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The Magnus Protocol

**Episode 56
"Structural Assessments"**

**Written by Maeltopia & Alexander J Newall
Edited with additional materials by Jonathan Sims**

[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus
Protocol.
Episode Fifty-Six – Structural
Assessments

[Music]

1. OIAR OFFICE INT (COMPUTER), INT. NIGHT, CLEAR
ALICE is actually working for once whilst listening to music.
GWEN enters and walks over.
Beat.
She leans in to speak.

ALICE
What?

GWEN
(surprised)
How did you know I was there?

ALICE
Rigged a mirror so no one can sneak
up on me.

GWEN
I wasn't sneaking -

ALICE
A) You were and B) What do you
want Gwen? I'm busy with the
caseload.

GWEN
That makes a nice change.

ALICE
(stopping)
Would you rather I stopped?

GWEN
No, I don't think that would be a
good idea given Celia's... truancy.

ALICE
(snorting)
Cool. Then if that's all you came to
nag me about why don't you sod off
back to Lena's office, I'm sure
there's some paperclips need
straightening or something.

Beat. Gwen centers herself.

GWEN
Yesterday you interrupted Harvey's
interview-

ALICE
I did you both a favour by scaring
him off.

GWEN
(pressing on)
-you interrupted Harvey's interview
to tell me something important. What
was it?

ALICE stiffens.

GWEN
(cont.)
Alice?

ALICE

(quickly)

We're out of loo roll. Thought ordering more was about your speed.

GWEN

Anything else?

ALICE

Get something nice. None of that government-issue one-ply nonsense.

GWEN

I see.

Beat. GWEN leans against ALICE's desk. ALICE doesn't like it.

GWEN

Alice, I know we don't always see eye to eye-

ALICE

Uh-huh.

-but I am genuinely trying to help with...

(gesturing)

all this.

ALICE

Debatable.

GWEN

So if there is something important you know that could help I need you to tell me all right? As the manager I'm responsible for keeping everyone safe but I can't do that with all these secrets in the way.

ALICE

You know what? You're absolutely right.

GWEN

Fantastic.

ALICE

So why don't we start with you coming clean about everything at your end and go from there? All *your* secrets.

GWEN

Oh. Well, I uh-

ALICE

Because it seems to me a good manager leads by example, right? They trust their staff, rather than hanging them out dry and hiring replacements behind their backs whilst becoming besties with a man-eating desktop.

GWEN

I don't know what you want me to say, Alice.

ALICE

Then I don't have anything to say to you *Gwendolyn*.

Beat.

GWEN

For goodness sake Alice, what do you want from me!? I'm working with the same information you are!

ALICE

I don't believe you.

GWEN

What, you think I've got some secret room hidden in the office, stuffed with boxes full of answers?

ALICE

God I hope so, because if you're genuinely as clueless as you're acting, we are so utterly screwed that it's not even funny.

Beat.

GWEN

(slightly ashamed)

You don't really think there could be one, do you?

ALICE

One what?

GWEN

A secret room.

ALICE

Have you looked?

GWEN

Not... thoroughly.

ALICE

Well then maybe start looking because it sounds like you need answers more than any of us and you're sure as hell not going to find them hiding behind Lena's desk all night hoping we'll clean up your messes..

GWEN

(moving to leave)

You're impossible.

ALICE
Better than incompetent.

GWEN
(exiting)
Fine. Suit yourself.

GWEN heads back to her office and slams the door behind her.

Beat.

ALICE puffs out her cheeks in frustration.

Starts to work then hesitates, thinking.

ALICE
(contemplative)
Hmm...

The case starts itself with a beep.

2. CYBERSPACE (COMPUTER), NA, NA, NA CHESTER

**To: Veronica Lewis
(zf.allan@elriccap.com)
From: Liza Knight
(L.knight@elriccap.com)**

Date: July 21st 2019.

**Subject: The Dower House
Surveyor's Report**

Veronica,

**I think you're going to need to find
an alternate warehousing option.
After two weeks of silence, I finally
went and checked the place out
myself. No sign of the surveyor but
found this report wedged in the door.**

**I've attached the scans of what I
managed to recover despite the
staining. With your permission I'd
like to burn the originals.**

**Sounds like there's enough hidden
footprint but you're going to struggle
with dry goods.**

**I'd suggest a pass on purchasing but
it's obviously up to you - I know you
like a challenge. Either way I'm not
taking the account.**

Attachment reads:

**Dorsen & Furthinton Property
Consultants Ltd - Level 3 (Structural)
Building Survey, RICS regulated
Firm Registration No. 7656281**

Client

**Knight, Liza (They/them) on behalf of
Elric Capital Investments Ltd.**

Property Address

**The Dower House, Stoke Park Estate,
Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS16 1EH**

Surveyor

**Furthinton, Thomas M. (he/him)
[BSc (Hons) Building Surveying,
FRICS, RICS Membership Number:
5481359**

Date of Inspection

19th June 2019

**Property Status: Occupied (multiple
tenants)**

Introduction

**Purpose of the Survey: To assess
structural integrity and property
condition. Special client request for
original notes re: basement sizing.**

**Scope: Non-invasive visual
inspection only. Inaccessible or
obstructed areas not inspected.**

Executive Summary

**Overall Condition: The Dower House
is a Grade II listed building which**

has been maintained to a reasonable standard. Some areas require attention due to-

[text obscured]

-over twenty years as a Chartered Surveyor, I've seen my fair share of oddities, but nothing like this. It's one thing to survey a building; it's another to face something that-

[text obscured]

Property Description

Type:

Detached, multi-storey building converted into residential apartments.

Age:

Constructed in 1553; rebuilt c.1760 and converted into apartments 2004.

External Elements

Drainage:

Functional surface water drainage. Some downpipes require realignment to prevent water ingress.

Boundaries:

Clear stone boundary walls with some mortar joints needing repointing.

Exterior walls:

Distinctive yellow rendered masonry-

[text obscured]

-is coming out of the walls. I'd suggest getting in a specialist to confirm it's not biological or-

[text obscured]

Internal Elements

Floors:

Suspended timber ground floors, signs of repair, no significant deflections. Timber joist upper floors with minor deflection.

Internal Walls:

Generally sound, minor cracking and detachment of plaster in communal areas.

Damp:

Some signs of rising damp due to inadequate damp-proofing and historic construction methods.

Main Structure

Foundations: Presumed period typical, shallow strip foundation.

Condition:

[text obscured]

-definitely wrong here.

Discoveries:

Gained access to basement using key provided by Client.

Initial examination found sizing

consistent with previous estimations
however, discovered trapdoor
leading to undocumented sub-
basement.

Subbasement is extremely large and
extends beyond stated boundaries of
property. Construction elements
consistent with Tudor-

[text obscured]

-replica of the house above, situated
entirely underground. There's a
pungent, mould-like odour and odd
sounds which might have been
caused by structural-

[text obscured]

-not even sure what part of the
house this is. It retains expected
attributes – high ceilings, ornate
cornicing etc. However, the state of-

[text obscured]

-appeared structurally sound but
showed signs of damp and potential
infestations. I'm not sure-

[text obscured]

-a third house, nestled within the
second. The repetition is uncanny...
Each house is an echo of the last.
Like walking through a time-lapse of
rot. The air is colder, and I am certain
I am being observed, though-

[text obscured]

**-beyond anything I've ever seen —
The wooden structures are bizarrely
swollen, rupturing with organic
decay. A dark, viscous fluid, like sap
or blood, seeps from-**

[text obscured]

**-the walls aren't just decayed;
they're alive, pulsating like some
sort of sick flesh. The air is thick,
heavy with an overpowering stench.
The floors also show the same
disturbing, organic quality—rising
and falling like the laboured
breathing of a dying animal. Sections
of the soiled flooring have been laid
back—open wounds that expose a
squirming, greasy material that
flinches when I touch it. And it's still
going down, lower into-**

[text obscured]

**-a cyclical pattern of decay and
regeneration, a continuous process
of decomposition and anomalous
reconstruction. The lower I go, the
worse it gets. This is not a house at
all, but-**

[text obscured]

**-staircases and corridors twist and
turn on themselves. I feel like a rat in
a maze, a maze designed by some-**

[text obscured]

**-barely more than a crawl space,
pushing through the wet corridor of
rot and mud-**

[text obscured]

**-I can hear the house, feel its
breathing underfoot. My skin is
beginning to grey and soften, and
even if I somehow got out of here,
it's only a matter of time...**

Conclusion and Recommendations

**Tell my daughter what happened.
Don't let her think I abandoned her.**

**Surveyor's Signature:
Furthington, Thomas Michael**

**BSc (Hons) Building Surveying,
FRICS, RICS Membership Number:
5481359**

Dated: 26th June 2019

Signature pending.

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

GWEN is once again frustrated on the phone.

GWEN

Nigel, I'm not having this conversation with you again! This office is closed to you and your... client and if you call again I'm just going to-

ALICE bursts in.

ALICE

There are secret rooms in the O.I.A.R.!

Beat. Mr. Dickerson complains inaudibly down the line.

GWEN

Goodbye Nigel.

Gwen hangs up.

Beat.

GWEN

I'm sorry. Run that by me again?

ALICE

(coming over, slower)

Well, I guess maybe not technically in the O.I.A.R. itself but Royal Mint Court? Yeah. Secret rooms!

GWEN

(cooly)

I see. I don't suppose you'd care to explain?

ALICE

(sitting)

So I was thinking about what you said-

GWEN

There's a first.

ALICE

-and you remember when Colin started going round all the offices with his gear?

GWEN

I remember Lena telling him to stop drilling into the walls.

ALICE

Yeah that, well I got to wondering, what was he looking for? I'd always just assumed he was doing general teching-

GWEN

"Teching"?

ALICE

You know, chasing cables, refragging hard drives, funging tokens, "Teching". Anyway, when I went through his notebooks it turned out there's really not that much stuff actually running in the office and it all just leads to the server room anyway right?

GWEN

Presumably.

ALICE
(triumphant)
So you got me thinking. What was he looking for?

GWEN
(dubious)
What was he looking for?

ALICE
Glad you asked.

ALICE dumps a bunch of paperwork on **GWEN**'s desk. **GWEN** is unimpressed.

GWEN
Alice, couldn't you have just emailed all this?

ALICE
(sorting printouts)
Not without Freddy getting his sparky mitts all over it.

GWEN sighs.

ALICE
(cont.)
So what do we know about this building?

GWEN
I know there was some talk about redevelopment that Lena really didn't like-

ALICE
That was rhetorical. Please hold all pointless interruptions until the ride has come to a complete stop.

GWEN is unimpressed but stays silent.

ALICE

(cont. reading out)

The Johnson Smirke Building was designed by James Johnson in 1805 and completed by Robert Smirke around 1812 after Johnson's death.

(back to normal)

Now, there's not much out there on Johnson but Smirke? Oh there's plenty on that guy. Turns out he was an odd duck, pissed off a lot of monarchists and then got into weirdo cult stuff towards the end. There were even rumors he sneaked extra stuff into the buildings he worked on. But wait, there's more!

Turns out Royal Mint Court is built right on top of a pile of weird stuff including a plague pit, a monastery and I shit-you-not, actual buried treasure.

GWEN

What?

ALICE

I know right? Now don't get me wrong, I doubt Colin was cool enough to be hunting for buried treasure but I do think he was looking for something. You remember how he was always complaining about everything being too old to keep track of? Well, what if he was talking about more than just shitty 90s PCs, what if he was talking about the actual building? What if he

found something he wasn't meant to
and Freddy did him in for it?

Pause.

GWEN slowly examines Alice's "evidence".

Eventually:

ALICE

Well? What do you think?

GWEN

Oh I'm allowed to speak now, am I?

ALICE

I'm serious Gwen, I really think there
might be something hidden down
there.

Beat.

GWEN

You do realize that Royal Mint Court
includes all the surrounding
buildings and none of them are
O.I.A.R property?

ALICE

Like I said, might not be under us
specifically.

GWEN

Hmmmm. Well, you're not wrong
about this building at least.

ALICE

I knew it!

GWEN

There are a couple of old rooms in
the basement that aren't on the
official floorplan.

ALICE

Great, we can start there and-

GWEN

**Which we already know about
because we've been dumping broken
tech in them for years.**

ALICE

(a little crestfallen)

What?

GWEN

(smug)

**Yeah. Ever since the council
changed the disposal rules on
electronics. I warned Lena it wasn't a
sustainable solution but she didn't
listen, of course. I did send a memo
about it to everyone, which you
would have known if you ever
bothered to read them.**

ALICE

(Deflated)

Oh. Right.

GWEN

(patronising)

**Look Alice, I get it okay? You're
tired, you miss Colin and Sam, and
you probably feel like you need a win
right now. But you're looking in all
the wrong places and this...
conspiracy is exactly the kind of
misunderstanding that happens
when you don't keep me in the loop
on what you're doing.**

**Now, I'm aware you've had a lot on
and Celia's absences haven't been**

helping, so how about this: you go back out there and do your caseload, then if you finish ahead of time I'll let you clock out early. You can go home and get some rest, have a bath or something. Or, we could use the time to visit some damp, horrible basement rooms full of rusty printers and asbestos together. Whatever you like. What do you say?

Beat.

ALICE stands and grabs her paperwork.

GWEN

(cont.)

I am glad you brought this to my attention Alice, before you did anything too foolish.

ALICE

You finished?

GWEN

Are you?

Beat. ALICE exits.

GWEN is smug in the smuggest, smuggy way.

4. A RURAL STATION (CELIA'S PHONE), INT. NIGHT, CLEAR

CELIA sits on an empty station platform in the middle of nowhere.

It's peaceful aside from an elderly night porter emptying bins etc.

Eventually:

NIGHT PORTER

Y'all right love?

CELIA

Mmm? Yeah, I'm fine.

Beat. The Porter keeps shuffling around tidying up.

NIGHT PORTER

First train to London isn't till six thirty.

CELIA

Yeah, I checked the schedule.

NIGHT PORTER

Right, right.

He continues to potter. CELIA exhales sadly. She's exhausted.

CELIA

When's the first train to Oxford?

NIGHT PORTER

Five forty-seven. Other way from London, though. You thinking of going there instead?

CELIA

(sadly)

Sometimes.

Beat.

CELIA

(cont.)

My life is in London though. I can't just leave.

NIGHT PORTER

Sure, sure...

CELIA

But it's hard knowing you don't belong somewhere. And when the cost is so high, when people are hurting because of it, sometimes I just feel like giving up and just going back y'know?

NIGHT PORTER

(awkward)

Family trouble, is it?

CELIA

I can't just abandon everyone...

Beat.

NIGHT PORTER

Mmmmm. Listen, I'm heading off but it sounds like you've a lot on your mind. If you've nowhere you can go, I can leave the staff room unlocked if you like? It's not much but it's better than here.

CELIA

(awkward)

Oh, that's kind but-

NIGHT PORTER

It's no bother. I can leave a note for the next shift and put on some coffee before I go?

Beat.

CELIA

(standing)

You know what? That sounds great. Thank you.

NIGHT PORTER

Righto.

CELIA grabs her stuff and starts to head off with the Night Porter.

NIGHT PORTER

(cont.)

Life's hard. There's no shame in having a bit of help now and then though is there? Eh??

CELIA

(considering)

True...True.

[Music]

ANNOUNCER

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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 Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer, Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley, Anusia Battersby as Gwendolyn Bouchard, with additional voices from Jonathan Sims. 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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The Magnus Protocol 56 – Structural Assessments

**CAT2RC2256-19062019-02072024
architecture (recursive) -/- isolation**

Incident Elements:

- isolation
- decay
- temporal/spatial distortion
- altered reality

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

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

Directed by [Alexander J Newall](#)

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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)

Anusia Battersby as Gwen Bouchard

Billie Hindle as Alice Dyer

Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley

Michael Looney as Night Porter

Jonathan Sims as Chester

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: Lynx_5969, chris_dagorne, daboy291, CAT-FOX_ALEX, Nox_Sound, kyles, Breezy2000uk, danielad, 1bob, cupido-1, WavJunctioncom, Robbyjames14, MTJohnson as well as previously credited artists

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