

# Malevolent Maine

## Episode 30: Last Ride Road

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

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### INTRO:

**TOM:** A whore house with a bloody, violent end. A group of people missing in a subterranean cave system. And a creature said to inhabit the dreams of children. These are the stories coming your way in the next few weeks.

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Last of all, keep listening, MMsers!

The fog envelopes your car silently, like a blanket pulled up all around you. The temperature plummets despite the summer heat and you can't help but shiver. You slow the car, but the cracked and broken pavement seems like it's trying to escape from beneath you, and you struggle to stay on the road. You round a

bend, praying you won't see the headlights of an oncoming vehicle.

Suddenly something steps out of the fog into the middle of the road. You jam on your brakes, but worry it won't be in time. You hear the screech of your tires, but there's something else screaming along with them. Is it you...or the ghastly figure who leapt in front of you?

This is Malevolent Maine.

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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?

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Buckle up, MMers, today's story takes us to Waldoboro and the lonely stretch of Route 220, just north of town. This ten mile stretch of road, mostly woods with just a few houses and empty fields, is reportedly one of the most haunted places in America. According to experts, over fifty-six individual spirits have been identified along the rural country road.

State Route 220 begins in the town of Friendship on the coast and runs north for over 65 miles before ending in Palmyra. For those unfamiliar with the area, this is the central coastal area of Maine, in Lincoln County. The road was originally designated in 1929 with its more modern form finalized in 1949. Overall,

there's nothing overly impressive about this stretch of road. During the day time it looks the same as any other back road, but at night, it's a very different story.

According to local legends, Route 220, or the Washington Road as it is known, is a gateway between the land of the living and that of the dead.

Those who drive the road late at night report seeing all kinds of strange sights, from spectral fog, to packs of wild dogs that seem to vanish into the night. There's the old man in a flannel shirt and suspenders thumbing for a ride who often disappears just as an unsuspecting driver pulls over to help, and the two girls, maybe eight and eleven, playing hopscotch in the middle of the black top.

There have been seventeen fatal crashes on the Washington Road, which the locals have dubbed Last Ride Road, since 1956. This may seem like an insignificant number, but Maine averages well under 200 motor vehicle deaths a year and has nearly 50,000 miles of road. What's even more surprising about this statistic is that all but two of those seventeen accidents have been single occupant crashes. This doesn't take into account the number of non-fatal accidents that occur on this patch of road. We couldn't find specific numbers, but one law enforcement officer we spoke to, said he thought it was somewhere around, "twenty to thirty a year."

What makes this particular length of black top so dangerous? According to Patricia Anderson, it all started back in the 50s with a girl named Brenda Thompson.

Patty, as she insisted we call her, is sixty-six, just a year into retirement. She has short white hair and large feather shaped earrings. She's a big woman, with a big smile and a big laugh. She's also been a resident of Last Ride Road for the past forty years. We ran into her while she was out for a walk along Route 220, something she says she does every day just before lunch.

According to Patty, she heard the story from a neighbor when she first moved to Washington Road. The story goes that somewhere back around 1953 a couple of teenagers were coming home from a date. Brenda Thompson and her boyfriend Tom Allen were driving down Route 220 when they got into some sort of argument. Patty told us she doesn't remember what the fight was about, probably normal teenager stuff, she said. At one point the dispute grew quite intense, and Brenda demanded that Tom let her out of the car. Apparently, he acquiesced to her demand and let her out on the side of the road, before speeding off into the darkness.

A thick fog had rolled in and the night was colder than Brenda had expected. She began walking along the side of the road, perhaps beginning to regret her decision to leave the relative warmth and safety of Tom's car.

A few miles up the road, with his temper beginning to cool, Tom Allen realized he should probably go back for Brenda. He turned the car around and headed back in the direction of where he had dropped her off. Whether it was the fog or his heightened emotional state, Tom didn't see Brenda until it was too late. She was walking up the middle of the road when Tom's Buick hit her. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

Ever since, the ghost of Brenda Thompson, perhaps still searching for her way home, can be seen on Last Ride Road, wearing her blue and white print dress and a forlorn look on her face, a trickle of blood running from a cut in her scalp.

We were able to confirm at least the broad sweeps of his story. A young woman named Brenda Thompson was struck and killed by a car on Route 220 in 1953. The driver was her boyfriend and he did admit they were having an argument leading up to the tragic incident.

Patty Anderson says that it was Brenda's death that began the series of sightings and hauntings along this often-patched length of road. And she should know. Patty runs the Last Ride

Road Facebook group, which has over four hundred members. People regularly post about their interactions with the ghost of Brenda Thompson, most of which involve ghostly drive bys and glimpses of her from the window of moving cars.

The rumors persist that the single occupant crashes are caused by Brenda, or at least drivers swerving to avoid her. That was almost the case with Colton Campbell, who says he encountered the spirit of Brenda Thompson on an October night in 2006.

"We were coming home from a Halloween party," he told us. "Me and a couple of my friends. It was a real foggy night, and we'd been out... at a party, if you know what I mean - so we were driving pretty slow. She was walking up the middle of the road. This girl in like an old fashioned dress with blood on her. She looked like a 50s zombie or something. She was kinda cute and looked lost so we pulled over."

Colton says he offered her a ride, and the young lady climbed into the back seat with his friend, Jesse.

Right away, they noticed something was off with the girl. She didn't speak much, only muttering, "Where's Tom?" over and over again. Colton said it grew cold in the car, which wasn't exactly uncommon for late October in Maine, so he turned the heat up.

"No matter how hot I cranked it, the car never got warm," he told us. "It was cold, like a winter night in the middle of January."

The radio squawked with static, so Colton changed the station. No matter which station Campbell put it on, the static persisted. His skin began to crawl and he noticed his friends were starting to get nervous as well.

"It felt like someone was looking into my head," Colton told us more than fifteen years later. "I know it doesn't really make any sense, but it felt like someone had unscrewed the top of my head and was poking around in there."

The sense of someone looking inside them, studying them, intensified. The uneasiness grew to anxiety and eventually paranoia. Eventually it grew too much for Colton and his friends. They pulled the car over and ran out, leaving the motor running with the strange woman inside. They ran five miles to the closest house, woke up the owners by knocking loudly, before eventually being picked up by their parents.

"I've never been more scared in my entire life," Colton said.  
"Never."

Colton Campbell's car was later recovered exactly where he had left it. There was no trace of Brenda Thompson or any other girl in a 50s dress.

This has all the makings of a classic Maine ghost story - a heartbroken spirit, a lonely stretch of mostly remote wilderness, and a randomness that makes it difficult to prove or disprove. If the story ended there, it would be a fan favorite told around campfires for generations. But there's far more to this haunted highway than this one forlorn spirit.

Lucas spoke with Ethan Sawyer, another long-time resident of Waldoboro. Sawyer had an encounter along Route 220 ten years ago, and since then he's been an avid collector of ghost stories from the stretch of road in his hometown.

**LUCAS:** Ethan Sawyer is in his forties. He's a short man with thinning red hair and a pair of square eye glasses perched on the tip of his nose. We stood on the front porch of his house over on the Old County Road, across town from the haunted highway. Ethan told me that he has never seen the ghost of Brenda Thompson, but that he did have a run in with a different set of spirits.

According to Ethan, he was driving home one night from Augusta. He'd been out to dinner with some friends and stayed later than he wanted. It was around midnight, he

said, as he took the turn off Route 17 onto Last Ride Road. He knew the stories about the road, but he had never taken them too seriously. Every town has urban legends, he told me, and he assumed the ghosts along Route 220 were just that.

It was August, but the night had grown cold, one of those rare summer nights when the first hints of autumn start sneaking in. He hit a patch of fog just past Medomak Pond and slowed down. "Thank God, I did," he said, sitting on his porch a decade later. He came around a bend in the road just past the Church of the Nazarene, when he saw *them* in the middle of the road. He had just enough time to slam on his brakes.

Ethan Sawyer claims he saw two little girls in the middle of the road. He thought they were both around ten years old, maybe a little older, maybe a little younger. They were playing what looked like hopscotch, taking turns jumping and leaping in some sort of pattern. His nerves were jumping all over the place and he felt like he was about to be sick from the thought that he had almost hit the girls with his car. Without stopping to think, he rolled down his window to yell out to them.

**LUCAS:** As soon as the window was down, Ethan said he could feel the cold come pouring into the vehicle. He said it felt more like December than August. He leaned out the window and started to say something about how dangerous it was to be playing out in the middle of the road at night. Whatever he was saying died in his throat as the two girls stopped jumping and turned to stare at him.

"Their eyes," he told me. "Their eyes were white. I mean, pure white like thick lake ice. And their heads hung at an angle, like they were hearing something in the distance."

Ethan Sawyer's blood ran cold and he found himself frozen, leaning halfway out of the car. He said that's when he got a good look at the girls.

The girls had long black hair, tied up in the back. They were wearing dresses, but according to Sawyer they looked old and outdated. They were a color, he said, but maybe because of the fog, the colors seemed washed out and muted, more gray than any real color. Each of them had a big bow in their hair that seemed to match the particular shade of gray of their dress.

**LUCAS:** "It was like watching a black and white movie," Ethan told me. We had driven out to the spot on Route 220 where he said he encountered the girls. We had parked a ways back and now stood on the very spot where he said they had been playing hopscotch.

The girls looked at him for a moment, then smiled. It wasn't the sweet innocent smile you might expect from a couple of little girls, nor was it the ashamed grin of someone who has been caught doing something they knew they weren't supposed to be doing. No... the smile on the girls' faces was... hungry.

Sawyer says the girls began to approach his car and the way they moved terrified him. He said they seemed to glide across the patchy hot top. As they silently approached, Sawyer slid back behind the wheel and took off.

**LUCAS:** He told me something about the girls scared him so deep inside that he raced home, rushed inside, and turned on every light in his house. He locked all the doors, drew the shades, and sat in a corner of his room all night.

Ethan Sawyer is convinced he saw the ghosts of two little girls along Route 220. And he has some proof to back this up. Sawyer said that after he told several friends about the encounter, one of them said he remembered hearing a story about two little girls who got hit by a car on that road some time back. The story went that they had been out playing hopscotch one evening instead of doing their evening chores. A logging truck had come barreling down the road and hadn't seen the girls in time.



This has all the makings of a typical urban legend, and Ethan Sawyer says he knows that, but something about his run in didn't sit right with him and he began doing research. Ethan says he spent countless hours online and at the local library, pouring over old copies of *The Lincoln County News*, trying to find anything to explain what he saw.

**LUCAS:** He showed me a copy of a newspaper article from 1962. It detailed a horrific accident that happened along Route 220. A driver came around a blind turn and struck two little girls who were in the road. It wasn't a logging truck but a pick up, towing a horse trailer. The trailer flipped over and the two horses inside had to be put down. The two girls were pronounced dead at the scene.

Ethan Sawyer is convinced what he saw that night was the ghosts of those two girls. He says he doesn't know why they came for him or what they wanted but he said he could sense a cold malevolence to them. They were dangerous, he says, and he knows if he hadn't sped off when he did, something bad would have happened to him.

And there are plenty more stories like this one. Ava Hamilton says she saw the ghost of a man chasing a woman down the side of the road with an ax. When she slowed down to see if she could help the woman, the two figures vanished into the heavy fog. The man is supposedly the spirit of Abner Whitman who murdered his wife Rebecca when she told him he had drunk all the beer in the house one evening in 1976. He chased her down their driveway out onto Route 220 with the ax he used to split wood. After he caught her and killed her, Abner Whitman slit his own throat with his pocket knife.

Dan Monroe, a driver who was just passing through one evening on his way back to Portland in 1998 says he pulled over for a young man wearing a faded green army jacket and carrying a pack over one shoulder. He said he thought the man was a veteran of some kind, and having served himself, he thought he'd offer the man a

ride. Monroe says they talked for about two miles. The man told him his name was Jeremy Goodson and that he was trying to get home to see his mother who was probably worried sick about him. Monroe said the man was friendly, though the interior of the car seemed to grow cold enough for Monroe to see his own breath. At one point, Dan Monroe turned to say something about the fog that had crept up all around him, but that suddenly the man was gone. Vanished into thin air.

It should be noted that Private Jeremy Goodson was a U.S. Marine who served during Desert Storm who was found dead alongside Route 220 in 1996. There were no signs of foul play and investigators believe he died from a drug overdose.

The stories go on and on. Some, like Private Goodson and Brenda Thompson have been seen by multiple people. The ax-wielding Abner Whitman and his poor wife are fairly common around August 12, the day of their death. There are plenty of other encounters that are far less common.

I spoke with Emily Caldwell who had by far the most dangerous encounter we uncovered. Emily is a long distance walker. Since 2012 she has walked across several New England states to raise money for different charitable causes. She told me she got the idea after her first year in college when she was home on summer break. She didn't have a lot of money but wanted to see all her home state had to offer. She started taking long walks, first around her hometown of Alfred, and then branching out farther and farther. This led her to begin the serious long distance walks.

In 2021, Emily began a trek that would take her from Fort Kent at the northern tip of Maine, all the way down to York, at its southern end. She had done the trip before on major routes, but for this hike, she was planning on taking more of the back roads.

"I called it Back Roads for Barbara Bush," she told me, referring to the children's hospital in Portland named after the

former first lady and long-time summer resident of Maine. Emily had raised over twenty-five thousand dollars before her trek even began, and was hoping for another ten thousand before she finished.

One of the things that makes her unique on her hikes, is that she carries everything she needs for twenty-four hours on her back. So she typically has a small tent, sleeping bag, a change of clothes, first aid kit, map book, and enough food for three meals, plus water and snacks. She often restocks at night when one of her friends or family members meets her at the pre-planned stopping point and refills her food supplies and replaces any worn out or broken items. She stays at campgrounds, free-to-camp stretches of wilderness, or even a private back field after she's made arrangements with the land owner. All of this is planned months in advance to make her hike as simple as possible.

A typical day for Emily when she's doing one of her cross country hikes is to wake up sometime around 5:30. She makes breakfast, enjoys a single cup of black coffee, then breaks down her campsite before heading out. She's usually on the road by 7:00. She'll walk until noon, have lunch and rest until 2:00 PM, then head back out, hiking until about 6 or 7 at night depending on her destination.

She doesn't like to hike at night. "It's not safe," she told me over the phone. "And plus, I usually need to get some rest so I can head out again the next morning." Emily hikes rain or shine, and doesn't take a day off until she reaches her destination unless something like an injury prevents her from going on.

During her Back Roads for Barbara Bush hike, she was hiking down Route 220 out of Pittsfield. She had spent the night in a farmer's field in Freedom, Maine and was hoping to make the Riverbrook Preserve in Waldoboro by evening. A local brewery in town was going to make a public donation as she came through town the next day and she was excited. It was a bit of a longer stretch than she was used to, but the roads were pretty flat and

she thought she could speed up a little and still make her time table.

A blown out sneaker changed all of that. Emily had to step out of the way of some oncoming traffic just south of the town of Liberty, and accidentally stepped on her own heel. It tore the sole of her shoe off. It wasn't a major deal, she used the emergency cell phone she carried to call her friend Danielle who was her spotter for this section of the trip and soon had a replacement pair. It slowed her down just enough that she was going to have to finish the last leg of her hike as the sun was going down. It wasn't ideal, but it would only be a few miles, and she thought she'd still be okay.

"I had never heard of Waldoboro before," Emily told me. "I mean, not really. I grew up in Alfred, so I knew Waterboro, but didn't really know anything about Waldoboro. Especially nothing about the ghosts or whatever."

Emily says that as she passed Jackson's Corner Store at the intersection of Route 220 and 17, a fog began to roll in. It was 7:30 and she had another hour left to reach camp. According to records the sun set at 8:15 on July 21st, 2021, the day Emily hiked Last Ride Road. Dusk had begun to settle around her, and that, coupled with the fog that grew thicker as she continued down the road, made the day grow dark.

Weather reports hadn't indicated any fog or any type of bad weather at all, but Emily was determined to press on. The road was empty, not a car in sight, and the fog made it hard to see the few houses and buildings that dotted either side of the cracked black top.

The air grew cold, and Emily stopped to put on the light sweatshirt she always carried with her. Summers in July are rarely cold, even in the evening, but Emily's father, Morris, had been an Eagle Scout and had instilled the Scout motto - "Be Prepared" - into his daughter from a young age.

It was after she started walking again, pushing her legs for the last few miles, that she heard footsteps behind her.

"Lots of people like to walk," she told me. "I see hundreds of people, maybe thousands out for a walk. Sometimes they walk with me for a bit and we chat. Other times, people come out specifically to walk *with* me. I had a family of four hike an entire day with me one summer. But this... this was different."

You could hear it in her voice, now almost two years removed from the event. What happened next still worries her.

"These footsteps were heavy. Like work boots on a hardwood floor," she said.

The footsteps seemed to match her pace. When she sped up, so did they. When she slowed down, the footfalls did as well. At first Emily thought that maybe the fog was causing some sort of weird echo of her own steps.

She called into the fog, thinking maybe someone else was there, perhaps a local who had come out to see her and had gotten disoriented by the fog.

There was no reply.

Emily froze. Suddenly the footsteps sped up to a sprint. She turned all around in the fog, trying to see who was coming at her. Then the footsteps were past her, sprinting still deeper into the fog. The air grew colder, and she could see her breath in the fog. She heard the sound of hushed whispers, like quiet conversations happening a room away.

Emily admits she was scared. She tried to use her cell phone to call Danielle, but she couldn't get a signal. She looked around for something to use as a weapon, a rock, a stick, anything, but there was nothing. With trepidation slowing her, Emily continued down Route 220.

She says she has no idea exactly where she was, the fog was so thick she couldn't get her bearings. She kept going forward, hoping to reach the Preserve where she was to camp for the night.

The being came swirling out of the mist. It wore dark robes of clothing, and its face was twisted in a disfigured scowl, only partially obscured by long black hair. It was hard to tell if it was a man or a woman, but its eyes shone with an eerie blue light. It seemed to float an inch off the ground, gliding silently towards her.

Emily ran, turning back the other way, trying to get away from the *thing* that had emerged from the mist. It moved too fast however, and was on her in an instant, wrapping her up with the heavy folds of its black robes.

Emily said she felt things whipping and tearing at her skin, like thousands of threads or strands. She felt something being sucked out of her, some force or power, and she understood this thing was taking her life. She tried to scream, but her mouth wouldn't move. The only sound she could hear were strange flapping sounds like a dozen leathery wings.

Then the honk of a horn pierced the night and bright headlights cut through the gloom. For just a second, Emily could still feel the *thing* around her, and then it disappeared, pulling away like a sheet being stripped from a bed, as a stunned driver screeched to a halt only a few feet from her.

Emily Caldwell suffered minor lacerations to her face, arms, and legs. The driver who had come around a turn on Route 220, claimed he saw Emily struggling with some dark shape that flew off into the night when he honked his horn. He gave Emily a ride to the Riverbrook Preserve where her friend Danielle was waiting, only half a mile up the road from where he had picked her up. By then the fog had begun to lift.

Emily has no idea what attacked her that night, but she knows it wasn't human. "It's easy for people to say that someone jumped me in the fog, but that's not what it was," she said. "I could feel it. Whatever it was, it wasn't alive. It wanted my life because it didn't have any of its own."

So what makes Last Ride Road so haunted? Lucas has a theory.

**LUCAS:** The barrier between the world of the living and... whatever lies beyond is thin on Route 220. It's easier for spirits to slip through back to our side, or perhaps never make it over to their own side in the first place. Maybe it started with Brenda Thompson, maybe it was older than that. But it's like a snowball gaining mass as it rolls down a hill. The pain and suffering of all the accidents, the terrible accident with the Reynolds girls, Abner Whitman's murderous attack on his wife, all of it, it just keeps adding on, making it easier and easier for the spirits to get stuck. Like some sort of supernatural quagmire.

According to paranormal experts, fifty-six distinct and unique spirits are said to dwell along Last Ride Road. All of them, save perhaps the newest and most dangerous, the cloaked figure Emily Caldwell encountered, have all been witnessed on more than one occasion.

Anyone who has encountered one of the spirits along that lonely stretch of road knows just how unsettling it can be. "We're not sharing these stories for fame or money or whatever," Patty Anderson said. "We're doing it as a warning. Whatever or whoever is on that stretch of road is dangerous. We want everyone to know and to be safe."

Ethan Sawyer agrees. According to him the spirits only seem to appear at night or close to it. They are usually, but not always, accompanied by a preternatural cold and thick, dense fog. Some of the spirits seem quite benign, perhaps even harmless, though several of them seem to have malicious intent. Several attempts have been made to exorcize the spirits from the

road, so far it appears they have been unsuccessful. Perhaps it is the sheer number of ghosts, or perhaps it has to do with the large geographic area, but one thing that is known, is that the spirits still haunt the length of highway, seeking to ensnare the living.

One last word of caution before we go. One of the ghost experts we spoke with, Dr. Brian P. Kilpatrick , out of Massachusetts, wanted us to make sure we warned our listeners about the dangers they may face if they decided to do some amateur investigating.

"Many of the reports from survivors of these spiritual encounters talk about near automobile accidents because of the entities," he wrote to us. "In many cases it appears to be sheer luck that kept the drivers from experiencing a catastrophic crash of their own."

While there are many listeners who might be tempted to drive this stretch of road, we advise against it. The thrill of witnessing the paranormal is far outweighed by the very real possibility of a spiritual attack or even death. If you are not careful, you could become the fifty-seventh ghost to haunt Last Ride Road.

Stay safe out there, Maine.

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

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Thank you for listening to Malevolent Maine.

And as always, stay safe out there, Maine.