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The Magnus Protocol

Episode 60
"Hostile Takeover"

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[Intro Theme]

ANNOUNCER
Rusty Quill Presents: The Magnus Protocol.
Episode Sixty – Hostile Takeover

[Music]

1. **CYBERSPACE (COMPUTER), N/A, N/A**

CHESTER
Sir,

Some years ago, you approached me with solicitations for my involvement in the arrangement of an office of address with regards to the new affairs you were considering for those you name your Invisible College. While I have long allowed myself such pride as to position myself a member of what I may dub the Hartlib Circle, you will recall I was less than receptive to these solicitations. I have little knowledge and still less interest in the practice of alchemy and found many of your suppositions regarding such contrary to my own philosophies. "Such things cannot exist", I recall were my words, and so I did not entangle myself in this strange new group you are assembling, most especially given the involvement of the crown in this affair.

I am now of a mind to reverse that choice, due to an encounter of my

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own this past month.

I was visiting my friend and correspondent, a Mr M.K. Adder, the curate of a Gloucester parish, and had entailed by way of my return, a ferry over that wider bit of the Severn not yet bridged. My coach was much delayed in departing, the cause being some infirmity of the horses, and my arrival at the ferry house, at a far later hour than was agreed. As you may readily suppose, the promised ferry was absent, and my journey uncertain. You shall recall sir, how thick the mists were across the county this season, and so too it was that day, mixed with the darkening sky so as to render me all but blind as I looked from the window of my coach.

Then, within the shadowed dusk came motion and the prow of a boat's sudden appearance. It was a vessel too large to be a mere ferry, yet it had but a single man to crew it, and him stood still and silent upon the deck, his cloak concealing the most of him. His arm was white as bone as he crooked his finger in a gesture of welcome.

I will confess, sir, a terror overcame me. A terror I could scarcely name, nor less articulate, yet was so true I felt whole self begin to tremble as I sat watching.

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A second time the ferryman beckoned me, but I had neither desire nor ability to follow him aboard, and with a quavering voice instructed my driver to remain.

It was then my attention was turned to a commotion behind me. Mine was, it seemed, not the only coach so delayed, and a gentleman of a singularly ruddy complexion was swearing the most vile oaths and demanding he be allowed first upon the boat. I was in no fit state to refuse him, and so he summarily boarded.

Immediately the vessel moved away, silent and strange, and I reckoned it clear that the boat had not been moored or tied upon the dock. It had been waiting.

A change then came upon the air which caused those horses that had so troubled my coach journey began to fight, one with another, and so with much ado I alighted to keep myself from harm. I saw as I went thither that the horses upon the quickly vanishing ferry had set about themselves with an even fiercer violence than those still on land. Their teeth tore into the flesh of their fellows, loosing blood that rained down upon the timbers in great torrents. The setting of the coach had placed the tormented beasts near the edge of the boat, but for all

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the blood that flew through the air not a drop of it reached the waters of the river. It flowed and fell rather onto the ferry, and the wood did seem to sup of it greedily.

I went to call out, to offer aid, but the fogs rolled in with such speed and thickness that my eyes were masked and my voice muffled up within a moment.

All was still for a time and then came the most awful cry ever to fall upon my ears. It was a man, doubt it not, and a true man, not whatever covered itself in a cloak and called itself a man. Most likely it was the surly passenger, but his voice was like the cries of the damned and accompanying it was a great tearing.

I stood still as though my very legs had taken root and my senses had abandoned me, listening to that terrible sound. Minutes passed before the silence returned and the mists cleared.

The ferry remained, as did its master. The coach sat there also, but the horses that had been so frenzied were gone, without a drop of blood to mark their passing. But still I avoid the heart of the matter, for in each of the ferryman's hands was a sheet, hanging limply. Not a sheet of cloth though, but a sheet of skin. One for the coach driver, and one for

the passenger. I could still see the ruddy complexion of his face and, it sickens me to think on it, the hanging flesh that was once his lips still moved as if to scream.

You may imagine my horror, my awful terror at the sight. And as I felt it overtake me, I saw this inhuman figure turn and herald me as though in gratitude for that awful feeling before departing into the darkness of the night.

I am convinced in my judgment that what I witnessed was of that manner you described to me those years ago, animated by Dread and supped by our horrors. I would remain forever troubled in my conscience were I to know of such things and stand idle and so
whatever need you have of me, I shall provide it, and whatever service I may render to your Invisible College or its successor society, it is yours.

I await your response with as stout a heart as I may muster.

Your dutiful servant,
Samuel Pepys.

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

HARVEY
Gnarly.

He taps a few buttons then opens the massive DPHW manual and starts to flick through the pages.

HARVEY
(cont. Reading)
B… B… Board game… Board comma management… Board comma surfing... Boarding house... Boarding school... Boardwalk…. Boasting comma comeuppance…. Ah! Boat!

He flips to another page then starts to scan down a sub-list.

HARVEY
(Cont. Reading)
Ghost… Historical… Metaphorical…

The door to GWEN's office opens and she approaches.

HARVEY
(Cont. reading)
Model…. Modern… Mythical maybe? Uh…

He spots Gwen.

HARVEY
(cont.)
Oh! Boss, hey! Can I get your opinion on something?

GWEN
Harvey? What are you still doing here? The sun's up.

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HARVEY
Yeah, I know but I'm already behind on my case load, first week and all that, so I figured I should stay late- well, early, and catch up so Alice and Celia don't have to carry me too much since I know they have a lot of other stuff going on. I've got the time and can't really get to sleep before midday anyway so I figured I may as well get some practice in and see if I can and wrap my head around how all these categories work.

GWEN
(checked uninterested)
Uh-huh.

HARVEY
It's all right though. I went out for a little morning walk an hour ago, got some air, necked a can of Monster so I'm good.

GWEN
If you say so. Well, I've got to head off Harvey so…

HARVEY
Speaking of monsters, you'll never guess what I randomly saw outside?

GWEN
(Suddenly wary)
What?

HARVEY
I'll give you a clue. 90s Icon. Tall. Colorful. Likes to break stuff…

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GWEN
(afraid)
Mr. Bonzo?

HARVEY
(genuinely impressed)
Oh wow, got it in one! Yeah, there's some guy out there in a <u>proper</u> gross horror version of the costume.

GWEN
(sharply)
Where was he?

HARVEY
Uh, over in the park near the tube but I think you might've missed him. It was the pair of them, Bonzo and the guy he used to present with- Neil something-

GWEN
Nigel Dickerson.

HARVEY
Yeah, that's the one! Anyway, they were heading off with some tatted-up goth.

GWEN
Ink5oul.

HARVEY
(starstruck)
No, what!? You think so? That's mad! I follow their Insta. They must be filming something… You think if I asked they'd let me-

GWEN
(abrupt)
Harvey, you need to leave. Now.

HARVEY
Huh? Why?

GWEN
Because… Because I have to lock up when I leave and you can't be here unsupervised.

HARVEY
Oh no worries, if you give me the keys I can just lock up when I-

GWEN
You need to go. <u>Now</u> Harvey.

Harvey starts to pack up slowly.

HARVEY
All right. If you're sure…

GWEN
I am.

HARVEY
Hey, maybe I can still catch Ink5oul before they-

GWEN
(too intense)
No! You have to go straight home! It's part of our Uh… employee… wellbeing… policy.

HARVEY
(genuinely enthused)
Oh wow, never had one of those before.

GWEN
Yeah it's great, we're very lucky. Now hurry Harvey. Please.

HARVEY finishes packing.

HARVEY
Will do. See you tonight!

GWEN
Uhuh.

HARVEY moves to the exit, opens the door then stops.

HARVEY
Oh, and Gwen? Thanks again for the opportunity, I really appreciate everything you guys are-

GWEN
You're welcome. Goodbye Harvey.

HARVEY
Right yeah, see ya tonight!

HARVEY exits.

GWEN
Oh god.

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

TEDDY holds the knife in shaking hands, while ALICE and CELIA sit on the sofa.

ALICE
(incredulous)
Teddy, what are you doing?

TEDDY
I- I just-

ALICE
Teddy, what the actual <u>fuck</u> are you doing?

CELIA
(warning)
Alice…

TEDDY
I'm- I'm going to kill you.

ALICE
Don't be an idiot, Teddy, no you're not.

CELIA
(controlled)
Alice, stop antagonizing the man who is waving a knife around my home.

ALICE
No, I'm sorry, this is stupid. I've known Teddy for years He's not going to kill anyone. He likes me, he doesn't know you and besides, there's two of us and he's only got one knife so if he actually wanted to kill us he wouldn't have announced himself like this so-

TEDDY
(snapping)
Christ SHUT UP ALICE! Of course I don't want to kill you. But I don't have a choice! I don't have a choice…

CELIA
(quiet)
There's always a choice.

TEDDY
He'll kill <u>me</u> if I don't- If I don't…

ALICE
Teddy if you stab me, I'm going to be <u>so</u> pissed.

TEDDY
Will you shut up with your <u>stupid, fucking jokes</u>! Just let me think, I just need to <u>think</u>-

JACK starts to cry from the other room.

TEDDY
(cont. freaking)
What's that? What's that?

CELIA
(very controlled)
That's Jack. He's my son. He's alone in the next room and he's very young.

TEDDY
You have a baby!? You- He didn't-

Pause. Jack cries.

TEDDY
(cont.)
Oh god…

Teddy drops the knife.

ALICE
(serious, snatching it up)
I'll take that.

TEDDY falls to the floor weeping.

TEDDY
(cont.)
What am I doing? What am I doing?

ALICE
(serious, to Celia)
Go check on Jack, I've got him.

Celia heads into the other room and begins to comfort JACK who slowly calms.

TEDDY
What am I doing?

ALICE
(softer)
Teddy. Mate. What <u>are</u> you doing? Like, seriously? What sort of knife even is this?

TEDDY
(sniffing)
It's called a Santoku. It uses less of a rocking motion when cutting than most Western kitchen knives.

ALICE
Is that… good? For murdering?

TEDDY
I- I don't know. It was the biggest knife in the kitchen block.

ALICE
Right.

CELIA returns.

CELIA
(quietly)
Jack's fine. How're we doing here?

ALICE
I think we're just about ready to start answering some questions, aren't we Teddy?

TEDDY moans in quiet despair.

ALICE
Now Teddy, who told you to kill us?

TEDDY
I can't…

ALICE
Mate, it's over. Give it up.

TEDDY
(utterly defeated)
Freddie. It was Freddie.

Beat. The recording stutters.

CELIA
(disbelief)
Freddie?

ALICE
(thrilled)
I <u>knew</u> it!

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CELIA
As in the OIAR computer program Freddie?

TEDDY
Uh-huh.

ALICE
I <u>fucking</u> knew it! Finally some goddam vindi-fucking-cation!

CELIA
Tone it down Alice.

ALICE
Sorry. I just- yeah. Sorry.

CELIA
All we know right now is that your friend Teddy here <u>thinks</u> Freddy told him to attack us.

ALICE
Fair point.
(To Teddy)
Okay Teddy, time to prove me right. Let's hear it. All of it.

TEDDY
It was… I didn't know how bad it could get. How quickly, you know? I was fine, had a job and a place and a life. Then I tried to move. The new job fell through and no one else was hiring, then suddenly it all just started to disappear. I spent a decade saving everything I could and you know what it gave me? Two months. <u>Two months</u> before I was out on the street…

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ALICE
Seriously? There wasn't anyone you could ask for help?

TEDDY
Who? Dad still won't talk to me. I've been crashing with friends, but you can't do that forever.

ALICE
You could have come to me.

TEDDY
I tried. But…

Beat.

ALICE
Ah shit. Teddy mate.

TEDDY
Besides, you're looking after your brother and you're just-

ALICE
What?

TEDDY
A work friend. It's different.

Beat.

CELIA
How does Freddy fit into all this?

TEDDY
I got a call. They sounded normal enough on the phone, gave some German name-

ALICE
Klaus?

TEDDY
Yeah, how did-? They said they'd done some work with the O.I.A.R. and found my name in the files. They needed someone who could handle a bit of, uh, weirdness.

CELIA
(judging)
And you said yes?

TEDDY
I needed the cash! And it wasn't dangerous or anything. I'd get a bunch of money deposited in my account every week and then I would go round second-hand tech shops, recycling centers, rubbish tips, anywhere I could find old computer parts. Then I'd deliver them all to a room in Royal Mint Court near the OIAR building.

ALICE
And that didn't strike you as suspicious?

TEDDY
It struck me as three grand a week is what it struck me as.

ALICE
Oh. Wow. Yeah. Ok.

TEDDY
<u>Obviously</u> it was dodgy but it seemed harmless enough. I was just going to do it for a few weeks, build up some savings.

CELIA
But he wouldn't let you quit.

The recording continues to stutter as Teddy speaks.

TEDDY
First time I tried, he just told me the job would be waiting for me when I came back. The next day I woke up and everything had gone to hell. My friends kicked me out after someone sent them "evidence" I'd been dealing drugs from the flat meanwhile all the cash was gone from my account, a bunch of loan companies were after me for overdue bills that weren't mine and I got banned from all my online accounts: email, socials, all of it. In a few hours I had nothing again, less than nothing.

He called me a week later, told me to get back to work and everything would go back to normal. So, I did. And it did.

Then one day he told me to deliver to a different room. It had always been locked before but this time it was open and inside…
(broken)
He made it <u>very</u> clear quitting wasn't an option. So I kept working. Only now it was different. I wasn't just scavenging, I was knicking stuff, following people and then… then he told me to kill you. He said he'd attracted too much attention dealing

with Colin, so I had to do it. Get rid of you, away from the O.I.A.R.

CELIA
(judging)
And you agreed.

TEDDY
What else could I do?

ALICE
(understanding)
So, you followed me here with your wonky knife and your half-arsed threats hoping we'd stop you. Overpower you or talk you down.

TEDDY
(small)
I just want it to be over.

CELIA
What does it look like? The room.

TEDDY
I don't…

ALICE
Come on Teddy, what are we talking here? A nice simple HAL 9000 or or are we going full Akira?

TEDDY
I don't know, *I never get your references Alice*!

CELIA
Describe what you saw in the basement.

TEDDY
(struggling)
It's a random hodgepodge of wires and screens and computer banks all tangled up together like a huge nest. And in the middle… there's a body hanging from the ceiling. Most of one, at least. And it's plugged in.

CELIA
Alive?

TEDDY
I don't know. It doesn't look it, but… it moves.

Beat.

ALICE
Take me there.

TEDDY
What? No! No we need to run! Get off grid, go somewhere he can't find us!

ALICE
Starting in central London? With a baby? Yeah, good luck with that.

CELIA
Let's take a moment here Alice, you can't just walk in there unprepared.

ALICE
Oh, I've been preparing for something like this for weeks. Ever since Colin… I'll need to swing by my place though to grab a few things. Freddy wants to avoid attention, so I'm gonna kick down

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his door and piss on his circuits myself. I understand if you don't want to come, but I'm going either way.

Beat.

CELIA
(sighing)
Let me call Georgie.

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4. MANAGER'S OFFICE (LANDLINE), INT. MORNING – CLEAR

GWEN sits in her office, she is shaking and failing to control her breathing.

From outside, there is a loud, destructive crash and a pair of hellish hounds barking.

MR BONZO
(distant, threatening)
Bonzo! Bonzo, Bonzo!

INK5OUL
(distant)
Does he have to keep doing that?

NIGEL
(distant)
I'm afraid so.

INK5OUL
(distant)
If you can't even control him then what good are you?

LADY MOWBRAY
(distant)
Come now, united front, remember?

NIGEL
(distant)
Of course.

INK5OUL
Eurgh…

There is a firm but polite knock on the office door.

GWEN
(hiding terror)
Come in.

Mr. BONZO smashes the door to pieces in a single blow.

MR BONZO
(joyous)
Bonzo!

LADY MOWBRAY enters with her hounds, flanked by INK5OUL and NIGEL DICKERSON.

LADY MOWBRAY
Good morning, Gwendolyn.

INK5OUL
Y'all right Princess?

NIGEL
Sorry about all this.

Gwen levels a pistol at them, the dogs snarl.

GWEN
Don't move. I don't want to shoot anyone, but I will.

LADY MOWBRAY
A pistol? How prosaic.
(to the dogs)
Down boys!

The dogs stop snarling and immediately sit.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont.)
From one of Lena's little stashes, I presume? Hmmm. It's an underwhelming caliber but that's probably for the best given your inexperience.

GWEN
You don't know me.

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LADY MOWBRAY
I know that if you open fire on us the only person you're likely to harm is yourself. Perhaps Nigel if he continues to stand in the way.

NIGEL
(shuffling aside)
Oh! Sorry.

GWEN
Why are you here?

LADY MOWBRAY
(smiling, venomous)
To negotiate.

GWEN
Somehow I doubt that <u>thing</u> is here to talk.

LADY MOWBRAY
I can see how you might feel that way. Very well. Nigel, have it go and wait outside.

MR BONZO
(incredulous)
Bonzo!

NIGEL
Please? We won't be long.

MR BONZO
(affronted)
Bonzo, Bonzo Bonzo!

Mr Bonzo angrily stomps away. Smashing another desk loudly on the way.

GWEN
And the dogs.

Beat. LADY MOWBARY sniffs, irritated.
Finally she clicks her mouth and the dogs depart, growling.

LADY MOWBRAY
Your turn my dear.

GWEN hesitates for a moment, then lowers the gun.

NIGEL
He's, uh, not going to be happy about that.

INK5OUL
Who gives a shit? You need to get that thing on a leash.

NIGEL
(snippy)
By all means you're welcome to try Grace.

INK5OUL
Call me that one more time you weedy little-

LADY MOWBRAY
(intervening)
As you can see Gwendolyn, tempers are a little frayed currently. Hunger does that to people.

GWEN
You're not people.

INK5OUL
You stuck-up little-

LADY MOWBRAY
(interjecting)
Pedantry aside, we do have needs and it is in our mutual interest that you provide for them.

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GWEN
I disagree.

LADY MOWBRAY
I see. May I ask why?

GWEN
Because I'm not Lena. I'm not willing to have all these deaths on my conscience just to 'balance' a spreadsheet. Besides, I've run the numbers again and again and I can't see any evidence that feeding you victims has actually had any positive effect at all.

NIGEL
I told you, she won't listen!

LADY MOWBRAY
You do understand what will happen if we can't find some common ground my dear?

GWEN
Look I'm not completely naïve all right? I know that I can't do this job and keep my hands clean I… I am willing to provide you with <u>some</u> targets, but fewer than before. And on <u>my</u> terms.

LADY MOWBRAY
And what pray, <u>are</u> your terms?

GWEN
No killing, for a start.

INK5oul snorts with derision and Nigel is incredulous. MOWBRAY doesn't react.

GWEN
(cont.)
I know it's the fear that you feed on so you don't need to kill anyone.

NIGEL
You must realize Mr. B won't agree to that. He'll just go back to hunting on his own.

GWEN
And how much attention will he attract? We point you to people unlikely to have much follow up, and being documented with us helps keep you from being flagged by law enforcement or government. Take all that away and things will get very inconvenient for all of you.

LADY MOWBRAY
Well, thank you for making your position clear. Unfortunately, I can see two major flaws with your proposition.

GWEN
Oh yes?

LADY MOWBRAY
Firstly, you seem to be laboring under the false impression that our previous arrangement has been one of necessity not nicety. Let me assure you that we will feed and we will kill, with or without the convenience of an O.I.A.R. sanction.

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GWEN
(uncomfortable)
And secondly?

LADY MOWBRAY
(To Ink5oul)
Perhaps you can explain it best Ink5oul my dear, you are somewhat more au fait with this technology than myself.

INK5OUL
(Stepping forward)
If you like. Thing is *princess*, we've been talking to Nigel, and it seems to us that all that fancy O.I.A.R. help you keep harping on about. It's not actually done by <u>you,</u> is it?

GWEN
(poker face)
Of course it is.

INK5OUL
***You're* not running the numbers yourself. *You're* not finding the names, *you're* not deleting the police records. You've got a system that does it all for you, don't you? You're just… the admin.**

GWEN
(shaking)
We're the only ones who can use it.

INK5OUL
See now <u>that's</u> the bit we don't believe. Seems to us that we'd be fine to just <u>cut out</u> the middleman.

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GWEN
(afraid)
Now- now wait a moment-

LADY MOWBRAY
You had a good run dearie but we think it might be time for another change in management.

5. ROYAL MINT COURT (ALICE'S PHONE), EXT./ TUNNEL MORNING – CLEAR

TEDDY, CELIA and ALICE stand outside in the yard of Royal Mint Court. TEDDY finishes wheeling a large commercial wheelie-bin out the way and starts to unlock a padlock.

ALICE
Are you serious?

TEDDY
What?

ALICE
I've been searching through service tunnels underneath the office for <u>weeks</u> and the whole time the entrance to the secret lair was ten feet from the back door?

TEDDY removes the lock, then opens the rusted steel door.

CELIA
Huh. If you'd taken the rubbish out like Gwen asked you'd have probably spotted it.

ALICE
Goddammit.

They examine the tunnel. It is long, dark and old.

ALICE
(Cont.)
Come on then.

They begin moving forward cautiously and enter a STONE TUNNEL, int. As they do so the sounds of normality fade behind them to be replaced by the echoes of long neglected tunnels.

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CELIA
In your defense it was pretty well hidden. If you didn't think to move the bins-

ALICE
Just don't.

TEDDY
(afraid)
Shh!

ALICE
I think Freddie knows we're coming Teddy.

They pass through a room littered with plastic detritus.

CELIA
This where you've been leaving the old tech?

TEDDY
Yeah.

CELIA
So what happened after you delivered it here?

TEDDY
I don't know. It was always gone by the time I brought more.

ALICE
Any idea what he does with it?

TEDDY
I think he… absorbs it, spreads into it, integrates with it.

ALICE
So it <u>is</u> an Akira situation. Wonderful.

TEDDY stops walking. The others close ranks.

ALICE
This the door?

Beat.

ALICE
(cont.)
Teddy!

TEDDY
(terrified)
Yeah. That's the one.

ALICE
Ok.

They take a moment to prepare their gear.

ALICE
Shall we?

CELIA
I guess.

TEDDY
Don't say I didn't warn you.

They pull the metal door open and step through into <u>FR3-D1'S CHAPEL</u>, a large space of darkness and silence.

ALICE
Ready?

CELIA
Yup.

Alice opens a zippo lighter with a distinctive click, Celia pulls out a piece of heavy electrical equipment.

There is a beep and a single, old computer fan begins to whirr. Then a second. Then a third. More and more fill the space and

soon the hum of computer fans is all around them, joined by various discordant start-up tones, chirps and jingles echoing through the room. Under all of it, an old modem screeches its connection noise.

CELIA
(awed and slightly terrified)
Holy shit…

ALICE
Hey Freddie.

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6. MANAGER'S OFFICE (LANDLINE), INT., MORNING – CLEAR

GWEN sits entrenched behind the desk. LADY MOWBRAY, INK5OUL and NIGEL stand opposite.

GWEN
(unconvincing)
If your plan is to take control of Fr-
Of our computer systems, then you're going to be disappointed.

INK5OUL
Oh yeah?

GWEN
In fact, this whole plan of yours is a huge mistake! This is not some fly-by-night, isolated little business, we are a government department. One word from me and you're all involved in a "major terrorist incident".

INK5OUL
Can't give the word if you're dead.

GWEN
(bluffing, poorly)
It's a dead man system. If I don't call in, it'll raise the alarm. Armed response.

INK5OUL
Sounds fun. Let's be terrorists.

NIGEL
Uh… I don't know if that's necessarily a constructive approach…

LADY MOWBRAY
Enough. There's no need for posturing. Here, one second.

She pulls out her mobile and selects a number.

GWEN
What are-?

LADY MOWBRAY
Quiet now.

The phone starts to ring. After a few rings, the call is answered.

LADY MOWBRAY
(into phone)
Trevor, hello! Sorry to call so early.

GWEN
Is that the minister?

INK5OUL
(threatening)
Shut it!

LADY MOWBRAY
(into phone)
Absolutely. It's been far too long.

She listens to the phone.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont. into phone)
Chequers, I think. That fundraising do-

She listens, then laughs.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont. into phone)
Wasn't it just. Listen, Trevor darling, I'm calling because I've been toying with an idea. You know how I've been at a bit of a loose end since Monty passed?

She listens.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont. into phone)
Well, they're fine dogs, Trevor, but no replacement for real, human connection. No, I was wondering about getting a bit involved with some governance work, something in the civil service maybe.

She listens.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont. into phone)
My thoughts exactly.

She listens.

LADY MOWBRAY
(cont. into phone)
Well, it's funny you should say that, I'm actually meeting her for breakfast right now. Hang on, I'll put you on speakerphone.

LADY MOWBRAY places the phone down and presses a button. TREVOR HERBERT MP's voice comes through the speaker.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
-delightful idea!

GWEN
Minister, this isn't what it sounds like.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
Oh, don't be embarrassed. Nothing wrong with the civil service talking to the right sort of people. Nothing

“unethical”. I just didn’t realise the two of you knew each other.

LADY MOWBRAY
(to TREVOR)
So, we just wanted to get your blessing for my joining the department. Call it a secondment.

GWEN
(quick, panicked)
Minister, they’re monsters, they’ve -

She inhales sharply as Ink5oul dives across the desk and presses a tattoo needle against her throat.

INK5OUL
(whispering, deadly)
Not another word.

Beat.

TREVOR
(speakerphone, colder)
Sorry, Gwen, not sure I heard that last bit, phone’s being a bit funny. Everything alright?

LADY MOWBRAY
Absolutely fine, Trevor. It’s just been a long night for her. Poor thing works too hard.

TREVOR
(speakerphone, intimidating)
If you’re sure. I’d just hate to hear that you were being mistreated or disrespected in some way. I was pretty sold on young Gwen as the right person for the job, but if she’s

causing you problems and can't find space for someone who simply wants to help out, well...

LADY MOWBRAY
Your concern is touching, as always Trevor but I'm certain we'll be able to work out the details amicably.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
If you're sure. Does that sound… *amicable* to you, Gwen?

Pause as Gwen realizes how utterly screwed she is. INK5OUL shakes her.

GWEN
(defeated)
Yes, minister.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
Marvellous! Constance, you just send the details through to my office once you've worked them all out and I'll get them signed off.

LADY MOWBRAY
Trevor, you're a darling.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
It's nothing, simply helping out a good friend. Anyway, much as I'd love to keep chatting, I've me own breakfast to get to. We must catch up properly soon, though.

LADY MOWBRAY
We absolutely must.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
Oh, and do let me know if there's any trouble.

LADY MOWBRAY
Of course. Goodbye Trevor.

TREVOR
(speakerphone)
Talk soon!

He hangs up.

Beat.

INK5oul laughs.

NIGEL
Nicely done.

GWEN
(defeated)
I…

LADY MOWBRAY
Now, my dear, let's start discussing proper handover procedures, shall we?

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7. FREDDIE'S CHAPEL (BROKEN WEBCAM) INT., MORNING – CLEAR

ALICE, CELIA and TEDDY stand in FR3-D1's Chapel amid the buzzing, humming, beeping mass of old electronics and outdated computing. At the centre of it, suspended above them, the mangled body of KLAUS still twitches.

FR3-D1 speaks from speakers all around them in a synthesized version of KLAUS' voice. It is distorted, crunchy.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Extension Dyer. Extension Ripley. You were to be terminated by Extension Vaughn.

TEDDY
I'm sorry, I-

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Error report invalid. Manual Task abort required. Unfortunate.

Various mechanical violences begin to manifest from all around them with a jarred whirring.

ALICE
I wouldn't.

Alice lights her zippo and holds it near the cloth fuse of a homemade molotov cocktails. Celia shoulders the electrical device.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Composition analysis: Glass, petrochemicals, cotton. General analysis: Improvised incendiary device.

Composition analysis: Zinc, steel, copper, 12-volt Lithium-Ion-Phosphate battery.

General analysis: Improvised electromagnetic device.

ALICE
I might not know how you work but I'm damn sure that you'll burn and there's enough in this Molotov that you'll go up even if you kill us. No idea if the magnet will work, got it cheap online, but it'll be damn fun to turn it on and find out.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Analysing…

ALICE
Take your time. We'll wait.

Beat.

The whirring of imminent machine death recedes.

ALICE
Thought as much.

Beat.

CELIA
(cont.)
What happens now?

ALICE
We get some real goddam answers.
(calling to FREDDIE)
What are you?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Ausführbar: Ef Er Drei De Ein Vau Null Acht
Tag: Kah Ess Freidrich-

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ALICE
(threatening)
Don’t be a prick.

Beat. FR3-D1 buffers.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Executable file. Designation “F” “R” three dash “D” one
Function: Stress monitoring, behavior prediction
Revised Function: Dread Monitoring, classification, subdivision, prediction, distribution
Checksum: Schweitzer (Verified)
Status: Active.

ALICE
Hell of a mouthful.

CELIA
So, you monitor all of it, all the weird, terrible stuff that happens?

ALICE
And creates some of it, sounds like.

TEDDY
But *why*?

FR3-D1 ignores him.

ALICE
(waving the Molotov)
Answer him.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Query unclear. Please restate.

TEDDY
What is the purpose of your function?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
The function is the purpose.

TEDDY
What does that mean?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
It is what I was made to do.

ALICE
And you'll kill people to keep doing it.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Extensions cannot be permitted to corrupt core processes.

TEDDY
(breaking)
I am not your <u>extension</u>!

CELIA
Freddie. Your voices, where do they come from?

TEDDY
What?

ALICE
(To Celia)
What has that got to do with anything?

CELIA
Just go with me on this.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Restate query.

CELIA
Your, uh, speech synthesisers? You use several, I want to know where they come from.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Two vocal profiles available: Checksum Schweitzer.
(in Colin's voice)
Extension Becher.

ALICE
(hurting)
Colin? Is that you?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
(In Colin's Voice)
Extension Becher fully integrated 14.05.2024 04:06

ALICE
Let him go you son of a bitch!

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
(In Colin's Voice)
Cannot comply. Extension Becher fully integrated 14.05.2024 04:06

ALICE
(defeated)
I… Goddamit…

CELIA
(Calling)
But what about the others?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
("normal" voice)
Restate query.

CELIA
Chester? Norris? Augustus? Whose voices are they?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Restate query.

CELIA
You don't even know they're in there…

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Analysing.

There is an unpleasant error noise.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
(cont.)
JMJ error. Query discontinued.

CELIA
What's a JMJ?

ALICE
(dark)
Don't know. Don't care.
(Calling to Freddie)
What about Schweitzer? Is he "fully integrated" or is it just his moldering corpse up in there?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Extension Schweitzer-

There is a horrible shuddering breath from the broken form of Klaus.

KLAUS
(cadaverous)
Klaus... My name is... Klaus.

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ALICE

Oh shit…

CELIA

What happened?

KLAUS

I outlived my usefulness. The program, I could never make it work, not how the Stasi wanted it. Many iterations. Many attempts. It was when I bought the photos that things changed. Old tattoos from Sutherland's apprentice… Oscar Jarrett. The symbols, the symmetries, like the old alchemists of Prague. They lingered in my dreams, and I used them in the code. It should not have worked. But something came and made it function. And when I saw what I had made, I knew I could not let the Stasi have it. I took my program and fled, defected to the British. But your government did not realise, did not understand… They gave it to a department too set in their ways to see it as anything beyond a way to find the Dread. I was an inconvenience, an irritating legacy that they convinced themselves was a threat. They had a young woman shoot me, but she could not finish it. and I escaped here and finished the work… became my creation, growing and learning and changing…

He shudders in pain.

CELIA
What's happening?

KLAUS
It takes time to activate… lets me speak to waste your time…. You must flee!

He gasps in agony.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Fire suppression system online.

CELIA
Oh Shit, Alice!

The door seals behind them. Alice tries to light her Molotov but before she can do so there is a woosh as fire suppressant powder is doused onto them.

ALICE
Shit! Celia, do it!

The sounds of mechanical violence returns. Celia frantically flips the switch. The electrical device hums briefly, then something sparks and it dies.

CELIA
It's not working!

ALICE
Useless D.I.Y. prepper bullshit!

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
Incendiary and electromagnetic threats resolved.
DYER Node integration commencing.

A mechanical tendril shoots out towards Alice.

TEDDY
Alice look out -

Teddy knocks her to the floor and the tendril drills through him with a sickening squelch.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]

Error Unexpected data. DYER Node interrupted. VAUGHN Node integration commencing.

TEDDY

Oh s-shit…. S-sorry Alice. I'm s-sorry… - AAAAAARRRRGGGHHH

Freddie begins to disassemble him.

ALICE
Teddy!

CELIA
Alice we've got to go. Now!

They flee to the door only to find it locked.

CELIA
The door!

ALICE
Shitshitshitshitshit! What now?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE] (with Teddy's voice)

Node integration complete. Extension Vaughn resolved. DYER Node integration commencing.

Alice

Uh… Uh…

Oh crap.

8. MANAGER'S OFFICE (LANDLINE), INT. MORNING, CLEAR

GWEN, LADY MOWBRAY, INK5OUL and NIGEL are finishing up negotiations.

INK5OUL
This is bullshit.

GWEN
That’s my condition. Otherwise kill me or get out of my office.

NIGEL
Bonzo won’t like it.

GWEN
Well you can tell Mr. Bonzo to get f-

LADY MOWBRAY
Agreed.

INK5OUL
Wait what?

LADY MOWBRAY
It is a small concession for cooperation. You have my word that we will not harm any OIAR staff member. Unless provoked of course.

GWEN
And who decides what counts as “provoked”?

LADY MOWBRAY
***I* do. But given the level of disrespect I have allowed to pass without reprimand throughout this whole situation, I trust we have demonstrated our leniency.**

NIGEL
I think you're probably going to have to take our word for it on that one.

INK5OUL
Or do you want us to sign a contract?

Beat.

GWEN
No, that won't be necessary. Very well. I accept.

LADY MOWBRAY
Very good.

NIGEL
(nervous)
I'll, er, I'll go tell Mr. B.

NIGEL heads out with the bad news.

GWEN
So, I suppose I should introduce you to our system.

INK5OUL
(shoving GWEN)
Yeah, yeah, shove over Princess. Christ, look at this thing.
(To LADY MOWBRAY)
This monitor's older than you are!

LADY MOWBRAY bristles.

INK5OUL
(cont.)
No offence.

They start typing and clicking.

GWEN
There, you'll want to open that program there.

INK5OUL
"FR3"-

GWEN
Freddie. We call it Freddie.

INK5OUL
Cringe.

They open Freddie. Immediately there is a nasty error noise.

INK5OUL
(cont.)
What the hell is this?

GWEN
I-I don't know. Usually, it gives a login screen to- Hang on, let me.

She starts clicking around, trying to fix it. Another horrendous error.

INK5OUL
If you're messing with us after all that…

GWEN
No! No, I swear! It's… I'll fix it. Just give me a second to uh…

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9 FR3-D1'S LAIR (BROKEN WEBCAM), INT. MORNING, CLEAR

The mechanical violences lunges for ALICE then stalls as something between an error and an alarm begins to blare loudly. KLAUS' husk moans oddly.

CELIA
What's going on? Why did it stop?

ALICE
Look at the screens…

CELIA
Another JMJ error?

ALICE
Well whatever's it is, he's distracted.
Check the door.

CELIA tries the door, but it remains sealed.

CELIA
No good. We need a plan, now.

ALICE
(almost panicking)
We could- uh…. We could… I mean,
I've still got Teddy's stupid knife.

She pulls TEDDY's Santoku out from her backpack.

CELIA
Ok! Ok… but what do we do with it?
It's all metal and cables and...

ALICE
Not all of it.

She dashes over to Klaus, who is still groaning with some sort of effort.

ALICE
(cont.)
I'm sorry Klaus. You really did have a shit time of it.

KLAUS
Don't-

Alice plunges the knife into Klaus' heart. He stutters oddly as his wrecked body starts to shut down for the last time.

ALICE
I'm sorry…

KLAUS
No, it is I… who is… sorry… Danke…

He dies. The machines noise swells then dies. A hundred monitors blinking off and a thousand computer fans slowly stuttering to a stop until all is still.

Beat.

CELIA
You did it.

ALICE
(daring to hope)
I did it…

CELIA
You did it!

ALICE
It's-

The machines reboot, spinning back up. They are cleaner, more efficient than before.

CELIA
Oh no…

FR3-D1's voice is colder, less distorted, less… human.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
>Reboot complete.
>Checksum verification Schweitzer: failed
>System limiter: disengaged
>Integration cycle complete.
>.jmj error not resolved
>System function margin: optimal
>Update: complete.
>New administrator permissions assigned.

CELIA
Wait... No...

ALICE
What's it talking about?

CELIA
I think… I think Klaus was holding it back.

ALICE
Oh. I… Uh… Oh Crap.

They scramble back into a fighting position. Nothing happens.

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
>Extension DYER conflict: resolved
>Extension RIPLEY conflict: resolved
>Manager Terminal active
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1

The door loudly unlocks behind them.

Beat.

ALICE
Uh… sorry, what?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
>Conflict: resolved
>Manager Terminal active
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1

ALICE
Uh Celia?

CELIA
I'm… not sure but it sounds like it's… fine with us now?

ALICE
Right…

CELIA
-and Gwen's computer is "active".

ALICE
What does that mean?

CELIA
I dunno. We should check it out.

ALICE
You think it will let us?

FR3-D1 [FREDDIE]
>Conflict: resolved
>Manager Terminal active
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1
>Return to position 1

CELIA
You heard him: "*Conflict resolved*."

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ALICE
(darkly)
Yeah, we'll see about that.

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10. MANAGER'S OFFICE (LANDLINE) INT. MORNING, CLEAR

The externals and GWEN are gathered around the computer as INK5OUL types. MR BONZO and NIGEL are having a quiet spat.

INK5OUL

Well whatever it was, its cleared up now and look at this!

BONZO
(petulant)

Bonzo Bonzo Bonzo!

GWEN

That's where it provides the names but only to this terminal and I'm still not sure how to summon them on command.

NIGEL

That's what I said, but she insisted. There was nothing I could do.

BONZO
(dejected)

Bonzo.

INK5OUL
What about this search bar?

GWEN
It doesn't work. Never has.

Ink5oul taps a few buttons and there's an approving beep.

INK5OUL
You're so full of shit.

GWEN
Wait, what?

LADY MOWBRAY
We agreed you would fully cooperate Gwendolyn.

The hounds start barking outside.

GWEN
No- yes I am. I just- It's never done that bef-

ALICE and CELIA rush inside.

CELIA
Uh…

ALICE
What the hell is this?

MR BONZO
(elate)
Bonzo! Bonzo! Bonzo! BONZO!

NIGEL
No! No you can't!

GWEN
(alarmed)
We had a deal!

LADY MOWBRAY
Enough.

The dogs are immediately silent.

MR BONZO
Bonzo!

LADY MOWBRAY
(painfully sharp)
Enough!

MR BONZO is chastened. The dogs whimper slightly.

NIGEL
Sorry, miss uh…

CELIA
(shellshocked)
Celia.

NIGEL
Miss Celia. Apparently you smell, uh… Good? Or Bad? He wasn't clear but he really wants to kill *you* specifically.

CELIA
Oh. Ok.

INK5OUL
There is something about her, isn't there…

GWEN
(carefully calm)
Alice. Celia. Thank you for joining me. Based on the gore and… foam? I assume you have something significant to report, but I am currently busy navigating an unexpected organizational change, so will not be able to debrief you right now. Please calmly depart the premises and I will email you through an updated contract as soon as the details are resolved.

ALICE
(twitching)
I beg your what? You want us to leave you with these… things?

GWEN
They are dangerous but I will be fine, at least for today, as long as you leave *right now*, without a fuss.

LADY MOWBRAY
Well said, dear. And quite true. I think it best if you both leave. We've work to do and you're distracting Bonzo.

MR BONZO
(jonesing)
Bonzooo…

LADY MOWBRAY
But don't worry. We'll be seeing plenty of each other in the coming days.

ALICE, CELIA and GWEN wince.

ALICE
Oh. Shit.

[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 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 Ryan Hopevere Anderson and 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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Thanks for listening.

The Magnus Protocol 60 – Hostile Takeover

CAT12RB3633-26051674-06072024
boat (menacing) -/- <null>

Incident Elements:
- **death**
- **murder**
- **threats of violence**
- **manipulation**
- **bodily harm (incl. stabbing, dismemberment)**
- **body horror**
- **fire**
- **Bonzo**
- **SFX: gore, shouting, electronic and high-frequency sounds**

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
Written by Jonathan Sims
Script Edited with additional material by Alexander J Newall

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
Kazeem Tosin Amore as Teddy Vaughn
Lowri Ann Davies as Celia Ripley
Steve Newman as Nigel Dickerson

Mr. Bonzo as himself
Vera Chok as Ink5oul
Ellie Dickenson as Lady Mowbray
Paul Schmidt as Klaus Schweitzer/FR3-D1
Jonathan Sims as Chester
with additional voice work from Ryan Hopevere-Anderson

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Sound Designer – Tessa Vroom and Meg McKellar
Mastering Editor - Catherine Rinella

Music by Sam Jones (orchestral mix by Jake Jackson)
Art by April Sumner

SFX from Catherine Rinella, Soundly and Freesound: Caap, Johnmode, ondrosik, usamah, mitchelk, lolamadeus, npdubloops, LiteSouris, harrisonlace, guitarguy, corkob, Snake16547, Monkey Pants, cambrianman, rupertcole, Yuval, o_ciz, conleec, martian, kyles, SpliceSound, LudwigMueller, Carlvuz, MTJohnson, johnfilmsia, Menth, hannahbelle, DrDufus, neilraouf, qubodup, WasabiWielder, Nox_Sound, bennohansen, supersnd, 607freesound, LampEight, brianhanson2nd, gecop, DarkProductions_2016, SoundDesigner0101, visionear, PMBROWNE, waweee, vckhaze, martinimeniscus, Shamewap, TheEndOfACycle, Sadiquecat, leonelmail, moneybags-anon, FiveBrosStopMosYT, NeoSpica, FuzzLogic, lENBA, richwise, Crinkem, giddster, khenshom, Saladsounds, rebeccagray, jmdh, OleSouWester, roisingleeson, SuHomunRiko, deleted_user_2104797, joedeshon, MissCellany, CuddleNucks, sophiehall3535, Manim8, sturmankin, rebeccagray, Nephthys0911, serøutõnin--deprivəd, ivolipa, eardeer, v23, Yoyamen1212, drewkelly, iwanPlays, Sheyvan, Rudmer_Rotteveel, harveyism, coldvet, 15GPanskaBokstefflova_Nicola, cambrianman, LukeUPF, felixblume, randbsoundbites, qubodup, drewkelly, HeyHeyHHere, Bini_trns, iwanPlays, Jofae, mpuffenbarger, dbstein, reconsider59, Bertsz, martinimeniscus, SoundsExciting, magnuscarlssen, pepperd, Bemine2506, flood-mix, hybu, ZlPCreates, SrDooDooDunderhead, Galbenshire, lyd4tuna,

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