



URBAN LEGENDS

UDLS
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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



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

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