Elements of a Legend

- “modern day folklore”
- “ghost stories”
- “a friend-of-a-friend of mine said…”
- framed as a story with plot and characters
- typically a cautionary tale
- the more believable, the better
- technology, modernity
- “normalcy”
Propagation and Belief
Participation!

Please participate!

Anecdotes, interruptions = candy

-> Now on to some legends....
Bloody Mary
Bloody Mary: False

Origin:
- early 20th Century England/United States

Explanation:
- strange-face illusion caused by low-light
- dissociative identity effect
The Babysitter
The Babysitter: True

Origin:

- March 18, 1950 babysitter Janett Christman is murdered after calling police

Variations:

- clown statues
- children live, or killer is caught
Lovers’ Lane
Lovers’ Lane: True

Origin:
- 1950s America with advent of car-culture and teenage rebels
- Texarkana Moonlight Murders (1946), Zodiac Killer (late 1960s)

Lessons:
- Teens shouldn’t have sex
- Don’t go to isolated places
- Be afraid of insane people
High Beams: False

Origin:
- popular spoken story from 1967 on; first print appearance in 1982

Lessons:
- Don’t judge others necessarily
- Always check your backseat; be vigilant of your surroundings
The Hitchhiker
The Hitchhiker: False

Origin:
- Early 20th Century in America;
- Earlier 1870s, horseback-carriage in Russia, Korea, Ozarks

Lessons:
- Can encounter supernatural when you aren’t expecting it
Body Under the Mattress
Body Under the Mattress: True

Origin:

- This has happened several times:
  - Atlantic City, NJ (1999)
  - Kansas City, MO (2001)
  - Memphis, TN (2010)

Lessons:

- Stay out of cheap hotel rooms
Kidney Heist
Kidney Heist: False, True

**Origin:**

- started as mid 1990s email chain; no verified cases until...
- 2008 several Indian labourers had kidneys removed for market
Other Legends

- **White Story (Scotland)**
- **Ghost tracks (USA)**
- **Kuchisake-onna (Japan)**
Thanks!
Sources

wikipedia.org

cracked.com

washingtonpost.com

goog