

Malevolent Maine

Episode 12: The Mad Splicer

Malevolent Maine is a horror podcast, and may contain material not suitable for all audiences. Listener discretion is advised.

INTRO

A woman destined to roam the blueberry plains for all time. An insidious image that spreads like a disease. And a cranberry bog that claims the life of a new victim every fifteen years. These are the stories we're working on. Your help and support is always welcome. By listening to our show, buying our shirts, and supporting us on Patreon, you're making sure that we can continue to tell your stories for a long time to come.

Don't forget to check the show notes for full credits and links, and keep spreading the word about our show. From Fort Kent, Maine to Fort Wayne, Indiana, from Camden to California, and even as far as Tasmania, we see you guys. Thanks for listening and thanks for believing. We believe you.

A tall man bends over a table bathed in harsh white light with something large on it. He reaches down and tugs on something that gives way with a wet ripping sound. There's the metallic ratchet of something being attached together. The man stands up and wipes his brow, as an eerie green light filters through thousands of liquid-filled glass jars.

This is Malevolent Maine.

Guys, what was that?

I saw it with my own eyes

No, seriously, what was that?

It's just not scientifically possible.

I can't explain it.

Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God.

This stuff is wild, man. It's real wild.

But... what was that?

Alright MMers, today's story we had to stitch together from a couple of different sources. It takes place primarily in Aroostook County, Maine's largest by land mass. We've talked about the County a little in previous episodes, but here's a little background for those of you unfamiliar with the area.

Aroostook County runs along the northern border of the state, neighboring Canada. As of 2020 there was a population of 67,105. With over 6,800 square miles of total area, that's about ten people per square mile. The largest city in the County is Presque Isle, with a population just under 9,000.

It's mostly known for lumber manufacturing, although agriculture, most prominently potatoes, has been a staple of Aroostook County since its incorporation. It was often one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad before it passed into Canada. In more recent years, it has benefited from Cold War era military spending, though as with many things in Maine, that too has begun to wind down.

It is a rural place which prides itself on being just about as far out of the way as you can in the United States. The people are strong, independent hard workers and they're not one for talking out of turn. The people of Aroostook County perfectly reflect our Puritan ancestral beliefs in hard work, dedication, and very little time for the fancier things in life.

So the fact that this story has been brought to our attention says something. There are lots of strange stories coming out of the County, but most of those are from visitors or people returning from a stay up north. This one is different because it's actually coming from the people of Aroostook County.

There's something unsettling about this story, maybe more so than any of our other stories. As you'll soon see, it's not just one story. It's several of them, found over the decades and pieced together like some macabre jigsaw puzzle. If these are the pieces that we know... how many are there out there that we've never found?

The story starts in the summer of 1995, Or at least this piece of it does, in a place called Garfield Plantation, about thirty miles west of Presque Isle. It's a small town, with just under 100 full time residents. As you can imagine there aren't a lot of kids in the area, and those that are, become friends by default.

Addie McPherson was one of those kids. In the summer of 95 she was eleven years old, the perfect age to explore the world around you, finally free from the ever watchful eye of parents, but still unburdened by the coming drama of teenage years.

In a town the size of Garfield Plantation, there isn't much but country roads and backwoods to play in. That summer she had her friends rode their bikes miles just to get together and they mapped out acres of woods. But it was the shed on the edge of Miles Erikson's property, a whopping hundred and fifty acres of mixed farmland and old growth trees, that became the object of their fascination.

"It was just a wooden shed," Addie told me when I sat down with her about a year ago. "Maybe eight by ten, plain wood, one grimy window, and a thick Master padlock on the door."

The kids had been warned by Old Man Erikson, and their own parents, to stay away from the shed. They could play in his

woods as long as they stayed off the old tractors he had scattered around, but if he ever caught them by that old shed he would tan their hides faster than you could say potato pie.

"Of course that only made us want to get in there all the more," Addie told me.

All summer they kept talking about the shed. They kept imagining what could be in there. Was it stolen gold? A serial killer's workshop? Stacks and stacks of nudie magazines? One of Addie's friends, Carl, thought it probably had something gross in there, like the remains of some sick animal. Another friend, Meredith, thought maybe the people of Garfield Plantation had locked someone up in there, maybe a person who had done something really bad, something truly terrible, and had left him to rot.

When they could, they would snoop around the shed, listening for odd sounds or trying to catch a peek at someone going in or out. The shed was always silent and as far as Addie knows, no one ever saw anyone coming or going from the shed.

"There was that one window, though," she said. "It was small, thick glass or maybe it was plexiglass, I don't know. One time, we boosted Carl up so he could look through it, but he said it was so thick with smeared grime that all he could make out was a few shapes, and even that he couldn't tell what he was seeing. Still, that was enough."

Finally, on an August day, the group decided to do something serious about it. Old Man Erikson had headed down to Bangor on some business and would be gone for the day. So they all stole some tools from their father's workbenches. Addie brought a screwdriver and a hammer, Carl brought a crowbar, and another boy, Jimmy, for some inexplicable reason brought a handsaw. They all met up on the edge of the Erikson property and made their final approach together.

They had expected to pop the hinges off the door or pry open the lock, but to their shock, the door was open. Just a crack, as if

someone had left in a hurry and hadn't closed it all the way. Maybe meaning to come back and lock it later.

"My heart was beating so hard in my chest," Addie said.

The children were afraid that someone might be inside and ruin their adventure. As they approached, they all stopped and were silent, listening for any sounds coming from within. The shed was completely still.

It was Addie's friend Carl, he who had peered through the dirty window, that finally approached the door. With the crowbar he had appropriated from his garage, he pushed open the shed door.

Addie said they expected it to screech open, like in a horror movie, but it glided open as silent as the day around them.

"I don't know what we were expecting, but it was clearly the worst," she told us. "I don't know if I thought I was going to see a dead body or that guy from the Silence of the Lambs or what. I remember Meredith actually screamed. Just one short gasp, but it was the only sound for probably miles."

There was nothing sinister inside the shed, at least not at first glance. There were wooden shelves lining three of the shed's walls. These were maybe only six inches deep, and lining the rows and rows of shelves, packed from floor to ceiling were hundreds of glass jars.

"Our first thought was that this was just someone's preserves or whatever," Addie said. "And then the idea crept into our heads that maybe it was moonshine. Maybe Old Man Erikson had some secret distillery around and was storing it in here."

Whatever they believed, it got the kids moving, and together they crept into the shed. One of the kids, Addie couldn't remember his name, stayed by the back and held onto the door frame, probably afraid the door would swing shut and trap them inside.

As they got closer they could see the jars were filled with some sort of liquid. Now convinced this was an old moonshiners hideout, they were quite surprised as they got closer.

"The liquid in the jars was a sort of greenish color," Addie said. "And there were things in those jars. All kinds of strange things. Things I don't think I can even remember or make sense of."

The jars were filled with combinations of parts and pieces from animals. Little tiny eyes, bones, tufts of fur. One jar had a big piece of antler, a long white feather, and what looked like a finger. Another was a bit odd as it had a metal bolt in it, what appeared to be the ear of a wolf or a big cat, and an eye that looked just a little too human. Each one of the jars was marked with the initials, "G.B."

The girls were shocked, but the boys were in awe of the strange mixtures. They couldn't stop oohing and awing over each gruesome concoction. One would pick up a jar and slosh it towards the others, and the others would push them away, and it would start all over. Jimmy was about to scare Carl with one particularly nasty jar full of what looked like teeth, but it slipped out of his hand and shattered all over the floor. After that the kids booked it out of the shed.

Addie said she never wanted to go back to the shed. She didn't want to think about the kind of person that would have a shed like that. Why would they collect all those nasty things? She kept herself up at night thinking about which one of her neighbors, people she had known her whole life, was the one mixing those strange trophies, or if there was some madman who lived in the woods, conducting those horrible experiments.

In the end, Addie never felt comfortable in her hometown. When she was fifteen, she left home, moving in with an aunt who lived in Dover-Foxcroft. She lasted there for two years before moving with a boyfriend to Augusta. She was living in Kittery when we

talked to her, twenty-six years from the summer she and her friends found that horrible collection. She told us she had plans to move even farther south.

"Something was ruined for me that summer," she told me. "If this could be happening in my own backyard, then what other secrets were being kept from me? I felt like I was being watched, all the time. And if someone would keep a shed full of mixed up body parts, what would he do to me if he found out I knew about it?"

What was that odd collection of jars and their gruesome specimens?

Addie said the boys she hung around with, snuck back several more times that summer, but just before school started, they reported that the shed had been emptied. All of its mysterious contents had vanished.

Miles Erikson died in 1999. As far as Addie knew, he had nothing to do with the old shed on the edge of his property. We couldn't find any of Addie's old friends, but we did make a visit to Garfield Plantation. We found the land that had once belonged to Old Man Erikson. The shed was still there, though it had long ago collapsed in on itself. It was just a pile of rotten boards by the time we got there. We tried to sift through them, but they crumbled in our hands. We did find one rusted hinge; it's mounted on the wall above Lucas's desk, but there was no trace of the bizarre specimens in the shed.

The story seemed to end there and for a while we held onto this curious story, wondering what all of those jars had meant and where they had gone. We filed it away with all of the other curios we collect that don't quite make it to our blog or this show.

Then we heard from Keith Makowski. Makowski is an accomplished hunter and outdoorsman. He has hunted all over the state of Maine and even taken several trips out west to hunt various big game. Originally from Bangor, Makowski has spent the last fifty

years hunting the northern Maine woods. He knows many of the best hunting spots in the County, and since his retirement five years ago, he's spent more and more time at his year round camp just outside of Presque Isle. The story he had to tell us is from ten years ago, in the fall of 2012, and it is one he has never forgotten.

Moose hunting in Maine was outlawed from 1935 until 1980 because the population had dropped to dangerous levels. Starting in 1980, Maine began a lottery system for selecting hunters allowed to hunt moose. In 2012, Keith Makowski was selected for the second time in his life.

He had spent decades scouting out the best places to hunt, so he knew right where to go. It was getting towards dusk and Makowski wasn't having much luck. He had seen a small bull but he really wanted to fill his freezer, so he had let it go. Just as he was about to give up he saw a pair of large tracks leading into a nearby thicket of saplings. He quickly followed them, but as he did an uneasy feeling settled into the pit of his stomach; something wasn't right about these footprints. The pattern of the footfalls was wrong for a moose. Whatever this creature was, it only walked on two legs. Makowski laughed to himself and was fairly certain another moose hunter was pranking him, or maybe these fake hoofprints were meant to steer novice hunters away from the prime real estate. Either way, after the initial jolt of anticipation at discovering the tracks, Makowski felt like he had been duped.

But luck still seemed to be on his side. Makowski heard something large rustling through the brush nearby and when he looked up he saw the large antlers of a moose weaving in and out of the saplings just up ahead. The antlers were pretty high up and had a great spread. makowski guessed if he could bag it, it would be big enough to fill a couple of freezers, so he began to stalk the beast, hoping to get a good broadside shot on it.

There was a clearing in the thicket of saplings, and Makowski hoped the moose would wander back into his view. He knelt down

near the end of the thicket and got ready for when the moose made its exit. As he waited, he could hear the moose moving off, away from him. He could see the brown fur of the beast and the wide rack of antlers moving in and out of the foliage. Makowski knew that if he didn't take a shot now, the moose might disappear into the woods, but if he fired and missed, the creature would bolt

He looked down the barrel of his hunting rifle, focusing on a spot just below where he had last spied the giant pair of antlers. He held his breath, then squeezed the trigger.

The crack of the rifle was deafening. "It was like a roll of thunder tearing through the empty woods," he wrote to us. "Or like an earthquake. It felt like the whole world of the woods had been split open."

In the seconds after the gunshot's echo reverberated through the forest, silence descended on the forest. It's nearly impossible to tell if you've hit an animal by sound alone, so at first Makowski didn't know if he'd been successful. Then the scream split the air.

"I knew it wasn't right," he told us. "As soon as I heard it, I knew whatever it was, wasn't a moose."

Anyone who has hunted long enough has heard the frantic screams of an animal not shot cleanly. It's not anything to be proud of, but it's a reality of hunting. Sometimes a shot misses its mark, an animal jumps at just the right moment or a hunter pulls the shot at the last second. The painful screams of the wounded creature stay with you, but the best thing you can do is put it out of its misery as quickly as you can. Despite being unnerved by the alien sounds issuing from the dying creature, Makowski entered the thicket.

What he saw next was unexpected. There was the head, large, black eyed, with a towering set of antlers, maybe six feet wide, covered in the soft brown fur of a Maine moose. But attached to

that head was the long gangly torso and legs of a human man. The skin was mottled and gray, a bright splash of dark crimson spreading across its abdomen.

As Makowski approached the creature it tried to rise, pushing its wounded body up onto its arms and legs. From its back, two giant, twisted wings flapped weakly. They had been white once, Makowski was sure, but they were dingy and stained pink with the drying creature's blood.

The creature cried out again. It wasn't human, but to Makowski's ears it sounded as if a moose were trying to speak English, or some other human language. Makowski said it was the worst sound he's ever heard.

He knew what he had to do, but as he looked down at the strange creature, his arms grew heavy, and his rifle slipped from his grip. He watched in horror as the creature tried to rise up on legs that would no longer support it. He guessed it would be around nine feet tall when it stood on its legs, which he noted, ended in the cloven hooves of a moose. As he stared, it collapsed back to the ground.

"It looked up at me," Makowski told us in an interview, "with those big, black eyes, and I felt...I felt something break inside of me. Something I know will never repair itself."

That's when Makowski ran. But not before he saw something clipped to one of the moose-creature's ears. It was a metal tag, not much smaller than the little charm on a dog collar. It was stamped with the initials "G.B."

Makowski ran off through the woods, leaving behind his hunting rifle and the dying impossible creature, some sort of modern day chimera or hybrid. He ran blindly and it was sometime before he could figure out where he was. He found his way back to his camp, and said he didn't leave for another four days.

Eventually he summoned up enough courage to go back into the woods and try to find the creature he had seen. He made his way back to the sapling thicket and found his rifle, still laying on the earth where he had left it. Of the strange, wounded creature, there was no sign.

As unbelievable as Keith Makowski's story is, there is at least some precedent in Maine Abenaki mythology. The Pamola is a thunder god said to live on the summit of Mount Katahdin, Maine's tallest mountain. It was said to have the head of a moose, body of a man, and the wings of an eagle.

Is it possible Makowski shot this Abenaki spirit? And what of that peculiar tag attached to the creature's ear with the mysterious initials, "G.B."?

We searched our archives and some of those of our peers and were intrigued to find another story about G.B. This one was from 1987 in the area north of Millinocket. It came to us from Marty Alcock, a seventy-five year old snowmobile enthusiast. Alcock told us the story two years ago, just about the time the world shut down because of the Covid-19 pandemic. We exchanged a series of emails with Alcock from his home in Millinocket, but were unable to set up an interview with him. Alcock passed away in 2021, but his story lives on through our notes.

Alcock, as near as we could determine, had been snowmobiling in the area around Millinocket for nearly his entire life. He belonged to a snowmobile club, the Millinocket Rippahs, and in his time he'd met lots of fellow riders. But one man in particular always sticks out in Alcock's mind. "He never introduced himself" Alcock told us, "we passed him on the trail one time back in 1984. He was tall, and even bundled up, it was pretty clear he was a skinny guy. Older guy. Maybe sixty-sixty, five."

The man stood on the side of the trail. Alcock assumed he must have hiked out of the woods from somewhere nearby because there was no sign of a snowmobile, which was strange as they were

about twenty miles from the closest house. Alcock and his friends stopped to see if the man needed help, but he didn't seem interested in anything but their snow machines. The man spent a long time studying and asking questions about his Arctic Cat snowmobile.

Alcock told us, "I walked him through how it worked, basic engine stuff. He asked me to rev the engine for him, and every time I did he would shake his head. He muttered a lot to himself. Said he liked the idea but the sound was all wrong. Then he just walked off."

Marty Alcock didn't see the mystery man again for several years. Although his white hair had grown long and lanky, Marty quickly recognized the man the next time he appeared beside the same trail. Alcock told us the man was easy to recognize because he had a large hooked nose and one of his eyes seemed too large for his head. He said it bulged out, as if the man was always staring closely at something. He wanted to show Alcock and his fellow riders his new snow machine, and in Alcock's own words it was, "a real beaut." It was similar in style to Alcock's own Arctic Cat but was larger, and when the odd man revved the engine it sounded much different than your average snowmobile. It made a guttural sound, like a growl, that rose a howl when the throttle was wide open.

"He was proud of it, that was sure," Alcock said. The man followed them down the trail all day, but was still standoffish. He didn't introduce himself this time either, didn't really talk to them except to ask questions. He wouldn't say where he got the machine or what made it sound like it did. He rode with the men for a while, maybe thirty minutes. Then he parted ways with the men never saying a word. He simply fell behind the group, turned off on a side trail, and was gone.

But this wasn't the last time Alcock saw the strange man. He saw him again while on a solo ride in 1987, and this is where the story gains its relevance to our investigation. Alcock was riding along the trail and saw smoke in the distance. As he

approached he recognized the strange man's snow machine. The snowmobile was belching black smoke into the air but the man wasn't anywhere nearby. Alcock stopped, concerned for the man and looking to help. He approached the snowmobile, cautious that it might burst into flames at any moment.

After a moment, the smoke died down, and Alcock ventured to pop the hood. He was expecting the usual cluster of metal parts, but the insides of that thing weren't like anything he had ever seen before. The inside of the Arctic Cat appeared to be mostly a fleshy substance. With a tentative hand, Alcock reached out and pressed a finger against the snowmobile's insides. It was warm to the touch and felt like skin.

As he held his hand against it, he could feel a rapid thumping in it, almost like a pulse but faster than any living creature should have. As he held his hand there the snowmobile gave a growl like Alcock had heard when the strange man was riding it the few years prior. It sounded like a cougar or a mountain lion, trapped inside the snow machine. Stamped into the fleshy substance, like a bran, were the initials, "G.B."

Then Alcock heard a shout behind him and stepped away from the mysterious machine. The tall man was coming down the hill with what looked like a doctor's bag and a bunch of tools under his arm. He shouted at Alcock again, told him to get away from his Arctic Cat. Marty Alcock didn't need any more motivation, so he ran back to his snowmobile and sped away.

It was Lucas who put all of the pieces together, and if he wasn't out on assignment this week, he would be the one explaining how he came to his conclusions.

We started to see a pattern that reached all the way back to that first story, the one Addie McPherson told about breaking into the mysterious shed filled with strange jars. It was when we went back and looked at her descriptions of the jars that things began to click.

One of the jars, and she was very specific about this, contained a piece of moose antler, a white feather, and a human finger. A moose, a bird, and a man. It sounds an awful lot like pieces of the Pamola or the creature Keith Makowski spied in the woods. Which, if you recall, was tagged with the same initials that appeared on those jars in the shed.

Then there was the Arctic Cat, the snowmobile that sounded like a wild animal, and looked *living* under the hood. Addie described to us a jar full of metal bolts, a cat's ear, and what she assumed as a human eye. Could it be the pieces of the snow machine Marty Alcock encountered not once, but twice?

We don't know where or when it started, but we began calling the tall man, who we assumed was G.B. the Mad Splicer. It's a corny, but it seemed to fit the bigger picture we were developing. This man, some sort of scientist or engineer was combining pieces of wildly different things into new constructions, splicing together the parts he desired, casting away the ones he didn't.

So what can we make of those jars in the shed? The body parts and odd pieces of metalwork floating in green liquid could be nothing more than trophies, meant to symbolize the Mad Splicer's accomplishments. Then again, they could be the solution from which he grew his monstrous creations. Without any evidence, it's hard to say. But we keep thinking about that jar filled with teeth that little Carl dropped all over the shed floor. What horrific creature could that have spawned?

Is there a modern day Dr. Frankenstein running around Aroostook County? It's difficult to say. So we will leave you with this final story. It was reported in the *Bangor Tribune* June 13, 2022, just a few months ago.

In it a man was stopped from boarding a plane at the Bangor International Jetport. He refused to hand over his carry-on luggage for the customary scan. When TSA officials confronted the man, he became quite agitated, cursing and muttering obscenities under his breath. Fearing the worst, the officials

got into a bit of a scuffle with the man, in an attempt to take possession of the luggage, in this case a small carry-on suitcase.

A zipper must have come open in the struggle and something slid out and smashed to the ground. It was a glass specimen jar. Inside had been a small amount of greenish liquid, a tooth that was later identified as belonging to a black bear, a lobster claw, and sixty-five strands of blonde human hair.

The man snatched back his bag and fled the scene. Police are still looking for him. He was set to board a flight to Munich, Germany. He has no known residence, though several different locations in northern Maine, all fictitious or abandoned appear on various forms of ID he used to procure his plane tickets. His name is listed as Gideon Barlow. G. B.

If you are exploring the north Maine woods, whether to snowmobile, hunt, fish, or anything else, be advised. More of the Mad Splicer's inhuman creations could be running around in the hidden parts of our state. Or you may encounter the Splicer himself, taking notes, studying, and preparing for his next dreadful concoction. Stay safe out there, Maine.

Malevolent Maine is Lucas Knight, Tom Wilson, and myself, Chris Estes.

If you'd like to read more about our investigations check out our website at malevolentmaine.blogspot.com/

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Thank you for listening to Malevolent Maine.

And as always, stay safe out there, Maine.