

## **MAG – “Season 5 Q&A, Part 3” (Patreon Edition)**

### **Content Warnings**

- Spoilers for show to date
- Innuendo
- Explicit language
- Discussions of: thalassophobia, claustrophobia, canon-typical apocalypse & trauma, food, religion, death (inc mass death), murder
- Mentions of: rot, addiction & mind control, violence, homelessness, explosions, zombies

*Transcriber’s note: For ease of reading, most small speech noises, stumbled phrases and the frequent laughs/chuckles have been omitted from this text.*

**ALEX**

Hello, listener. And welcome to Q & A 3. The year is 6057. All is death.

**JONNY**

Except for me! Alex won’t let me die!

**ALEX**

Bitterness. Wasteland. And Jonny. As Jonny stays—

**JONNY**

To answer more questions.

**ALEX**

—answering Q & As, in a dark and bitter future of only Q & As. In the future, there are only questions and Jonny has all the answers. Hello.

**JONNY**

Hello.

**ALEX**

Are you ready for some more Q & As, Jonny?

**JONNY**

No.

**ALEX**

Cool. So I'm going to go ahead and just jump straight in then.

**JONNY**

Yep. Great. Let's do it.

**ALEX**

I got a question here— Oh, as always, we're not going to get through all of them because there's too many. Jonny will burn out like a very, very tiny stick of dynamite.

**JONNY**

Like a guttering star, flickering it's last and then just supernova-ing, taking out most of Walthamstow.

**ALEX**

Well, thankfully we'll have a bit of warning as you slowly expand to fill the entire solar system. We'll at least know that's coming.

First question is from Lauren: How did your own relationship to fear change over the course of the show?

**JONNY**

I think it deepened in some ways, like, it was quite an interesting one, because right from the start creating the Entities was, in many ways, the closest examination of fear and my own fear that I had to do in the whole journey. It was very sort of front-loaded in that sense, because I really had to, sort of, dig down and be like, ‘Well, what am I afraid of? And what lines would I draw between them? And what fears are like just mine and what fears do I feel can be expanded into a slightly more sort of primal space.’

I think as I went on my relationship to horror changed more than my relationship to actually fear, and how I feel horror, and the horror that I write, interacts with fear in both, sort of, an entertainment and an exploratory sort of sense. Like I think the later series are a lot more exploring certain ideas within fear. Whereas the earlier ones are much more like, ‘Hey, here's that scary thing. Pretty scary, right?’

**ALEX**

Mine's real simple. I'd love to say it did; it didn't really. When you make the machine, it just turns into a bunch of nuts and bolts. I learned the word ‘thalassophobia’. There was a word for a thing that I thought was just a me thing. But that's about it, I'm afraid. Sorry for an underwhelming answer there.

**JONNY**

Did you were the only one who was afraid of the sea?

**ALEX**

No, no, no, no, no. But I didn't have an explanation, and I'd never managed to explain it to anyone. The issue of – I'm a very, very strong swimmer, like used to lifeguard and stuff like that, yet I still don't like open sea because of the depth.

**JONNY**

Sorry. I don't know why that tickles me. You're like, 'Oh yeah, no, I'm scared of the ocean. I'm a very strong swimmer.' Like, it's great.

**ALEX**

Well, you've gotta be a strong swimmer otherwise how are you going to conquer the ocean, Jonny? No, open water weirds me out because there is clearly a whale the size of, you know, an oil tanker down there. But I never managed to explain it in a word before. And there you go. Thalassophobia, that's it for me, I'm afraid.

I'm going to bounce, then to a question from Zoombeam: Did you ever consider any of the other Fears as the patron for the Archivist when planning the whole story?

**JONNY**

No... just because the idea of what The Eye was did evolve and change slightly, but because of the nature of the podcast, like, it was always going to be a watching Fear or a listening Fear. Like, the whole idea of the collecting stories was so tied up in the idea of observation and recording that it was always going to have to be an Entity in that vein. And so, yeah, while details about The Eye kinda changed and got a little bit refined over the course of planning and early Season 1, it was always going to be The Eye, like, the others wouldn't have worked on a metatextual level.

**ALEX**

The only thing that really bounced around a little bit was how much The Web was interested in him. But even then it was more just a case of like, ‘Is it a four or six in terms of how hard you push that?’ and that's not really the same thing as the question.

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

Okay then, in that case, question from DC: I know that time was broken during the apocalypse, but did either of you have a sense of how long you thought the apocalypse actually lasted for?

**JONNY**

In my mind, probably about six months.

**ALEX**

Interesting... that's a little longer than mine, but yeah.

**JONNY**

I did some Google Mapping to figure out how long it would actually take to walk from John O'Groats down to London. John O'Groats being the most northerly point of Scotland. And like the conclusion I came to was, if you were walking at, like, a normal pace, rather than, like, absolutely booking it—

**ALEX**

And not along highways and stuff.

**JONNY**

Yeah. It would be a few months. With breaks and all that sort of stuff, to my mind... yeah, about six months probably.

**ALEX**

I think some of it as well is, it depends on versions of the story. There was a version of the story where we had a mid-season break where they chilled out at Salesa's for a bit longer I think. So as a result that would have extended and shortened it. I always kind of had it in my head around the four month mark, but yeah.

**JONNY**

But you're absolutely right that time doesn't really work during the apocalypse period, so that's very much a ballpark figure.

**ALEX**

So the answer is somewhere between one hour and a billion years.

**JONNY**

I mean, yeah.

**ALEX**

Next question is Drowsy Salamander: Jonny, *The Magnus Archives* has a huge amount of unique minor characters. Did you find it difficult balancing all of them and ensuring that the audience knew what their deal was while only having a limited amount of episodes?

**JONNY**

Yes.

It is one of those things where a lot of the early episodes act as, in some ways, auditions for the rogue's gallery.

**ALEX**

That's a good way of putting it.

**JONNY**

And weirdly a lot of it, when I say 'auditions', is not really for the audience, but for **me**, in the sense of, is this a character that lodges well enough in my own mind, and hangs around and, like, just lingers and drops some little things. It's like, 'Hey, this is something new you can do with me.' And if that happens, then I'll bring them back. And once they've come back two or three times— Various points I had different spreadsheets of the threads and the different characters, that I'd sort of just drop them in. But yeah, if you listen to some of the Season 1 and Season 2, there's quite a lot of like hinted characters that might or might not have grown into something bigger.

One point I had an idea for, like, a Buried avatar and there was echoes of them in the workhouse episode with Kempthorne and the London Underground episode. But in the end, I just didn't get a strong enough sense of who they were going to be. They never really fully materialised as a character. Like, in universe, they're still there. They still exist.

So yeah, a lot of those early episodes were me seeing which members of the rogues gallery were going to hang around, because they tended to be the ones that I did find myself able to keep track of.

**ALEX**

Next question's from a lot of people: Were there any horror domains that didn't make the final cut?

I have a few, but that's because I was just keeping them in reserve, in case at some point you turned up and went 'Alex I've got nothing!' and it didn't happen. So...

**JONNY**

Yeah, I feel like I went through a big list, but enough that none of the discarded ones really stick in my mind. Like, I know that the ladder in 198 was actually a replacement for another domain that I'd written into the plan and then realised didn't particularly excite me, so I swapped it out for a big ladder. But because it didn't particularly excite me, I've completely blanked on what it actually was.

**ALEX**

That scans though, doesn't it? I mean, ultimately when everyone's, like, 'Are there any things that didn't make the final cut?', 90% of the time as well the answer will be, 'Well, yes. And it's hard to explain and that's why it didn't make the final cut.'

Like 'What if, like, inside a shark' and things. It's like the reason that it doesn't make a good answer is because it never came together as an idea in the first place. If it did, it would be there.

**JONNY**

I had some idea of, like, a weird rusted old clock tower, I think.

**ALEX**

Oh, that would have been nice. Aesthetically.



**JONNY**

Yeah. Well, the thing is, a lot of my discarded ideas were really nice aesthetically, but I couldn't get to work thematically.

**ALEX**

Yeah, isn't that always the way? I'm the same where, like, aesthetically that will work, but when you try and dig into the meat and bones of it, it's just you're trapped in a weird space and that's pretty much the entire thing.

**JONNY**

Yeah. When we were planning out Season 5, there were quite a few of those because I was like, 'Oh, that sounds like a really interesting, like, horror environment.' But as soon as I started writing it and I was like, 'Oh, these are all about things', I'd be going back to the list and being like, 'Well, I have no idea what this one's about.'

**ALEX**

There was one that's always interested me, which is the shrinking endless library. You know, the endless library is a trope.

**JONNY**

Yes.

**ALEX**

And it's like, if you keep walking long enough, you get back to the middle of the library? That, except, so the person knows it's an endless library. And then that library is shrinking. So it's endless and shrinking as a combination. I find that very, very interesting, but again, ultimately it's 'person trapped in room'.

Similarly, I think there's stuff to be done in, you know those big, massive, old Victorian orangeariums? Orangeums? [NOTE: he means 'orangeries']

**JONNY**

I mean, greenhouses does work.

**ALEX**

Unnecessarily massive greenhouse.

**JONNY**

Ah, with, like, gross plants and, like, getting everything rotting and like, yeah.

**ALEX**

Or you can do the thing where it's like, you know, 'I'm trapped in a space that's bad'. It's not got that meat.

**JONNY**

Great little hellscapes, but I've no idea what I'd do with them thematically.

**ALEX**

Good question, though. Next one is from Creeper, similar idea: Were there any ideas for Fear names or Entities that were scrapped?

**JONNY**

Are we talking avatars or Entities?

**ALEX**

Well, I think we've done avatars already and I think we've done the Fears already, so I figured monsters, beasties, let's take it that way.

**JONNY**

Oh, loads! Again, none that super stick in my mind, but I'm always coming up with monsters. Love a good monster. And also, I think a lot of the avatars actually started out to me much more as monsters, and then gradually developed into characters because that is how longform storytelling works. Like, when you give it a name, you make it a character.

I've talked about it before, like, the difference between the slender man and Slenderman, one is a monster and the other is a character. But none that really stick in my mind or at least none that stick in my mind that I haven't ended up using somewhere else.

**ALEX**

I'm the same. There's quite a lot of monsters in it is the thing. Like, there is quite a lot.

**JONNY**

Yeah. There are two sorts of monsters that might've ended up in *Magnus* and didn't. The first sort is well, they're not actually that great, bit half-baked, and thus I have forgotten them or they were really compelling and thus I have put them in something else.

**ALEX**

One, I've got one! I seem to have a weird naval bent recently – a sapient battleship.

**JONNY**

As a kid, I had, like, a little tiny toy battleship with like a shark face on the front.

**ALEX**

See, there you go. That, but big. Job done.

**JONNY**

I like, for instance, the— from *Thirteen Storeys*, my novel currently out at all good bookshops—

**ALEX**

Ah, very smoothly done.

**JONNY**

The thing in the pipes was something at one point I considered for *Magnus*, but, like, there wasn't a good place to put it. That's what I mean, when I say, like, a lot of the ones that stuck with me ended up in other projects.

**ALEX**

Yeah, that scans. Next question's from Blues: There has been a lot of talk about how much agency John had during the series. How much was he able to decide for himself in the end?

**JONNY**

In your real life, how much are you able to actually decide? What you have asked there is fundamentally one of the core questions of the series. Where you land is very much to do with your own reaction to the text. Sorry to be a bit, like, '[INCOHERENT MUMBLING]'.

I mean, cos the question is his decisions are all his decisions. He is not at any point being actively mind-controlled, but at the same time, his decisions are taking place within an extremely oppressive framework. His options are deeply limited, and

usually an array of different, bad things. And while he's not technically being mind-controlled, he does have externally-influenced desires and pulls.

You know, because of my background, my parallel to me is always of addiction. You know? Your addiction isn't in *control* of you but it is still a factor. It is still an external pull on you. So how much you see John as having agency, how much you see as his actions being a hundred percent his own responsibility, how much is the situation he's in? That is very much to me, something that is a personal response to the text. Because fundamentally that's not a question that has an answer. That's a question the text is asking.

### **ALEX**

Yeah, pretty much. And I know that there'll be some people who are like, 'No, but tell me the answer.' And it's like, 'It doesn't work like that. Sorry.'

I warned people there would be some answers that are just, that's a question that is a question, yes.

### **JONNY**

It is one of those things where a lot of the time you'll be asked questions and you're like, 'Yes, you have successfully identified the question that the text is asking. But if I had an answer, I wouldn't have asked the question over the course of five seasons in a podcast.'

### **ALEX**

Dear blues, whoever asked this question, I would suggest if you have not already, do an examination of chaos theory versus hardcore determinism. That will be a fun, deep dive but I suspect you've already done that.

**JONNY**

But also, like, fiction is not to me about providing answers or pointing you towards particular philosophical research. Like, I think there is a lot of value in sitting with questions that don't really have answers and just, you know, having fiction and stories that explore these spaces that fundamentally you can't say for certain one way or the other.

**ALEX**

Next question's from Flamango: Which part of the show do you think is most misunderstood? And could you explain it now?

I have one I could start with. So this is one that comes up a lot, and it isn't necessarily a *Magnus*-specific thing, but it comes up all the time which is: Podcasts **aren't** novels.

**JONNY**

Mmm.

**ALEX**

And people consume long-form audio drama very often like it is a novel, and you will get a lot of, 'Well, why didn't you redraft this? Why did you do that?' And a lot of the time, it's like, 'Well, you have to remember in a lot of ways, what effectively you're listening to is draft one.'

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

And, like, in a novel it's, like, 'Of course I'd go back and I'd tighten this. I'd change that. Oh, that arc didn't go anywhere. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.' But one of the things that I keep having to say more and more, especially on anything that has an improvisational bent, which doubles down on that, is: This is effectively you're listening to a hot off the press, very first draft of a thing.

So a lot of the time it'd be like, 'Ah, you know, for certain shows, this didn't land how I'd have thought you'd have wanted it to', and you'll get the writer going, 'You are correct.' That's not because they're bad, it's because it's a completely different medium. It doesn't work like that. And I think that that to me is probably one of the things that I think is most misunderstood, is people conflating 'having a plan for 200 episodes' as 'that was the first draft written and we have then gone back and redrafted and revised', and it doesn't work like that. It couldn't, it's impossible. It's too dense.

**JONNY**

I've previously used the analogy of just trying to direct a boulder as it's rolling downhill.

**ALEX**

And that's exactly what it's like. And yeah, I think that's probably the thing that people most either misunderstand or underestimate as a factor.

**JONNY**

And on top of that, you have the thing where you need to try and balance it so that the pacing works, both as a week-to-week thing—

**ALEX**

And a binge. Yeah.

**JONNY**

And I think it's interesting that the reaction to 198, it was broadly positive, but quite a few people were like, 'Why are you having a filler episode two before the finale?'

And it's like, well, a) it's not fully a filler episode. It's not actually a filler episode, it's doing a lot of specific emotional work with the characters. But also because pacing-wise, the big reveal and the big confrontation in 197 needs a beat to rest afterwards before going into the final two episodes.

And the thing is the week-on-week listeners already had that. The week-on-week listeners had a whole week to digest it and mull it over and decompress. So, when they come back for the next one, they're like, 'Oh okay. So we're just having this now.' But the thing is, you've still got to have that episode for the pacing to work.

**ALEX**

Yeah.

**JONNY**

For any other context, other than the week-on-week live listeners.

**ALEX**

Yeah, it wouldn't land.



### **JONNY**

With a show this size and this scale, stuff gets misunderstood all the time. Like a detail will be overlooked, and people will build huge theories on stuff and I'll – I don't know – stumble across them and be like, 'Oh, actually there was something in, like, episode, like, 16, that completely invalidates all of that. You just obviously didn't catch it.'

I think in a wider scope, a lot of it actually does kind of reflect on the previous question. I think the biggest misunderstanding is that *The Magnus Archives* and, in a lot of cases fiction more generally, is able or looking to provide concrete answers or specific moral lessons.

What is the moral of *The Magnus Archives*? I mean, there isn't one. There are a lot of questions, a lot of themes, a lot of subjects and thoughts that I'm keen to explore, but in a lot of cases, it's like, well, if I had an answer for these questions, I would be writing a philosophical treatise, not a horror podcast that is trying to grapple with these subjects.

### **ALEX**

The Jonathan Manifesto.

### **JONNY**

I mean, to a certain degree, a lot of these things are ambiguous because I don't have answers in myself to them. There's a reason that there are so many arguments between characters. It's because often I don't know what the answer is.

**ALEX**

Next question, a bit more specific, is from basically everyone: Could you talk some more about Agnes Montague and her connection to Gertrude? Were you intending to do more with her character?

**JONNY**

“Intending” is a tricky word, in this sense, because the short answer is no.

Again, it sort of speaks to this first draft thing, that you mentioned. Agnes Montague is very much a character that I think if I did a second draft of *The Magnus Archives* as a whole— Which I'm not going to do!

**ALEX**

Yeah. Don't lay that seed, Jonny, please don't open that door.

**JONNY**

Just to be clear, I'm not going to do that!

But if it was something that had been wholly written and then gone over, I think Agnes is a character I would have done something a bit more with.

**ALEX**

Well you've said it in a previous Q & A, she was meant to be, you know, the messiah-in-absentia.

**JONNY**

Yeah, exactly.

**ALEX**

It wasn't received as such. And so the benefit of the redraft would have been, you can tweak it a bit.

**JONNY**

It was received as such, but I think, in retrospect, it was not a *satisfying* character study in that way.

And I think, yeah, she is a character that could have had more done with her, especially that connection with Gertrude, which is something that, to be honest, I don't know if it's something I ever fully figured out enough to hang any significant plot on it.

**ALEX**

We always discussed it as an allusion, not a thing that had to hold up the whole series or anything like that.

**JONNY**

Yeah. It was one of those things that, like, I think if I'd gotten a better sense of it earlier in the series, it might have taken greater prominence, but as it was I don't know if I ever properly figured it out more than an aspect of Gertrude and, like, drawing this sort of connection and parallel, but not really paying off on it, I guess.

**ALEX**

Next question is from, again, a bunch of people unsurprisingly: There's been a lot of debates on social media about the different options discussed in 199. Which option would you *personally* have gone for or preferred in that situation?

**JONNY**

I mean, the morally correct decision... -ish, in as much as there is one, is to, like, contain the Fears.

**ALEX**

You are incorrect! You have no guarantee of multiple worlds beyond the statement of a single person. Known fact versus potential fact; in that risk assessment, you let them go.

**JONNY**

The thing is, it is that choice about, like, villain or victim and, like, I think that is the dichotomy that the whole series is ultimately concerned with. By the end of Season 5, literally every character in the series has been rendered either villain or victim. And of the early ones it's looking at the interplay, where does the crossover come? Where's— What's the overlap? How do you draw up these categories in a system which hurts people, but also gives them the opportunity to offset that pain onto others and, like, this relationship with fear?

And so that is all very distilled into this final choice. In many ways it's one where it's like, 'Yeah, okay. But if you do strip off all nuance, what do you do?' I think most people would choose the villain side rather than the victim side in this dichotomy. But I mean, that may just be an indication of my own cowardice or my view of people in general.

**ALEX**

I do very enjoy our new dynamic:

<Question?>

Jonny: <Carefully considered a nuanced answer that considers all angles>

Alex: <Hot take! Next question!>

**JONNY**

Well, I mean, to be honest, a lot of these are things that I myself have been mulling over for however long. And so someone's like: '<Question?>' I'm like, 'Okay, here is me just vomiting up the answer that's been, sort of, churning over inside me for however many months.'

**ALEX**

This one is a little less involved, little easier to answer, I think. From Sazandorable: What are your best memories related to the fanbase or favourite fandom moment or anecdote?

**JONNY**

They're all from early seasons. Once the fandom blew up to a certain size, I had no real way to constructively engage. I really enjoyed back when there was the forum. Do you remember when there was a forum, Alex?

**ALEX**

Oh yeah. I was so proud of my, like, 1980s-esque forum. It was so very retro. I made that.

**JONNY**

There were maybe, like, a couple of hundred people at most, and a few of them posted up observations about, like, some stuff that didn't add up in Season 1. And so we included those as— like, when Tim is, like, just going through all the ways that the Archivist has screwed up. Those were, like, legitimate things raised.

**ALEX**

Yeah. I remember that.

**JONNY**

I think we may have used some of their, like, actual names. We got their permission and they were like, 'Yeah, great!'

That felt like a really fun back and forth between, what was at that point, a very small podcast and, like, a fun little fanbase. Also like weirdly, the strangest thing about the expansion of the fanbase is how almost homogenous it makes certain things. I'll be honest, I miss the fanart of the early days.

**ALEX**

Oh yeah. Where everyone was still just— yeah.

**JONNY**

Yeah. Because, like, you used to get so many variant, different designs in the early days. Like, every character, every time you saw art of them, they'd look entirely different. And it would be fascinating to see how everybody, sort of, saw these characters. Whereas at this point, because, with a large fanbase, generally people come into something having already seen a bunch of fanart, it's this recursive loop where you end up getting, like, characters kind of settle into standardised looks.

I'll be honest, I really like the sort of broad fandom idea of what the Archivist looks like, what Martin looks like, what Michael and Helen look like. But I miss the days when there was just this huge variety of all sorts of different character interpretations.

**ALEX**

I think I have two. I haven't done much in the way of live events by virtue of just frankly, I'm too busy. Like I tend to end up doing other stuff cos I'm like, 'Would

you rather a new episode or a new show? Or would you rather this one event? So I tend to lean a bit harder to the former.

But it was at an event and I overheard some fans having a conversation. And it was just the takeaway of:

- That's Martin.
- That can't be Martin!
- No, it is. That's Martin.
- He looks wrong!
- What do you mean 'he looks wrong'?
- He's wearing a belt.

and that just stuck with me, as someone caught a glimpse of me-as-person and went:

- That can't— No. Urgh. No. Eww. No.

Again, it was a genuinely lovely experience and everyone was lovely, but that just tickled me. 'That can't be Martin, he's wearing a belt.'

**JONNY**

Martin, famous elasticated pant-wearer.

**ALEX**

Yeah, it was just— it was an interesting little glimpse into someone's specific take.

**JONNY**

Martin only wears dungarees. I don't— like, it's pretty much canon.

### ALEX

The other one was answering my door to a delivery from a very, very bemused looking delivery driver who had, like, enough baked goods to feed a small country. And I had no context for it. And I found out after the fact that, long story short, as a sort of thing, the mods sort of, like, clumped together and just— 'The idea was to send like a cake our way to just be like, 'Ah, here's a cake. Well done.'

However, because there was a little bit of a miscommunication as to, like, stuff, it had spiralled wildly out of control. So there were, like, three full-sized cakes plus, like, 30 scones and an entire thing and an entire thing. And after the fact, it was like, it over-scoped very quickly, but it was just the look on someone's face as they thought I had ordered – to what is clearly a house of just two people – four cakes, 50 scones, blah, blah, blah, to just sit there and eat on my own.

Did. Enjoyed it. Have no regrets, but it was just a very funny moment. And it just ties into that thing I keep saying of, like, the fanbase is terrifyingly organised when it wants to be, just scary sometimes.

A fluffy question though, from basically everyone: What are John and Martin's favourite kind of tea? Also Jonny and Alex?

### JONNY

I mean the sort of tea I drink the most is a normal English Breakfast, quite partial to Twinings if I'm feeling flush, otherwise a solid Yorkshire brew, Yorkshire Tea is good. I really like jasmine green tea, because it reminds me of a restaurant that I used to go and sit in, in uni with just a bunch of friends. And we'd sit there for, like, hours just getting refills of jasmine tea and not really buying anything else. You know, we weren't good customers, but we were there a lot. And so it's got those really nice associations. Also, there is a tea shop in Soho called Yumchaa,



which does a blend of lapsang souchong called Russian Caravan, which I'm very partial to. It's a lot smoky— Like, I didn't like it when I first tried it cos it was very smoky, but I've really, really gotten into it.

Archivist, pass, no idea.

**ALEX**

Oh, you gave me— We've explicitly discussed this before:

- What's John's favourite kind of tea?
- Coffee.

**JONNY**

Oh, yeah, he's a coffee guy.

**ALEX**

John's favourite type of tea is coffee.

I've always assumed that Martin is an English Breakfast tea, kind of guy, but I could be corrected.

**JONNY**

Yeah, I think he likes a variety but broadly speaking, he values the comfort of milky tea.

See, I, on the other hand, deeply and fundamentally hate English Breakfast tea. It is a well-known fact that I—

**JONNY**

Really?

**ALEX**

Well, I started working crazy young and have done a lot of jobs. And when you start young, you almost inevitably end up being the person making the tea for everyone, which means I have spent legitimate years of my life trapped in a kitchen about as wide as my desk, making just hundreds and hundreds of cups of tea. So as a result, that's just gone for me as a thing.

**JONNY**

Yeah, that's fair.

**ALEX**

I'm okay with, like, mint tea and so on. But yeah, it's not really my thing.

**JONNY**

Also, it fascinates me because like, I'd be really curious to know if the person who asked this question is British. Cos I suspect not, just because outside of Britain, like, the question of, like, 'Oh what's your favourite type of tea?' is a thing. Because, like, you know, you will be buying specific sorts of tea, cos it's like a nice special drink. In Britain, it's like, 'What's your favourite type of tea? Tea...?'

**ALEX**

Two sugars.

**JONNY**

Like 'What?'

**ALEX**

Just milk.

**JONNY**

‘A cup of tea, mate, like...’

**ALEX**

Okay. Next one is onto a technical question. This one's from TheThoughtfulNinja: Jonny, do you re-record ‘The Rusty Quill presents *The Magnus Archives*’ beginning sometimes? Or have you used the same one since Season 1?

**JONNY**

I don't remember. Alex, have we used the same one since Season 1?

**ALEX**

We've recorded it three times. We used one in Season 1. I think we then did a better one in Season 2, that saw us over to about Season 4. And then we did one more in Season 4, but bear in mind that Jonny obviously had to record the titles for each one. And because the way we did it, we always got him to read it three or four times per title. So...

**JONNY**

Yeah, like, I've read it many, many times in various scenarios. I have zero idea which of those were used and at what point they were.

**ALEX**

Nice easy one for this one, from many people: What fan reactions to a specific scene, character or episode, whatever, surprised you the most?

**JONNY**

All sorts.

**ALEX**

Why didn't I see people thinking Elias as sexy? I genuinely did not. And it's obvious! Obviously! Didn't clock.

**JONNY**

I sort of saw it in, like, it wasn't as **much** of a surprise. It was very funny to me, to be like, 'Whaaaat, how could people find this sexy?!' Whereas it's like, 'I am aware. He's a smug villain.' There is a proportion of any given audience that finds a smug villain, just like, automatically, boom, they are sexy now. But I didn't anticipate the scope. Like, I didn't anticipate quite what a percentage of the audience it was going to be.

**ALEX**

What, a hundred percent?

**JONNY**

I think it would have only been eighty, but Ben's performance, Ben's natural sexual dynamism pushed it over the edge.

**ALEX**

His podcast musk.

**JONNY**

A lot of fan reactions have surprised me at various points, because of the way, like, fandom works. I always think of it in terms of, like, I'm painting a picture of a pig. You know? Let's go with a pig. Dunno why that's in my head, who can say. And everyone who views it is viewing it through a lens. And everyone's lens is slightly different. Like, bits of the lens are slightly convex, slightly concave, which means everyone sees this picture of a pig with slightly different proportions.

**ALEX**

Love a good monster pig, carry on.

**JONNY**

And then what often happens with fandom, especially with big fandom, is you have groups of people with the same lens, stacking them one on top of each other until the picture is so focused on, like, one or two specific bits that, like, as the person painting the pig, we don't actually know a lot of the time how one line I'm adding is looking to— like, I can probably say, well to just someone who's listening to it for the first time, I'm like, 'Okay, I've added an eyelash.'

Whereas the people focused specifically on one or two other aspects, like—

**ALEX**

'The eye aesthetic has completely shifted!'

**JONNY**

Yeah, no, absolutely. Or people being like, 'Well, why... what are you doing over there? Like, it's all about the snout. You haven't added any lines to the snout for, like, ten minutes' and other people who are just entirely focused on the arse are being like, 'I can't believe anyone would write a podcast entirely about a pig's arse, that's awful' And it's like, 'I guess.'

So, yeah, I dunno. Like, a lot of the fandom reactions have, like, taken me off-guard a bit since it exploded.

**ALEX**

I think there's one other one from me, which is, I had always wanted to have a few sympathetic monsters kicking around the place. Right?

**JONNY**

Mmm.

**ALEX**

I was astonished at how broad a swathe of people immediately attributed sympathy regardless of the presentation of the monster. I don't mean that all monsters, but like, we could present just some horrible 'Rarr, I do nothing but eat faces, rarr'. And then so many people were being like, 'Same hat. You know, big mood. I get it.'

**JONNY**

'Aww, face eating? Yeah. No, absolutely. Let's all, let's all eat some faces.'

**ALEX**

It was fascinating to me to realise just how sympathetic with— Like, there were some monsters that were innocent until proven guilty when their opening line is the equivalent of, 'I do nothing but kill!'. That surprised me.

**JONNY**

I'll be honest, there's a part of me that— I think that the worst monster I've ever created was Doctor David.

**ALEX**

Mmm.

**JONNY**

And I think there was part of that, that was, like, very much thinking of, like, 'Okay, well, what is a monster that people are not going to be able to, like, avoid the fact that they are a monster?'

And it's like, well, physical violence, people can very much react positively to monsters doing physical violence. So it was very much that sort of emotional, psychological sort of violence that I was, like, that I think is something that is going to render this creature truly monstrous.

### **ALEX**

Next question's from Elizabeth Wynn, kind of touches on stuff we've covered before: How did you decide which characters would become regulars? Were they all decided from their introductions? Were there any who were written into future episodes after their first appearances?

### **JONNY**

If they were fun to write and I kept thinking about them after I wrote them the first time, they were probably going to come back. At least that was for Season 1 and 2. By, like, Season 3 and 4, it was very much like we had our basic rogues gallery and we were adding people in, shifting them around, to actually set things up in motion for the last seasons.

### **ALEX**

There was no major character who was introduced either, where we were like, 'Well, I guess you can't be in any further because you didn't work as a character', which is useful.

It was all either 'these are your core characters' or 'these are ones that are fun to keep around'. I don't think there was one that we had to bail on. But that's the problem, is that audition thing that you talk about where you kind of— For Nikola Orsinov, it's not like we had an entire Orsinov thing, to then introduce a single

episode and go, ‘Oh, that didn't work. We have to rewrite all of, you know, all of Season 3 or whatever.’ It didn't really work like that.

**JONNY**

Michael, for instance, then later when Michael died, Helen, the Distortion, became, I think, a bigger character than it was originally conceived of, largely because in Season 2, Alex was like, ‘The Distortion has to turn up. We have to actually meet this monster.’ That actual in-person appearance wasn't in my original Season 2 plan. And like, we actually had a bit of an argument about it, because I was saying like, ‘Alex, if we meet it at this stage, then this monster is going to become, like, a character.’

**ALEX**

Yeah, I did give you that as a rule.

**JONNY**

Which is not, like I say, like this difference between, like, the monster and the character and, like, the naming and all this sort of thing. I was like, ‘It will— It is going to become, like, a character and I'm not sure that's what I want to do with it.’

**ALEX**

Mmm.

**JONNY**

And Alex, you very much like, ‘No, I think it will work best in the narrative as a character and as this foil for John's own journey’ and you were right, you were absolutely right, I think.



**ALEX**

I forgot about that. That is one of the few times where I was, like, pushing on something quite hard in a way that I don't normally do. Yeah, I forgot about that, good point.

Next question is from a bunch of people: Did fan reception, at any point, alter the writing or production of the show itself?

**JONNY**

Not in specific instances. I mean all through, like, right from Season 1, people's, like, responses and feedback and, like, what people liked and didn't like, you take it on board, you know, what characters people like, what themes that they respond to and what episodes just don't really land.

You do take that on board and factor it in. And, like, that does influence the writing. I can't think of any point where there was a fan reaction that made us go, 'Oh, we need to not do this', or 'We need to change this'.

**ALEX**

I can, but it's not a huge one. Reception to 'The Lonely' as a power. That wasn't just an internal shift where we realised, you know, this is something. That was a simultaneous, you and I going, 'Oh, Lonely is a much bigger thing here than we thought it was going to be two years ago, or whatever', at the same time that the fandom did.

**JONNY**

Sure. But to me that felt much more like a, 'Okay. 'The Lonely' touches on some very specific, very real issues regarding, like, depression. And so I need to be a little bit more careful and more conscious about how I'm writing around that rather

than we were going to do a big Lonely episode and then we realised, ‘Oh no, that's bad. Let's— We've got to change that.’

**ALEX**

It's not like everyone went, ‘We like Alasdair’, so we went, ‘Well, I guess you get Alasdair for 50 episodes.’ Yeah, It doesn't really work like that.

**JONNY**

And a lot of this is to do with the rolling boulder. Like, there's actually a very small window of time in which we would both have had a fan reaction to take on board and still had the scope to change the immediately approaching story decisions. And beyond that window, the story decisions are much more like, well, with taking all these different fan reactions on board, as we're deciding on the direction of the story is going to go.

**ALEX**

And don't forget production lag as well. It makes it sound like we listen to how people responded to last week's episode and then we do this week's episode. It's like, that episode was in the can a long, long time ago. By the time you're finding out how people react to something, the ship has already well, well, sailed. The best you could do is predict how people could react, but you can't really do that kind of a course correct. It doesn't work like that.

**JONNY**

It's very much like people are responding very well to this or people aren't really into this. So, like, when the next season comes around, we need to factor that into planning out the arcs.

**ALEX**

That's the closest we got really.

Next question's from Alice: What happened in the rest of the world? Did Paris turn into the Inheritors domain as 134 predicted, for example?

**JONNY**

The apocalypse was global. I don't know enough about most other countries to speak to what the specific domains and fears that they would have. I mean, I think a lot of them would be similar. Like, I think France would probably have their equivalent of a lot of the domains that we travel through in the UK, probably with their own avatars.

**ALEX**

Yeah.

Next question's from Pamplemousse-rose: What are you most proud of in this podcast?

**JONNY**

Finishing it.

**ALEX**

Finishing it.

**JONNY**

I wrote 200 episodes. Basically every week. Well, no, as in— No. I wrote an episode a week for, like, 200 episodes over the course of five years. That's, like, 600,000 words. It was a lot and... I did them all and they just about work.

They function. As a cohesive story, they don't collapse, the ending isn't a complete cop-out. The themes broadly come out as they're intended to. I did it.

**ALEX**

We started with whatever we could, and stuck to it. There's a lot of alternate versions out there where we went, 'Nah, we're not going to be able to start well' and then never got around to starting it, or there's versions where we got bogged down, trying to get things changed in Season 2, or— There's a lot of versions where this never... finished. And I think probably that one.

I mean, god knows, it almost nearly never launched.

**JONNY**

Did it?

**ALEX**

Yeah. Remember I was made homeless, because of all of the stuff. I launched *Magnus* from a temporary hotel room that was being paid for on debt I hoped an insurer would pay. They did.

**JONNY**

Oh god, yeah!

**ALEX**

Yeah. That was a whole... whole thing. So...

**JONNY**

To be fair, some early episodes were recorded in James Ross' flat, some were in your asbestos flat before it asbestos-ed.

**ALEX**

I think if you look at the multiverse there's more versions where it didn't work, than it did. So that's the thing I'm proud of.

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

This next one's from Azrael. I think we've mentioned this similar before, but worth readdressing: If Lottie Broomhall could have continued playing Sasha, what would Sasha's arc have been or was her story not yet written?

**JONNY**

Her story wasn't solidly written. Hmm. That's a good question. Cos, like, fundamentally we knew the situation with Lottie by like—

**ALEX**

Very, very early.

**JONNY**

Pretty much by half-way through Season 1. So it was established by the time we were, like, properly planning out Season 2 and beyond. I have a suspicion that if Lottie'd been able to keep going and Sasha had remained as a character and we'd, you know, [MAKES QUICK DEATH SOUND] got rid of Tim—

**ALEX**

As quickly as possible.

**JONNY**

Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I wanted to have the Not!Them take someone at the end.

**ALEX**

So assuming it took Tim instead of Sasha.

**JONNY**

Yeah, I think in Season 2 as it is, the Archivist is very much the paranoia and the investigation and Tim is dealing with his trauma. I think the theoretical ‘Sasha Season 2’, I think Sasha would have been a lot more involved with the investigation side of things. And it probably would have doubled down a bit on the Archivist’s paranoia, because we had Sasha as a character to do a bit more of the digging.

**ALEX**

Fan the flames of it.

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

That could have worked.

**JONNY**

That also might have sent the Archivist on a slightly different path.

**ALEX**

I don't necessarily believe that. I think you'd have ended up homing in on more or less the same point.

I think that's what you start out with, and you'd get a little different flavour in Season 3, but I think ultimately Tim and Sasha would have just, kind of, inverted each other's story roles a lot.

**JONNY**

Yeah. I think they would have ended up in the same place. But I think they would've got there very different ways.

**ALEX**

Mmm.

**JONNY**

It probably worked out for the best, in a lot of ways, because I'll be honest, I think that we probably would have ended up killing Sasha at the Season 3 finale, just because, pacing-wise, where that escalation death needs to happen. But I think it ended up in quite a satisfying place with Tim.

**ALEX**

Nah, hot take: Archives would have blown up in... start of Season 2 and then the series would have ended. That's my hot take. That's what would've happened.

**JONNY**

I mean, that would have been a comparatively happy ending.

**ALEX**

I mean, once you start looking at the total scope, I think that's a very happy ending, unfortunately.

**JONNY**

Mmhmm.

**ALEX**

Okay. Next question's from Avatar of the [KISS]: What do you like most about each other's character?

That's easy for me. The Archivist is a bitter sceptic, and so am I, and I can respect that.

**JONNY**

I like that Martin's dead now!

**ALEX**

WHOA!

**JONNY**

Sorry, there's nothing to prove, I just—

**ALEX**

Don't try and do hot takes, that's my thing!

**JONNY**

I just wanted to, like—



**ALEX**

Damn!

**JONNY**

You ever hear a question—

**ALEX**

Wow!

**JONNY**

—and you're like, 'I want to just throw a grenade in response to this question.'

**ALEX**

God!

**JONNY**

No, I think Martin cares about people in a similar way to me. He has a tendency to, sort of, hover and try to do things to make other people's lives easier in a way that is not necessarily always useful or constructive. I see a lot of myself in that part of him.

**ALEX**

Next question is from ricey: Was there any aspect of John and Martin's relationship that was especially important to get right? Or was there any aspect that was especially difficult?

**JONNY**

I wanted them to communicate well, but I also wanted them to be— I mean, fundamentally, I never wanted to lose sight of the fact that they were essentially

having their first date in a global apocalypse, for however long. Nailing that balance between, like, good communication and, like, a broadly healthy relationship, but also representing that stress. And I think I just wanted it to feel real.

**ALEX**

You see that's very interesting to me. Cos I found the Season 5 dynamic quite an easy one to tread. Admittedly, I am a married man in a high stress environment for extended periods.

So it might have—

**JONNY**

Yeah. Like, I'll be honest, I didn't feel that the writing of Season 5 was actually difficult because yeah, actually, a healthy relationship and an incredibly high stress environment is something that I too have been navigating over that year. It certainly was the most important to me, I think.

**ALEX**

Season 4, for me, was the one that was difficult. That was a really fine balancing act of keeping them away from one another, without it being full-blown hostility, without it deteriorating into just pointless pining either way. I think that Season 4 was a more difficult balancing act because there was so little time of the two characters together, it had to work. And then so much of their time apart was being defined by that absence in a way they were both being surprised by and blah, blah, blah.

Like, I think that was probably the most difficult one to write.

**JONNY**

I guess if you've got forty episodes of them being together, any given individual interaction has less pressure on it, is going to be less definitional for the relationship as a whole, cos in Season 4, there were only like a handful of scenes they're in together.

**ALEX**

And if you misplay it then the big reunion is, 'Oh, well that feels kind of, like, harsh or whatever.' I found Season 4, much more difficult to make sure we had it right.

**JONNY**

I think you're right, there.

**ALEX**

The next question's from SophiaSoap: What do you think are the most important things that distinguish tragedies from cautionary tales? And how did you incorporate this into *The Magnus Archives*?

**JONNY**

A cautionary tale is intended to deliver a specific lesson. And honestly, I feel that the majority of lessons simple enough that you can properly deliver them through a story? Those are your childhood lessons, those are your, like, your fairy tales. To me, a tragedy is about people failing.

It's like in your classical sense, it's that core flaw in a character that leads to their ultimate failure. But what is the lesson of *The Magnus Archives*? Don't go to work for the Magnus Institute, but you don't know because, like, the majority of the choices you make in life, you don't have all the information necessary.

**ALEX**

I think it comes down to the fact that a cautionary tale has a right answer.

**JONNY**

Yeah. That is it.

**ALEX**

The cautionary tale, even if you want to go broader with it and consider something like *1984* a cautionary tale. What's that? Don't embrace fascism. You know? I'm oversimplifying, but my point is, is there is a right answer that you're meant to take away from that.

**JONNY**

I don't know if that's even true in a sense, cos like *1984* is a dystopia. Like it is illustrating a bad end, but, like, there's nothing within it that could be easily interpreted as, like, 'And this is how you don't get there.'

**ALEX**

But I'd still say it was a cautionary tale. I'm stretching it a little bit, but: Here's the destination that you want to try to avoid. The right answer is avoid this destination.

**JONNY**

Yeah, no, okay. Fair enough. Fair enough.

**ALEX**

A tragedy is far more personal and inevitable. You can't look at a tragedy and go: You shouldn't do this. I mean, there is an overlap to a degree, but the point is there is, it's like, a tragedy, once the pieces are in play, off it goes. You know what I mean?

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

And a cautionary tale is meant to be a thing where you see it off. And I realise there is some overlap, the whole, like, argument— Let's go real classic with it, you know, *Romeo and Juliet*. You could argue, well, there's a cautionary tale of, you know, don't create these divides between people, blah, blah, blah.

**JONNY**

Cautionary tale is: Don't be teens!

**ALEX**

My point is, I think it comes down to that there is a clearer right answer in a cautionary tale, and god knows the whole point of *Magnus Archives* is there couldn't be. That was something we dictated at the start is, we always wanted 199 to be that big, heavy discussion. And it was really, really important that there was not a right answer for that heavy discussion, because if there was, it ceased to work.

**JONNY**

Yeah. Or rather, it's the sort of thing where, like, I think maybe 30% of the audience absolutely, as soon as they heard the proposition were, like, there is a right answer. And another 30%, as soon as they heard the proposition, absolutely said there is a right answer. And those two 30% had the exact opposite, because, like, a lot of it is to do with your own personal philosophy and how you view the world and value— And like that 40% in the middle that's, like, 'Oh no, this is a, ooh, difficult choice.'

**ALEX**

Then there's that 1% who are like me, who see the trolley problem and go, 'Yes. How **do** you hit **all** the people? Hmmm.'

**JONNY**

I've said it before, like, I don't feel like I have lessons to impart in the cautionary tale sense. And I am much more interested in exploring tragedies and, like, the anatomy of a tragedy. And if through the anatomy of a tragedy, you as an audience can, like, hone in on something and, sort of, see it and say, 'Oh, well, this could have been avoided if X or Y', and, like, take that away as a personal insight. Brilliant. That's something that fiction is very good for, helping you work through your own thoughts on something, help you, sort of, figure out where you stand on different things. But yeah, I'm not interested in writing cautionary tales in the sense of, like, 'And here is the lesson to be taken.'

**ALEX**

Next question then is from Icahbod Stark: Were there any plot points that you didn't originally intend to be in the story that you either thought up late or ended up being happy accidents?

It's quite a tricky one to pick out.

**JONNY**

Yeah, because when does something stop being an accident and start being intentional? In the sense of, like— I'll tell you the exact one: Hill Top Road being the site of the hole, which is almost entirely due to the fact that I could not keep the fucking timeline straight in Season 1.

**ALEX**

Oh yeah, no, good point! That *was* why we decided that.

**JONNY**

I couldn't even keep the names for— like Annie or Anya for the nurse. Just for some reason I lost complete track of all the details surrounding Hill Top Road throughout Season 1.

**ALEX**

So it **had** to be that location in the end.

**JONNY**

We knew that the Fears were going to exit the world. And I knew I wanted to do *something* important with Hill Top Road. But those two being the same thing very much came out of the fact that I was, like, well, obviously there must be some, like, time/dimensional stuff around it because otherwise I've just made a bunch of mistakes.

**ALEX**

I forgot, yeah. I forgot. I forgot. There you go. Yeah. I've got a very clear memory of that and you just being like, 'Oh, there you go. Great.'

**JONNY**

Yeah. But again, like, that became intentional very quickly.

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah.

**JONNY**

It's a tricky one to say exactly where accident stops and intention begins.

**ALEX**

Next question is one that we've definitely answered before. From ro: If you had to voice different characters, who would you want it to be and why?

Elias. It's always fun to be the villain.

**JONNY**

You're right, actually, because then people would lust after him less.

**ALEX**

I would turn that entire audience just off. I would flick that switch. It'd be like, <WHINY DRAWL> 'Hello, I'm Elias.'

**JONNY**

I'd probably have wanted to play Hope alongside Martin.

**ALEX**

I couldn't, I couldn't do that.

**JONNY**

Me and Martin Corcoran—

**ALEX**

I couldn't— No...! You already did—



**JONNY**

Especially, it would work because when we recorded our voices sound so similar.

**ALEX**

Yeah, but you already did that anytime Breekon and Hope were in the studio. It was just Breekon, Hope and then Breekon again.

**JONNY**

That's why it would work so well.

[DESPONDENT ALEX SIGH]

I'd have written them a huge role. They'd have had episodes upon episodes, and we'd have just been having fun, being friends.

**ALEX**

It'd just be bad, bad, like, very British jokes 'til the heat death of the universe. God...

**JONNY**

It would be the best thing.

**ALEX**

Urgh. Next question. Just next question. Jess Alston asks: Which villains or monsters from other horror media do you think could best represent entities in *The Magnus Archives*?

**JONNY**

All the *Hellraiser* cenobites, *The Flesh*, top to bottom. Most of your slashers, like your Michael Myers', your Jasons Vorhees, would be *The Hunt*, probably.

**ALEX**

I think if you look at something like the xenomorphs from *Alien*, *Aliens*, whatever you want to call it, there's an interesting angle there because it hits a few notes.

**JONNY**

Mmhmm.

**ALEX**

It's sequentially, where it's like, oh, if it's facehugging, you're getting a bit more of a *Flesh*-y vibe or a *Corruption* vibe or something; it has an interesting conversion element to it.

**JONNY**

I think your zombies are probably either *Corruption*, *The End*, or if you're going with someone like *Train to Busan*, *The Slaughter*, if you get proper, like, leg it murders zombies.

**ALEX**

Good reference. Yeah. Okay.

**JONNY**

I think the thing is most movie monsters are kind of *Hunt* because, the more I think about it, the *Power* that horror movies are very good at representing, just because of the way filmmaking allows the sense of the chase, the sense of threat, which dovetails very much into *The Hunt*.

Oh, Jigsaw from *Saw* probably Stranger, I'd say.

**ALEX**

I've never considered it before. Would *The Omen* be Stranger, because it's the, sort of, 'kid that knows too much' angle. Like what would *The Omen* be?

**JONNY**

It is tricky because a lot of American horror movies are very, like, Satan-focused or about, like, witches. And like, I always kind of side-stepped the religious stuff in a lot of *Magnus*, largely because the specific sort of religious fears and, like, religious panics and this sort of thing are ones that are difficult to locate within the framework of the Fears.

Cos I mean, honestly, most of them are The Stranger. Most of them are fear of the other, creating an externalised threat.

**ALEX**

Ohhh, okay, in a kinda more broader, abstract sense.

**JONNY**

Or the fear of corruption. I think *The Omen* might actually be a bit Corruption, because I think a lot of satanic panic style films, or horror that's built around, very much sees the Devil and this sort of thing, as a contagion, as a corruption within a society. And I think *The Omen* is actually pretty easy to read in that sense.

**ALEX**

Good call. I hadn't considered that. In that case then, next question, which I remember, and I don't know whether you do, from a bunch of people: Can we

now talk about the idea that would have required re-recording a huge chunk of the whole show?

This was, I believe we were in a conversation with James D'Amato. But the thing that was interesting is, in that conversation, we both had an idea at the same time, in real time conversation, going we could do the thing where we had a character, and I've forgotten which character it was, where we swapped that character out wholesale, go back and change the episodes and just leave the fandom to discover that the character had been changed and never acknowledge it publicly.

**JONNY**

Ohhhh yeah! It was like a Not!Sasha thing, but—

**ALEX**

Yeah, yeah.

**JONNY**

—on a metatextual level.

**ALEX**

It had been a more minor character, but it'd be like, you re-record every single time that Tim was ever mentioned to be a different name and a different actor, and just point blank don't acknowledge it until it becomes part of the text.

**JONNY**

Yeah, I think you maybe oversold it as, like, a thing that was considered.

It was just this very much, like, fun idea that was like, 'Oh, could we?' And then we both very quickly came to the conclusion, no, we couldn't.

**ALEX**

I do remember it and being, like, ‘That would be fun.’ That was what the takeaway was. That would be fun as a creator to do. However, genuinely within about five minutes, I just ran the logistics and went, ‘No, that's like making another season on top of another season.’ It's just, no, I'm not going to do that.

**JONNY**

Yeah. And it was one of those where, like, if it was a character minor enough for the workload to be manageable, no-one was going to notice.

**ALEX**

Yeah, that was the other angle is. We managed to find, I can't remember for the life of me, we managed to find a character it would have worked for. The equivalent of like your Dekker or something like that. But, when we went back and figured out just how many points of interaction there were, even at that level, it just... it falls apart.

Yeah. I'm not doing that. Before people build conspiracy theories, we didn't do that. That isn't a thing that's happened. Don't go looking for it— No, it didn't happen.

We now have, lined up here, a series of quickfire questions. Now, the reason that these are quickfires are, a lot of them, the answer might just be ‘the text is the text’. Okay? So we've gone through and we've picked out ones that I think you should be able to answer.

**JONNY**

Okay.

**ALEX**

But I will apologise now that there were a lot of questions where, if there isn't an answer, a lot of it might be just, well, you're kind of not meant to know, necessarily.

@elleielle: What exactly did the apocalypse survivors do to Simon Fairchild?

**JONNY**

I mean, what do you think they did? They threw him off something high!

**ALEX**

Next question: In Oliver's first statement he mentions an ex-boyfriend named Graham. Is this the same Graham from 'Across the Street' or is it a coincidence?

**JONNY**

Yes.

**ALEX**

Next ques— I know I've got to ask now. "Yes" to which? Or, is that the point?

**JONNY**

Yes, it is the same.

**ALEX**

Right.

**JONNY**

It is actually one of the very first connections I wrote in this thing. I did nothing with it, but it is deliberate.

**ALEX**

Okay. Next question. From a bunch of people: What happened to Monster Pig?  
Did it have its own domain?

**JONNY**

Yeah, sure. Why not.

**ALEX**

A bunch of people: Where is / what happened to Joshua Gillespie?

**JONNY**

I dunno, he was probably fine, like— I don't know!

**ALEX**

That's fine.

**JONNY**

I don't care.

**ALEX**

No, you do, you do. Next question—

**JONNY**

I do care. I do care.

**ALEX**

What did Martin say was his middle name?

**JONNY**

That's the joke! That is the joke! The joke is you don't know! The joke is you never find out!

**ALEX**

Next question. CricketSaysNo says: What was the creature that killed Robert Montauk?

**JONNY**

Oh, that was one of the monsters that I never ended up really doing anything with. It was, like, a Dark-summoned thing. Yeah, killed Robert Montauk, hassled Julia. In the end, I got more interested in the cult that summoned it than the actual creature itself.

I have this sort of vague image of, like, a creature made of darkness that like stagnates water and, like, was very ice cold to the touch, was kind of like a negative space thing, but I never really did much further with it.

**ALEX**

Next question. dilf\_elias asks: What skin care routine did Nikola use on John? And did he stick with it afterwards?

**JONNY**

He probably didn't because it was probably very traumatic to apply any sort of lotion or toner after a month of that. And like, I think it was probably just a very standard cleanser, toner, moisturiser routine. It would have taken a while to get the right products for his skin. Cos I don't think he was going to be very helpful with that.



**ALEX**

Dr Brainbox asks: Is the dog barking in the background of ‘The Sick Village’, Agape from ‘Love Bombing’?

**JONNY**

Yeah, sure. Why not.

**ALEX**

Next question from a bunch: Is Rosie's last name, Zampano, a reference to *House of Leaves*?

**JONNY**

Yes. That one I will say is just, like, I really enjoyed taking characters that were specifically supernaturally investigation-y characters all connected to the Institute, and just giving them the surnames of horror writers or horror characters I like. But in some ways I regretted it because I was never consistent with who I actually did that for and didn't. It was just whenever the fancy took me.

But when I was doing Rosie, I was like, ‘You know what, for old time’s sake, I’m going to throw in a horror reference name.’

**ALEX**

Fair play. Next one is from James: Was there a reason Elias always referred to Basira as “Detective”?

**JONNY**

Sounds good. Literally, it is a trope that I really love when, like, a smug villain says the word “Detective”. It's just something I like.

**ALEX**

kyandicane asks: Was the house in MAG170, Moorland House, the home of the Lukases?

**JONNY**

Yeah, sure. Could be. I mean that wasn't in my mind when I wrote it, but it makes sense.

Actually, wait, no, it doesn't make sense. The locations don't match up, because in 170 they would still have been quite far north and Moorland House, I believe, I located somewhere in the arse of Britain, down the south-east.

**ALEX**

Lulu Solier asks: Where was Toby Carlisle getting all the meat from?

**JONNY**

Meatsend.com.

**ALEX**

Oh no. Don't...

**JONNY**

Meatsend.com.

**ALEX**

Don't give people websites.

**JONNY**

Is that a real website?

**ALEX**

Well, it probably is now!

**JONNY**

Alex quickly google meatsend.com for me.

**ALEX**

I'm not googling that! No way. I'm on a work computer, not a chance.

**JONNY**

Google it!

A lot of it came from the meat dimension and the stuff he mail ordered came from a website that sends you meat. I will call it meatsend.com. If that is a real website, please don't sue us meatsend.com.

**ALEX**

OllyTheCrab asks: What really happened to Michael? Is he dead or just somewhere else?

**JONNY**

The nature of identity in the Distortion is a difficult one. I mean, like, what happened was Michael died in those corridors shortly after he was eaten by the Distortion. Then the Distortion became *a* Michael. Then that Michael died, was torn apart from the inside by the rest of the Distortion. Then the Distortion became Helen, who was also dead as a character. And then the Distortion as a whole died wearing Helen's face.

Sort of, I guess, is one interpretation. Like the questions of identity and existence within the Distortion are ambiguous and like, kind of, deliberately so.

**ALEX**

Next one is from a bunch of people: What was the significance of the Archivist calling Jonathan Fanshawe his “namesake” in ‘Remains to be Seen’?

**JONNY**

What do you mean? They were both called Jonathan.

**ALEX**

Yep.

**JONNY**

That's what “namesake” means. “Namesake” just means someone with the same name as you.

**ALEX**

Okay, onto the last ones. Hila Horizon asks: Was the Admiral happy in his domain?

**JONNY**

Yeah. He loved doing violence. Like all cats.

**ALEX**

From a bunch of people: Is Jurgen Leitner Martin's dad?

**JONNY**

If you want him to be, I guess. Like, I—

**ALEX**

I didn't have that in mind, but that doesn't mean anything.

**JONNY**

I've never thought of that as a connection. So, if you figured you've cracked a secret, sorry, but if it makes sense, like if you've constructed a big theory where it makes sense then, yeah, I guess it makes sense.

**ALEX**

Last one, Ian Lynam, the most important question arguably: Did Martin's poems survive the blast—

**JONNY**

No.

**ALEX**

—at the Archives?

**JONNY**

No. None of them. Destroyed. Utterly wiped out.

**ALEX**

So, that's your quickfire done. I've only got the last few proper questions. Fair play, we got through a bunch there. And I'm impressed with you. Some of those were actually proper answers. Hardly any of them were, 'I don't care'.

Last couple of questions, which will probably have unsatisfying answers. So just to round it out in a really nice way. From a lot of people: What's next for both of you and Rusty Quill? Is Jonny going to be working on Rusty Quill future projects?

**JONNY**

Yeah, that's a very good question actually, Alex. Is Jonny going to be working on Rusty Quill future projects?

**ALEX**

Can't wait to be shot of the man.

We can't talk about future stuff. I'll tell you now, don't expect “*The Magnus Archives* 2, coming in 2 mo—” That's not going to happen. We need to not make *Magnus Archives* for just a little bit.

**JONNY**

I will probably still be around, here and there, as a voice, but I personally am probably done with podcasts for a while. I'm really interested in different media. And, like, what any given medium can do. At the moment I'm leaning quite heavily into novels. Obviously *Thirteen Storeys* is the book that has— came out in November. That's my first horror novel, and I've got a second one that should be coming out later this year.

And there are a few other projects that I'm working on, tinkering with, but I feel like I've done everything I can do at the moment in the podcasts sphere.

**ALEX**

Do not expect us— a new show suddenly to just drop in out of the ether. It's— No.

**JONNY**

And personally, I'm also doing a lot of work in game design at the moment with mine and Sasha Sienna, my partner's company, MacGuffin and Co. I think by now

the Kickstarter will have finished for our little micro-settings collection, but you can check out our work at [macguffinandcompany.com](http://macguffinandcompany.com).

**ALEX**

And in terms of what's next for Rusty Quill, I literally am not allowed to talk about any of it. Sorry. I'm not allowed to talk about any of it. You will find out soon, but I can't talk about any of it.

But I have a final question, potentially your final Q & A for *The Magnus Archives*.

**JONNY**

Right?

**ALEX**

I think it's from AMJT. I don't think that's an acronym meaning like All Magnus Junior Team or something, I think it's just AMJT: On behalf of the entire fanbase, Jonny, please could you say the following – that *The Magnus Archives* **was** a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Sharealike 4.0 International license caveat, in **the** voice?

**JONNY**

No. Because it still exists.

**ALEX**

No!

**JONNY**

It still exists!

**ALEX**

You're a monster!

**JONNY**

It's still out there. You can still listen to it. It's still **is**.

**ALEX**

You're going to make so many people angry with that answer.

**JONNY**

Well... tough.

**ALEX**

Ohhhh, brutal! Twisting the knife to the very last. Wow! Okay.

**JONNY**

In many ways, I feel like the end of this Q & A is the real tragedy of *The Magnus Archives*.

**ALEX**

Oh my god, Jonny, why do you just want to pick fights with the world?

Brilliant. You know what? Okay. Okay, cool.

**JONNY**

Alright. Okay. Alright, alright, alright.

**ALEX**

Eh, you do you, Jonny!



**JONNY**

I'm not going to say it all. I will say:

<ARCHIVIST VOICE> *The Magnus Archives* was a podcast.

I'm not going to do all the rest of it.

**ALEX**

Okay, okay. Alright—

**JONNY**

You've all got the recordings. You can, like, I don't know, just pop in to Audacity, like, chop it up yourself.

**ALEX**

Right.

**JONNY**

But I don't believe it, because media doesn't stop existing just because it's not being actively produced anymore.

**ALEX**

Didn't you hear we're both deleted from public consciousness forever now?

**JONNY**

It's fine.

**ALEX**

If nothing else, thank you for your time. You know, for the last five years, and for the stuff we're still going to record today.

**JONNY**

Yeah.

**ALEX**

But thank you everyone. If we didn't get through to your question, I guarantee you there's limited hours in the day. And we did try. I promise you that. And I think after this one, we have a commentary episode so strap in for that.

Thank you everyone. I hope you've enjoyed it. And if you have any further questions, I'm sorry.

**JONNY**

If you have any further questions, good! Good! It means you've engaged with the story and you have reactions to it and thoughts.

**ALEX**

Goodbye, everyone.

**JONNY**

Bye!

**ALEX**

That's the worst out ever. And I love it.