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Winter 11-2-2018

Paper Skeletons

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Recommended Citation

Ledyard, Rayna, "Paper Skeletons" (2018). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 524.
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/524

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Dawnetta Mahnken
Logan, Utah
12/2/18

Paper Skeletons

Genre: Prank

Informant: Dawnetta Mahnken is my mother. She is 42 years old, and has a wicked sense of humor when given the opportunity to show it. She loves to unexpectedly tease her children, joke around, play with us, and have fun, even though she usually is the one who does a lot of the household chores and encourages her children to do the same (under threat of suspended activities, of course). She is a very organized person who loves to read (or listen to audio books), garden, and help her family. She is a wonderful mother, despite having a very hard childhood- I won't go into detail. Suffice it to say that I am amazed and grateful that she turned into the person she is today. Before she was a mother and had her own family, she had many more opportunities to enact pranks and jokes, and often took advantage of these with gusto.

Context: I was visiting my parents' home for Sunday dinner, and after the meal I was chatting with my mom on a comfy couch. We were relaxed and full, enjoying each other's company. As she asked me about recent life, I shared some stress about the collection project and other finals coming up, telling her that I was planning on just collecting some pranks to get the last few bits of folklore I needed. (This was a set-up: my mother was the one I had been planning on asking in the first place.) She told me that she had some pranks, allowed me to pull out my phone to record, then eagerly shared some of her favorite pranks she has pulled.

Text: So there's one time when um, we... what did we do... we had like this, paper skeleton that glowed in the dark. And we taped it on to... well we kind of made this black dummy thing and then taped it onto them. And then we'd wait for cars to- we were hiding in a tree, and we'd wait for cars to come, and then we threw it out of the tree in front of the car, and the person would think that they hit someone. *[Laughs]*. That was pretty mean... Or- *[breaks off laughing.]* There was this time when we would, similar thing, we'd get the same skeleton glow-in-the-dark-thing and we taped it to the front of Lance. He was wearing black clothes and he'd kinda lay on the ground over at the cemetery. We'd have him lay in a certain spot at the cemetery and then we'd

um... talk someone into coming, *[laughing]* it was usually like, “Hey let’s go play tag at the cemetery!” or whatever we’d do at night. Um so then we’d go over and talk them into going to the cemetery and we’d walk them by the, the specific spot that we knew Lance was at. And then as we’d walk them by he’d all of a sudden JUMP up and go, “HUAAAAAAAAAAH!!” And they of course would SCREAM and go running away... *[laughing, then a pause to take a deep breath.]* Good times.... *[Starts laughing again.]*

Texture: My mother CLEARLY enjoyed sharing her prank stories with me. She got into the story-telling groove very quickly, and was laughing almost the entire time as she remembered the fun that she had living through these elaborate jokes. If she wasn’t laughing, she was grinning, and at one point she wiped tears from her face from laughing so hard. She used emphatic arm movements while telling the stories, and her eyes were bright. She emphasised words for dramatic effect, making loud sound effects when needed, and overall seemed excited to share these stories with me.

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Fall 2018