

Malevolent Maine

Episode 29: Genius Party

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

INTRO:

LUCAS: A road home to over fifty-six distinct and independent ghosts. A brothel haunted by the spirits of the women who worked there. And an underground cave complex in northern Maine that may hide an ancient evil. Keep tuning in to hear these and more stories we're working on.

Hey it's Lucas, and before we start this episode, I wanted to give a special shout out to our newest member of the Malevolent Mob, Becky Vigue. Becky has been a loyal Believer of *Malevolent Maine* and recently joined our Malevolent Mob over at Patreon. If you'd like to help us out by making a small financial contribution to help us keep investigating the odd and the strange, head over to patreon.com/malevolentmaine.

Don't forget to like and follow us on social media, check out our website, or make a purchase from our merch store. We're almost to the halfway point of this season, but we've got a lot of amazing stuff coming up that you're not going to want to miss. And remember, if you have a story that you think would be great for our show, contact us on social media, email, or through the form on our website. We believe you.

The jarring notes of the piano seem out of place with the spinning colored lights and bright hip hop drum loops. Suddenly, the DJ reverses the track and the harsh, off key notes suddenly

turn into something... *else*. The music is almost hypnotic and you fill with a quivering, almost electric energy. An image forms in your mind and you *need* to write it down before it's gone. It doesn't matter that there's nothing to write with or on. You'll find something. Your own arm looks good enough.

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?

This one might make your head spin, MMers. Today's story takes us all the way back to the year 1999. For our younger listeners who may not remember this was the time when the singing toy fish, Big Mouth Billy Bass was all the rage, Smash Mouth's All Star was just a hit song that had nothing to do with *Shrek*, and everyone was playing Tony Hawk's Pro Skater and Final Fantasy VII on their PlayStations. On top of that the dreaded Y2K was fast approaching and everyone was worried that the end of the world was rapidly approaching.

In early October of that year, Miles Beal of Falmouth, invited his classmates to his sixteenth birthday party. His parents had rented out a local function hall, complete with a catered meal

and a dance floor. Miles himself was going to DJ a portion of the party.

"I had the whole set up," Miles told us. "A couple of Pioneer CDJ-1000 controllers," - those are cd players with jog wheels for controlling the playback of digital audio files, for those who are unaware. "I even had my dad's old turntable, you know, a record player," he continued. "And a huge stack of CDs. I had been mixing for a little while. Everyone was really into it, you know? I was a really good DJ. I thought I would mix some of my dad's old records in. Like, the old school scratching thing."

That's when things got interesting. Picture twenty teenagers dressed in what passed for the coolest outfits of the day, dancing to Backstreet Boys, Will Smith, Christina Aguilera and more, while Miles Beal cross-faded and remixed hits at the small Dj booth they had set up at the front of the dance floor.

Miles mixes in some dance hits of the 80s and his fellow teenagers indulge him - one of his classmates we spoke to told us Miles wasn't nearly as good as he thought he was. That's when he saw it, a loose record at the back of the wooden box where Miles's father had stored his vinyl records.

"It was black," Miles said, as we sat across from him at his parents' home in Yarmouth. It's been over twenty years, but he still remembers that record. "I mean, they're all black, right? But the label in the center was black too. There wasn't anything written on it except, 'Adolphus Winn,' which I thought was weird because that was my great-grandfather's name."

Adolphus Winn was born in 1895 in Portland, Maine. He was the son of a ship-builder and a seamstress, and one of seven children, all boys. From a young age, he was fascinated by music and soon began writing his own songs on the small piano his family owned. As a young man he quickly became an accomplished composer and musician. He released several compositions which had gained him some acclaim, but by 1917 he largely disappeared from public life.

No one knew why the driven young musician secluded himself, but he would disappear for long periods of time only to emerge with a new composition. It was said he was a rising star in the world of music and it was only a matter of time before New York, London, or Paris caught wind of him and snatched him away.

Some time around 1923, however, Winn released a composition that drew the ire of many in the music industry. It was so vastly different from his previous works and so counter to everything that was considered popular at the time. He quickly followed it up with a second piece that could be described as experimental at best.

Suddenly, any goodwill that Winn had built up evaporated and he became an object of derision and his eccentricities, instead of being tolerated, were mocked.

Adolphus Winn removed himself from public life even further, and ceased performing his music in public at all. He continued to compose and record music by himself though he rarely played it for anyone, not even friend or family. By the 1930s he had embraced the latest technological advancement in recording technology - vinyl recordings. He began pressing his own private collections of music. These very rarely saw the light of day; no one, outside of a few close individuals ever heard an Adolphus Winn composition again.

Upon his death in 1968, his family attempted to donate his music to someone who could appreciate it - a college or library perhaps, but many of the recordings were, quote, "unlistenable." They were full of discordant notes, abrasive arrangements, and often featured a jangled assortment of instruments. They were, to be honest, completely worthless to anyone aside from their composer.

No one knows where those private recordings went, but some were obviously kept by the family. It is not impossible to find an

Adolphus Winn recording, though aside from his more early work, there is very little reason to.

Miles Beal's father, Michael had found the record in his parents' home when he was cleaning it out after their passing. He knew he was a descendant of the once accomplished musician and figured the record was a sort of family heirloom. Unsure what else to do with it, he shelved the black record away with the rest of his vinyl.

Miles told me he doesn't remember the black record feeling any different than any other record despite it being over sixty years old. He says when he thinks back on it now however, he imagines it must have felt like ice, the kind that instantly burns with its intense chill, but that most likely is a figment of his imagination. He told me he had no way of knowing what would happen when he put the record on.

Miles said he thought it might be something he could mix with a more popular song of the time or maybe even freestyle to. At the time he considered himself something of a rapper, though he now admits he probably wasn't that good.

Words don't come easy to Miles Beal. Many times during our interview he had to stop to gather his thoughts. Other times it appeared he had to nearly physically force a specific word to come out. He is nearly forty these days. His black hair shot with more gray than you might expect. His chin and cheeks are covered with a few days' worth of wispy hairs. He lives with his parents because, as he is keen to admit, he's not capable of taking care of himself.

"I just can't do it," he told me. "I'll forget things. Important things. Like to shut off the stove or even to eat at all. Sometimes I'll forget to go to sleep and just stay awake for days at a time. It's like..."

And that's where he lost his train of thought. For a moment he just stared at him from across the table, unsure of what we had

been talking about. He looked at me as if waiting for me to ask him a question.

"I did it again, didn't I?" he said, probably noticing my quizzical expression. "It happens a lot. You know, it's like I can still hear that music. That black record. It's in my head. I know that, but when I hear it, I can't think of anything else. It takes me away. I'm lost in those notes until they stop and let me come back."

Miles started spinning the record, but it was, in his own words, "weird piano music." It didn't have a flow to it or a rhythm. It was like someone banging hard on the keys, but somehow worse. Miles made a split decision then that changed the course of not only his own life, but the rest of the teenagers at the party. Miles decided to spin the record backwards to see if that sounded better.

When the sixteen-year old would-be DJ played the record backwards that's when everything changed.

"They all stopped dancing," Miles says. "They just stood there. Then they... they just went crazy."

At the moment Miles played the black record, all of the adults had been outside, grabbing a quick smoke break and getting ready to bring more food into the party. They were spared from what came next. The twenty teenage guests on the dancefloor were not so lucky.

Upon hearing Adolphus Winn's music played in reverse, they immediately froze. They all stared up at Miles at the DJ booth, seemingly transfixed by the warbling, distorted tune. Miles said he didn't notice at first because he was busy queuing up his next song, but when he looked up and saw all of his friends frozen, he felt his stomach drop out.

Then as one, the gathered teenagers burst into motion, running around the function hall. They all grabbed for things to write

with and started scribbling furiously. When they couldn't find pens and pencils, they grabbed whatever they could find. One boy used the frosting from the three tier birthday cake. A girl used a knife to scratch into the wood floor. Several of the teenagers tore into their own flesh and used their blood to write on the walls, floors, and tables.

"It was crazy," Miles told me. "It was like they were possessed or something. They just kept scribbling and writing. They couldn't stop until I stopped playing that song."

All in all, the episode lasted one minute and thirty-nine seconds before the plug was pulled on the speakers and the adults rushed to quiet the manic teenagers. As the music ended, the party-goers began to calm from their frenzied writing, but a new panic set in. They had no recollection of the past minute and a half whatsoever.

I asked Miles what it was his classmates had been writing. He told me he didn't know. He watched the chaos unfold from the front of the room and while he didn't fall under the influence of the music, the whole experience was still overwhelming.

"One kid wrote a bunch of math problems, like these crazy advanced equations," he said. "One of the others drew, like, plans for some kind of machine. It didn't make any sense to me, but it looked really complex. I think one of the girls was writing a play. She... she was using her own blood. She'd covered one of the white table cloths."

Four minutes after the music ended, men in black suits arrived at the function hall. Miles and his parents do not remember them showing any identification, but they had an official, authoritative air to them. The teenagers and the few parents in attendance were ushered from the function hall and the site was quickly roped off with police tape.

Parents were called and the teenagers were sent home. A few were sent to the local hospital to treat the self-inflicted cuts and

injuries, but they were expected to fully recover. Miles said he remembered seeing several of the men heading into the hall with cameras, and then loading several of the items left behind into a truck. The next day, every personal item the Beals had brought to the party was returned, though they noticed several of the items were replacements, exact replicas, but not the original items. All of the gifts, even the birthday cake the party-goers never had a chance to eat, were replaced, almost as if nothing had happened. The Beals were advised by a lawyer who visited them that some mold in the air circulation system had caused several of the teens to hallucinate, but that it was completely harmless and isolated. They were refunded their deposit to the function hall and counseled to keep their talk of the incident to a minimum to avoid triggering any traumatic memories. Then they were advised to simply move on with their lives.

That was over twenty years ago.

Miles said it was within the first year of the disastrous party that his memory began slipping. At first it was little things, and people thought he was just absent-minded. A few years later he was diagnosed with ADD - attention deficit disorder. From there his problems with memory progressed. At one point, his father told me it was like living with someone suffering from Alzheimer's, except Miles doesn't meet enough symptoms to qualify for that diagnosis. Sometimes he simply hears the music - the quavering backwards piano composition of Adolphus Winn - and he slips away for a little bit.

His peers didn't fare nearly as well.

Of the twenty party-goers who heard the reversed song, twelve of them have been confined to mental health hospitals and rehabilitation centers. Three are serving prison sentences. Five of them have passed away. Christina Spaulding was in a fatal car crash in 2012. The remaining four - Jeremy Buck, Stuart Owens, Preston Fowler, and Colleen Grady - all took their own lives in the years since that fateful birthday party.

I was able to arrange sit down interviews with four of the survivors - Melody Chase, Dave Stratton, Ray Moore, and Theresa Byrd. All four of them are patients at the Birchwood Restorative Therapy Center in Augusta. I met with each of them individually and the staff at BRTC did not allow me to record the interviews. I have done my best to summarize what each of them told me.

Dave Stratton is a big man. He is 6'3" and weighs over two hundred and twenty-four pounds, which he proudly told me. He has sandy brown hair, a mustache and thick glasses. When he speaks his voice is surprisingly soft. The large hands he lays on the armrest of the easy chair in the activity room are scarred, the nails picked short.

When I asked Dave about the birthday party, he started nodding his head even before I could finish the question. "Yep, yep, yep," he said. "I know you'd be asking me about that. I knew someone would come ask me about that some day."

He says he doesn't remember exactly what he was doing when Miles Beal put on the black record, but he assumes he was dancing. "I had a girlfriend back then. Charity or Chelsea. I can't remember. So we were probably dancing." He also doesn't remember the moment the Adolphus Winn song began to play in reverse. In fact, he doesn't have many concrete memories of that day.

The one thing he did remember was waking up surrounded by screaming people. He was sitting on the wooden floor. He was holding his pocketknife and he had carved a strange equation into the wooden floor.

"It was really complex," Dave told me. "Looking at it didn't make any sense. It wasn't calculus, at least not the kind they teach in school. I don't know what it was, but it covered a three foot by three foot square on the floor."

Dave says that he doesn't remember any of the strange math he had carved into the floor. He says sometimes, mostly at night, he can still hear Winn's symphony.

"It's like a Rubik's cube," he said, smiling as he sat across from me. "I hear those notes again and the blocks start spinning. If I could just hear it long enough, I could get all those colors on the right side, you know? And things would work again. Things would make sense again. I could see those numbers and see what I was solving. But then it's gone."

Dave Stratton checked himself into Birchwood in 2007. He has been a resident here ever since. He said he can't live in what he called the "real world" anymore. He said he tried, but things came undone around him. It was like thread unspooling around him, he told me. He would be looking at something - a computer screen, a house, the road, and it would just begin to unravel. He knew something was wrong and by 2007 it became unmanageable. He came to BRTC and has never left since.

"It's safe here," he told me. "They help me keep the world wrapped tight."

When I asked him if he thought Adolphus Winn's music had something to do with his mental state, he agreed right away.

"Whatever it was, it messed us up," he told me.

Melody Chase is in many ways the opposite of Dave Stratton. She's a small woman, just under five feet, with hollow eyes and long black hair. She sits in the same chair that Stratton did earlier, with one leg curled up underneath her. She's constantly scratching at her arm in an absent way.

When I ask her what happened the night of the birthday party she snorts and glares at me. "My whole life ended," she snaps, then after a moment of holding my gaze, she drops her eyes back to her lap.

Melody Chase was class president and an up and coming star of the swim team when she attended Miles Beal's party. A year later she was confined to Birchwood after she violently attacked her

mother and her mother's friend with a paring knife she took from a kitchen drawer. Deemed mentally incompetent to stand trial, Melody was sent to Birchwood. By her own admission she hasn't been an easy resident (the word she used was inmate, but BRTC staff told me they don't use that word). She has committed several infractions, including two that caused serious harm to another resident or staff member. An orderly stood by while I conducted my interview.

Melody told me that the music melted holes in her brain, or at least that's how she could explain it. Parts of her that had been there before that night, were gone, burned away. She says she knows she's not the same person, but that she can't help it. Then she called me a name I can't repeat on this show.

"It was a machine," she said after a few minutes of a tense silence. Her response was unprompted and at first I was confused by it. When I asked her what was a machine, she smiled at me from behind her long dark bangs. She reminded me of a cobra poised to strike. Even the orderly noticed and he moved a step closer to Melody's seat.

"What the music showed me? It was a machine."

When the adults rushed into the hall and pulled the plug on the record player, Melody Chase was standing an inch from the back wall. She had torn open the skin on her wrist with a fork and was dipping the index finger on her other hand into the open wound and using her blood to draw a diagram on the wall.

Melody says she believes what she was drawing was the schematics for a perpetual motion machine. A perpetual motion machine is a hypothetical machine that could work infinitely without any external energy. It is, by definition, an impossibility. While long a goal for scientists and inventors, its very existence would violate the laws of thermodynamics. Still, Melody believed she was drawing blueprints to a functional machine that once turned on would run on its own power indefinitely.

She told me that she's sorry she ever went to the party, and then snapped that she wished she had killed Miles Beal before settling back into a more docile manner. I asked her if she ever still hears the cursed music.

"Only when I close my eyes," she said.

Theresa Byrd is the newest resident at Birchwood to come out of that fateful party. She was admitted last year. She is 41, and if you didn't know it, you would think she was any other middle-aged soccer mom. When we met, she was wearing jeans, a flannel shirt, and a vest. Theresa lives in a low-level wing. She doesn't require constant surveillance and can even sign out for a few hours at a time.

As she explained it to me, her problem began when she began collecting in the weeks that followed the birthday party. "I just began needing complete sets," she said and laughed. "At first people thought I was just being particular or coordinating, but I needed every color hair clip or every album by a band. I needed every season of my favorite shows on DVD. Every color gel pen. I guess it just grew from there."

Theresa's sister was the one who finally got her the help she needed, but not before her husband of ten years divorced her and took their two children with him. They still visit once a month, and she says she's slowly working to rebuild her relationship with them.

By the time she came to stay at Birchwood, Theresa's collections had grown. She collected anything and everything she could find. Cereal boxes, fast food kids' meal toys, Pokemon cards, couch covers, commemorative cups, and more. She admits her house was full of her collections.

"It wasn't just commercial stuff either. I started collecting art from local people, rocks from the beach, even..." she stopped and looked around. "Even roadkill," she whispered.

Theresa understands she suffers from compulsive hoarding disorder. She knows her desire to collect things, to hold on to them, is irrational and destructive. She knows all that, and still, sitting there in the bright activities room, she admitted she felt the pull to take some of the game and puzzle pieces back to her room.

"It's all because of that song," she told me in a hushed tone.

Theresa says she used to have a crush on Miles Beal. She blushed when she said it, and fanned herself in an exaggerated way, before laughing. She was so excited to go to his party, and secretly hoped she would have a chance to tell him how she felt. She was standing off to the side of the dance floor, near the table with the large, three-tier cake, when Miles began to play his great-grandfather's record backwards.

"I remember hearing the music start to reverse," she said. "You know how it just sounds different? The next thing I remembered there was blue stuff all over my hands and I began to scream."

The blue substance in question was icing from the birthday cake. Theresa had used it to begin composing what appeared to be a poem. She told me she had a minute to read it before she was pulled out of there by somebody's parent.

"It was beautiful," she said. "I don't remember all of it now, but the parts I do remember... they were perfect."

Theresa says the poem had something to do with a tree, but also a wave and an eye. But it wasn't really about all that, she said. It was really about love and pain. She said it made her remember her grandfather who had passed away several months before, and she claims it created an image of her son's face in her mind - a son that wasn't born for another ten years. She said had she been allowed to finish the poem it would have been a masterpiece, something that could have won a Pulitzer Prize.

She told me she can't really remember any of the lines. Sometimes, usually when she's distracted, a line will bubble to the surface of her mind for a moment, before disappearing again. Theresa wonders what happened to the poem, whether the government agents photographed it or preserved it before they cleaned up the hall. She hopes so.

As Theresa was preparing to head back to her room, which she promised was modestly decorated - no more collecting for her - she stopped at the doorway and did that odd little point to the ceiling that is universal code for, "I just remembered something." She took a few steps back into the room and smiled one of the saddest smiles I have ever seen.

"It wasn't a song. Not really," she said. "I mean, I know it was a musical arrangement reversed, but that's not what I heard. Not underneath. It was a voice. It whispered those secret words to me and I wrote them down as fast as I could."

She started to go, but then turned back. "But whose voice was it?" she asked.

Ray Moore was the last resident I spoke to. Ray has been at Birchwood since the incident in 1999. He's a small man, completely bald. His eyes seem to roll lazily around in his head and it's hard to tell if he's focusing on anything.

I admit, I was worried that this particular interview would be a bust. Ray is quiet. He goes weeks, months without ever speaking. The care providers told me that he very rarely responds to direct questions, but it would not have felt right to exclude Ray from this story.

He was led into the activity room and shown to his seat. He stared at me for a moment before his eyes roamed around to take in the rest of the room. I explained who I was and why I was there. I told him I wanted to ask him a few questions about the night he attended Miles Beal's birthday party.

He looked back to me and smiled. He started talking then, quite eloquently in fact, and he barely stopped talking the entire thirty minutes I was allowed to interview him. He told me he was an honors student in high school and that he was looking at attending an ivy league college before the incident. Like many of the others, he didn't remember much of the roughly 90 seconds the backwards track inspired a sort of frantic madness in the party goers. It was what he said after that shocked me.

"It was a device to teleport living beings," he said, staring intently into my own eyes.

Ray, under the influence of the odd music, had taken a pencil from his pocket and began drawing on the wall of the hall where the party was held. At one point the lead broke and he continued writing with the jagged point of the pencil, scratching lines into the actual wall.

According to Ray, the plan he was drawing was a blueprint for a device that would transport living matter from one place to another. I asked him how he knew this and he smiled. Ray is missing several teeth, including one of the central incisors. Because of this his face has a more hollow shape to it and his smile was a little unsettling. He tapped one finger against his temple, never once breaking eye contact with me.

He told me he has an eidetic memory - the ability to recall something clearly after only seeing it for a short time period. He said that in the time after the music ended and he "woke up" before he was rushed out of the room, he saw what he had drawn. It took him a long time and a lot of studying, but he believes it was a blueprint for a teleportation machine, at least in theory.

He also was able to recall several of the other things his fellow party-goers had created. He remembers a play titled, "Two Months 'til Forever" which began with an unnamed narrator describing watching the last blossom falling from the last cherry tree in the world. He said he saw plans for what would

become the smart phone and wireless earbuds. One girl drew a breathtaking image of a tree turned inside out.

He spoke matter-of-factly about these memories and I found myself believing him. I asked him if there was any proof that he saw these inventions years before they were invented. He told me he drew them, recreating what he had seen to the best of his ability, time and time again in notebooks over the years. He said that when his room became too crowded, someone from Birchwood would remove them. If I could find those notebooks, which he always dated, I would find the proof. I made a note to follow up with this.

When I asked him if he thought the music did something to him, he smiled that crooked jack o'lantern grin of his. "Adolphus Winn's black recording," he said and his voice had grown to a low croak. I was shocked he knew of Mile Beal's ancestor.

"You know he held many occult beliefs," Ray told me. "There were rumors he was part of an organization that worshiped dark things. *Red* things."

When I pressed him further he gave me a list of resources to look into. Some of them were ones I was familiar with, but a few I had never heard of. I'm working to vet some of these sources before sharing them with you, but once our team has had a chance to review all of them, we promise we'll let you know what we find.

Ray Moore believes that the music was *designed* to activate manic creativity whether through science or perhaps an occult ritual. The music sounds broken and discordant because it was meant to be heard in reverse. Adolphus Winn wrote the song so that when it was played backwards it would trigger something - whether in the listener's own brain or perhaps some dark ritual, that would channel creative energy and inspire the listener to create with wild abandon. Miles Beal unwittingly completed the ritual and unleashed the creative force on his unsuspecting party guests.

A quick disclaimer here. As convincing as Ray's explanation was, it should be made clear that Ray has been diagnosed with severe mental illness. He has been at Birchwood Restorative Therapy Center for over twenty years. It is difficult to fully support the theories of a man who was once labeled insane.

And yet, there is something compelling about this explanation. If Adolphus Winn, growing more eccentric in his musical stylings somehow became involved with a secret occult society, it might be possible he combined his avant garde musical composition with some of the more powerful occult practices. And then there's Ray Moore's statement that Winn and his secret brotherhood were into "red things" whatever that might mean. More to come as we investigate further.

Before we go, I want to share what Ray Moore told me when I asked him what he thought had happened to him *after* the recording ended.

"Whatever that song did," he said to me. "It filled our minds with...*something*. The near unlimited creative potential was too much for our brains to handle and parts of them must have short circuited. Like a power surge, the parts of our brains that made us... normal, have blown out. We couldn't touch the mind of a god and hope to escape unscathed."

After that, one of the orderlies informed me that our time was up and he led Ray away. When I asked about his journals, the notebooks he claimed he had drawn in for years, I was told I would need to speak with the director. She assured me that residents' personal belongings are never discarded with the expressed permission of the resident or if they present the possibility of harm to anyone in the facility. While she couldn't tell me exactly where twenty-five years' worth of notebooks might be stored, she told me she would look into this at her earliest convenience. As of the time of this episode's release, I have not heard back.

Was Adolphus Winn part of a secret cult? Did he create a masterpiece that would inspire divine creativity? Maybe more importantly, who were the men in dark suits who took everything away, including Adolphus Winn's cursed record? The Beals, Ray Moore, and even Theresea Byrd believe they must have been government agents. Could these proverbial men in black have known about Winn's recording, looking out for it somehow? They confiscated all of the things produced by the teenagers and nearly everything present at the incident. If what Ray Moore told me is correct and plans for smartphones and other technology not yet invented in 1999 were included in those drawings and notes, could the government agency in charge of collecting them, have put them to use?

It's an intriguing theory and one that bears close study. In the meantime...

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/

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.