

Episode 7 TMP Quick Thoughts

Housekeeping and Prologue

Hello, this is Douglysium and you might not know me as that guy who wrote over 100 pages of analysis on the Eye (which can be read on Tumblr here (<https://douglysium.tumblr.com/post/735599414228484097/the-relationships-between-the-dread-powers-the>) or Google Docs here (

 The Relationships Between the Dread Powers: The Eye- Knowledge is Fear and Ignorance...)) or as that guy who wrote an article on the Extinction (which can be read on Tumblr here(<https://douglysium.tumblr.com/post/717929126195003392/what-would-avatars-of-the-extinction-be-like-a>) and Google Docs here(

 What would Avatars of the Extinction be like?: A TMA Speculation))). Suffice to say I might be a bit of a TMA fan. Also, spoilers for TMP up until episode 4. You can read my ramblings on the last episode here ( TMP Quick Thoughts 6).

However, Protocol offers a very unique opportunity and experience for me because I didn't actually get into TMA until after it was over and I binged all of it. So this is my first time experiencing something even remotely similar to what the original TMA fans probably experienced when waiting for each episode week by week and slowly having to put everything together with the limited information they had. So I decided to throw my hat into the ring since this might be my only chance to do something similar. However, I'm working on some longer form TMA content so I can't spend as much time on these articles giving a bunch of super detailed thoughts. I will try to keep these short and that inevitably might mean some could have questions about why I think or predict certain things and in those cases I would probably recommend you read at least some of the two articles I mentioned above to get a better idea of where I'm coming from. This also means I won't be giving you a play-by-play of every single thing that happens in the episode so I encourage you to listen to or read them yourselves and feel free to comment if you feel something is important.

These reviews are probably going to end up focusing mostly on the Entities and their manifestations as they are what I have thought about the most and spent the most time interpreting and there's been a lot of... interesting theories floating around about how the Entities are manifesting that I want to go over.

Finally, I'm just going to say it right now, spoiler warning for all of The Magnus Archives. I know that Jon and co said one could start with Protocol and be fine, and while that's probably true, media like this tends to be made in conversation with or take into consideration what came before it in the irl chronology in order to connect them. While I'm sure you could skip The Magnus Archives, I don't really see the point of skipping over it when we are already getting characters from TMA showing up in TMP in Protocol. So to me it's pretty clear that if we want to understand the full picture of TMP and all the things it is trying to say then we can't just try to pretend TMA doesn't exist or scrub it away. Just because you could understand what's happening without the context in broad strokes doesn't mean you're getting all the nuances.

These articles are meant to be quick and short so sorry if there's typos and if I don't address every possible question or possibility. I don't want to repeat myself too much in this series outside of the prologue so be sure to skim some of my other articles.

Episode 7 "Give and Take"

Like always we cut to a computer spying on some characters (something something Entities, person, or monster watching). In this case it is Alice giving Celia a tutorial on how to work the computers... and in less than 5 minutes into her second appearance Celia has already become one of the most suspicious characters in the entire series so far when she says "Yeah. I mean, it's an old system, but it could have been worse. It's not like we're wrestling with tape recorders and manila folders." which implies that she might not only be familiar with these kinds of things but that she is also referencing The Magnus Institute. Since we know that the Institute in TMA used both tape recorders and paper documents to record and archive statements. Sure this could be a coincidence but this is just such an absurdly oddly specific and otherwise random thing for Celia to say and she phrases it in a manner that would imply this is an experience she has had directly.

The way Celia continues to talk yet further hammers in that she's sort of expecting or used to this. She even questions Alice's half baked explanation of why the computer's talk in this interaction-

ALICE

"Not really. Colin, he's the weird IT guy, he reckons some of the system runs through the sound card so it just spits them out randomly."

CELIA

"You're sure?"

ALICE

"Well, no. But it kinda makes sense."

This not only implies that Celia understands that there could be another explanation for what's happening with the computers but it also shows that Alice may not believe these statements are as fake as she lets on, or at the very least she thinks Colin's explanation doesn't any sense, but I suppose believing in some weird technobabble from the IT guy probably makes more sense then believing people are turning into trees born from guilt or violins being satiated by sacrifices of blood and / or violence.

Celia then asks if Alice and company have ever bothered checking to see if the statements they get have anything in common and eventually mentions this while asking if it is possible to look up specific files "Oh I don't know. Every case about being buried alive or meat or... whatever." An oddly specific thing to ask and the patterns Celia asks about as an example would be patterns that are very familiar to viewers of TMA. Specifically, if you were to look

through statements revolving around being buried alive or meat you would find that they usually have to do with The Buried and The Flesh.

Alice does mention there's a search bar that doesn't work and so Celia would have to go through them manually. I wonder if this is intentionally done so that anyone who's really adamant about finding a particular file would need to look through a bunch of statements or something (The Eye's whole "seeing too much" and all that's pointed out by MAG 200 and some other parts of TMA). The last time statements like this were disorganized it was because Gertrude purposefully disrupted the Archives to throw Jonah off but I don't know if such a thing would be possible here. Maybe one or more IT managers have been purposefully messing around with the system's code (which could explain Colin's frustration with said code). But I'm not sure if that really makes any sense even if Colin does say the code in the system makes no sense. It's possible that the code doesn't make sense because it literally just shouldn't work but it's also possible that Klaus or someone else purposefully made the coding obtuse for some unknown reason. It could also be a mixture of both, maybe most of the code doesn't and shouldn't work but specific parts of it do allowing for extremely specific things to be manipulated or changed.

Before we get into the statement we need to address the elephant in the room. Something that I missed when originally listening to this episode and something pointed out by others is that Celia is actually a name we have heard before in TMA. A character by the name of Celia is actually one of the survivors living in the tunnels with Melanie and Georgie as part of a cult worshipping them. However, that actually isn't even the first time we've seen her since we know she actually changed her name and used to go by Lynne Hammond and she appears in MAG 100 (I Guess You Had to Be There) rambling about ghosts and fire, as well as MAGs 190 (Scavengers), 191 (What We Lose) and 194 (Parting) as part of Georgie and Melanie's cult. I don't recall Celia ever getting a new last name in TMA and the Celia in TMP goes by Ripley but they are both voiced by the same voice actress (according to the wiki anyway).

Okay, so this Celia character must be the same person right? Well... there's a big question we have to ask ourselves and that's how the fuck Celia could've gotten here and I think there are 3 broad answers that are the most likely.

The first, most basic, answer is considering that we later see parallel versions of some other characters it's possible this Celia is merely a parallel version of the one from the TMA universe and that potentially she is worshipping the Entities or something as a parallel to how she worshipped Melanie and Georgie. However, this explanation has a hole since even if you were 100% adamant that Smirke's 14 still exist in this universe the tapes and manilla folder stuff are oddly specific. It's possible that she somehow interacted with this universe's Magnus Institute (I have no idea how old she is) and that the tapes could still exist somewhere as they were probably pulled to this universe along with the Entities.

The second answer is that Celia got dragged here with the Entities but I find that possibility to not make a lot of sense. Annabelle hypothesizes that when the Change is undone the Entities will be sucked into a new universe. Theoretically, this would mean any monsters would get dragged along with them, as monsters are literally part of the Entities, and what

happens to Avatars is a bit up in the air to a degree. If the Avatar's body can still function biologically (that is to say they don't have their skull caved in like Annabelle and their body wouldn't just stop functioning the second the Entities leave) they might just be left behind. If the Avatar is actively being kept alive by one or more Entities (and isn't just having their aging slowed down or halted) then one of two things could happen: they would just die or end up dragged along with the Entities. Annabelle also mentions that it might also depend on how close you are to the Entity and how much of you is made up of said Entity. Presumably normal people would be left behind. While Annabelle is mostly just speculating and could be wrong, her point is somewhat backed up based on what we hear about Simon. Since Melanie says in MAG 200 "I mean, I just don't think people would exactly be understanding. You remember what happened when they found Simon Fairchild?" and "And he's not just some powerless left-behind avatar, you know? We're talking about 'The Archivist'."

Which to me would imply that Annabelle was at least mostly right with the biggest question being if Annabelle died or was dragged into the universe. It is possible Annabelle was just wrong and that the people dragged to the new universe were random or maybe certain domains dragged people with them. This second explanation also has some holes since Celia later mentions that CHESTER's voice sounds familiar and Sam gets an email from someone named "John." If Jon and Martin somehow did get dragged to this universe or connected to it that would punch a hole in this theory since while Jon became literally part of The Eye (via becoming its pupil) Martin didn't seem to be any sort of Avatar or Monster. It's possible Martin got dragged along with Jon because he was in the same area as Jon, because he is closer to The Eye and / or Lonely than we thought or something else entirely but idk for sure but I feel like there's also a 3rd possible answer.

This third answer being that Celia followed the Entities through the gap in reality sometime after the Change had been undone. As I pointed out in the last Quick Thoughts there's actually no confirmation that the hole would automatically close once the Entities were pulled through it and I don't think there's any reason to assume that it would just seal itself. In addition to this we know the Entities (such as The Web) could actually reach through the gap to a certain extent. This is seen in MAG 114 (Cracked Foundation) when Anya Villette is seemingly pulled through the gap. Anya notes "Thinking now I know that there wasn't any light down there, but... that horrid gap was clear as day, darker than just the simple lack of light that surrounded it. And then I was at the edge looking down, and those eight spindly arms reaching up to pull me in. I couldn't have screamed even if I wanted to." and when she wakes up she notes that the date is off. The date was originally April 23rd but somehow it had become April 8th after what is presumably The Web pulled her through.

This third answer proposes that Celia had a similar experience and an Entity pulled / beckoned her through or that she even purposefully followed them through somehow. This could explain why she is aware of the tapes and folders the Institute had and she even comes across a tape in one of the tunnels during the Change after meeting Jon but this also doesn't really answer how she found out about Entities like The Buried and Flesh. Not everyone dragged to each

Domain seems automatically aware of the Entities or which Entity their Domain belongs to but it's possible that some of the remaining characters from TMA simply filled her in on the truth after the fact or that Georgie and Melanie tried to explain what was happening before even if she didn't initially believe them. It's also possible that Celia was just dragged to some weird Domain where the 14 Entities and knowledge of their categories was somehow implemented into their fear.

Maybe after Melanie and Georgie's cult members were dragged back to their Domains from the tunnels Celia lost faith in them and began worshipping the Entities as some sort of gods? She wouldn't be the first person to do so since The Cult of the Lightless Flame, The Church of the Divine Host, and Peter Lukas all refer to their respective Entity as a god and seem to believe them to be such. Not that I can completely blame them for that conclusion. But it's also possible that she simply realized the truth of the Entities somehow or came to some other conclusion. Maybe she is in fact here to help Jon or somebody else for some reason? If the gap is still open maybe she is just banking on being able to travel back and forth somehow? Although, that might be a little much even for TMA and multiversal travel in TMA doesn't feel that easy or controlled.

Let's move on to the statement though. Immediately, the statement hits us with a familiar name: "Hilltop Centre branch of Oxford Peoples" which points to a possible connection to Hilltop Road in TMA. I didn't actually plan for this to happen right after I mentioned the possibility of the gap in reality. I wonder if what the computers show is truly random or if there is some sort of logic to them? We know that Jonah mentioned he would try to make sure Jon found specific statements to guide him on the right path and it is odd that the OIAR computers randomly showed Gwen Lena's secret and showed Alice that Sam was trying to access classified documents. It could just be a random information leak but maybe someone or something is trying to pull the strings and trying to guide them somewhere with a trail of breadcrumbs. Either way CHESTER continues to give the statement.

It details messages from Dianne Margolis complaining about a company's neglect in addition to describing a strange event that unfolded At the Hilltop Centre branch of Oxford People's. The first odd thing to happen is that upon being promoted to the manager position due to the death of the previous manager Dianne had a period of probation and, according to her, upon completing it "It soon became apparent that though Mr. C Clayton was my line manager, neither he nor the Human Resources Department would provide any managerial oversight or support and any requests for assistance sourcing a replacement volunteer for my former role would go unanswered." and she takes matters into her own hands by printing out and posting A4 flyers around Hilltop Centre. On November 13th, 2015 an applicant walks in and Dianne notes "The young man's interview was not exceptional as he had no experience in charity work, no driving license nor any demonstrable experience in retail. He claimed, however, to know the Hilltop Centre better than anyone and as he was the only applicant in the role I elected to give him a try."

I might as well spoil some of my assumptions right now and say that I believe this statement reeks of parallels with The Stranger. We'll get into more specific examples later but I think it's interesting that the man is seemingly unremarkable and lacks a driving license. While the man could have easily had other forms of identification a driving license is also a pretty notable form of identification. It could simply be that this man doesn't know how to drive but it's kind of weird that Dianne didn't immediately say this man's name. Almost like she didn't know it... almost like this man is a total stranger. Someone she doesn't know (and The Stranger feeds off the fear of the unknown and uncanny).

Dianna says "He even personally donated a rather large false plant in a somewhat disconcerting ceramic pot modelled on a shouting human face." which I admit could be rather vague but I think it could be an Entity like The Stranger trying to feed off of the fear of the uncanny. Not only could that explain the weird human head but The Stranger in TMA had a precedent for handing out weird and seemingly random items. Sometimes it was stuff like Breekon and Hope passing around the artifacts of other Entities and at other times it was students passing out apples with teeth in them.

This man eventually says he has a friend who also wanted to volunteer and while Dianne was extremely suspicious of this offer "given that the site still needed at least 5 more staff members and Mr. C. Clayton was no longer replying to my messages, I had little choice but to interview them."

The first person we hear about is a young woman who had a name Dianne can no longer remember. Which I actually think is an interesting note since The Stranger especially has a precedent for causing memory loss (even if we have seen it occur with other Entities). When Jon and co disrupt the Unknowing they all lose their memory for a time and can't even recall who they are or what they are doing. In MAG 165 (Revolutions) we see Not-Sasha watch over a Domain that takes the form of a merry-go-round with people fighting over faces. People with no faces must fight over the faces of others to rip them off and regain some sense of identity and when they lose their face it is said "And soon enough they will forget they ever even had one, rest assured; it's best to step the dance and keep your face secured as much as you are able. Just. Keep. Running."

In case there is any debate about what The Stranger embodies in MAG 200 it is stated "And as they learned to know their friends and kin, so too did they learn to fear the unknown figure, the coming of the stranger" and in MAG 092 (Nothing Beside Remains) Jonah tells Jon "We thrive on ceaseless watching, on knowing too much. What we face is the hidden, the uncanny, and the unknown." while in MAG 111 (Family Business) Jon says "The Stranger is the unknown. The uncanny." and Gerard doesn't correct him. Theoretically the fear of the unknown would probably often include the fear of forgetting something as you would know longer know it. The idea that there's something you once knew but now you don't and so it is unknown. This obviously would overlap with The Spiral a lot with the fear of your senses being wrong but that's a whole thing for another time and plenty of Entities overlap with stuff all the time. All I'm

saying is that there's a strong precedent for The Stranger making people forget stuff or making things hard to remember.

This mysterious woman apparently laughed a lot with the man and Dianne mentions she gave them a warning "but they insisted "it's all for a good cause" and there were no customers at the time." One thing The Stranger also has in spades is odd seemingly random behaviors, such as Breekon and / or Hope eating a butterfly and having other weird mannerisms in TMA. I assume the idea here is that you don't know why they are doing it or it's just supposed to seem uncanny. This second volunteer also gives her own gift "...in the form of a large Bearskin rug. I attempted to contact Mr C Clayton to enquire about our policy regarding real fur items, especially ones of such size, but was informed that he was on a "personal development sabbatical" and thus unreachable. I elected to store this in the back room, especially given the sharpness of its teeth." It goes without saying that in TMA there was a strong connection between The Stranger taxidermy, skins, skinning things, etc.. Especially ones that look uncanny or strange.

Three days after the probation of the second volunteer the mysterious lady says she has more friends who want to volunteer. Dianne says "As I was still technically understaffed I agreed to meet with them. I normally would not have accepted so many new starters at once but with the Christmas period approaching and still no reply from Mr. C Clayton I feel I made a managerial decision that was clearly within my jurisdiction."

The next two volunteers "made donations of a large chandelier of dark glass and an oversized gramophone with a collection of records of what I believe to be religious plainsong. I was surprised that young adults would donate such exotic items and explained it was not necessary but they insisted claiming it was "all for a good cause"." I assume that at this point Dianne has no idea why they keep saying "all for a good cause" or what they mean by it. Which could feed into the fear of the unknown or uncanny.

I think it's interesting that Dianne doesn't know where Clayton is but we get a possible explanation "Mr. C Clayton had not yet returned from his sabbatical which I had by then learned was with full pay in the Seychelles. I'm sure he had a lovely time."

On the 30th of November Dianne gets 4 more volunteers "It seemed that my instructions had been misconstrued and all of them had already been offered a position. I explained that this was contrary to the Oxford People's Trust's normal hiring policies but I elected to nonetheless offer them a probation in order to fully fill the volunteer roster for the Christmas period." We also get more odd gifts "All four of them started the same day and despite me being very clear that it was not necessary they had also brought personal donations in the form of A crudely-carved rocking horse, a grandfather clock that leaked some sort of dark oil, A heavily vandalized set of the Encyclopedia Britannica and an extensive collection of abstract canvas artworks respectively." Dianne notes that she is quickly losing control of the situation as they don't remove the "gifts" despite Dianne's orders. Then on December 1st she "arrived to find that the new hires had already opened the shop. To be clear I had not provided any keys and remain unsure how they obtained a set. I intended to pursue the matter immediately but was initially unable to locate them behind all the additional donations they appeared to have accepted."

These new donations apparently weren't fit for sale and Dianne recalls "...two large, soiled Crinoline dresses, a Chaise Longue with cushions filled with some sort of coarse sand, a taxidermied vulture, a rusty antique printing press and a collection of old medical equipment that had seemingly been recently used. There were many, many additional items but I was unable to take a full inventory as the shop floor was overfull." Once again we get a reference to taxidermy and the medical equipment could be a reference to something like the medical students from MAG 34 (Anatomy Class). Dianne manages to find the original volunteer and she tells him that social gatherings are not allowed in the center during work hours to which the man responds by saying they were all volunteers and when she tells them to leave the premises they just laugh and keep bringing in new items. So it's clear that there's a lot of people in this center at this point.

Dianne decides to try to call for some intervention from the head office and "began to push my way through to the landline but as I did so I saw yet more people entering the shop with donations: some sort of leather kite, an oddly curved brass telescope, a wheelbarrow full of shifting fossils, an armload of swords, lengths of rope... and they were all laughing and calling out to one another "it's all for a good cause!" The shifting fossils makes me wonder if some of these objects are in fact artifacts (artifacts that shift or move around in such a way are often connected to Entities like The Spiral and could potentially allude to some others. Maybe The Extinction or something if you want to go full tinfoil hat theorist). It wouldn't be the first time The Stranger has messed around with the artifacts of various Entities since Breekon and Hope were all about giving people strange unknown supernatural objects to feed off of their fear.

People continue to pour into the center and "As more and more people arrived, pressing into the shop, the central shelving was toppled and items were being damaged underfoot. A tin bathtub filled with moldy food, a stack of old dental retainers, a brace of half-butchered pheasants, jars of what appeared to be pickled hands;" and Dianne soon finds herself trapped in the center by the sheer amount of people. She loses sight of the exits and "The pressure grew unbearable and I was pinned on all sides, my shoulders crushed against an ancient diving suit filled with sawdust, with my neck wrenched under a broken picnic hamper whilst bloodstained china was ground beneath my feet. There wasn't even enough space to fall now. " "I tried to scream but could only manage a wheeze as I began to blackout. My limbs were contorted and gouged by unseen edges, my mouth filling with the copper taste of imperial coins pouring down on me from a jar above." Gunshots start going off but all the volunteers keep laughing even as Dianne "could feel the deadened thud of impacts" and " could see spatters of gore through what gaps there were in the items all around me." There was thud after thud and eventually the laughter starts becoming drowned out by flames.

The pressure on Dianne suddenly lessens and she crawls her way through the crowd and all kinds of detritus out of the center. Once out she tries to get back to her feet only "to be shoved to the ground by a heavysset man in black clothing, who demanded I identify myself while pressing a gun against the back of my head." As expected of any normal person in this situation Dianne freaks the fuck out and starts crying from fear (she also has a broken rib) but luckily the man seems satisfied with this response and "he threw me roughly over his shoulder and walked

away from the Hilltop Centre as the charity shop blazed behind us. I swear I could still hear them laughing over the thudding of machine guns and the roar of unchecked fire..." Before I talk about this man Dianne says "It has been made very clear to me that I am not to identify the security firm that took this action, so I shall not do so here. Nor am I aware of which individual or organisation hired them, except in as far as I know for a fact they were not working for the Oxford People's Trust" and to write the fire off as an accident with no further investigation. Dianne says she can provide contact info if need be but advises against it.

So what is the deal with this man? Based on what Dianne was told I think it's safe to assume that the man actually did start the fire and that the reason he spared Dianne is because her breakdown confirmed that she wasn't one of the "volunteers." Is this man some sort of Hunter like Daisy or Trevor? Maybe he's more like Dekker and isn't directly aligned with a particular Entity? He could even be a part of the Starkwall private military contractors involved in the "The San Pedro Square Massacre" mentioned in episode 4. It is unclear at the moment but I'm at least leaning towards that idea that for whatever reason this man went out of its way to kill the volunteers.

While one may at first assume that the gun fire was coming from objects the "volunteers" had brought into the store going off it actually sounds like the gun fire was being aimed at the center as it burned down. If that is the case then this man probably isn't operating alone. I wonder how much various parts of the government in TMP know about the supernatural and if this man is affiliated with them or the government has things in place meant to try to keep the Entities in check somehow.

I've made it pretty clear that if I had to assign this statement an Entity based on what we've seen in TMA I would point to The Stranger. You could also make a solid argument for The Buried and themes of being trapped and crushed both literally and metaphorically. Dianne feels like she has no other option and becomes trapped by the strange crowd. You could also make an argument for The Lonely because while Dianne isn't alone physically she clearly seems to have been abandoned by Clayton and her higher ups and left to deal with this mess alone. Additionally, The Lonely manifests as a faceless crowd in MAG 48 (Lost in the Crowd) so it's not like it can't manifest as people or at least something resembling people. Maybe their odd behavior was meant to alienate Dianne and make her feel even more alone?

The statement ends and surprisingly Celia seems shaken by the voice despite how otherwise familiar and confident she seemed about the statements. Maybe the voice sounds familiar to Celia...? Okay, time to address the second big elephant in the room. CHESTER sounds like Jon from TMA and shares the same voice actor and if we assume that Celia is the same Celia from TMA that would explain the reaction as she has met Jon and would thus recognize the voice. I mean, she even states herself that she does recognize the voices and asks Alice if she knows who the voice actor is. I'm going to be honest, part of the reason I didn't bring up the voices or any theories around them is because I admit I kind of just wrote them off. Since there was no conclusive say up until this episode I assumed that it was simply Johnny

reusing voice actors but I realize now that was a wild presumption for me to make. Especially since while it is true that one of the voices sounds like Martin the other one sounds unfamiliar to me which is an odd choice.

It is possible that during the shift from universes Jon and Martin somehow got melded with The Eye or metaphysically trapped somewhere or some other wacky shit. If Jon and Martin somehow are connected to the computers that could explain why the computers have odd quirks like giving away random information and notifications. It could be someone trying to help or nudge things in a certain direction but this is still all very uncertain and up in the air. In my previous essays I mentioned that I think Sam shares certain traits with characters like Jon and from this standpoint I wonder if Jon notices the parallels somehow and is actually trying to stop Sam from making some of the same mistakes he felt he did.

We cut to another scene and the transcripts clarify that we are listening in through Sam's phone as he asks Colin a question, and this is where we get the big reveal. Sam asks Colin "Uh anyway yeah, I was wondering if you knew who "John" was?" and explains "I got a weird email from "John" with a random name and an address and it looks like it's from an internal email so..." Of course, Colin has no idea who this is and confirms that no one named John works at the OIAR. Colin then gives an ominous warning by saying "Listen mate. If you're going to get this worked up over a weird email you're going to freak when you see the real stuff." Sam questions this and Colin only says "Oh you'll see" and Sam asks Colin if that's why he taped over his webcam.

Colin eventually notices Sam's phone and freaks out since he has a sign that says "No external electronics". Colin seems to take Sam's phone and says "It's already recorded too" and there is a scuffle that the transcripts confirm ends with Sam's phone breaking.

Before we move on to the next part let's go over this. Obviously, the name John rings familiar to TMA fans as the name of the protagonist from TMA. Right now I think the two biggest possibilities are that Jon is in this universe and somehow tied to CHESTER or the computer, or that this is Jon's parallel counterpart from this universe sending an email while trying to look into The Magnus Institute or something. The second possibility seems a bit more dubious and obtuse I admit (especially since Sam notes that the email had an internal address. Something that can easily be explained by the computer itself sending the email). Once again we see Colin's paranoia about being watched which lines up with what we saw in the TMA's Institute and the feeling of constantly being watched noted by characters like Jon. Colin also proves to be right in his paranoia since someone / something (besides the audience) is listening through Sam's phone. I have to wonder what "real stuff" Colin is talking about. Maybe a direct encounter with the Entities, monsters, Avatars or some sort of creepy artifact storage? He could be talking about the statements ramping up in horror or something but that seems odd even if not impossible, and the way he talks seems to imply to me at least the possibility of interactions that are more direct than receiving strange messages.

Start Here If You Came From the Reddit

We do get something Colin could possibly be referring to when we cut to Gwen and Lena via a landline. I think it's interesting that the transcripts clarify "LENA puts the phone down and the line disconnects but we can still hear. " which points to more supernatural surveillance. Maybe The Eye, maybe something else who knows." Gwen reveals she knows Lena's secret with the video the computer showed her (and she made copies of the video) but it's made apparent that Lena didn't actually kill Klaus. But rather, faked Klaus' death. Gwen even says "Because I suspect the only thing worse than being convicted for attempted murder is being punished by the people who paid for it. " and "According to my source, they believe this man to be quite dead."

This could be a subversion on TMA. In TMA a creepy boss (Jonah / Elias) kills a man (Jurgen) after he comes out of hiding in addition to killing Gertrude. But while our first assumption here would usually be that Lena (a creepy boss) killed a man who came out of hiding (Klaus) it appears that this is actually reversed and she saved him. It's possible that Lena might be trying to do the right thing or believes what she is doing is a necessary good as opposed to a plot designed to trap the world in an eternal hellish fearscape. Lena remarks on Gwen's source by saying "Source. Singular. Interesting." I wonder how Gwen knows who Lena's bosses are. Is her source one of the computers? Her last name is Bouchard which could point to something supernatural going on but she also doesn't seem to know exactly who Lena's bosses are and I can't just assume that she also has weird abilities like Elias / Jonah. She might have just found and questioned Klaus with that in mind. She could also just be Elias' daughter. We don't know if Jonah got to Elias in this universe (he probably didn't) and we don't know how old Elias was so is it possible Elias could've had a daughter had Jonah not body hopped to him? Although, Gwen could just be a relative or a character with no immediate or obvious counterpart to TMA.

Lena says "You have ambition, Gwen, I will grant you that, but not a lot of imagination. You are blackmailing me personally, correct? For what? I am not a wealthy woman, certainly not compared to your own family. What is it that you want?" and Gwen replies "I want "in". " Lena says "It's simply a bit unexpected. Perhaps you have more stomach for this work than I gave you credit for. And I have been needing someone to step up to the real work for quite some time now. " and after being prompted elaborates "(Pulling out paperwork) If you want answers and authority, you'll have your chance to earn them. I am appointing you as the new "Externals Liaison.""

Obviously, I have a lot of questions about Gwen's motivations. I don't know why she seems so cagey on top of feeling that she deserves to be boss of the OIAR. Without context I have no idea why she would care so much since she seems to be good on money based on Lena's comment about her family. Maybe she was simply cut off from her family but that still raises a lot of questions on why Gwen feels so strongly about this in particular. Not just being promoted but mastering an obtuse categorization system for various creepy stories while working odd and long hours in a basement with like 4 other people. I have no idea what "in" means yet. Also, both Celia and Sam note the interview for this OIAR job as strange and Alice mentions Lena goes

through a lot of effort to weed people out. So I wonder what Gwen said / encountered that convinced Lena to hire her in the first place?

According to google, a liaison's job is to "facilitate communication and collaboration between departments, teams, or organizations." and this random pdf I found (https://www.embs.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Liaison-establishment_Erin_9_Feb2022.pdf) says "A Standards Committee External Liaison is an information conduit that enables sharing of information from a Standards Committee/Subgroup to an organization external to IEEE" This does potentially shed some light on whatever Gwen was doing with Mr. Bonzo but I'm going to bite my tongue since I'm trying to handle these in order as they appear as much as possible so my thoughts don't end up jumbled and ideally someone could read most of these essays as they listen to each episode.

People who have read my other stuff probably know that The Eye doesn't just have a big emphasis on watching but information in general. In MAG 200 it is described as being born from the fear of "seeing too much" and Jonah has the ability to shove information into the heads of people like Melanie and Martin. Additionally, people like Jon can force people to give statements and by extension force them to remember or revisit the past. The Eye isn't just about someone seeing too much of you but also the possibility that you might see too much of something else and regret it. This could connect to Gwen's new position as External Liaison if I maintain my argument that the OIAR is somehow connected to The Eye because of the statements the computers read and constant surveillance.

In essence in a similar manner to how the job of the Archivist is to be an "archive" by acting as a living chronicle of fear through watching and comprehending various horrors the External Liaisons job might be to transmit information or see other horrifying things they are interacting with. Lena does also mention "I have been needing someone to step up to the real work for quite some time now." so I wonder if the goal is to promote the people working at the OIAR if they manage to reach a certain qualification or metric.

If one is to argue that the OIAR is somehow connected to one or more Entities this wouldn't be the first time multiple factions tied to different Entities could be connected (since Gwen's new job seems to require acting like some sort of messenger or middleman). In TMA the Lukas and Fairchilds worked together. The Daedalus space station's involved a collaboration between the Fairchilds, the Lukas family and the Church of the Divine Host. I wonder if the OIAR is directly involved with every Entity (and maybe different branches deal with or connect with different Entities) or if one of its tasks is to somehow work with or manage other factions? Is the government somehow trying to keep the supernatural manifestations in check by making deals when possible and trying to fight the rest? I don't know and most of this is just tinfoil hat wearing spitballing.

I also have to wonder who Lena's bosses even are. Is she working with or for the Starkwall private military contractors? Is the government trying to sweep something under the rug? I can't say.

Conclusion

Spoilers for some future episodes:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Is her job to witness what the other factions are doing like some weird take on the Archivist?

Idk for sure but if you take a step back and look at it this is definitely one of the more eventful episodes (or at least the one setting up the most threads and questions at the moment).