“Explanation and Origins of the Slenderman Legends”

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Folk Belief

Informant:
Dane is my former roommate and good friend. He is 27 years old and a civil engineering major at Utah State University. He is an outgoing, fun loving guy, and likes a good scare from time to time. He is from Herriman, Utah, but has been up at Logan for quite a while now. He enjoys a good video game, has previously done some pretty adventurous outdoor work, and is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Context:
I had just collected a description of Dane’s understanding and experiences with Slenderman, and had stopped recording, thinking we were done. I casually asked why he thought Slenderman had gotten big in America, and why kids were into it, as he told me believed it was a European myth. He got excited, and started off on how dumb it was that kid’s would hijack the myth from Europe because of the game, and start claiming he was here. I realized he was about to give me some more folklore and started recording after he had already started.

Text:
“…this is back, that other stuff. I can’t really say, but I mean they’re black and white fricken pictures, so you it’s like, at least twenty, thirty years old, [he chuckles] more, that these myths come from, I think it was, ah, uh, don’t quote me on this at all but, I think, the forties probably?

Me: I might quote on you on it, but--

Dane: Yeah. Me: (yeah). [we laugh a lot]

Me: Forties?

Dane: So, I never looked up the time period, but, like, they were pretty old school pictures. So, [I ask if he’s heard any stories outside of the video games, or if it had mostly spread through the games] Um. There... there weren’t any, like, specific stories, mainly like. short, brief, things, that
talks ab--like it would like, name off little things that happened, like, girl seen at park in Norway. Um, once, taken picture, like it was literally brief, like almost like a re--police report kind of a thing. Once seen, once slender, he, apparent slenderman was seen in picture, girl disappeared two, three days after. And that’s like all it ever was. And stuff. People go looking for him, never find him. You know? They can’t find traces of him. Like, nothing, you know? But there’s, like, apparently, these pictures of him and [fades off, almost inaudible]. And so, I’m like, I dunno, [I chuckle] I honestly don’t, fully believe in that kind of stuff, I’m like. Well, I don’t know what these kids are doing, I mean like maybe [I chuckle] there was like crap going on in their family [I laugh through this sentence] and they fricken ran away, so. But some of them were too young that they wouldn’t run away. And it probably could have just been a kidnapping, maybe there just literally was a man, or a group of people. Wha-I have read other people, in their, comments, who say, no, slenderman is not a group of people, that are kidnapping children, for whatever purposes, or sick means. But that their overall, um, that it’s literally a evil creature, he just wants you to think he’s everywhere.

**Texture:**

Dane seemed significantly more excited to speculate on where Slenderman came from, rather than how people described him, or what the myths were. He was very into the story, rushing at times, trying to make things fit into a real world frame that didn’t rely on supernatural explanations. There was a bit of back and forth, and most of my laughter was at the way he told the story with enthusiasm, speed, and some fun inflection, as well as being surprised at the information I had never heard before.