

OSTIUM PODCAST - SEASON 6

EPISODE 62 - Anomalies I

Created and written by Alex C. Telander

STEVE

played by Alex C. Telander

DIRECTION

DIALOG - (*DIRECTION*) - [*SCENE*] - *SOUND DESIGN* - *Music*

[SCENE ONE: EMU 12 - THE RETURN] [STEVE]

I'm back baby! Oh god, I really regret saying that. And once again, I know full well I could just edit this shit out so it sounds all nice and clean, but if you're listening to the 12th installment of Enigmatic Mysteries of the Unknown then it probably means you leant your ear to the previous 11, and I very much thank you for that. I've had my ups and downs; my ins and outs. But I made it through; by the skin of my proverbial teeth, in some cases. Many thanks in part due to the wonderful Jake Fisher, and of course, by no means least, my dear, loving mother, Monica Chase, whom I have since been reunited with and any previous hurts and wrongs have been healed. All is forgiven, as the saying goes.

Of course, if you're also caught up with all the Ostium installments then you know everything that's happened with regards to the Ostium Network. How we ended up on the Rock of Gibraltar, permanently so to speak. How things were just grand when we were all reunited and it felt like things were really starting to settle down and then the weird shit began to happen . . . sorry. Sorry for the swearing. I know. In many if not all of the previous installments of Enigmatic Mysteries of the Unknown I swear my bloody head off, but after talking and listening to my mum for a number of days . . . I'll just say I'm trying to keep things . . . cleaner shall we say. For now. Not really sure why I'm bothering. It's not like I'm seeking a specific Parental Guidance rating or anything like that. Call it a new year's resolution or something; not that I have any clue what day of the month it is, or even year for that matter. I know I could easily ask Zhang and get an answer, but I'm blissfully, ignorantly choosing not to. And don't worry, I'll get to Zhang in due course.

Where was I? Oh yes, thinking things were going to be okay for a bit. Let the dust settle and all that. Should've taken it all as one big warning sign. Again, if you've listened to the Ostium recordings from Jake and Monica, then you already know all this. And you know that Jake is gone, as is my mum . . . once again. I . . .

Breath

I was pissed off at first. Very P.O.'d in fact. But I also knew neither of them were coming back any time soon, so I stewed and simmered and mentally did various other cooking techniques that involve heat for a few days, and then came out of it on the other side sort of understanding. Something happened to Jake. I'm not exactly sure what, but he's gone. My mum loves him. With all her heart. Whether she loves him more than me is something I never intend to ask her and I just don't want to know the answer. But I understand why she went after him. I may not be happy with it, but I comprehend her intentions, and I'm also fully confident she won't give up until she finds him, and I know full well when she finds him she'll drag his arse all the way back to the Ostium Network. And he will love her all the more for it.

I've gotten some answers from Thyra. If you've listened to her Circe recordings, you know a bit of her story too. And how I've helped her get back on her feet again. Started her getting her magical abilities back and whatever. We don't see each other too much, which I'm not too fussed about right now. Still dealing with my mum and Jake being gone, and she's still working on getting her mental faculties up and running again, and she's really loving doing the recordings. Can't blame her. I can see how it's helping her. I check on her at least once a day. Seeing if she needs anything. Help her with preparing meals and whatnot. But she's becoming more and more self-supporting. Won't need me at all in the not too distant future. I hope she'll still like to

hang out and chat occasionally. It does get awfully lonely here at the Ostium Network without Jake and Monica.

But after all, I do have Zhang. Yes, you know of this artificial intelligence from the Ostium recordings. They're . . . well, they're bloody brilliant. Obviously. They're a quantum computer. So I shouldn't be too surprised. But they know so bloody much. About everything it seems. They helped me figure out my jumbled up memories and got them all lined up in sort of a chronological order. It made me feel a lot less discombobulated with my recent life. But Zhang is so much more than just your ordinary AI. We have conversations, back and forth. We debate and discuss, though I believe they do it more to make me feel like I know what I'm talking about; at least a little bit, or maybe they do it just to pity me. Nevertheless, I do enjoy our conversations very much. And it's quite nice being able to get in touch with Zhang anywhere and anytime. I won't say that I've become completely dependent on them, but if they were to suddenly somehow disappear or stop talking to me . . . well, it wouldn't be good for me. It wouldn't be good for any of us. Zhang is . . . well to be honest, they're the heart and soul of the Ostium Network. And the intestines and internal organs and all the bits and pieces that make this whole place run. Sorry to get a bit graphic there, but I feel it's warranted.

To hit the proverbial nail on the proverbial head: Zhang puts the "network" in the Ostium Network, in every possible sense and iteration of the word.

But bringing this all back to the beginning here: I'm starting up the Enigmatic Mysteries of the Unknown, much like Mulder and Scully got the X-Files reopened on a number of occasions, because the Ostium Network may be a place I now call home. I may live in a cushy apartment and have everything be hunky-dory. I may even have a person here from another world in a galaxy far, far away, from a planet called Albion, who I talk to occasionally, and an AI named Zhang I would unquestionably call a good and loyal friend . . . nevertheless, there are still abounding mysteries here at the Ostium Network. Enigmas and riddles hidden within the rock of Gibraltar that I have yet to crack the code of and fully understand.

That is why the Enigmatic Mysteries of the Unknown are alive and well once more.

And that is why tomorrow I begin a new quest, a new adventure; to peel back the facade of this place out of a scifi novel and try to understand what is really going on at the foundation of this Network that is a part of Ostium.

sfx - [THREE SECOND BREAK]

No mantra this time. Except for in reference to the sentence before this one. Did you see what I did there?

[SCENE TWO: EMU 13 - A BIRD'S EYE VIEW] [STEVE]

I'll start off this recording by saying it one time and one time only. Getting it off my chest, and trying my best not to say it again, but I'm not making any guarantees . . .

Deep breath

I don't know when Jake and my mum are coming back . . . I don't know if Jake and my mum are coming back. I honestly try not to think about it too much; it just worries me. Stresses me out and starts me on a path I really don't want to keep going on. It's just jolly old me here at the Ostium Network. Zhang is here with me, of course, reachable in any place at any time. And yes, I've even tried on the toilet, and they asked how they could help me at that moment and I told them to shut up. They weren't hurt by it; they're a bloody smart AI after all. Almost human in many ways. That's why I enjoy talking to them so much. And it definitely helps with distracting me from thinking about what my mum and Jake must be going through; whether they've gotten any closer to each other in time and space yet. I suppose if it's to do with all that timey wimey stuff, then at this point it's all relative and they're together and could be on their way back at any moment . . . all depends on how long it takes them to get back here. And that's where the lands of dangerous thoughts lie and doubt becomes a familiar character. So we're going to steer clear of all that, alright? Good.

For being a separated island in time and space, this rock of Gibraltar is still a pretty big place, and I want to try and wrap my mind around the whole thing. As I said: I'm the only living, breathing human here, to the best of my knowledge. Oh, except for Thyra of course, but she technically doesn't count as a human being from Albion, even though she looks plenty anthropomorphic, but that's a discussion and conversation for another time. But there was a lot of stuff that happened here in the past. A good chunk of it I could probably ask Zhang to spout back to me in detail, but it would all feel like second hand knowledge being regurgitated by a machine.

Sorry about that Zhang. I assume you're able to read or listen to these recordings, probably even as I'm recording them, and once they're stored in your data banks. I didn't mean anything by it. You know I love ya. I was just trying to make a point. I know there will be lots of stuff I will be asking you about at some point in the future about what went on here at the Ostium Network, but for now I want to try out my "leet skillz" and see what I can come up with by my lonesome.

sfx - [BEGIN WITH EV SOUNDS AND QUICKLY REPLACE WITH CABLE CAR SOUNDS THAT FADE OUT AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE]

I decide to start with getting the best view of the island I can, which means a trip in the EV to the cable car, getting it going, and then up to the top of the rock.

sfx - [LIGHT BREEZE AS STEVE LOOKS ON FROM A GREAT HEIGHT AT THE WIDE VISTAS]

From an outside viewpoint this might seem lonely and somewhat sad, like the last man alive or something, but it isn't. The scenery here, especially going up in the cable car is quite beautiful. I'm starting to wonder if they messed with the climate in some way in this realm that we're in, because it never seems to be cold or raining or even that cloudy. Overcast is a phrase that apparently doesn't apply to the Ostium Network. I can't remember learning anything about that during the training, and I don't remember my mum ever mentioning it. Maybe it was something that happened later on, after she and I were done here. Or something after everyone was gone and there was just Zhang. I have of course asked them, but it appears to be a black spot in their memories, they have no recollection or knowledge of whether the weather here at the Ostium Network remains consistent day in and day out. Not that I'm complaining at all, it's not too hot, not too cold; just lovely. And makes everything look vibrant and colorful and alive. But I need to know the true and exact limits of this island.

I take a good slow look around at HQ from the windows, studying as much as I can with what I can see. Then I decide I need more. I ask Zhang for a pair of binoculars. They tell me where I can find them. And then I'm off, looking for higher grounds, trying to get to the true top of the rock. The very pinnacle of Gibraltar.

sfx - [WIND IS A LITTLE STRONGER HERE BEING HIGHER UP]

There of course is one and it's enclosed by a fence that's really too low for my liking. Nevertheless, it's clear that this place was possibly made for tourists to come up to when the rock was a tourist spot, or created by the Ostium Network for some would be sightseers, or perhaps for those wanting to get that little ounce of extra detail and information that the view from HQ wasn't given them, and like me, had this place made at the very top to see everything they could. Regardless, it's here and I'm happy to be able to use it, even if my legs are a little wobbly.

I cast my memory back to those times I visited Gibraltar when it was its own real place, still connected to the country of Spain. There were views of the coastline and the Mediterranean. Here, well, there's nothing but sea, and sea, and lots more sea. I can make out waves and swells, and the very occasional whitecap, but not many of them at all because of that calm, wonderful weather we keep having. The water's a deep, dark blue, like the Pacific when you get away from the land. Meaning it's really bloody deep. I won't be going underwater around here, unless it's for a quick swim or I'm in a bloody submarine. And hey, who knows. They have a lot of technical shit here. Maybe somewhere in some wet dock there's a little sub waiting for me. And maybe it's even called Boaty McBoatface. Make a mental note to check with Zhang about that.

It's also weird not to see any signs of movement on the water indicating a thriving marine life below. It's pretty calm and placid in most areas. Disappointingly so, I suppose. I want to see the fluke of a whale, the splash of a dolphin tail, or even a school of flying fish making themselves known to me. Just something. It sure would make for a very tasty dinner . . . if it were true.

But, sadly, there's nothing out there but deep, dark ocean. And if there's any sort of Nessie-like sea creature below, as I said, I'm going to need something that works well at going underwater to deep depths to investigate.

So . . . one could consider this a complete bloody waste of time, but I'm an optimist these days, at the Ostium Network, because I need to be to get by. While I don't get any of the potential answers I might've been hoping for, I get some answers, which hasn't always been the case with things relating to the Ostium Network. So I consider it a win in my court. Not game, set, and match exactly, but I think for now I've won my first service game, and we'll see how things go onwards.

Next, we're going to be circumnavigating the island of Gibraltar. Yes, I will be using the EV and not walking the whole way, because that would just be barmy. And really tiring too. And I think it's going to take a few days too. Need to do it in chunks and bits, sort of like a really long hike. Eventually I'll have completed the round the Ostium Network trip and will have some more answers. Good or bad? Who's to say, other than time, which will tell. Yeah, a pretty convoluted sentence there. So let me shut up now and head back down to HQ and have Zhang show me some maps of the island. Though, just for a few more minutes, I'll enjoy this grand, three-hundred-and-sixty degree vista.

It really is something.

sfx - [WIND SOUNDS CONTINUE FOR FIVE MORE SECONDS THEN SLOWLY FADE OUT]

[SCENE THREE: EMU 14 - CIRCUMNAVIGATING] [STEVE]

sfx - [WALKING SOUND ON ASPHALT, WITH ADDITION OF WATER SOUNDS AGAINST A DOCK COMING IN AFTER FIVE SECONDS]

So . . . I'm going to start by going back to that dock Jake and I went to before, way back before - feels like decades ago at this point - when the two of us first arrived here at the Ostium Network. And even though it feels like eons ago, when I get there it feels familiar, like I was just there a day or two ago. I suppose in the grand scheme of things, it technically hasn't been that long of a time really, but a hell of a lot of shit and stuff has happened in the meantime, making it feel like something that happened to me when I was much younger. How naive and innocent I was when Jake and I first traveled through the door he made to that dock. Well, naive at least.

And now I'm back here again and it looks just like I remember it. Old, rundown. The wooden planks aren't cracking or anything, but they look like they've seen their share of ware and salty water. There are a few stanchions, for tying ropes to, and one actually has a bit of rope on it hanging in the water. It looks greenish and more like a bit of seaweed or a tentacle perhaps? But this place doesn't look like it's seen a boat in ages, not that I would necessarily be able to recognize how different things would actually look if there had been a boat here an hour or two ago, but you know what I mean: it looks like it hasn't been used for its intended purpose in a long while. Long before we arrived. Actually, it looks old and worn enough that the last boat it saw was the one that brought mum and I here to the Ostium Network for the first time. That had been really cushty. Bloody huge. All the amenities you could imagine, plus a delicious meal. Really wished it had been a longer trip. More of a voyage than a jaunt, if you know what I mean.

Okay . . . okay. I'm having a moment. There's something . . . something about all this pinging with me, much like stuff did before when I was trying to remember my history at the Ostium Network. But this feels different . . . stronger. And . . . nope. Can't quite get it. It's gone. Slipped through my fingers like a trickle of water. But I'm making a very obvious mental note here, with lots of asterisks and highlighting and exclamation points, so I can come back to it later and cogitate on it some more.

sfx - [EV SOUND SLOWLY ACCELERATING]

I hop back in the EV and start my slow, scenic circumventing of this wonderful island of Gibraltar.

sfx - [FIVE SECOND BREAK, EV SOUNDS CONTINUING]

I suppose I should talk a bit about why I'm doing this. You see: it's all part of my fiendish plan, like getting to the very tippy top of the rock, to see if there's any detail or piece of evidence I might come across that says: "Hey, I know this looks a bloody lot like you're on this lonely island and there's absolutely nothing else around you and you really shouldn't have any hope of that ever changing, except for this little tidbit; this nugget of possibility that says maybe, just maybe, there's something more to this than you being stuck out here in the middle of nowhere and no-when, all alone on this island." Again, much like my ascending trip to the highest point on the island for a bird's eye view of everything around turned out to mostly be a waste of time, I'm expecting much the same news with this circling foray, but what I also know is that the only thing that will satisfy my mind and put my brain at any sort of peace is knowing completely and undeniably for sure. Then I can sort of mentally move on and deal with whatever needs to be dealt with next, knowing I did what I could to answer this question.

sfx - [FIVE SECOND BREAK, EV SOUNDS CONTINUING]

As I thought and planned, going around the entire island does take a couple days. But I'm not in any sort of hurry and just enjoy myself, passing the time

and getting the chance to really see the whole island. At least the outer edges of it. There are some interesting buildings and places here. Some I'd certainly like to check out in person, as well as check with Zhang. And yes, each time I see something interesting I could just ask them, and get an immediate answer no doubt, but it would add more time to this "mission" that I do want to see to the end because . . . well, because there's that weird feeling I had yesterday at the dock and what it means in this whole grand scheme of things. I still don't know what, but I know it's something important. Something that needs to get fixed or resolved or answered in some way. I still haven't been able to drag it up from my subconscious yet, but I feel like I'm getting closer, sort of, like prying a piece of rock loose from the earth. As you dig deeper, you keep finding out it's a bigger and bigger rock, but also as you dig, it gets looser and starts to move a bit. I'm hopeful it'll pull loose soon. I could go with a grisly rotten tooth analogy here, but I'm just not going to bother. Too cliché mate!

There was nothing I saw on the waters. Nothing in or beneath the waters that I could make out. And there was nothing around the entire island that gave me any hope of or even an inkling for that matter that it would be worth heading out into the waters to try and find something behind the horizon, should I have some flotation device to make that even possible. As I was passing through more familiar areas of what had once been Gibraltar, I tried to remember what the original place had been like. Where there had been marinas and quays and lots of boats and yachts, there was now nothing. No indication that such a location like that had ever existed. Just roads and pathways and buildings. The whole way round.

The only thing that said one could ever arrive, or more importantly, attempt to leave this island via the waters is that single, solitary dock.

That dock again. Why does it always come back to that?

What's important about it? What's significant?

The rock is still stuck in the ground. I'll just have to give it more time.

Maybe it's made of ostium?

No, sorry, I was trying to make a pun-type joke with adamantium or something, but it felt flat on its face. Again, sorry. Ooff, I'm heading to bed. Night night.

[SCENE FOUR: EMU 15 - COME UP TO TOWN] [STEVE]

I'm almost there. Mentally. Yes, I know that could mean a lot of things, but I'm specifically talking about all that rubbish about the submerged rock that was a very heavy handed metaphor for my trying to remember something big and important and not being able to. Well, as I said, I'm getting a lot closer to remembering everything right now - and no, this isn't something Zhang could easily answer for me, much as they helped me remember my past before, and that's because . . . well, I already tried asking them, in various ways, and all to no avail. So Plan B then, which was really Plan A all along with me getting my brain to dredge it up and remember the bloody thing.

But enough of that for now. We'll revisit it when I know more. Basically I'll tell you when they tell me, and by "they" I mean my little gray cells. Today we've got a new mission. Oh, my mum would be so proud hearing me say that, even if it's more of an expression. She'd tell me it was me getting my priorities right, whatever that means. Doing what needs to be done. Or is that more what the old Monica Jake first knew would say and think.

Oh shit, it is. Bloody hell. Got well off track there. Where did that even come from? Okay, get your head on straight, mate. Focus Steve.

Where are we going today?

Ostium. Right.

sfx - [WALKING SOUNDS DIFFERENT FROM BEFORE, WALKING ON GRAVEL]

Yeah. That Ostium. It's another thing I check with Zhang: I asked if Ostium was still there, still accessible and all that. They said it was; all in working order. I said, sounds like you're taking the words right out of my mouth, and they're definitely the words I want to hear, but I have to be a hundred percent sure. I need to know for certain. And that's going to require a little trip for me. It's all part of my big plan to make sure everything at the Ostium Network is still in working order, albeit without any actual people to do whatever they were doing before to make sure things were running smoothly; hence my wanting to be completist. I've checked the perimeters, so to speak. Now it's time to . . . check the perimeters in another dimension.

I've been telling myself this is for my own sanity and safety, being all alone here. But I'm actually sort of realizing right now that it's probably because I want to make sure things are as organized and running as usual for Jake and Monica to make it back here as easily as possible. I assume it will involve the town of Ostium in some way, since that's the door nexus for traveling through time and space when it comes to the Ostium Network. Although I suppose Jake also has his, for lack of a better word, "magical" ability to open his own doors wherever he is to wherever he wants. But since I think messing around too much with this is what got him into all this mess to begin with, being able to use the familiar doors of the town of Ostium should make things easier for the pair of them.

sfx - [WALKING SOUNDS QUICKLY FADE OUT, HAVE SERIES OF THREE DOORS OPENING AND CLOSING]

I go through the familiar doors to get to the . . . oh what the hell was it called . . . Inception chamber? I think that was it. Bloody stupid word for a simple thing. And then I stare at the button and toggle and switches array. Am I going to need to turn this damn thing on and get it all up and running before I can go through to Ostium? The lights are all on in here and everything looks like it's working normally. And wouldn't Zhang have told me if I needed to do something like that.

And that's when I have this feeling well up in me . . . It could best be described as: not giving a shit.

"I don't give a shit!" I yell. Zhang wisely remains shtum. I just want to do something, something that will make something else happen. I want to feel . . . Oh I don't know, like I matter. Like I . . . Give a shit, I suppose.

So I say fuck it and walk into the chamber, pull open the door and step through.

sfx - [INCEPTION CHAMBER OSTIUM DOOR SOUND FOLLOWED BY FIVE SECONDS OF SILENCE, THEN FADE IN WITH WALKING SOUND]

And just like that I'm back in Ostium and experience a whole waterfall of feelings running over me. Memories, nostalgia, nightmares, the whole kit and caboodle. But it also looks calm here, one might even say peaceful. I never thought I'd be using those words in this place, but it's completely true. I feel . . . relaxed.

I stroll down the street - did I think of it as "main street" at one point, or was that just from one of Jake's old recordings? It's all starting to get a bit mixed up. Wonder if that's normal, or part of the old noggin corroding away in some fashion. Hope it's nothing to do with the Ostium Network contributing somehow; you know, lead in the water, asbestos in the air, or something unknown in the specially sealed packaged food that lasts for fifty plus years.

sfx - [WALKING SOUNDS END AND WOODEN DOOR OPENING]

I open door number one and step into the clock tower. Things are messy and abandoned, as they should be. I check out the kitchen and find that secret little door mum used to get back to the Ostium network, deep in the back of the pantry.

sfx - [PUTTING BOXES, CANS AND GOODS BACK IN THE PANTRY]

I spend half an hour putting all the canned goods and boxes back in an organized fashion and make everything look clean again. I tidy up the rest of the place too, trying to make it look nice for when Jake and Monica come back, right? I'm also hoping constantly, in the back of my mind, as I do this, that they'll show up at any moment with open arms.

sfx - [SOUNDS END]

No such luck.

And then things are as clean and organized as they can be.

I close the door behind me as I step outside, then head off to door number two. I can still remember where it is from that first time I went through.

sfx - [OSTIUM DOOR OPENING]

When I reach it I don't hesitate, grabbing the handle and opening it. I step through and keep the door open, not wanting to get stuck with whatever might be on the other side.

Like the town of Ostium, things appear to be all back to normal here too. It's a lush forest with tall trees. I'm sure if I went off in a specific direction I'd arrive at a tree with C-R-O carved into it and then a strange little hamlet.

I step back through Ostium and close the door.

sfx - [OSTIUM DOOR CLOSING]

Ostium remains a place of calm. I take some nice deep breaths, then walk back to the main gate of Ostium and pass through back to the Ostium Network like it

was a perfectly normal thing. Like walking through a doorway from the bathroom to the living room. Nothing special.

sfx - [INCEPTION CHAMBER OSTIUM DOOR OPENING THEN CLOSING]

I head back to my pad, have something to eat, and think about what I've been avoiding.

The answers my brain has now arrived at, and the knowledge of what I need to do next.

And I'm not at all happy about it.

[SCENE FIVE: EMU 16 - NEEDLE IN THE HAY] [STEVE]

And so it's come to this then. Here we are at the end of the road. Time for some answers. Answers to what's got me all so wound up, like a twisted piece of rope that just keeps getting twisted tighter and tighter. Obviously Jake and my mum being gone and the uncertainty of their return weighs heavily upon my mind, but at this point that's something I keep bringing up, like a proverbial elephant in the room, and serves as more of an excuse than anything that would actually stop me from being able to function normally and healthily. Next there's the impending and what I have to admit is a growing sense of loneliness here at the Ostium Network. I talk with Zhang as much as I can, and as I've mentioned a number of times before, they're reachable anywhere here, but it's not the same as a flesh and blood human being. And before you offer up an alternative, Zhang, I'm fully aware you do have a robotic body form, such as the one you used to interview both my mum and me with many years ago, but as impressive as that is, it's still not the same as the real thing; as a familiar face that I've come to know too well or have actually grown up with. So that's obviously getting to me, but again it's not everything; it's just part of this whole package of despair I'm dealing with and trying to reckon with right now. I won't say it began with whatever got kick started in my brain when I was at the dock, but it added another symptom to a growing something that I haven't been able to fully wrap my mind around . . . and I'll be honest, I'm still not completely sure about everything, and certainly don't have all the answers, but unlike Ostium where answers can be few and far between, I do at least have some, and have come to my own conclusions on some matters that ring true in the context I'm putting them in.

Let me lay out the bits of evidence I've come across and mentally rehashed over and over again recently; I've actually even been listening to the old recordings too, both Jake's and mine. Gleaning them for any details I might've missed, or perhaps forgotten about. Yeah, forgotten feels like a better word in this case. We've all been going through so much and it's just been, like, nonstop. We barely have a moment to catch our breaths and have a bite to eat before some new doomsday shit happens and throws everything on its head, whether it's here at the Ostium Network, or somewhere else in the universe of Ostium.

The universe of Ostium. That's an interesting way of putting it, and I think you might have hit the proverbial nail on the proverbial head there, mate. So let's go back a bit to when Jake and I first arrived at the Ostium Network, and were getting our bearings. While I was also dealing with my memories coming back in a haphazard fashion that was really doing a number on my noggin. We were looking around, checking out the buildings, trying to get a feel for what this place was. Little did we know that my mum was also here doing the same thing, but that's not really important to what I'm talking about here. As Jake and I were looking through the various buildings around here we found lots of pretty normal stuff . . . well, perhaps normal isn't the right word. I guess it would be considered normal within the context of the Ostium Network. But there was lots of unassuming furniture and tech gear that seemed fancy and futuristic to our eyes, but when considered part of the whole of this place at least fit in and made sense with what was going on here, especially in hindsight once we knew what the Ostium Network was.

But we also found some weird and frankly outright unbelievable things that shouldn't have been possible here, but at the time we didn't know otherwise and didn't really know what was going on, so we had no context to rule them as something that doesn't belong. And like so many other things that have come our way with the next upheaval coming round the next corner we didn't have time to process or even completely take in what we'd seen.

I'm talking about the strange things we saw in those three rooms. If you don't know what I mean, then go back and check our recordings; if you do, then you know exactly what I'm about to talk about next.

In one of the rooms Jake and I searched, we found it mostly cleared, with the furniture pushed to the side and a massive pentagram in the center of the room. I don't want to say drawn, because it was more like it had been poured in the shape of a pentagram with white chalk or some other white powder . . . I suppose cocaine is even a possibility, but highly unlikely I should think. We saw it; didn't really know what to think, and moved on.

Another room had a similar situation with some furniture moved out of the way and then in the middle again was this bloody tower of chairs. They looked like they'd been carefully stacked and placed, like some avant garde work of art, or a crazy slash dangerous game of Jenga. But it wasn't till I reached out and touched one of the chairs - much to Jake's displeasure and concern - that we found out they had all been fused or welded together somehow. What the hell was going on here? We didn't have a clue, and we didn't spend any time talking or thinking about it. We just moved on to our next mystery, which was . . . do you remember?

Yep. That weird shower room where the dripping water wasn't just dripping like a crappy old tap, but was actually making a tune, and not just any tune, but Claire de Lune by Claude Debussy. Which happens to be one of the oldest recorded pieces of music I recall, having seen and heard it on a programme. Something that if I'd seen and heard in my own bathroom would've sent me running and screaming, but here at the Ostium Network, we'll just take down it's name and number and get back to it when we have time.

Which has been never. Until now. Now I have time. And I've been mulling on it a lot, on all these enigmas. Plus the thing at the dock, which is this - and again I had to dig through recordings to be sure:

When Jake and I first arrived at the Ostium Network, I was on the ground, mostly out of it. For all intents and purposes, unconscious essentially. Meanwhile Jake was describing what he was seeing, such as a dock and the strange place we were in, including the great big rock of Gibraltar, which was obviously what shocked him the most. But not me, no, it was a line from a little earlier about the dock, and here I'm quoting him:

sfx - [NEED LINE FROM ORIGINAL EPISODE]

"I can see a short dock. Looks sturdy and new. There's a boat tied to it. A really flashy looking motor yacht."

A bloody boat tied up at the bloody dock!

But then I checked the next recording with the two of us and when I finally came to my senses. We were all trying to process everything that was going on and figure out how we were going to deal with it all and that's when the beginnings of the return of my memories started, but Jake again describes the dock. Again, I quote:

sfx - [NEED LINE FROM ORIGINAL EPISODE]

"In front of us is a wooden dock. Solidly built. About thirty feet long. There are stanchions. Looks like a space for one big boat or a couple small ones. But it's presence is very . . . permanent. This dock has been here a while, which means Gibraltar has been this way for some time."

Jake is referencing the fact we have both just come to realize which is that Gibraltar is now an island. But did you notice a certain missing detail there? Yep. No bloody yacht. No boat whatsoever in fact. So where did it go? Or did something happen to Jake? Or was it something that happened to us, just after we arrived here?

I think it might be one or all those things, or it might be something else entirely. Something . . . something much worse that I've only just begun thinking about and I'm not ready to talk about yet. At least not here and now,

as I've been talking too long anyway. But I promise I will next time. And I know it's got something to do with each of the strange things we saw in those rooms. And I know I need to find out what it is that links them all together and finally get to the bottom of all this bloody weirdness.

[END CREDITS]
