



URBAN LEGENDS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

THE AMAZING STORIES THAT HAPPENED TO A
FRIEND OF A FRIEND

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ORNITHOLOGY



STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

1 Theoretical Introduction

a) *Urban Legends* as a genre

→ characteristic features

→ research

→ collections

→ terminology

b) Teaching *Urban Legends*

→ Rationale: Reasons for teaching *Urban Legends*

→ Challenges

→ Methodology

2 Practical Explorations

a) time for individual reading

b) discussion in small groups

c) handouts: suggested activities

URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

Urban Legends...

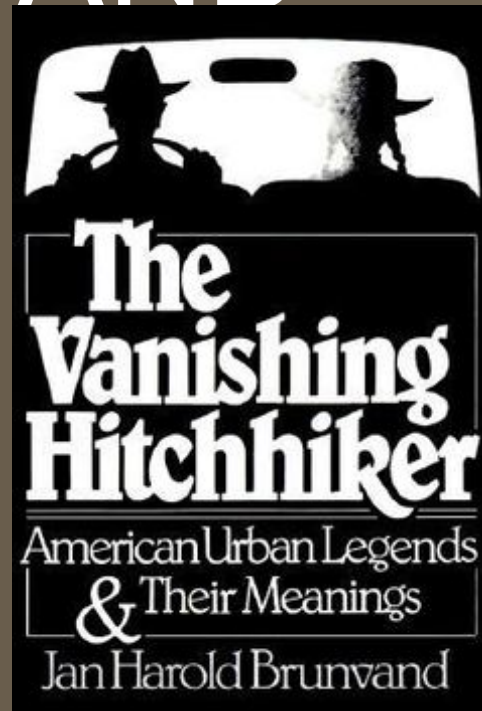
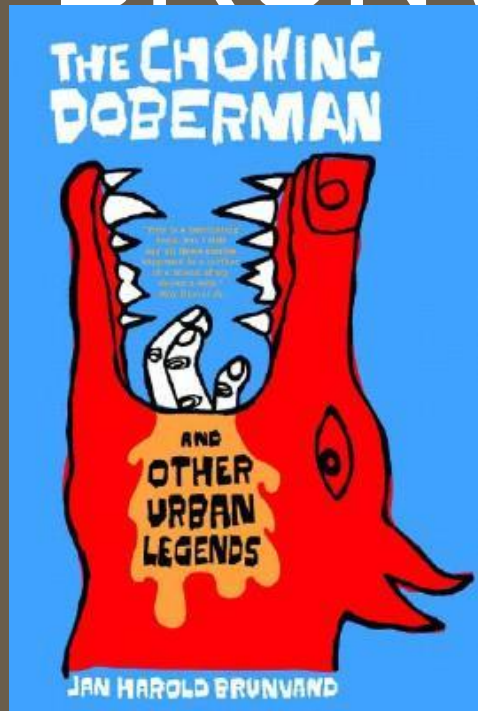
- are short prose texts
- are of unknown origin
- are spread orally among „relatively sophisticated, educated, urbanized modern people“
(www.janbrunvand.com/faq.html) but also via the internet
- claim to be factual (friend-of-a-friend or Foaf)
- but are „demonstrably untrue“ (T. J. Craughwell, p. 14)
- include an element of humor, horror or coincidence
- aim at teaching „a lesson about what happens to people who disregard the taboos of Judeo-Christian civilization.“
(T. J. Craughwell, p. 14)
- occur (with minor variations) in different regions or countries (cf. www.janbrunvand.com/faq.html)

URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- 1960s: Linda Dégh at Indiana State University (Bloomington Indiana)
- 1980s onwards: Jan Harold Brunvand at the University of Utah
- Germany, late 1980s onwards: Rolf Wilhelm Brednich, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE:
COLLECTIONS

URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: COLLECTIONS BY J.H. BRUNVAND



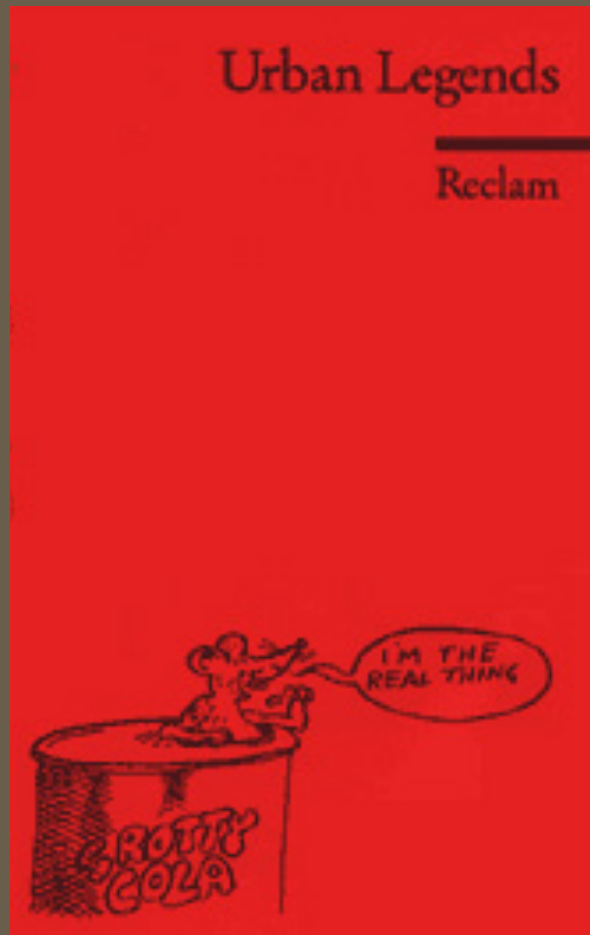
URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: COLLECTIONS BY R. W. BREDNICH



URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: A COLLECTION BY T. J CRAUGHWELL



URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: A COLLECTION BY HEIKE JÜNGST



*URBAN LEGENDS AS A
GENRE:
ONLINE COLLECTIONS*

snopes.com

urbanlegends.about.com

URBAN LEGENDS AS A GENRE: TERMINOLOGY

Urban Legend

Urban Myth

Contemporary Legends

modern folklore

sagenhafte Geschichten von heute

Foaf tales

belief legend

Großstadtmythen

TEACHING *URBAN LEGENDS*: RATIONALE

- they are short and narrative
- contain simple everyday language
- they are entertaining (→ element of humor, horror or coincidence)
- offer authentic language material
- huge choice/ wide range of topics
- offer a cultural and geographical context as well as transcultural elements
- they enable ‚authentic‘ production phases (→ oral tradition/ everyone can become a teller or re-teller of an urban legend)

TEACHING *URBAN LEGENDS*: CHALLENGES

- Finding a suitable *Urban Legend* for a certain group of learners can be challenging
 - violent, gruesome or sexually explicit content of some *Urban Legends*

TEACHING *URBAN LEGENDS*: METHODOLOGY

- pre-, while-, post-model
- while-reading phase can be divided into
 - first reading (global understanding/ reading for gist)
 - second reading (detailed understanding/ reading for detail)

TEACHING *URBAN LEGENDS*: METHODOLOGY

Suggested reading:

Thaler, Engelbert (ed.): Shorties. Flash Fiction in English Language Teaching. Narr Francke Attempto, 2016.



PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS

Time for individual reading:

Throughout the seminar room, you can find a choice of *Urban Legends*, sorted according to prevalent curricular topics and grades.

Please take 10 minutes for your individual reading of a number of *Urban Legends*.

PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS

Discussions in small groups:

Get together in small groups and discuss:

a) the suitability of the *Urban Legends* (concerning content and language) for the suggested age group.

b) possible pre-, while- and post-reading activities for working with specific *Urban Legends*.

(20 minutes)

PRACTICAL EXPLORATIONS

Handouts: suggested activities

A LIST OF THE URBAN LEGENDS THAT WERE PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Grades 5 and 6, Topic: Pets and Animals:

- **The Mexican Pet** ((from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 259)
- **The Hare Dryer** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 298)
- **Back from the Dead** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 600)
- **The Guest and the Dog** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 312)
- **The Persian Cat and the Chihuahua** (from: Jüngst, Heike: Urban Legends. Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 11)

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Grade 6+, Topic: Food and Drink:

- **The Package of Cookies** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 355)
- **The Perfect Mousse** (from: Jüngst, Heike: Urban Legends. Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 32/33)
- **Squeaky Canned Cola** (from: Jüngst, Heike: Urban Legends. Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 31)

A LIST OF THE URBAN LEGENDS THAT WERE PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Grade 8, Topic: New York, New York!

- **The Anxious Tourists** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 234)
- **Alligators in the Sewers** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 249)
- **„No Radio“** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 280)
- **The Helpful Car Stripper** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 151)
- **The Stolen Wallet** (from: Brunvand, Harold: Too Good to Be True. The Colossal Book of Urban Legends. W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1999. P. 37)

A LIST OF THE URBAN LEGENDS THAT WERE PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Grade 8+, Topic: Spooky spooky! It's Halloween:

- **The Vanishing Hitchhiker** (from: Jüngst, Heike: Urban Legends. Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 59)
- **The Hook** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 278)
- **The Murderer in the Backseat** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 137)
- **The Hairy-handed Hitchhiker** (from: Jüngst, Heike: Urban Legends. Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 75)

A LIST OF THE URBAN LEGENDS THAT WERE PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Grade 10/ 11 and 12, Topic: Going to College/ University Life

- **Late for Finals** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 167)
- **The Definition of Courage** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 168)
- **„I like it better each time“** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 196)
- **The Letter Home** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 173)
- **Football Is for the Birds** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 179)

A LIST OF THE URBAN LEGENDS THAT WERE PRESENTED IN THE WORKSHOP

Grades 11 and 12

Topic: Love and Friendship:

- **The Blind Date** (from: Brunvand, Jan Harold: *The Mexican Pet. More „New“ Urban Legends and Some Old Favorites.* W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1986. P. 126)
- **The Lover's Telephone Revenge** (from: Jüngst, Heike: *Urban Legends.* Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 98)

Topic: The Generation Conflict:

- **The Free Air Guitar** (from: Craughwell, Thomas: *Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend.* 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York, p. 543)
- **Old vs. Young** (from: Brunvand, Jan Harold: *The Mexican Pet. More „New“ Urban Legends and Some Old Favorites.* W. W. Norton & Company, New York. 1986. P. 67)
- **The Grocery Scam** (from: Jüngst, Heike: *Urban Legends.* Reclam, Stuttgart. 1999. p. 45.)

SOURCES:

Craughwell, Thomas: Urban Legends: 666 Absolutely True Stories that Happened to a Friend... of a Friend... of a Friend. 2005, Black Dog and Leventhal Publishers, New York.

www.janbrunvand.com/faq.html