those
moments that added up from then to
now but she just smiles and nods
and whispers “don’t worry, it’s only
pretend, it’s all just pretend” then
she gestures to the carpet and I see
it turn a rich, familiar red,
blossoming out from me and into the
Auditorium.**

**It’s beautiful and wonderful but it fills
me with a fear I don’t understand. It’s
as though there is something terribly
wrong but the Premiere is perfect
and Birdie is waiting for me and I
finally get to join her on the red
carpet... and it is so red... so very**

red...

I stumble for a moment but Birdie catches me and as she does the fear fades into an afterimage of the flashing bulbs and smiling faces and all that's left is the wonder of being there with her.

We hold hands and step from the bright lights to the darkness inside, together again in a single, perfect moment that will last forever and the smiling Usher closes the doors behind us as we fade to black.

4. CELIA'S FLAT (CELIA'S LAPTOP), INT.MORNING CLEAR

CELIA enters. She is exhausted and trying to be quiet. She puts down her bags and steps in to find Baby JACK nestled in GEORGIE's arms.

GEORGIE
(Quietly)
Morning.

CELIA
Hey... Everything okay?

GEORGIE
Oh yeah he's fine, something woke him up early so I had to settle him back down and somewhere along the way I ended up becoming his new bed.

CELIA
You need rescuing?

GEORGIE
Ah I'm okay, you take a moment to settle yourself.

Beat.

GEORGIE
(cont.)
Unless maybe mummy wants a turn?

CELIA
(bittersweet)
Please.

GEORGIE
Of course.

GEORGIE carefully passes baby JACK across to CELIA. He stirs a moment then settles in her arms.

GEORGIE

He missed you. And I missed having
feeling in my forearms, oof.

CELIA holds **JACK** close for a moment while **GEORGIE**
massages life back into her arms.

GEORGIE

(cont.)

How you doing? You look
exhausted.

CELIA

I'm okay. Just feeling grateful. For
him and for you.

GEORGIE

Aw shucks.

CELIA

I mean it. I couldn't do this without
you two.

GEORGIE

You don't need to.

Beat.

GEORGIE

(cont.)

Celia, where's this all coming from?
Has something happened?

CELIA

No, I just. I've been thinking a lot
about trust and... well... if something
happened to me, you'd- you'd take
care of Jack wouldn't you Georgie?

GEORGIE

(without hesitation)

Of course.

Beat.

GEORGIE
(cont. careful)
Is something likely to happen to
you?

CELIA
(hesitating just slightly)
I don't- No. No, I just... I needed to
hear it that's all.

GEORGIE
(concerned)
Sure. I-

She stops herself..

Eventually:

GEORGIE
This is a pancake morning, I think.

CELIA
(small laugh)
You don't have to. Honestly, I'm fine.

GEORGIE
Glad to hear it but I'm still making
pancakes.

She heads into the kitchen.

CELIA
(Calling softly)
You're too good to us, Georgie.

GEORGIE
(softly from kitchen)
True, but don't worry, I'm yours until
I'm swept off my feet by a strapping,
cheese-loving lumberjack who
shares my stance on bigfoot. Fair

**warning though, once that happens I
am out of here.**

**CELIA
(Calling softly, smiling)
Understood.**

[Music]

ANNOUNCER
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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
Alexander J Newall and edited with
additional materials by Jonathan
Sims, with vocal edits by Lowri Ann
Davies, soundscaping by Tessa
Vroom, and mastering by Catherine
Rinella with music by Sam Jones.
It featured Bilie Hindle as Alice Dyer,
Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley,
Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn
Bouchard, Sasha Sienna as Georgie
Barker 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 54 – Human Resources

CAT2RC2247-03112023-01072024

hallucination (cinema) -/- memory (grief)

Incident Elements:

- **suicide**
- **grief**
- **hostile work environment**
- **altered reality**

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Created by Jonathan Sims and [Alexander J Newall](#)

Directed by [Alexander J Newall](#)

Written by [Alexander J Newall](#)

Script Edited with additional material by Jonathan Sims

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)

Jon Chew as Harvey Liew

Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Sasha Sienna as Georgie Barker

Alexander J Newall as Norris

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 from Soundly and Freesound: Islabonita, skymary, kiefspoon, killianm97, Vrymaa, Sheyvan, Crovic, Nightflame, runaste, krb21, Yuval, Vrymaa, Carlvus, brunoboselli, Feibel1, petersrin, sturmankin, j1987, hausthechild, MordinSolus, nickmaysoundmusic, madcowzack, squidge316, SpliceSound, vckhaze, HenKonen, ventousawins, macdaddyno1, reconsider59 as well as previously credited artists

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