

# Malevolent Maine

## Episode 9: Stridda Longbody

---

---

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

---

### INTRO

A mysteriously murdered doctor from the 1800s. A race of fish-like humanoids who dwell in Maine's water system. And some strange science projects that seem to defy understanding. These are the stories we're working on for our upcoming episodes. You guys have been an amazing audience, not just here in Maine, but all over. We see you, Houston Texas, Boston, Massachusetts, and Seymour, Connecticut. Not to mention Portland, Ellsworth, Augusta, and a ton of other listeners at home. We appreciate you.

If you'd like to help our show grow, consider joining our patreon at [www.patreon.com/malevolentmaine](http://www.patreon.com/malevolentmaine) where you can get exclusive access to early episodes, side-stories like the Black Tarot, and behind the scenes information. You can like us on Facebook at MalevolentMaine and follow us on Twitter at @MalevolentMaine. We love interacting with fans so we hope to hear from you soon. Lastly, don't forget to like, follow, review, and share our show wherever you listen to podcasts. Again, thank you for all of your support.

The trail slopes gently downwards as you descend the mountain. Around you tall trees - pines, birches, a few oaks - stretch up the sky all around you. Suddenly one of the trees starts to move. That's not a tree. What is it? It's 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?

---

Okay MMers, we've got a real tall tale for you, this time from the Newry-Andover-Hanover region of Oxford County. Specifically somewhere between the Ellis River Road and the Bear River Road. This area is part of the Mahoosuc Mountain Range, some of the toughest parts of the Appalachian Trail, not far from the Sunday River ski resort. It's a fairly remote part of the state, with seasonal busy times in the winter. It's a great place for a hike or to hang out along the many rivers and streams that cross the area.

It's also home to a creature the locals call Stridda Longbody. The creature is described as being incredibly tall, with long thin limbs. It typically walks on all fours, but can stand and move on just two. Reports have placed it somewhere between twelve and twenty feet tall. Its skin is incredibly pale, nearly snow white. It has glowing bright eyes and a mouth full of jagged teeth.

It's been seen stalking among the trees, crossing the road, even looming over several of the homes around the area, usually at dusk or in the dark of night. It seems to avoid people and has been known to become quite threatening when engaged. As of yet

there are no confirmed deaths caused by this cryptid, but that has been difficult to corroborate. Whatever is stalking the woods north of Sunday River is clearly dangerous and it is a matter of time before a human encounter ends tragically.

Before we continue our story, we at Malevolent Maine want to take a minute to introduce a new member of our team. Since this podcast has started our primary business - investigating claims of the paranormal and supernatural - has really taken off. We're getting hundreds of stories each week. Between interviewing people, researching stories, and writing reports, not to mention recording this podcast, things have gotten a little too busy.

As you know, we've brought on our producer, Megan Meadows to handle a lot of the podcast things, but we've also brought a new member into our investigative team.

Mark Mercier is joining Malevolent Maine as an intern. If you call the office, you'll probably talk to him first, or if you stop by, you might see him manning our front desk. Mark is going to be handling a lot of our preliminary research as well, and we're lucky to have him on board. Say hi, Mark, and tell us a little about yourself.

**MARK:** Hi, I'm Mark. I've always been interested in paranormal stuff and when I saw Malevolent Maine had an opening, I thought it would be a fun place to work.

Thanks, Mark. He's also graciously agreed to read statements from various people who chose not to have their voices on our show, so you'll be hearing a lot from him.

One of those people was Adam Hussey, an avid hiker who claims to have seen Stridda Long Body last fall when he was hiking Fulling Mill Mountain. Here's new intern Mark reading a transcript of our interview with Adam:

**MARK:** "I've done a lot of hiking. I try to do at least ten mountains a summer. So I'm coming down Bald

Mountain. I got caught in a rain storm that just popped up so I hunkered down for a bit. Two summers I would have pushed through, but I sprained my ankle trying to climb down Mount Chocorua over in Conway, New Hampshire in the rain. Anyways, I'd taken my time, so as I'm coming down the mountain it's starting to get dark. Just dusk, you know? But I decided I really needed to pick up the pace. So I'm coming down the trail, I go around this little bend where there's these big rocks you go between, and bam! That's when I saw it."

What Hussey saw was Stridda Long Body. He said he estimated the creature was around fifteen feet tall, though it was hunched over on all fours, walking on its long limbs. He said it had hands and feet, or something approximating them. They appeared to be long claws, not like fingernails growing out of flesh, but long solid claws growing from its hands and feet. Hussey said he was pretty sure there were only four digits on each appendage.

**MARK:** "It was sort of creeping through the trees. That's the only way I can describe it. It moved so fluidly for something so tall. I think it was probably sixteen, maybe eighteen feet tall, and those long legs and arms, right? But it almost looked like it was swimming through the air."

The creature sensed Hussey and turned. Its eyes, which Hussey said seemed to shine like headlights on a car, seemed to pierce into his very core. Hussey was frozen with fear, sure his life was about to end. The creature hissed, a sound he described as "something like a cat crossed with a snake." Then it reared up high, Hussey says, like a gorilla going from four legs to two.

It was massive, its full height on display. Hussey had known the creature was big, but now it seemed impossible tall. It was thin, almost delicate, yet still strong, like a birch tree. There was something terrifying in its slenderness, like

something that thin should not be that tall, and if that law of nature was broken, then all others could be too.

**MARK:** "It roared. I mean. It didn't sound like a lion or whatever. You know what it sounded like? Like the T-Rex from Jurassic Park. You remember that movie? It was like that - I mean, not exactly, but that's as close as I can get to describing it. I just froze. I didn't move a muscle. I don't even think I breathed. It just kept roaring, like the sound of the world ripping in half."

Finally, the creature stopped and the woods were silent. Nothing moved, not even a bird chirped. Hussey stayed perfectly still, the creature's roar echoing in his ears. The creature seemed to look at him for a second, to assess whether he was a threat or not. It dropped down onto all fours. It hardly made a sound when it dropped, just a few leaves displaced. It shouldn't be that silent, not after the mighty roar that had seemed to shake the entire mountain. Then it moved off, sliding between the trees. Hussey didn't move for another five minutes, until the birds and the squirrels had resumed their normal chatter.

**MARK:** "Then I booked it off that mountain just as fast as I could."

Stridda Longbody.

No one is really sure where the name came from. Some stories claim that 'stridda' is a colloquial twist on the word 'stride,' or 'strider' referring to the creature's long legs. Others claim that Stridda is an old Indigenous People word for a tall spirit creature said to stalk the mountain regions. Either way, the name is apt.

What is this creature? Are there more than one of them? Paul Tarbox, who grew up in nearby Hanover, ME, considered himself something of an expert on the creature that came to be known as Stridda Longbody.

Born in 1942, Tarbox joined the military as soon as he was able to and in 1951 he was sent to Korea. When he returned home in 1954, Tarbox was unsure of what he was going to do, but after a chance encounter with Stridda Longbody one summer evening while hiking near Old Speck Mountain, he dedicated his life to understanding the creature. He enrolled at the University of Maine studying biology and history before returning to the area to find proof of the creature.

Paul Tarbox died in 2020 from Covid-19. He was seventy-seven years old and already in declining health. We had several communications with Paul before his death and we will always remember his warmth and generosity. After his passing, we were contacted by his wife, Shelia, to whom he had been married for 46 years. She said that Paul wanted to make sure that we got all of his research and notes about Stridda Longbody. He thought we would know what best to do with it.

Included in his notes was a journal he had kept about his Stridda-sitings, going back almost 35 years. We found one passage particularly interesting. I've asked one of our investigators, Lucas, to read it:

**LUCAS:** "I saw it again. It's been forty years, but I know it was the same creature. It had the same markings on its hindquarters I saw in 1953. I don't know how it is still alive, but I swear it was the same one. It was nine thirty-six PM and I was walking along Bear River Road. It was my monthly search. I had just curved along this bend, and there it was, standing there, reaching for something up in a high oak tree. Its skin was almost translucent and seemed to glow silver in the moonlight. It didn't see me or sense me and for a moment I was able to observe it. It was clawing at something in the tree, but in the dark I couldn't quite make out what. It moved slowly, like a sloth, long limbs reaching up, up, up. It was beautiful. It was horrific. This was something not of

this world and for the second time in my life I had come face to face with it. Then somewhere in the distance came the blast of a logging truck's engine. I was just reaching for my camera when the creature froze. It was like a deer who hears something. Then, sensing the upcoming truck, it dropped down onto all four feet and ran. Despite its earlier slowness, it moved with a speed I couldn't really comprehend. It charged right at me. I don't think it knew I was there. I think, like the spooked deer, it was just rushing to get away. At the last second before it would bowl me over, it cut to the left and was gone, gliding through the woods without making a sound."

Paul Tarbox was able to snap just one picture of the creature before it disappeared. In it, distorted by the darkness, a near human-like head can be seen. It looks like a skull, with giant eyes and a flat nose. The creature's eyes are glowing and its impossibly long limbs are moving at full speed. The picture is blurry and grainy, and many photographic experts have labeled it a hoax. Still others have said it cannot be real, but cannot say how the picture was faked. It is, to date, the clearest picture of Stridda Longbody, though it is hard to call it conclusive evidence.

We have the negative of that picture in storage, left to us by Paul Tarbox's widow, and a framed copy of the picture is on our wall here at the Malevolent Maine office.

There have been dozens of sightings of Stridda Longbody over the years. Most of them are from hikers, but a few have come from some of the locals as well. It has become something of a well known urban legend in the area. Just about everyone in the area knows about the creature and more than a few claim to actually have seen it, or known someone who has. There's even a house on Route 5, just a little ways north of Covered Bridge Road, where a man makes giant plywood cut outs of Stridda Longbody. Some he displays on his property. A few, he told us, he has actually

placed out in the woods somewhere in the area, hoping to give some unsuspecting explorers a good startle.

One area convenience store, Manny's Qwick-Shoppe, right on Route 26, actually sells t-shirts with the creature on them. We talked to the owner of Manny's Qwick-Shoppe, Anne Robbins about the creature.

**ANNE:** They've been telling stories of ole Stridda Long Body since I was a girl at least. I'll tell ya though, I spent my entire life up and around these mountains, and I ain't seen him once. Still, the shirts sell pretty good. Every summer I get five or six people stop in specifically looking for him. They have all this hi-tech, fancy hiking and tracking gear. They ain't seen nothing. If Stridda's out there, he's too smart for them, you know? Plus I got another ten or twelve campers and vacationers who just think the shirt's funny. It's a good seller."

One thing that we noticed during our research: people in the area seem to be a little protective of Stridda Longbody. None of the locals we talked to mentioned going out to hunt the creature or to try and kill it. Even Paul Tarbox's notes only ever mention wanting to observe it, not capture it. Locals are resistant to out-of-staters coming in trying to discover the truth of their cryptid. More than one of them denied the paranormal, monster-hunter type cable shows, who wanted to come in and do a special on it. They were even hesitant to talk with us until we assure them of who we are and what we do.

If there is a creature stalking the mountains and forests outside of Newry, it's *their* creature. "He ain't harming no one," said one local man. "He's just doing his thing. Like the rest of us."

As is often the case at Malevolent Maine, we begin to look outside the state once we've exhausted our in-state resources. When it comes to cryptids - that is, creatures that are believed



to exist but have not been proven by mainstream science - we often find similar stories across the globe. Bigfoot or Sasquatch for example has similar counterparts in other parts of the world known as the abominable snowman or the yeti. The Loch Ness Monster has an American cousin (or two or three), the most popular being known as Champ, the monster of Lake Champlain. So when we tried to see if there were other sightings of Stridda Longbody, in other parts of the world, we were surprised to discover quite a few similar creatures.

All across the northern United States and Canada there are reports of creatures known as Crawlers. Crawlers are said to be tall, lanky, and grayish white humanoid creatures with no hair, extremely sharp claws and sharp teeth, and sunken eyes. Crawlers are said to crawl extremely fast on all four limbs, but are capable of standing on two.

There's even a Creepypasta character known as "Rake" who bears a striking resemblance to Stridda Longbody and these Crawlers, though Paul Tarbox's journal predates the history of this fictional monster, who was created in 2005, by about three decades.

So, is Stridda Longbody one of these creatures known as Crawlers? It's likely it is. So the question remains: is there just one creature or have there been several different ones in the Newry area? Paul Tarbox believed that the creature he encountered in 1996, the one we heard about from his journal, was the same one he encountered in 1953. That would make the creature at least forty years old. According to his notes, Tarbox believed that there was only one Stridda Longbody in the area and that it may in fact be immortal. Here's Lucas again, reading from Tarbox's journal:

**LUCAS:** "While the creature behaves much like an animal - skittish around humans, defensive when its territory is invaded, etc. - I do not believe it is, in fact, an animal. Instead, I believe the creature, or more accurately, the entity, is a kind of forest spirit or

supernatural being. I think it has been here longer than humans and will exist long after we are gone. Whatever Stridda Longbody is, it's not of the natural world."

Could Paul Tarbox be right? The Penobscot Native American tribe, from lands not far from the territory of Stridda Longbody, had a story about Gici Awas [**gih-chee ah-wahss**], or "The Great Beast." It was said to be tall and stiff-legged, and looked something like a hairless bear with an oversized human head. The stories claim it roamed the forests, eating the flesh of men. While not an exact match, it does bear a striking resemblance to Stridda Longbody, and proves that people have been telling stories about creatures like these for a long time.

There have been few reports of missing people or mutilated remains found in the area. If Stridda Longbody is eating humans, he's not doing it very often and is surprisingly discrete. Hunters and hikers alike haven't discovered any bones or animal corpses that might indicate the creature is consuming the local wildlife.

Paul Tarbox theorized the creature might not eat at all, that instead, it lives off the "bio-energy" of the forest. This, he believed, explains what it was doing the night he came across it in 1996. It might also explain why it didn't attack hiker Adam Hussey who claimed to encounter the creature while hiking down Fulling Mill Mountain. According to Hussey's story, Stridda Longbody grew threatening, but did not attack. Perhaps, the Native American stories were fabricated to contain the more gruesome aspect of the creature's diet, or perhaps it has evolved. Perhaps, it's an entirely new creature all together.

What is known is that the creature is highly elusive. Aside from a few chance encounters over the years, it has managed to escape serious detections by a population that is highly aware of its existence. While many in the area claim to have an encounter with Stridda, most of these amount to strange noises in the woods or something moving just beyond the line of sight. When

the TV show, *Bigfoot and Company* came to the area in an attempt to locate evidence of the creature they didn't find more than a few broken trees and a strange impression in the earth that *could* have been a footprint (though if you watched the actual episode, clever editing and a little acting might make you think they had come face to face with the beast).

Paul Tarbox thought that Stridda Longbody avoided detection by posing as a tree. By stretching its limbs and remaining completely still, it might go undetected from a distance, mistaken for a misshapen tree.

Either way, it's a fact that unlike Bigfoot, Stridda Longbody hasn't left behind many clues of its existence. There are no castings of footprints, fur samples, or even remains to lend credence to its existence. All we have are some first-hand accounts, a few blurry photographs, and one well-preserved exploration journal to go on.

And yet, the legend of Stridda Longbody continues to grow. Each year, more and more people flock to the area in hopes of catching a glimpse. There are numerous internet groups and Facebook pages dedicated to the creature. There is even rumor of an independent first-person horror video game being developed based on it. As Anne Robbins, the owner of Manny's Qwick-Shoppe told us, "He's good for business."

What is stalking the forests of the Newry area? We may never know for sure. The fact remains that something - whether supernatural guardian or some sort of missing link creature - Stridda Longbody is out there. He's been seen by too many people, their stories too similar for this to be cast aside as made up stories by those too scared or too creative for their own good. Paul Tarbox's copious notes, dating back even before his own time, lend further evidence that this creature is in the woods in the shadow of the Appalachian Trail.

If you go walking in the woods near Old Speck Mountain and you see something that almost looks like a tree, but not quite, our

best advice is to keep moving. So far, Stridda Longbody hasn't claimed any victims. Yet. Who knows what this ancient and powerful being is capable of if it is truly angered. With its massive size and sharp talons and fangs, it is best we don't find out.

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/](http://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](https://patreon.com/malevolentmaine)

Thank you for listening to Malevolent Maine.

And as always, stay safe out there, Maine.