

The Magnus Protocol

Episode 1
"First Shift"

Written by Jonathan Sims and Alexander J Newall

01-08-2023
Draft 1.6

1. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT, RAINING (COMPUTER).

A decrepit computer turns on in a dated and dingy shared office in Royal Mint Court. There is the hum and whine of an old PC - the sort of mid-90s oversized, slightly yellowing plastic tower that still has a floppy disk drive. A tinny digital fanfare accompanies its awakening, then the PC settles into the quiet whirr of its fan.

There is a slight stutter of digital distortion and then the computer's aged microphone abruptly begins recording. It is eavesdropping on an anemic work party. SAM, LENA and GWEN can be heard quietly talking in another part of the office.

ALICE

[What are you] -looking forward to the most?

TEDDY

I mean, occasionally seeing the sun could be nice?

ALICE

Boooo! Your pathetic addiction to vitamin D will only make you weak.

TEDDY

But Alice, my bones! They're ready to snap like twiglets!

ALICE

Listen to me: bones are a lie peddled by Big Milk to keep you buying. No such thing.

TEDDY

Right, so what keeps your body upright?

ALICE

(grinning)
Spite and coffee.

TEDDY

(laughing) Well, I'm afraid we can't all subsist entirely on coffee and social media drama.

ALICE

Not with that attitude. I reckon you could crack it in another 4 years...

TEDDY

Another 4 years of you and cracked is exactly what I'd be!

Small laugh.

Beat.

ALICE

I'm gonna miss you Teddy.

TEDDY

Nah, we'll stay in touch, right?

ALICE

(unconvincingly)

'course. I mean, yeah, if you think you can escape my iconic brand of nonsense by getting a boring, normal job you're going to be sadly disappointed, my friend.

TEDDY

You know most people would consider civil service a boring, normal job.

ALICE

Yeah, well, most people don't work here.

COLIN

(approaching)

Ain't that the truth.

COLIN shuffles up, a touch worse for drink.

ALICE

Colin! There's my guy! How's it hanging? Is it an app yet? Do we have a minimalist logo? I assume you've finished all the social features?

COLIN

Don't you start. I swear I'm going to shove a cable down that prick's throat, pull it out his ministerial anus and floss him to death.

ALICE

Is that what you mean when you go on about things being "backwards compatible"?

Colin sighs wearily.

TEDDY

Booo!

ALICE

Don't boo me! I created you, and I can destroy you!

Laughter.

COLIN

So are we just leaving Sam to the wolves then?

ALICE

He's a big boy, he can look after himself. Besides, he's going to be working with them.

COLIN

Sure but you know how Gwen and Lena can be...

TEDDY

- awful?

COLIN
(overlapping)
-intense.

ALICE
He's fine. 'Course it wouldn't
have been an issue if we'd just
done this at the pub like normal...

TEDDY
You know Lena.
(imitating)
"Proper procedure requires any
provided food and beverages to be
consumed on site. This includes
cake.". Fair play, though, Sam's
been a good sport. God knows you
wouldn't have got me to a
stranger's goodbye party at six in
the morning.

ALICE
(moving away)

Eurgh. Fine, I'll go rescue him.

Beat.

COLIN
So... Insurance?

TEDDY
It's reliable.

COLIN
True. Just let me know if they
need an IT guy, yeah?

TEDDY
Colin, mate, you know you're never
getting out of here.

COLIN
Christ, don't say that.

TEDDY

Even if his nibs lets you off the hook, which he won't, you couldn't bring yourself to just leave. Not 'til you've figured out all these fun little errors.

COLIN

Or they finally kill me.

TEDDY

I mean, sure, that too.

Beat.

TEDDY

Heads up, looks like they're all coming over.

COLIN

(morose)

Great.

ALICE, SAM, LENA and GWEN come over.

TEDDY

Hey!

LENA

Enjoying the party?

TEDDY

Colin was just saying how much of a blast he's having, isn't that right?

LENA

(sardonic)

Oh really.

COLIN

Uh, sure.

TEDDY

-and how he'd love to take the afterparty to the pub.

ALICE

What a great idea, Colin.

LENA

Nonsense. Sam is the only one who has had any cake so far.

GWEN

And that was only because you practically forced it down his throat.

SAM

No, no, it was... nice.

LENA

People like chocolate cake.

GWEN

(sullen)

People *like* being treated like adults...

Beat. Gwen may have overstepped there.

LENA

Thank you for your feedback, Gwen. I will take it under advisement. Now I was just telling Sam that he can expect supportive co-workers here at the O.I.A.R..

ALICE

Oh Yeah. We're a real family. I'm your cool sister, Gwen's your uncool sister, Lena's you emotionally distant mother, Teddys the uncle that just got another job, and Colin's the family's grumpy IT manager

GWEN

You'll have to forgive Alice, Sam. She's convinced that she's funny.

SAM

It's alright, we actually go way back.

LENA

Alice recommended Sam for the job.

GWEN

Oh? Nepotism, is it?

ALICE

(acidly)

I learned from the best.

GWEN

People are trying to enjoy themselves, Alice. Could you please just turn it off for a moment?

TEDDY

(gently steering)

Soooo! I think we might all be done on cake, so I'm going to call it and suggest anyone who wants to can decamp to the pub, ok?

COLIN

Plan.

LENA

If that's the consensus, I will accept it. Although I'm afraid I won't be able to join you at The Steward-

ALICE

Shame...

LENA

-but do take Sam along and enjoy yourselves. Just remember it *is* a work night.

SAM

Oh, er, sure. I'm down.

TEDDY

Great!

LENA

Oh, and Teddy?

TEDDY

Mm?

LENA

I understand you're leaving us, but that's no excuse for being sloppy. Please ensure you shut down your workstation before you depart.

TEDDY

Hm? Oh I already d- Oh. That's- uh... Right, hang on, I'll just-

Teddy pushes the power button. The recording ends and the internal fans spin down as the computer is shut down.

2. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE - NIGHT, RAINING - (COMPUTER).

The computer boots up and the microphone switches on. Sam is sat at his desk, filling out paperwork. ALICE approaches.

ALICE

Right then. Ready?

SAM

Hang on, I've still got the last page to fill in. Do I really have to put "Samama Khalid" at the top of every single page?

ALICE

Yeah, they're pretty big on paperwork around here.

SAM

There has to be a way to do this online.

Beat.

SAM CONT.

What?

ALICE

(chuckling)

You'll see. Anyway, hurry it up, time to mold you like clay into the perfect government drone for the Office of Incident Assessment and Response.

SAM

Speaking of, there's this box for a "Response 121" on the form. Do you know what that is?

ALICE

Oh, you can ignore that. There used to be a separate "Response" department, I think, but now it's just us. Guess they never updated the onboarding.

SAM

Ah. I already ticked it - is that a problem?

ALICE

I doubt it since no one actually reads that stuff.

Beat.

ALICE (CONT.)

Right pens down, eyes front, class is in session.

SAM

Right.

Sam puts the paperwork away on the desk.

SAM CONT.

Lead on, sensei.

ALICE

So, this cutting-edge device is known as a personal computer, or "PC" for short-

SAM

Alice, I know you're joking, but how old is this thing? It has a floppy drive.

ALICE

Patience young one. You've got your login details from Colin, right?

SAM

Sure.

ALICE

(faux portentous)

Then bestow them unto the device that you may gain its ancient wisdom...

SAM

Right.

Sam types in his login. There's a beep and the computer starts to spin up with very retro fanfare.

SAM

What-?

ALICE

(sweetly)

Something wrong sweetie?

SAM

Is this... *Windows 95*?

ALICE

Of course not - don't be ridiculous!

Beat.

ALICE

(cont.)

This is a modified version of Windows NT 4.0, the business-focused predecessor to 95.

SAM

H-How is that even-? There's no way this is still supported...

ALICE

I think a good half of Colin's job is just making sure the workstations don't all try to update and instantly brick themselves.

SAM

But... I mean, why?

ALICE

See that symbol?

Alice double clicks something on the screen.

SAM

(reading)

FR3-d1?

ALICE

Meet Freddy. The program doesn't really have a proper name. Bespoke software from the mid-nineties, I think. It's the bedrock that the whole system is based on, and it's been at least fifteen years since anyone actually knew how it worked.

SAM

What does it do?

ALICE

Crashes, mostly. At least it does if you try to update it, breath too loudly or link it to anything developed more recently than the Bronze Age collapse.

SAM

So what's it supposed to do, then?

ALICE

It searches online databases, newspapers, forums or whatever for incidents, flags them, then passes them through to us for assessment.

SAM

What sort of "incidents"?

Beat.

ALICE

(slightly hesitant)

You'll see.

SAM

Right, so this list is...

ALICE

Today's case files. Just double click on the top one.

Sam double-clicks.

ALICE

Ok, so looks like it's an email.

SAM

And I just... read it? Is that even legal?

ALICE

Probably. We do work for the government. Sort of.

SAM

What about GDPR?

ALICE

Look, Sam, I don't know what to tell you. This is the job. I've been doing it for years and there's never been any problems. Maybe ask Lena? - She'd probably know.

SAM

Fine. Sorry. Ok, so...

He starts reading. Pause.

SAM

This is-

ALICE

Yeah, they're all like that. At least this one is short, nice easy start for you. So, once you've read it, you get out the binder-

She slaps an enormous ring binder on the desk and starts paging through it as she speaks.

ALICE CONT.

And look up whatever's mentioned most in the case. Looking at this one we go to "D" and... Sam, eyes on me now. We go to "D" and, right, would you say this is more "Dolls comma watching" or "Dolls comma human skin".

SAM

(a bit shell-shocked)

I- Uh- I mean- I guess the human skin bit is only implied, so... both?

ALICE

Nah you can only pick one, Freddy's dumb as rocks. Right, so, after each entry there's four numbers. That's the DPHW. So, "dolls comma watching" is... 1157. Then you cross reference with the table here, that would be a 2-C, and then you type that into the box here, along with date of incident if there is one and today's date. Which gives us...

Alice's quickly types.

ALICE CONT.
CAT2RC1157- 12052022-13012024 and
then we hit submit.

Beat.

ALICE CONT.
Well go on then.

SAM
Oh, right!

Sam double clicks. There's an 8-bit chime.

ALICE
Excellent work. We'll make a wage
slave of you yet.

SAM
Where does it go?

ALICE
If I were a betting woman, I'd say
some long dead database that no-
one will ever look at or care
about.

SAM
So why do it?

ALICE
Because that's what they're paying
us to do.

SAM makes an incredulous noise.

ALICE
Welcome to civil service.

SAM
What the hell sort of job have you
gotten me Alice?

ALICE
One where you get paid to hang out
with the coolest person left in
London all night, every night.
You're welcome.

SAM laughs despite himself.

ALICE
Now you try the next one.

SAM
Right, so...

He double-clicks the next case. NORRIS's voice blares from the speakers abruptly. They both talk over his monologue.

NORRIS (computer)
To: Darla Winstead
(dwinny@mailpod.com)

From: Harriet Winstead
(hpw332@mailpod.com)

Date: May 12 2022.

Subject: Re: Re: checking in

SAM
(talking over)
Alice, what is this?

ALICE
(talking over)
Hey! You got Norris!

SAM
(talking over)
What?

ALICE
(talking over)
It's... Hang on, you can pause it
by hitting space.

She hits spacebar and NORRIS abruptly stops speaking.

ALICE
Sorry, didn't think you'd get one
of those so soon.

SAM

One of what? Why is it reading it out?

ALICE

Started about a year ago. Best Colin can figure, something broke and whichever genius made the program ran some redundancy through the sound card.

SAM

Right...

ALICE

Yeah.

Lena won't authorize Colin's proposed solution: Smashing it with a hammer. All it really means to you is that it'll read out maybe one in twenty cases and won't let you do the next one until it finishes.

SAM

But- No hang on, that doesn't make any sense. If Freddy's a search program from the nineties, why would it have text-to-speech?

ALICE

Great question. I asked Colin the same thing a while back.

SAM

And what did he say?

ALICE

Nothing. He just snapped a pencil in half and walked away.. Look Sam, it's a completely knackered system that's old as balls. Dangly, grey-haired old man balls. And until it finally collapses forever, we just have to put up and shut up.

SAM

So how do we stop it reading them out?

ALICE

No idea. So now, when we come across a chatty case, we generally take that as a cue to get coffee. Then we come back and read it through once the computer's done waffling.

SAM

Right. Okay. And who's Norris?

ALICE

So, there are three voices it reads them in. I call them Norris, Chester and Augustus, although Gwen doesn't like it. This one here is Neil, he and Chester are the most common.

SAM

But it's okay if I do hear it? Like, I'm just thinking I can finish up this onboarding here while it's running.

ALICE

Knock yourself out. Just grab me in the break room when it's done. We've got a load more to get through.

SAM

Gotcha.

Sam hits spacebar again.

3. CYBERSPACE

NORRIS

(computer)

To: Darla Winstead
(dwinny@mailpod.com)

From: Harriet Winstead
(hpw332@mailpod.com)

Date: May 12 2022.

Subject: Re: Re: checking in

I'm so sorry. I should have listened. I just couldn't face the thought of the rest of my life never hearing him again, I had to try. It wasn't a scam, not like you said.

He sounded different when he called. He was all eager with an off-putting sort of excitement, not like our earlier face-to-face consultations. He just gave me an address and told me to be there that night:: Grantham Cemetery. I started to wonder if this was all just another messed-up sales pitch. Some preachy lesson about acceptance and letting go before asking for more cash. But I had to know, so I went to the cemetery.

I used to love the night. When Arthur couldn't sleep we would just walk for hours under the lampposts, just us and the occasional headlights streaking past. It frightens me now. I look at the shadows, not the lights. They hide whatever it was that took him away from me.

The cemetery gates were wide open. I don't know if I would have had it in me to break in. I was so nervous that the smallest obstacle might have sent me running home. But they were open. So in I went. Slowly, towards the grave.

It's not a big graveyard, and spacious enough that I could see the figure standing there before I got too close. For a moment my heart skipped and I thought it might be Arthur but no, the shape... The shape was all wrong. Then my step faltered, because I had no idea who else it could be. They were too short for the consultant. Maybe someone else entirely, some innocent mourner? In the middle of the night? I doubted it.

I was scared, Darla. I was so scared. I was certain I'd been set up, that I was going to be grabbed. I turned to leave, hoping I could get back to the main road lights but then the figure began to speak from where it was stooped in the dark.

It was his voice. It was Arthur's voice. I know you won't believe me but he called my name and I know it was his voice. I froze in place.

It came closer, and as the moon escaped the clouds for a moment I could make out the discolored skin, the mismatched features. It moved slowly, shuddering towards me with a jerky, ungainly step. Something was pressed against its skin, from the inside.

I said the only thing I could think:

"Arthur? Is that you?"

And that voice I have loved for twenty years answered: "Some of him."

And then it laughed. Great heaving gasps and wheezes that seemed to leak out as if through a rotten bellows. It laughed and laughed, violently throwing its head back and forth, faster and faster, impossibly fast. So fast I could hear bones snapping.

I ran, and it didn't chase me.

I don't know what to do now. I've not left the house all day. I keep thinking I see something at the bottom of the garden, but I can't bring myself to check. Do I call the police? What could I even tell them? I tried calling the helpline but no one answers. Are you free tonight? I don't want to stay at the house. I know you warned me that it was too full of memories but this isn't that. I'm afraid Darla and worse, I think it's Arthur I'm afraid of. Or what's left of him. Please get back to me a.s.a.p.

H

4. INT. OIAR main office - NIGHT, RAINING - (COMPUTER).

Sam is sitting there, slightly freaked out by what he's just heard. He exhales slowly. Alice comes up behind him and he jumps as she speaks.

ALICE

You didn't come get me?

SAM

I... Yeah, sorry. I got distracted. Are they all like that?

ALICE

What? Upsetting and horrible?
Yeah, pretty much. That one seemed
pretty tame, to be honest.

SAM

Great. Can't wait for a bad one.

ALICE

So, ready to score it?

SAM

Sure, so, uh...

He starts leafing through the massive binder.

SAM

"Zombies" would probably be under
Z, right?

ALICE

Yeah, it's mostly alphabetical.

Gwen, who has overheard this, calls over from her desk.

GWEN

(calling)

It's not zombies.

ALICE

I'm sorry, Gwen, I thought Sam was
shadowing me today since you're so
busy with your own massive
backlog.

GWEN

(Standing and coming
over)

And you're just going to let him
put "zombies"? He'll get a misfile
on his first case.

ALICE

No he won't.

(To Sam)

You basically never get a misfile.
No-one's checking this stuff-

Gwen starts leafing through his binder.

GWEN

Here. "Reanimation". I'd probably go with "partial" cross linked with "regret", but you could also go with "amalgamative" subsection "semi".

ALICE

Zombies would have been fine.

GWEN

A) no it wouldn't and B) there's at least three pages of sub-classifications for Zombies. He'd be here for hours.

ALICE

And I'm guessing this dedication to detail is why you're so behind?

GWEN

It's why I have the highest accuracy rate in the office.

ALICE

Which, and it's absolutely crucial you understand this Sam, means exactly nothing.

SAM

I'm going to put "reanimation", ok?

ALICE

Fine, whatever. Like I say, none of it matters, so arguing about it is a waste of everybody's time. And none of us have much of that going spare tonight do we Gwen?

GWEN

Just making sure he's taught properly. If you want to be picking up after him for the whole year, be my guest.

ALICE

Gwen?

GWEN

What?

ALICE

Lena wants you in her office.

Gwen looks over.

GWEN

Oh joy. Just what I need tonight.

She stands and starts heading off.

GWEN CONT.

(departing)

Don't let her teach you too many
bad habits Sam.

SAM

(chuckling)

I'll do my best.

ALICE

(good-natured)

Traitor...

5. INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE- NIGHT, RAINING - (MANAGER'S
SPEAKERPHONE)

Lena's office is pristine, sterile and has nothing that
might indicate its occupant would be brash enough to have a
personality. GWEN enters.

GWEN

You wanted to see me?

LENA

Yes, Gwen. Please sit down.

GWEN does so. It is clear from her tone she knows what to
expect and has been here several times before.

GWEN

Another "performance review"? Can
we make it a bit quicker this
time?

LENA

You're aware you are significantly behind your caseload?

GWEN

Because I'm actually trying to process them correctly. You can have it right or you can have it fast.

LENA

Regardless, that's not what I wanted to talk to you about.

GWEN

I see. So what else have I done wrong, then?

LENA

Last night. At Teddy's leaving party-

GWEN

"Party"

Beat. The room gets a little colder.

LENA

Last night at Teddy's leaving event you were openly disrespectful towards me in front of the new hire. This is not acceptable.

GWEN

Seriously? You're calling me in here because I backtalked you in front of the new guy?

LENA

I'm well aware you dislike me, Gwen, and that's entirely your prerogative but I am still your manager and undercutting my authority in front of a new team member is deeply inappropriate.

GWEN
(Standing)
Understood. Now if that's all-

LENA
It's not. Sit down.

Gwen sighs and sits.

LENA CONT.
If you hate working here so completely, you are perfectly within your rights to resign. No one is forcing you to stay here.

GWEN
You'd like that, wouldn't you?

LENA
Honestly, it more or less balances out. You are difficult to manage, but hiring new staff is always something of a pain.

Beat.

LENA CONT.
What do you actually want, Gwen?

GWEN
Your job.

Beat.

LENA
You think you could do it better?

GWEN
I do.

LENA
Hmmm. I've always known you thought you were slumming it down here, but I never actually considered you might think of this as the first step of a career. Most people simply move on within 12 months or so.

GWEN

I'm not most people.

There is a pause as LENA considers this.

LENA

No.

GWEN

No?

LENA

No. Unfortunately, I know what climbing this particular ladder entails, and you don't have what it takes.

GWEN

Surprise, surprise.

LENA

I'm sorry to put it so bluntly, but I really do fear your ambition is misplaced here.

GWEN

(leaving)

Mhm. Well, good talk as always. Excellent use of my time. Let me know if you have any other gems of wisdom you want to spit in my face.

LENA

Gwen, that's- [exactly the kind of attitude...]

Gwen is already out the door and slams it behind her.

LENA sighs.

6. INT. OIAR BREAK ROOM- NIGHT, RAINING - (CCTV).

COLIN is sat in the corner, grimly drinking a cup of tea. SAM enters and heads over to the coffee machine.

SAM

Hey! Colin, wasn't it?

COLIN grunts an affirmative.

SAM

Hey.

COLIN grunts.

Beat. SAM starts to make his coffee

SAM

So. How's the app going?

COLIN

(Immediately furious)

So that's it, is it? Lena's hired another smart-mouthed prick to just piss around and cause problems?

SAM

Wow, okay-

COLIN

I already have to explain to some chinless inbred politician that we're running on something as old as the goddamn Atari Falcon, now I've got some green little smartarse giving me lip for it too? Well you can take your funny little lines and shove them up-

SAM

Alice told me to say it! Okay? It was Alice. I have literally no context for this. At all.

COLIN

Oh.

SAM

I said you seemed kinda scary and I didn't know how to say hi, so she said to ask about the app.

COLIN

'Course she did. Well, tell Alice it was funny. Yeah.

COLIN makes a noise that is probably meant to be a laugh.

Awkward beat.

COLIN CONT.

Scary?

SAM

A bit, yeah.

COLIN

Huh.

SAM

So like, how *is* it going?

Beat.

COLIN

Mate, I've been banging my head against this system for almost two years and I've got nothing beyond a bug list as long my arm.

SAM

So not great then?

COLIN

'Bout a year ago I figured out it was written with some kind of propriety German source code, so you know what I did?

SAM

What?

COLIN

I learned German. But do you think it helped? At all?

SAM

Nein?

COLIN

Nein.

SAM

Well... At least it'll help if you ever go to Germany?

Beat.

COLIN
Why would going to Germany help?

SAM
I don't- no I meant like, as a
Holiday?

COLIN
A holiday?

SAM
Yeah, like time off? I hear they
have good... sausages?

COLIN
I'm a vegetarian.

SAM
Right.

Awkward Pause. Sam finishes preparing his coffee.

SAM CONT.
Well, this was great an' all but I
should get back to it.

COLIN
Sure thing. Good luck mate.

SAM starts to leave.

COLIN
Tell Alice I laughed.

SAM
...sure.

7. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE- NIGHT, RAINING - (COMPUTER).

SAM gently taps on the keyboard occasionally giving a
perturbed mutter as he tries to input scores.

GWEN
You met Colin, then?

SAM

Yeah. He's, uh...

GWEN

A grumpy weirdo?

SAM

I don't know. I think he's having a bad night.

GWEN

Then it's a night that's lasted since he got here. I'd ignore him. Alice is the only one he tolerates. God knows why.

SAM

Right.

Pause. Some more typing.

GWEN

So you and Alice go back?

SAM

Yeah, we knew each other at uni.

GWEN

That how she tricked you into working here?

SAM

To be fair, she did say the office vibes were- uh- "a bit bleak".

GWEN

That's one way to put it, I guess. So how did you end up here? You don't seem like the usual hopeless wasters Lena hires.

SAM

Heh. Maybe I'm just better at hiding it?

GWEN

You know how to work a keyboard, so you're already better than most of them.

SAM

Ha.

Pause. More typing.

GWEN

So what is it then?

SAM

Hmm?

GWEN

The awful, terrible thing that
landed you here?

SAM

Does it have to be awful and
terrible?

GWEN

Usually.

SAM

Maybe I just like creepy
monotonous data entry instead of
sleeping at home?

GWEN

Maybe.

Beat.

SAM

Honestly? I'm just trying to get
back on my feet. You?

Beat.

GWEN

None of your business.

SAM

Now hang on-

He hits a key and CHESTER's voice starts to speak from
the computer.

CHESTER
(computer)

Forums.lostcityurbex.com
Board index. Spelunking. Sites.
New topic: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Sunday April 10.
2022. 3:31pm

SAM
(speaking over)
Eurgh never mind. Got another
talking one...

8. CYBERSPACE

CHESTER (computer)
Anyone know what the deal is with
the Magnus Institute? Recently
moved back to Manchester and I've
been keen to keep up my
spelunking, so was looking at the
lists here of good sites to check
out.

There's some great ones one there
(I have got to check out the old
Hippodrome at some point!), but
I'm a bit confused about the
Magnus Institute. It's listed
under "cleared", but there's no
pictures or info. I get that it's
useful to have a way of saying a
place has been explored to death,
but usually when that's the case
there's at least a few photos
that can be found online. Is it
worth me checking out? It's only
a half hour from me, but I don't
want to bother if it's genuinely a
solved site and there's nothing
there worth seeing.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By BadGrav31 on Sunday April 10
2022 4:51pm

Not sure. I don't think ArcherK
has updated those lists in a

while. Don't remember it, though.
I say go for it - if there aren't
any pictures about, seems like a
good reason to see for yourself.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By ArcherK on Monday April 11 2022
1:27am

I do update them when people send
me through stuff, but it doesn't
happen all that often. I'm mainly
just adding stuff to Devan's old
lists from when he left. I don't
know why he put the Magnus
Institute on the Cleared list.
Never really thought about it.
Maybe it's been a self-fulfilling
thing, and no one's been checking
it out because it was put on there
by accident.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Monday April 11
2022 12:39pm

Thanks guys - think I might check
it out after all!

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By ArcherK on Monday April 11 2022
11:13pm

Awesome! Look forward to reading
the report!

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Wednesday April 20
2022 12:10am

Just got back. Definitely not
cleared. Really weird place. Kinda
cool. But. Really weird. Full
report tomorrow.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins

**By FlowersUnderground on Friday
April 22 2022 4:07pm**

Any news on this? Really keen to see some pictures.

**Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Friday April 22
2022 6:33pm**

Sorry, yeah, that's the problem. Having a really tough time actually uploading any of the pictures I took. Plus not been feeling super well. Forgot how weirdly paranoid I can get after spelunking. But yeah, the building's an odd one. Looks like it hasn't been touched since the fire, and that was, what, 20 years ago? Structure itself is in pretty good shape - a lot of damage and scorching, plus the third floor is pretty much gone, but the rest of the building is safe enough. There was one spot where my foot went through the floor, but tbh that was mostly me being careless.

It's got a really cool vibe, though. Like, if you'd told me it was a Victorian asylum or something before the fire I reckon I'd have believed you. Lost of austere old furnishings that are still in decent nick, and a bunch of offices like little cells. Kept getting this sense like doors were going to slam shut and lock behind me, even though half the frames didn't even have actual doors left in them.

Big surprise was no old papers. I mean, they'd be mulch by now, obviously, but all the old filing cabinets were still rusting in

place, and there was clearly what used to be a massive library or archive or something in the first basement layer. Was really expecting a bunch of paper pulp, but there wasn't really any. Maybe that's why it was listed as "cleared"?

Also, I don't know how to describe it really, but there was a bunch of old graffiti. I don't mean tags or anything, I didn't see any tags at all, actually, and it wasn't your standard "YOUR SOUL IS FORFEIT" spooky ruins graffiti, it was like... symbols and stuff and some pretty suspicious stains on some floors. I don't really know occult or whatever, but I dunno. Felt legit in a way most of it doesn't. I know a few of you do graff stuff, so I wouldn't mind picking your brains about it later.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By BadGrav31 on Saturday April 23 2022 11:28am

Quote: I know a few of you do graff stuff...

While I can neither confirm nor deny my involvement in the tagging of freight cars near Brighton, I wouldn't mind getting a look at it.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Saturday April 23 2022 12:17pm

The photos from the spelunk seem properly gone, but I did find an old wooden thing with a bunch of similar symbols on. Some kinda empty box, not really sure what

for, though. Gonna see if I can get the light right for a decent pic.

Edit: No dice, I'm afraid. Must be something up with my phone camera. Really not helping the whole paranoia thing either. Anyone know anything about photographic distortion? Gonna see if I can borrow my dad's SLR tomorrow.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By ArcherK on Saturday April 23 2022 2:24pm

Quote: I did find an old wooden thing..

Just to be clear, theft from explorations is not endorsed by this site, so I trust you were simply remembering something you saw, and not admitting to taking souvenirs.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Saturday April 23 2022 5:21pm

Sorry. I know the rules. I'm going to go put it back, ok? So you can call off the dogs. I don't need anonymous DMs calling me a thief or threatening me. I can dox people too, you know. It's just a hobby, a bit of fun. People don't need to get all bent out of shape about it.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By ArcherK on Saturday April 23 2022 6:01pm

Quote: I don't need any more anonymous DMs...

I don't know where this aggression is coming from RedCanary, but to be clear, this forum does not

allow for direct messages to be sent anonymously, and no one is threatening to dox anyone. This is your formal warning.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By BadGrav31 on Friday April 29
2022 1:19pm

Still waiting on pics of that graffiti, if you've got them, RedCanary.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By RedCanary on Saturday April 30
2022 2:01am

[Image removed by moderator]
Canaries should stay above ground.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By FlowersUnderground on Friday
April 22 2022 4:07pm

Gross! Can we get some Mod action over here?

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By BadGrav31 on Saturday April 30
2022 3:11am

What the hell is that? Are those eyes? Are you alright?

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins
By ArcherK on Saturday April 30
2022 7:33am

RedCanary, you have been warned, our terms forbid posting explicit images including gore. I'm sorry it's come to this, but you brought it on yourself.

[RedCanary has been temporarily banned]

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins

By FlowersUnderground on Friday

April 22 2022 4:07pm

Quote: [RedCanary has been temporarily banned]

Shame. Good job mods.

Re: Magnus Institute Ruins

By BadGrav31 on Monday May 09 2022

7:07pm

Any more word on this? Is canary still banned? Kinda worried about them after those pics.

[Thread locked by moderator]

9. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE- NIGHT, RAINING - (COMPUTER).

Sam sits there still, obviously shaken. Gwen stops typing.

GWEN

Sam? You ok?

SAM

Uh - yeah.

GWEN

Look, it doesn't matter to me but if you're going to stick it out here you're going to need a stronger stomach.

SAM

What? Oh no, I'm fine it just threw me. Have you ever heard of the Magnus Institute?

GWEN

Like from the case? No. Why?

SAM

Nothing. Just a bit of a blast from the past, is all.

ALICE approaches.

ALICE

How we doing over here? Clear your cases yet?

SAM

Not quite. I had another talker.

ALICE

I heard. Sounds like you met Chester.

GWEN

Must you name them?

ALICE

I don't name them. The universe names them. Through me.

GWEN

It's a bad name.

ALICE

So's Gwendolyn. Anyway, it's your first night, so I'm sure Lena will let you catch up tomorrow.

GWEN

Because Lena is so very understanding.

SAM

No it's fine, I can probably push on.

Beat.

ALICE

Alright. You are looking a little pale though, so don't overdo it. We're not really monitored with breaks, so if you need to step away after a bad one, that's fine. Just don't fall too far behind or anything.

SAM

Sure.

ALICE

Ping me when you're done. I'll
have a pint waiting.

SAM

At six thirty in the morning?

ALICE

I'll send you the address.

10. INT. A QUIET PUB- MORNING, LIGHT RAIN - (ALICE'S
PHONE).

ALICE plonks a beer down in front of SAM.

ALICE

To the first day of the rest of
your nights!

SAM

(exhausted)

Cheers.

ALICE

Was it really that bad?

SAM

No worse than you warned me.
Although setting me up like that
with the IT guy was-

ALICE

Hilarious, I know. It's win-win -
you get a job, I get a fresh
victim. It's all in your contract.

SAM

Don't remember signing that
particular bit of the paperwork.

ALICE

Gotta read the fine print, kiddo.

Sam takes a sip of his drink.

SAM

I didn't even know pubs opened
this early.

ALICE

Six am to nine am. It's mostly for market traders who set up in the wee hours but there are a few of us nightwalkers who frequent. Cosy, innit?

SAM

It's not bad.

Another tired sip.

SAM

Thanks, by the way.

ALICE

It's fine, next one's on you though.

SAM

No, I mean for the job. I don't know if I've actually said it. Thanks for this.

ALICE

Don't worry about it. It's not really the sort of job I'd expect to be thanked for hooking you up with.

SAM

It's something to focus on. And I need that right now.

ALICE

And it's not too awkward working with an ex?

SAM

Only if she won't stop bullying me.

ALICE

Ah. Guess it'll always be awkward then..

SAM snorts goodnaturedly.

Beat. They drink.

SAM

Alice...

ALICE

Yeah?

SAM

These cases...

ALICE

(Sighing)

Yeah.

SAM

Do you- Is there- What's up with them? You think they're real?

Beat. Alice exhales.

ALICE

I don't see how they could be? Mostly I try not to think of them like that, like, things that might or might not have really happened. They're just words on the screen.

SAM

I've no real idea what the OIAR even is.

ALICE

You and everyone else. I've checked and there's not really much info on it. My current working theory is that maybe it got set up in the 70s, back when everyone was off their tits on LSD and giving ghost-hunters massive grants to wave crystals in graveyards. I reckon at some point they must have put together a small government department to, like, oversee the spending and monitor this stuff and no-one's noticed it's still going.

SAM

Makes sense.

ALICE

As long as you don't pay too much attention.

Beat.

ALICE CONT.

Try not to dwell on it. Besides, it's worth the paycheck, right?

SAM

Yeah.

ALICE

And a Civil Service pension...

SAM

True. I could be cleaning toilets.

ALICE

You wish. Cleaning toilets actually helps people. Besides, you wouldn't last a night. Stick with scoring horrors until you hit the gym and fix your noodle arms.

SAM

Noodle arms?

ALICE

Just a pair of waggling vermicellis. Surprised you can lift that pint.

SAM

Well thank goodness you helped me get this night job to help with my health.

ALICE

(singsong)

What can I say? I'm the patron saint of cute wimps.

SAM raises his glass.

SAM

To new beginnings.

ALICE
With old friends.

They clink their glasses together.

The recording cuts off abruptly.

10. INT. OIAR MAIN OFFICE. MORNING. RAINING (COMPUTER)

The office is quiet as the computer boots up again. Someone is searching through desks. There is a slightly frenzied desperation to it.

There is a pause, as the figure spots the activated terminal. They move through the office towards it. The voice reveals it to be COLIN.

COLIN
(slightly manic)
You're not as clever as you think
you are. You think you've got us
all fooled, that no-one knows
you're listening, But I do. I
know. I'm going to find you and
then...

COLIN turns the computer off.