

Blood Town S1-E9 Bury Yourself

Penny 0:00

Please be advised that this episode contains descriptions of images that some may find disturbing.

I'm Penny Dearmin, and this is Blood Town. What follows is an interview with Abigail White. She is one of Marcus Lillard's friends who got in touch with me and wanted to tell Marcus's side of the story of what happened on the night of the Mother's Day murder.

Thanks for joining me today. You want to introduce yourself? Tell the audience who you are.

Abigail 0:46

My name is Abigail White. I live in Key West. I'm an artist.

Penny 0:49

You want to tell us how you met Marcus Lillard?

Abigail 0:52

Sure. He came into my gallery when I was working, because it's a co-op, I work in a co-op gallery. So, I work one, one day a week, he was like, I have a gift for you. And I wanted to know what that was. So, he said, I wasn't sure if he meant it was for me or for my gallery as a whole. But I was like, sure, what is it? And then he said, I want to make some frames out of this old barn wood that I have. He was down here working as a crab fisherman, and he left his phone number with me. So, I texted him. And we talked a little bit, but we never saw each other again, while he was down here or ever in person. I reached out to him again. And he had moved back to Georgia. We started talking over text and Facebook Messenger. I'm a Christian. So, I was telling him a lot about my faith. So that's how our friendship began. But I felt like I got to know him pretty well over the course of a year before the incident happened.

Penny 1:54

So, you knew him while he was dating Marianne?

Abigail 1:57

Yes. He would talk a lot about her. And he was really helpful for her with promoting her bug campaign, whatever you call it. So, he would go around to traveling with her and supporting her. He was a car salesman, like once he back went back to Georgia. He was a car salesman the whole time. He would start up a certain enterprise, and then he would go on like the crazy vacation with her for like two weeks or whatever. And then he come back and then he would get a new job at a different used car sales place. And it was like his regular thing that he would do that pretty constantly.

Penny 2:33

How did you hear about the incident and Marcus's arrest?

Abigail 2:40

So, he has a childhood friend that I met. I mean, I didn't meet her. I mean, I only know her online. As soon as she found out, she texted me and said, Please pray for Marcus because he's in a lot of trouble right now. And at first, nobody even knew it was a murder at first, like when it first came out. And then like, a couple of days later, he got accused, or a day or two later, he got accused of murdering her.

Penny 3:07

Abigail reached out to Marcus's mom and made arrangements to have a phone conversation with him from jail. And I asked her if she remembered exactly when that first conversation took place.

Abigail 3:22

That was May 17th, four or five days after the incident.

Penny 3:27

What did you guys talk about? I mean, what do you want to share with us that you've learned and you know your discussions with him and...

Abigail 3:34

I knew a lot about him and his family and people he knew, just because I talked to him pretty frequently. He met Clark about six or seven years ago, because he brought his son to Clark's psychiatric care to see him as a doctor, you know, for his son. I believe the doctor, I believe he was practicing child psychology back then. His son is like 21 now, so that was like six or seven years ago. So they became acquainted with each other and they, they would see each other around and they talked. When Clark started up the yoga studio, he ran into Marcus and said, Hey, I'm starting this yoga studio, so why don't you come and join us? Marcus started going to the yoga classes for a while. I know that Marcus and Marianne had met when they were really young, like in their early 20s or something around there, and that they had worked at like a country club together, and I knew all that before I... before all this happened, so I don't know how it ended up that Marianne and him like started dating, but like their very first date was a double date with this guy Clark. I think it was their very first date or whatever it was like one of their very first dates was a double date with this guy Clark and some other lady.

Penny 4:54

Abigail also stated that during this time, Clark had maintained a sort of friendship with Marcus's son after he was no longer in his care.

Abigail 5:07

And Clark liked to throw parties at his pool. And apparently there's lots of drug use and ecstasy and a lot of young, young people in their 20s would like to go to this party and Marcus's son was one of them. Marcus was very open and honest about his drug addiction, and his other addictions like alcohol, and he was very promiscuous and never seemed to get free of it. And it was kind of ruining his relationship with his family, and especially his son.

Penny 5:39

Abigail wanted to come on and have Marcus's story be heard.

Abigail 5:45

Since nobody seems to be wanting to tell his story, I think that would be nice for people to hear. So, this is how he told it to me.

A few months prior to the murder, Marcus and his son hadn't really been talking. They had kind of a falling out in their relationship because his son didn't really respect him and was kind of ashamed of him because of his lifestyle and his drug use. He had wanted to see his son before he left for Ecuador with Marianne, which was going to happen the Thursday, that would have been the Thursday after the incident.

And so, he wanted to give him this present that he had made for him, which was a poster, a sort of mural of rock and roll pictures that he liked, and that his son liked, and he wanted to give that to him as a present. But since he really wasn't able to see his son so much, he decided to bring it to their mutual friend's house, which is Clark. Marcus's son would often go to see Clark because he would go to his parties a lot. So, Marcus wanted to bring this poster over to his house. I think they packed a little bit before Ecuador.

Then they went for drinks in Milledgeville and went all around there bar hopping, and ended up driving to Clark's house to bring the mural/poster/collage/picture to Clark's house to drop off for Marcus's son. The next thing that happened was, I guess that Clark probably offered them some drinks or beer, and they started talking. And Marcus had knowledge of this ritual that they do in South America, and both he and Clark had spent time in South America. So, Marc has wanted to relate this ritual.

They go into the woods, and they bury themselves. They use a little spade, and they dig a hole for themselves, and they spend the night in a hole. And they do this so that their minds can be still and quiet and they can find peace in their souls. And this is supposed to calm and quiet their minds and their hearts, so Marcus related that knowledge to Clark. And, of course, then they proceeded to do some marijuana and drink some beer. And at some point, Marcus decided to go for a swim. So, he stripped down and went swimming, and Marianne stripped down and joined him; they ended up in the hot tub. Marcus said he kissed Marianne, and then he got out of the hot tub. He went over to the fire pit and he started stoking whatever was left of the fire. And it was very dark by this point, and from over across the swimming pool on the other end by the porch side of the pool.

He heard Clark shout out, Hey, why don't you go into the woods and look for some firewood? And then he added kind of...it was kind of strange, Marcus said. He said, and while you're out there, why don't you bury yourself? So, he goes over to Marianne who's still in the hot tub. And he says, Hey, Marianne, I'm going to go for a walk in the woods and look for some firewood. And she did not want him to leave. She was like, Please don't leave me here. And, and he's like, Don't worry. I'll be right back. She stood up in the hot tub, and she's like, Marcus, I need you to get back into this hot tub with me right now. And he said she sounded really terrified. But he's like, Oh, don't worry, baby. I'll be right back.

I'm just gonna go for...I'm just gonna go for a little bit. I'll be right back. So, off he went into the woods to go look for the firewood. And he doesn't know what happened next, but he woke up. He was having like an out of body experience where he is, where he was floating over his own body looking down at himself and it was kind of weird and freaky, and he had never really experienced anything like that before.

Penny 10:03

Marcus told Abigail he hadn't done any drugs that would make him feel that way. He said he only like natural drugs because he doesn't like synthetic drugs. But Clark did.

Abigail 10:15

He kind of came back to himself and he gathered himself up and stood up and started walking back up the slope because this was like down at the bottom of the slope. And he started walking up the slope towards the house. And as he was walking, he heard, he said he heard some kind of crazy commotion. As he continued up the hill, and the commotion was going, you know, it's kind of crazy. So he went, ran up the hill, and he got to the hot tub and he looked into the hot tub and there was Marianne's body just like floating there like that with the hot tub, underwater lights all like gleaming around.

He heard the voice come from the dark and Clark's voice said, well, you found her; now what are you gonna do? And Marcus said, he sounded very sinister. He thought, What can I do? And so immediately, he decided, I mean, he said he had life guard experience. So, he got her out of the hot tub and began to perform CPR and tried to get her to come to and she just wasn't coming. He tried and tried.

And then, at one point, Clark handed him Clark's phone. I mean, Marcus took Clark's phone and he thought, okay, who do I know who can help with the situation? And the first thing he thought of was his ex-wife because she was a respiratory nurse. So, he calls her, and he says, Hey, I need help, or whatever. What can I...What can I do? And he said, she cursed him out and said, Call 911. So, he's like, so he hung up. And he was like, Oh, that was like a waste of time. And then he tried more CPR. And then Oh, yeah. And then he thought of another person, who had respiratory training, and he knew their phone numbers by heart. I believe that his ex-wife had called him back and said, Why don't, you know, I think she has...she called back and asked him if he had called 911. Marcus used Clark's account to message some of the women or some of the people that might have, that Clark knew that may have had respiratory training. That

didn't work. But I guess that eventually Clark called 911. When the police arrived, they interviewed him and Clark together.

Penny 12:16

Abigail said both Clark and Marcus told the police that Marcus had been in the woods just prior to discovering Marianne's body.

Abigail 12:26

During that first conversation, I think we talked for like 30 minutes. It was like, in 15-minute intervals. But he talked a lot about her family and how concerned he was for them.

Penny 12:35

Did he talk about what the newspapers reported about him swimming across the pool and dropping her? Did you talk about that at all?

Abigail 12:44

No. He didn't tell me about that during that conversation, but I later, I asked him, did you...did that happen? Because I read it in newspapers. And he's like, Oh, yeah, that happened. I did swim across the pool with her and then drop her. And he's like, that just shows how like out of it I was. He believes that Clark had drugged him.

Penny 13:03

Did he mention that during that first contact? Is that when he first mentioned the potential drugging by Clark, or did that come up in a later conversation?

Abigail 13:13

Oh, no, that was in the very first that was on May 17th. The very first conversation that we had.

Penny 13:18

What do you think about what he told you?

Abigail 13:21

I definitely believe him because I've known him for a year, and he doesn't...he's always been very honest. And he hasn't...He doesn't make up stories like I, I don't think he would be capable of making up this story. I believe that he's telling the truth. He wouldn't do like what they're accusing him of. If it if it wasn't that accidental thing, he would have taken responsibility for that. He's like, sensitive, and he cares about people, he cares about peace, he's all about love. And he's a pacifist. He doesn't fight. If it was the accidental thing. Well, it wouldn't be that because he said that he didn't do that that night. Plus, he says he hasn't done that in like, many, many years. According to him, that was early on in his life and that he does, he would never do something like that with Marianne. The kind of violence that they're talking about that was on her body does not come from like an accidental, some kind of accidental asphyxiation. It has nothing to do with him. Whatever he did to those women, he did that because they asked him to and because they wanted him to do that. He would never have treated her like that.

Penny 14:30

How would you classify his relationship with Marianne?

Abigail 14:34

Before all of this, I would have said that they were like really good friends. He never referred to her as his girlfriend, but he was definitely living with her for a long time. For him, it was sort of like a Friends with Benefits thing, or maybe it started out that way. And then she probably felt a lot more serious about him as time went on, but then he was kind of like undecided whether he wanted to stay with her, but he really loved her as a friend. He broke up with her at one point because he felt...he said he felt guilty kind of leading her on, or not loving her the way he thought he should. But they were definitely very good friends and like she would hang out with him all the time. And they were kind of inseparable. And they...they probably had like a need for each other like to fill a void in their lives. So, they would always like gravitate back toward each other.

Penny 15:22

Can you tell me what do you think happened that night?

Abigail 15:24

When I first learned about all this, I was like, Oh my gosh, like Clark obviously did it because he went, he felt guilty. He went and shot himself. And plus, I mean, honestly, Marcus didn't do it. So, well, there was some like some DNA evidence that has come out seems to indicate that there was like an unidentified individual. So, the rape kit indicated that there was no evidence of sexual activity, but there was DNA under her fingernails, and it belonged to an unidentified individual. And that means that whatever happened while he was down and unconscious, and who knows how much time had passed, but if Clark had drugged him and sent him off into the woods, he had a motive for sending him off into the woods. But what was that motive? And there was another, at least one other individual involved since the DNA under her fingernails is just someone else entirely. This murder has only begun to like be solved, like I mean, I mean, hasn't begun to be solved. Who is this person? And can we find this person whose DNA because that would be another potential witness and possibly the actual murderer, instead of having like a person who may not have been...maybe he wasn't a very good boyfriend, and he wasn't even a very good person, but at least he's not like a vicious murderer. Since the only thing we know from Marcus is that he was out in the woods unconscious for the time that she was murdered, and so anything could have happened.

Penny 16:47

This account, as told to Abigail White by Marcus Lillard, is his version of events. And while we do have corroboration that this is a similar account that he has told others, we continue to seek confirmation of the accuracy to the extent possible at this time. Thanks for listening, please rate and subscribe. You can follow us on Facebook and Instagram @Bloodtownpodcast, and Twitter @bloodtownpod.