

Malevolent Maine

Episode 18: Flight 129

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

INTRO

A so-called lycanthrope who roams the forests around North Monmouth. And a pop up midnight cinema whose showings may mess with the mind. These are the last two episodes we have coming up this season.

We investigate the strange and the unexplained and present it to you. Through your generous time and support we've been able to expand our investigations and shine a light in the darker corners of our state. Make sure to follow us on social media, to share this show with your friends and family, and if you're able, join our Malevolent Mob at www.patreon.com/malevolentmaine. There you'll discover early episodes, extras that don't make the final cut, and exclusive content, like our side story, *The Black Tarot*. This week we want to give a special shout out to Malevolent Mob member, Alden Fouraker.

The plane rumbles slightly beneath your seat, the gentle hum of the engines is relaxing white noise. Suddenly you hear a gasp from a few seats ahead of you. You open your eyes and look out the window. What is that? A cloud of swirling colors? They're like nothing you've ever seen before. And... are they moving? Undulating might be the right word. And they're coming right towards you.

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?

The sky's the limit with this one, MMers. Today's story might just be Maine's most unexplained phenomenon. We're talking, of course, about Flight 129.

The events of our story take place in 1976, making this story over forty years old, but it is a case that remains unsolved to this day.

Flying Eyes Flight 129 left Boston on July 13th, 1976 at 10:15 PM. The flight had been chartered by the military to transport several troops and their families to Loring Air Force Base in Limestone, Maine. On board were twenty-seven soldiers and their families for a total of 68 passengers, as well as ten crew members. It was a routine flight, one taken multiple times by the Flying Eyes crew, who were often used to transport troops.

Loring Air Force Base was constructed in 1947 just outside of Limestone and Caribou in Aroostook County. It was one the largest air force bases upon its completion, and served as a heavy bomber, aerial refueling, and interception facility for most of its existence. The site was chosen because it was the

closest point in the continental United States to Europe, making it a strategic location during the Cold War.

Just over 6,00 people lived on the base, which included troops and their families. By 1976 the base was falling into disrepair. It was estimated that it would take 300 million dollars to upgrade Loring, and a long debate on the base's importance finally culminated in the base's closure on September 30, 1994.

Flying Eyes was a private company, often hired by the military to transport troops from Boston to Loring. It closed in 1985, but through most of the 70s it maintained a fleet of a dozen propliner planes chartered for private flights.

Flight 129 was captained by Stephen Gregory, a veteran pilot of twenty years. His co-pilot was Jim Coogans. Both of them had impeccable flying records. Gregory noted that the night was clear, visibility was great, and there was no turbulence. The flight itself was just over sixty minutes and Flight 129 should have touched down somewhere around 11:30 PM. Instead, it was never seen again.

The last radio transmission from Gregory was brief, but ominous. To this day no one knows exactly what it means. Here's his final transmission, in full:

GREGORY: "We're at 35K. Clear skies. Moon looks amazing. We're over... what is that Jim... Moosehead Lake on our left. We should be - hey, what is that? What the hell is that? I've never seen colors like that before. My mind. It's inside my mind. And it's so small. And so big. I can see it all. I can see forever. The beginning. The end. It's all right here. I think... I think we're going. Tell June... tell her I love her-"

This was at 10:59 PM. It was the last communication from anyone aboard Flight 129.

The plane never landed in Limestone. No wreckage or remains of the plane were ever found anywhere along its flight path, somewhere just northeast of Monson, Maine. For years both professional and amateur sleuths have scoured the entire state looking for any trace of the missing plane. No trace of the seventy-eight people about Flight 129 has ever been found.

The official story is that Gregory must have gotten turned around somehow. Perhaps a faulty meter indicated they were higher than they believed. They most likely crashed into one of the mountains in the region, including Maine's tallest, Mt. Katahdin. This has never been confirmed, of course, and no evidence to support this has ever been discovered.

So what did Stephen Gregory and Jim Coogans see that night? What were those colors that defied words? And where did the passengers go? Some have speculated that aliens attacked the plane.

Maine has a very storied history with alien and ufo experiences. In the past forty years there have been over one thousand sightings.

Perhaps the most famous is the so-called Allagash Abductions, which took place, perhaps not so coincidentally on August 31, 1976. That night, four men who were canoeing on Big Eagle Lake, claimed to have been abducted and experimented on by extraterrestrials. Ray Fowler, a renowned UFO researcher and author wrote an incredible book based on his research into this case in 1993's, *The Allagash Abductions*.

Recently declassified information has confirmed that there was UFO activity in the area around Loring Air Force Base for a good deal of the 50s, 60s, and 70s. These accounts led to the government's investigation into unidentified flying phenomena, Project Blue Book.

It can't be a coincidence that just six weeks before the Allagash Four were abducted, in an area known for UFO activity, Flight 129 would experience something unexplained.

Could aliens have captured the plane or perhaps shot it down somewhere northeast of Greenville? It's possible, maybe even probable. The strange colors pilot, Stephen Gregory, saw could have been the weapons system of an alien craft or perhaps some sort of indicators along its hull.

But that doesn't explain the remarkable discovery made in 2018.

There were forty-one civilian passengers aboard Flight 129, the family members of the soldiers who were to be stationed at Loring. Among the missing were 21 children, many of them under the age of ten.

One of those children, Lisa Woodward, was eight years old when Flight 129 vanished. She was the daughter of Andrew Woodward who was set to join the 2192nd Communications Squadron. Like everyone aboard Flight 129, Lisa Woodward disappeared completely. No trace of her was ever discovered, and her last known communication was a picture she handed to her maternal grandparents right before she boarded the doomed flight.

In the picture, Lisa is holding hands with her grandparents, Bill and Judy Ridley. In the sky is a bright yellow sunshine as well as a rainbow. In big, sprawling letters, Lisa signed her name at the bottom. The Riddleys kept the picture, as well as hope to one day find some answers about what happened to their daughter and her family. When they died, Judy in 2008, and Bill in 2011, the picture passed to their son, Jordan Ridley, who sent a picture of the drawing. He says he keeps it framed on the wall of his office.

"Shannon was the kindest woman I ever knew," Jordan Ridley said about his sister in an interview with the *Portland Tribune* in 2012. "She was an amazing sister and mother, and it makes me so sad to think she and Andrew never got to see Lisa grow up into

the beautiful, intelligent woman she would have become. We don't know what happened to them. Maybe we'll never know what happened to them, but it breaks my heart that they're gone."

The disappearance of Lisa Woodward and her parents is one of many tragedies connected to the disappearance of Flight 129. But in 2018 investigators made a startling discovery in the Australian Outback that seemed to defy logic.

The Outback is a remote, sparsely populated area of Australia that extends from the northern to the southern coastline. It's often depicted as an empty arid region, which portions of it definitely are. It was in the Great Victoria Desert portion of the Outback where authorities became aware of a woman living alone in the wilds of the desert. When they finally tracked down and spoke with the woman she told them her name was Lisa Woodward.

The woman in the desert lived in a small hut she had constructed from driftwood and what appeared to be animal skins. It did not seem old, perhaps several weeks by the best guess of those involved with the case. The woman was twenty-two years old, wearing clothing made out of animal skin and sandals made of wood and leather. Forensics could not determine what kind of wood nor what kind of animal leather was used in their construction.

She was apparently living alone, surviving off the land, subsisting on whatever meager game she could trap and collected rainwater. She was dirty, slightly undernourished, but otherwise healthy.

The young woman, who claimed to be the missing Lisa Woodward, told the Australian authorities that she had no idea how she had come to be in the Outback or how long she had been there. She seemed quite confused by not only the questions or the investigators but her surroundings. She kept asking for someone named Tim.

Now, we have to tell you that it would be impossible for the Lisa Woodward who went missing in 1976 to turn up alive and well in 2018 looking no more than 22 years old. Lisa Woodward was eight years old when she disappeared with the rest Flight 129. In 2018 she should have been fifty years old. The woman taken into custody in Australia was significantly younger, and yet there was something about her interview that bothered the authorities.

For one thing she seemed to have knowledge of the people aboard Flight 129. She frequently mentioned Andrew and Shannon Woodward, the parents of the missing girl. She mentioned Stephen Gregory and several other members of Flight 129 by name, including Timothy Fredericks, a twelve year old boy who had also been on the doomed flight.

When questioned further she seemed to have intimate knowledge of the missing flight, including weather conditions and specific conversations she said took place on the plane.

The woman claiming to be Lisa Woodward spoke with an American accent and seemed completely shocked by modern technology like computers and cell phones. She had no identification on her, but when authorities asked her to sign her name, after some reluctance or difficulty, she managed to scrawl her name on a piece of paper.

When the Australian authorities reached out to the U.S. Embassy in hopes of identifying the woman - who they assumed was deranged and perhaps obsessed with the missing Maine flight - they discovered new information that shocked them to their core.

Like many of the families of the missing, Lisa's grandparents, and later her uncle continued to hold out hope that the missing flight had somehow landed safely, perhaps hijacked by terrorists, and that the passengers had survived somewhere. Lisa Woodward's image had been run through age approximation software multiple times over the years. American authorities were able to

get ahold of one of the images, showing what Lisa Woodward would have looked like at age 20.

When the Australian police received the image they compared it to the woman in their custody. They were surprised to find that the woman living in the Outback looked almost identical to the computer generated image of the missing girl.

Lisa Woodward was too young to have any official identification before she disappeared. Authorities attempted to match the handwriting sample she had given them with anything that would connect her to the missing girl. One of the only samples they could find was the framed picture Lisa had given her grandparents.

Experts were unable to confirm anything based on the limited handwriting samples, but one of the examiners reported that he did see several consistencies in letter formation, though the signature provided by the woman in Australia appeared to be by someone unskilled or perhaps out of practice with writing.

In an attempt to get the truth out of the mysterious woman, authorities began questioning her about the disappearance of Flight 129.

The woman calling herself Lisa Woodward explained how she had been unable to sleep on the flight and had been looking out the window. She was a bright flash in the sky and saw what she could only describe as a cloud of rainbow light pulsing in the sky. She said the colors were like nothing she had ever seen before. There were no words to describe the undulating mass of color, though new words popped into her head only to disappear as soon as the color shifted.

She said the light surrounded the plane, then seemed to suffuse it. She said she felt herself filling with the shifting light. She closed her eyes and when she opened them again everything had changed.

She said she remembered hearing the alarms as the plane suddenly began to dive out of the sky. The pilot, Stephen Gregory was able to gain enough control to land the plane, but what the passengers saw as they exited was something that defied explanation.

The woman who identified as Lisa Woodward described the sky as being a green color, like fresh grass. They were in some sort of field, but it and the trees in the distance were shades of red. In the distance a flock of something that vaguely resembled the shape of birds flew lazily across the sky, but Lisa said they were like no birds she had ever seen.

She believed they had traveled to another world, though her eight year old brain was fully capable of understanding that at the time. The bright colored lights had transported them to a world vastly different from the one they had left.

She said they spent the first night camping in the shadow of the downed plane. In the morning they discovered four people - including co-pilot, Jim Coogins, had gone missing. A search revealed the mutilated bodies of two of them - Coogins, and a woman named Susannah Harriman - about a mile from the plane. Over the next several days, as the members of Flight 129 sought a more permanent shelter, ten more people were killed in the night. Not all of their bodies were recovered, but no sign of them was ever seen again.

"There were restless things in the dark," Lisa told the authorities. "Hungry things. We never saw them, but we heard them. They whispered to one another in the night."

Eventually, the woman claimed, the passengers found a cave on the side of a mountain. There, using some of the equipment they had brought from the plane, as well as weapons they fashioned along the way, they were able to secure shelter.

Lisa said they lived in the cave system, and the small camp they were able to construct around the mouth of the cave, for the

next fourteen years. She said they were able to carve out a living in the harsh land, though there were dangers everywhere. She said there were at least twenty babies born during their time there, but three of them died in childbirth.

Eventually, she had a young man she identified as Timothy Fredericks become hunters for the group. They would often range far during the day, looking for more of the strange bird-like things they ate. They also gathered something they called cornberries, because they looked like red ears of corn growing on low bushes.

She claimed it was Tim, who was also her lover, who discovered the small cave behind a black waterfall. In the cave they found a small cloud of those shifting glowing colors like the one that had brought them here. She said they held hands and reached out together to touch it.

The next thing Lisa recalled she was alone in the desert where authorities found her. She wasn't sure how long she had been there - long enough to construct a crude shelter - or how long she had been gone from Earth. She had no idea where Timothy Fredericks was.

She reported that many members of Flight 129 were still alive on this other world. Fourteen years had passed for them, and the world could be a very cruel one, so several had perished. She was able to give a list of names - Todd Knowles, John Alcorn, and Sara Gladwell among others, who had died. All of those names corresponded with someone on Flight 129 at the time of its disappearance.

She didn't know how she had returned home, but she knew she needed to get back. Her friends and family were still there, including a younger brother and sister born after Flight 129's arrival. She wanted to get back to them to make sure they were safe.

Australian authorities prepared to deport the woman back to America, but before they could, she escaped from custody. Police tracked her back to the desert hut she had constructed. There they found it fully engulfed in fire. Footprints of the woman lead directly to the hut, and authorities concluded she entered the temporary shelter she had constructed and burned it down with herself inside.

There are inconsistencies with this conclusion, however. First, no remains of the woman claiming to be Lisa Woodward were ever recovered from the burned down hut. In a fire as relatively small as the shack Lisa had constructed, with limited fuel, the body should not have been completely consumed. However, Australian authorities never discovered any human remains inside the shack.

Search teams located no tracks leading away from the burning hut, indicating that either Lisa never left or that she completely covered her tracks. The belief that a woman with few resources could completely elude trained officials seems highly improbable.

To this day the case of "Lisa Woodward" remains unsolved despite several attempts to locate the woman.

It should be noted that the official story regarding the woman found living in the Australian desert was a disturbed individual who believed herself to be the missing Lisa Woodward, but the facts simply don't support that, mainly the large age discrepancy between the actual woman and who she claimed to be.

But what if the woman was telling the truth? Is it possible that Flight 129 left from Boston, Massachusetts and crossed over into an alternate reality somewhere over Maine?

If so, this strange world of green skies and red trees appears to run on a different time than our own reality. While nearly forty years had passed since Flight 129 vanished, Lisa had only aged fourteen years. Children were born and several of the

passengers lost their lives, but many of the original passengers were still alive when Lisa was taken into custody in 2018.

And then there's the fact that the Lisa Woodward found in the Outback had very detailed information about the passengers on the flight. Many of the names and appearances she could have gleaned from news stories done on the missing people over the years, however she did offer up several pieces of information that would have been harder to come by.

For example, Lisa Woodward told investigators that Shelley DuPaul, one of the flight attendants, died after eating a small rabbit-like creature the hunters had caught. No one else died, but DuPaul's face and neck swelled up. DuPaul managed to tell the others that she had an allergy to shellfish before succumbing to anaphylaxis. Lisa said the passengers concluded that somehow the rabbit creatures were more fish than mammal and were careful bringing them around people with known allergies.

When contacted, Shelley DuPaul's sister, Myra, did confirm that DuPaul was allergic to the shellfish, something that had never been brought up by the press.

There were several other small stories about lesser known details about several of the other passengers. These would be difficult, though not impossible, to have uncovered.

Which brings us to Timothy Fredericks, the man, Lisa Woodward said she was romantically involved with. He was several years older than Woodward when they left Boston in 1976. Lisa claimed that the two were seeing each other at the time of their return to Earth and would have eventually married, though not too many people where they were gave the idea of marriage much thought. When questioned by authorities to prove she knew Fredericks, Lisa initially grew embarrassed. She eventually confessed that Fredericks had a port-wine stain birthmark on his upper left thigh.

Interestingly enough, after digging through several boxes of photographs collecting dust in Timothy Fredericks' grandparents' garage, we uncovered a photograph of him at six months old. He's in a tub, a healthy, chubby baby. He's smiling and got a fist raised in the air. It's not a picture that would ever have been published in the papers at the time or later in any online forum, but clearly visible on the bubbling baby's upper thigh is a birthmark, just like the woman calling herself Lisa described.

Is this proof that the woman in the Outback was the missing Lisa Woodward? Not exactly, but we tend to believe in the possibility rather than to dismiss it. How else would this woman know these intimate details of the missing passengers?

If it was Lisa Woodward, where did she go after escaping captivity? Could she have found a way back to the world she claims she lived on for the past forty year...or fourteen... years? Why did she burn down her hut? And where did Timothy Fredericks go when Lisa transported back to Earth?

She maintained they were holding hands when they touched the glowing lights. If he appeared somewhere else on Earth, he has never been found. Perhaps, years from now explorers will uncover the remains of a man in Antarctica or a remote section of the Amazon rainforest. Or perhaps, even more tragic, he appeared somewhere over or beneath the ocean, in which case he will most likely never be recovered.

But just as realistically, is the chance that Timothy Fredericks went... *somewhere else*. Multiverse theory claims there is an infinite number of not just worlds, but entire realities, with billions upon billions of planets. It is highly likely that if Timothy Fredericks wasn't teleported alongside Lisa Woodward, then he was sent somewhere completely different and unknowable.

One last note about the sudden appearance and disappearance of Lisa Woodward. In the remains of her burned down hut, investigators found a piece of metal that had been shaped into a rough blade or spear tip. They theorized that it had perhaps

been tied to a wooden pole that was consumed in the fire. Their report also indicated that the metal was consistent with the aluminum used in aircraft.

If Flight 129 slipped into another reality it may be nearly impossible to contact them, let alone reach them. Lisa Woodward claimed that the glowing mass of odd-colored lights served as the doorway between our world and the alien one they were sent to. Perhaps these are thin spots in reality or portals to unknown worlds. If so, it appears these are almost impossible to find or track. The only confirmed reports of one of these colorful clouds is the final transmission from Captain Stephen Gregory, right before Flight 129 disappeared. If these are doorways to other worlds, there's no telling where or when one might show up again.

It has been almost forty-five years since Flight 129 disappeared and the families of the missing still have no answers, and they may never get them. But, if the survivors of Flight 129 are out there somewhere, on some foreign world with green skies and a strange blue sun, we wish them well. They have survived this long, but we can't help remembering the words Lisa Woodward told the authorities: "There were restless things in the dark. Hungry things."

Stay safe out there, Maine.

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

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

While there, don't forget to check our merch store. And, if you're so inclined, support us on Patreon at patreon.com/malevolentmaine

Thank you for listening to Malevolent Maine.

And as always, stay safe out there, Maine.

