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Beware the Slenderman

By Unknown

Hey! Over here!

Please!

911, what is the address
of your emergency?

Waukesha County, I'm gonna transfer
over a caller on Big Bend.

That's a dead end
just south of Rivera.

Okay. He came upon a
12-year-old female.

She appears
to have been stabbed.

She appears to be what?

- Stabbed.

- Stabbed?

Correct.

On Saturday, May 31st, 2014,
at approximately 9:50 a.m.,

the Waukesha Police

Department was notified

by a concerned citizen

that a 12-year-old girl
was stabbed

in the area of Big Bend Road
in the city of Waukesha.

The stabbing brought a huge
police presence to the area,
a major search by ground and air
looking for two other girls.

Anissa Weier and Morgan Geysler
are accused

of stabbing their friend
and leaving her for dead.

Weier and Geysler lured Payton
into the woods

Police say that's when Geysler,
holding the knife,

was told by Weier,

"Go ballistic, go crazy."

And what happened?

Payton said,

"Then she started."

Geysler began to stab
the 12-year-old,

as she screamed, 19 times
with a five-inch blade.
In the arms, legs, and torso.
One of the knife wounds
missed a major artery
near her heart
by just a millimeter.
Payton somehow survived.
She crawled out of those woods.
A bicyclist found her
on the sidewalk,
covered in blood
and begging for help.
When asked who attacked her,
she said, "My best friend."
Police say the suspects
were inspired by a character
on a website called Creepypasta,
a site filled
with scary stories.
Now, the story they followed
was about a character
called Slenderman.
A tall, fictional boogeyman
featured on Internet blogs.
Slenderman, a faceless ghoul
many parents have likely
never heard of.
If you don't know
who Slenderman is...
well, we didn't either,
but plenty of young kids do.
If you don't know who Slenderman
is, you live under a rock.
Who's that?
Run! Run! Run!
Oh my god, run! No, run!
- Oh my god!
- Oh my god!
Anissa Weier and Morgan Geyser
were found walking
near the interstate.
They later told police
they planned to walk

to Slenderman's mansion.
Police say it's also who
the young suspects claimed
they wanted to please.
Anissa felt as though
she needed to prove
that Slenderman existed and would be
able to do that by killing somebody.
And Morgan said that her family
would be in danger if they didn't.
Prosecutors have charged
the girls as adults.
If convicted on the charges,
each 12-year-old faces
up to 65 years in prison.
Did it seem to you at any point
during your interview with Morgan
that she was remorseful
about what she had done?
Absolutely none.
Did she cry at all at any point
during your interview of her?
There was no emotion
from her at all.
Did you, after discussing
the incident itself,
have any conversation
with Payton
about how she felt about Morgan
and Anissa at this point?
She said that Morgan should go to
jail for the rest of her life...
and that Anissa should
go to jail too, but not as long
because she was involved
but she didn't stab her.
She just stood there
and watched.
Hi, Morgan.
Hi, Morgan.
Morgan was a surprise.
And I didn't know how to feel
about it at first...
but I knew that I loved her.

Yay!
And she changed
our lives drastically
and for the better.
Morgan's always been quirky,
and she's always marched
to the beat of her own drum.
Even from...
from little on...
she didn't care
what people think about her,
which I think is a wonderful trait,
especially for... for a girl.
Girls are usually so...
so self-conscious
and concerned about...
about what others think of them,
and Morgan was never like that.
You know, she just...
She always just did
her own thing,
and if people didn't like it,
well, that was their problem.
Kitties and puppies
aren't wild animals.
- No, that's right.
- They're not. They're pets.
I had a camera in her face
for a good portion
of her childhood,
so I think she got sick
of it sometimes.
She got a real miniature baby grand
piano for Christmas one year.
And she would sit there
for quite a long time,
just making up
sweet little songs.
And we tried to capture as many
of them as we could on video,
but usually as soon as she realized
that we were paying attention
or recording her,
she would stop.

They'll stay stray forever
One thing about Morgan
that always struck us...
as a little...
odd was that she...
She didn't react the way
that you would
expect her to react...
like at the movies.
Like, if something bad happened
to the main character, she...
she wouldn't
have empathy for them.
Bambi, come here!
Look.
New spring grass.
I remember watching "Bambi"
with her for the first time.
We were so worried
to watch it with her,
because we thought she was gonna be
so upset when... when the mother died.
Bambi, quick! The thicket!
Faster! Faster, Bambi!
Don't look back!
Keep running! Keep running!
But the mother died,
and Morgan just said,
"Run Bambi, run! Get out
of there, save yourself!"
You know?
And she wasn't sad about it.
We made it!
We made it, Mother!
We...
Mother!
And I could think of...
a lot of other examples
along those lines
where she hasn't reacted
in the way
that we would expect
a little girl to react.
We were aware that Morgan

was interested in Slenderman.
She would show us some of the
characters and some of the stories.
While I wasn't thrilled
about her interest,
I didn't really see
the harm in it either.
We never thought
for a moment that she...
She could possibly believe
that it was real.
When I was Morgan's age, I...
I remember biking home from the
library with Stephen King's "It."
You know, so I liked that sort
of thing too when I was her age,
and I think most kids her age do like
scary stories and horror movies and...
scary stories on the Internet, you know?
So, that's all that we...
that's all that
we thought that it was.
I just can't imagine her...
I can't imagine her coming up
with that plan on her own.
My bonnie...
My bonnie lies
over the ocean
My bonnie
lies over the sea
My bonnie lies
over the ocean
So bring back
my bonnie to me
Bring back, bring back
Oh, bring back
my bonnie to me
Bring back!
Bring back
Back
Oh, bring back my bonnie
to me Bonnie... me
She lost a tooth, so the tooth
fairy gave her a dollar.

It was that tooth.
I was telling her...
I was like, "A dollar?"
I said, "I only ever got
quarters from the tooth fairy."
She was happy.
The tooth fairy
gave her a dollar.
This was the last video I have.
This was at the end of her
sixth grade year for school.
Hush, hush,
somebody's callin' my name
Hush! Somebody's
callin' my name
Hush, hush,
somebody's callin' my name
Oh my Lord, oh my Lord,
what should I do?
Yes, this is Anissa's
very pink bedroom.
At the time that we painted
this, pink was the thing.
Anissa's his person.
Tiger is Anissa's cat.
After Anissa left...
he would come up here
and he'd spend a lot of time
just walking around,
nosing around,
looking for Anissa.
You know, nobody uses...
the bed while she's gone.
I don't know,
maybe the cat does, but...
I guess it just made more sense
to take everything apart
and wash it
and when she comes home,
it's all clean and ready to go.
It's just a matter of when.
She would come
in here to practice choir.
She did projects

that she would have to FaceTime
with two or three different kids
from this flight academy class
she was in.

'Cause I'd pop in
on a regular basis.
I'd just you know,
"What are you doing?"
I see a face on the iPad.
"Okay, who are you talking to?"
You know, "What are
you guys working on?"
And then you know, most days...

you know, 7:

you're done with your iPad."
Shut it down, come downstairs,
be with your family."
And she never argued.
People have asked me if I saw any signs
in my daughter and this and that.
And I'm just like, "No. I knew
what she was doing in here."
Because when she wasn't doing her
choir practice, that door was open."
You know, all of the kids...
not just Anissa, all
of them... they know...
there's no closed doors
in this house unless you're...
fresh out of the shower
or getting ready for bed.
So...
for people to say...
I wasn't involved...
Apart from sitting in the corner
and watching every move she makes,
I don't know how much
more involved I could've been.
My focus is Anissa...
not Slenderman.
And what is your name?
Anissa Weier.
Anissa, okay.

Okay, Just kind of...

give me a look.

Give me a look.

Morgan.

- How you doing?

- Fine.

Come on up.

Morgan, all right.

Hmm.

Okay.

All rise, please.

I thank you. Please be seated.

Court will call the matter, State of Wisconsin versus Morgan E. Geysler and also State versus Anissa E. Weier.

Good morning. The case is here today on a number of matters. The first matter I'll address is the issue of... competency. They're glad...

they're...

Uhh...

So...

There was a sleepover the prior night for Morgan's 12th birthday.

We knew that there was Anissa, Morgan, and a third girl that we've never met...

and that they were all at Morgan's house.

Morgan and Anissa have only known each other since they started sixth grade.

They met because they...

they rode the same bus.

We were so happy that Morgan had made a good friend so... so close, someone else in the neighborhood.

We were...

we were so happy for her...

to have someone to play with.

Uh-huh.

Okay.

My name is Bella,
and I was nominated
to do the Ice Bucket Challenge
for ALS by...

Morgan and Bella have known
each other since kindergarten,
and they've been best friends
since fourth grade.

- Are you guys ready?

- I guess.

Let's go.

One, two, three.

One, two, three.

Oh my god!

Umm...

Okay.

Umm...

Hello, Dr. Zipes!

I... I don't have...

I... uh, wait.

Hello?

Actually, the quality
seems fine on my end.

And yeah, my Skype is
just not having it today.

You... have we started now?

- Yes, yes.

When... when did we start?

Hello.

Hello.

- How are you?

- Good.

Who are you Skyping with?

Someone... I'm getting
interviewed for a documentary.

Okay, then... what... so let's start...
start with the question then.

Slenderman is
the modern-day boogeyman.

Because it's faceless,
because it's quiet,

because it doesn't speak words,
it's open to a lot
of interpretation
and open to a lot of possibilities
and to a lot of projection.
It varies from person to person
as to what
Slenderman actually is.
He's the creature
that lives in my closet.
He's the guy
in the windowless white van.
The faceless stranger
who kidnaps kids.
It encapsulates, symbolically,
a lot of these other
kind of societal fears
that we've had for ages and ages
and kind of conveniently
wraps them up
and makes it really malleable.
Because, really, Slenderman can
be whomever you want him to be.
We can empirically look back
and find out where
Slenderman was created.
It was created
in 2009 by Eric Knudsen
under the screen name
"Victor Surge"
as part of a Photoshop contest
to try to create something
that looked real
that really wasn't.
Urban legends on the Internet
has been a thing for decades.
There was already
a base audience
that was ready
for a globalized project
to kind of build a myth.
It actually began with the games
that spun off from Slenderman.
It's so heavily

visually oriented
that it's replicable
without really having
to understand
too much cultural context.
And from there,
it spread
to every available platform
and medium on the web.
Tumblr...
DeviantArt...
YouTube...
and also the 4chan's
Paranormal Board.
All of these websites have
a really strong affinity
with fan art in general.
"Slender is coming"?
YouTube was
the international hub
for non-English speakers
to kind of break their way
into the myth.
Creepypasta is this generic term
for horror stories
that gets copied
then pasted because it's good.
As it spreads,
people start tweaking
some parts of the story or
pick up where they left off.
These are stories
that branched out
of the main canon of Slenderman.
"Oh, should I travel
through the woods,"
"Or should I not
wishing I would?"
"For above me
lurks within the trees"
"No one could hear
my deathly screams"
"The palest man,
the blackest suit"

"Bigger than the tallest brute"
"Six black arms will grab you up"
"Or stalk you
till you just give up"
"He'll leave your body
not to eat
But to staple
your corpse upon a tree."
"Fear the man, the Slenderman
For he can do
what no one can."
Slenderman kind
of represents an opportunity
to see where people are nervous
about certain things
and what excites them
and what brings them together,
because it changes.
It changes based
on who's telling the story.
Often in the adult world
we forget how much
it sucks to be a kid.
Slenderman can also be seen
as a guardian angel.
Slenderman is the Grim Reaper
but with a heart.
These pictures are not
so much him showing up
on the playground to snatch
kids away, but to rescue them.
Stories like this can be
a powerful aphrodisiac for...
for somebody who is lonely
or is troubled,
or is trying to find
their way in the world.
Slenderman has this entire
community of people online
who are feeding
into the narrative
and creating
their own versions of it.
It's constantly...

it's exponentially growing.

That's the definition
of a good meme.

In human culture,
if it's copied
from one brain to another,
that's a meme.

Hi, my name is Valerie,
and I've decided to do
the Ice Bucket Challenge.

I'm doing the ALS
Ice Bucket Challenge.

I'm here to join the people bringing
attention to Lou Gehrig's disease.

It can be an idea.

It can be a tune.

It can be a style of dancing.

Tired?

What do you think he's doing?

- Planking.

- Oh, you know?

- Yeah, I do.

- Yes!

I am from the Internet.

The Internet provides
a very, very fast,
efficient, universal,
worldwide medium
for memes to spread.

That'll never catch on.

No doubt.

There may be
some memes that spread
like a very rapid epidemic
and then die away.

But others may have
strong persistence.

People are captivated
by Slenderman
and wish to pass on images
or to modify images of him.

This horrifying story
of two girls who thought
that it was their duty to

Slenderman to go and kill someone.

Well, that's what I call power.

That's very substantial power,
very horrific power.

- Unconsciously,

- Slenderman stems

from a tradition that...

that goes way, way back.

To a great extent, the Brothers
Grimm collected tales that deal
with what I would call
universal human struggles
that we continue to have today.

I think that's

one of the reasons

why people are

responding to this tale,

and they're telling

their own versions,

their own horror stories

about what is happening

in the world today.

Slenderman is

a tale about a character,

a strange weird character,

who may feed upon children.

It made me think of a legend

that Jacob

and Wilhelm Grimm collected

called "The Pied Piper

of Hamelin."

Many years ago a town was

being devastated by rats...

in the gutters...

on the streets...

in the cellars.

The Pied Piper comes

out of nowhere.

And he's a very odd,

strange-looking person,

but he has a flute

or some type of pipe

that he plays.

The man said, "If you want me to get

rid of the rats, you must pay me."

So they said, "Yes,
as much as you want
if you can get rid
of the rats."

The Piper began
blowing on the pipe.

The rats began following.

The Piper had all the rats
jump into the river.

But the mayor and the
councilmen cheat him.

"And the Piper said," You know,
"there are other
tunes I can pipe
"and ways that I can repay you
in a way that
you will never forget."

So the Piper took
his pipe to his lips again
and he began piping.

The people froze, but the
children followed him.

There was an opening,
a sudden opening
in the mountain.

And all the children headed
toward this opening.

And as the last one entered,
the mountain closed,
and the Piper
went inside as well.

Depending on the times and the
person who is telling their version
of "The Pied Piper,"
he can be many different things.

So he is
a very mysterious figure.

We don't know
whether he's evil or good.

We don't know whether he's going
to do anything to these children.

The children never return.

Nobody ever hears about them.

But the Pied Piper does live on.
Umm...
It's almost like she was living a
whole nother life inside her head
that we just...
that we just didn't know about.
It's hard with kids because...
they don't necessarily
know how to differentiate
between fantasy
and reality to begin with.
So, it's just hard to know...
where... where to draw the line.
Where does that become...
abnormal?
So even though, you know,
looking back,
maybe there were some signs.
It's everything in retrospect.
It's been two months
to the day on the calendar
that she's been in Washington
County Juvenile Detention Center.
The first day was rough.
You know, you get in there...
you have to learn all your check-in
procedures and everything.
You know, you get back there, and
you don't know what to expect.
There's you, there's a pane of
glass with metal bars behind it,
and then...
there's our daughter.
That's how it works.
This is the first time
we are trying this.
We got him something.
He doesn't know yet.
It's a little mouse.
You can see him in there.
You ready?
It's the circle of life, okay?
Right, Cole?
Yep.

It's just like "The
Lion King." Yeah.
Let's see how he reacts.
It's the same color as the...
as the bathtub.
Look, baby.
Look, baby, look.
See if he notices it.
My voice is going to take you
to a very calm
and peaceful place.
So this part,
striking into any soft
tissue in the body...
the eyes, the cheeks,
cut right through the blood
and air vessels into the throat,
get it in and out,
in and out, in and out.
Meow, meow, meow!
So with the first one,
why do you think
the pig passed out
when the kitten was put on it?
He's playing with it.
Dog goes woof, cat
goes meow, bird goes...
Ah! Why do you
stick a baby
in the blender feet first?
So you can see
the expression on it's face.
Shh.
I don't know if I should say,
"I hope you enjoyed it,"
but there's the circle
of life for you.
Talk to you later.
Thanks for watching.
Ever since she got that iPad,
she liked to spend a lot of private
time up in her room and...
she watched a lot
of things that were...

funny to her.
Nothing that was gross,
or depressing,
and emotionally degrading...
She liked...
that iPad just gave her a way
kind of not to...
to socialize with the family.
And I totally...
regret the iPad.
Anissa showed me a picture once.
She was in her bedroom,
and I went up to see what she
was doing, and I looked.
It was a picture
of this Slenderman character
and Jack Skellington.
At the time, it doesn't seem to
be anything inherently dangerous.
I had no inklings that I would
need to research this further.
The iPads will be moving
into elementary school levels
this year.
So, at least, our fifth-grade son is
going to be coming home with one.
His own.
So this is the yearbook
from Anissa's fifth grade year.
And this is what Anissa wrote.
It says, "You're like
a second dad to me."
So that was really sweet.
It's kind of tough
looking back on it,
'cause if she felt that strong,
you know, just...
maybe I could have done
something else.
Anissa was definitely one of
the biggest outliers I've had
just because she had
no solid connections
with other

4th and 5th-graders.
Anissa would definitely cry once every
couple weeks, I would want to say.
Mostly about... kids
being mean to her at school.
She wouldn't be able to contain
herself in front of the whole class,
and sometimes
she would just cry.
So other kids
were aware of her...
emotions, and being upset.
And there's times she would
come in from lunch/recess
and cry about
not having friends.
I've guessed that Anissa made
a connection with Morgan
and was happy that they
both were into Slenderman,
was happy that
she made a new friend,
shared a connection,
shared interest,
and it may have spiraled
out of control from there.
You couldn't set up
a better system to fail
In terms of "No one
at school likes you",
"but here's this
open-ended monster
who will embrace you."
The worst time
to be socially isolated
is the time when your brain and
body are begging for camaraderie,
for kinship,
which is adolescence.
It's the hardest time
to be alone.
I think in the absence
of social contact,
the Internet can sometimes serve

as a peer in a way,
or a peer group.
Those two girls in a tight-knit
group of eight friends,
I don't think
this would've happened,
because they wouldn't have only
been talking to each other
and they wouldn't
have been relying so heavily
on information
from the Internet.
Bill and I separated
in the summer of 2012.
It was my decision.
I asked for a divorce.
But when a situation
got really bad,
he was willing to still
be there and stuff.
She's not allowed to see
her brother or sister.
She's not allowed to see any aunts
or uncles, or cousins or anything,
so I wanted to have
as many people
as she could have
as often as possible.
I try to bring her mentally
out of the environment
and try to bring her
some sunshine in her day.
But then when I leave,
I kind of feel...
I feel happy
that I was able to see her
and... make her smile
for a few minutes in a day.
But on the other hand,
I'm still kind of sad
that I'm leaving
without my daughter, and...
The drive home is
sometimes heart-breaking...

but... I know
that I'll be coming up
and seeing her
in a couple days anyways,
and I'll just repeat
the performance and...
and hopefully, someday,
this might be my last trip
and... and...
And then
she'll be home for good.
But that might be a while off.
You have a prepaid call from...
Anissa...
An inmate at...
Washington County Jail.
This call will be recorded
and subject to
monitoring at any time.
You may begin speaking now.
Hello, Anissa.
So, how was your day?
Yeah?
Define "pretty good."
Do you know who's sitting here?
- Yep, Tyler's sitting here.
- Hi!
How are you?
I've been...
pretty good despite the cold.
Hi, Ani!
What's up?
Anissa! Anissa.
We can all tell
you're a little spun up.
Are you excited
to be talking to everybody?
Yeah?
Hey, hey hey! Anissa!
Dial it back a notch.
So, besides what
you've already like mentioned,
what's up with you?
Okay.

Yeah.

Just don't smile too much.

One minute remaining.

All right, we've got one minute,
so you have a good night.

Love you too.

All right?

And I will see you tomorrow.

So... all right. Thank you
for using IC solutions.

Goodbye.

And there you have it.

I don't know where
the whole Slenderman thing...
started because Anissa never
talked about anything like that.

Nobody ever talked
about Slenderman.

Unless she was, like,
constantly Internet surfing,
she never really showed me
anything that was bad...
or anything scary.

She... she is
easily frightened, though.

Maybe she did it because
she wanted to be noticed.

Because, honestly, at her school
I didn't know that
she didn't have many friends.

She told me that she had lots of
friends, lots of guys liked her,
and a bunch of...

and she was accepted,
and she was having
a great time at school.

But... she was
constantly picked on,
and she never really fit in.

She was a follower.

All rise.

- Okay, thank you.

- Please be seated.

I think some kids are just...

big believers.

They can't help but believe everything they hear.

Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

- Yes, I do.

- In this case

were you assigned to interview the victim, Payton Leutner?

Yes, I was.

At some point, your discussion got into the area of a birthday party that was planned for Morgan?

Payton said that the birthday party

had been planned for several weeks,

and it was for May 30th,

and that they had planned to go do Skateland

and sleep over

at Morgan's house.

They were being

normal little girls.

They were running

up and down the stairs,

holding hands and giggling.

There was no...

indication that anything

was... was off

or that we had anything to...

to be worried about.

After Skateland,

they came back to Morgan's house

and they went into the basement.

And we... we woke up

in the morning,

and we had donuts and

strawberries for breakfast,

and everything was very normal.

The girls were laughing and...

having a good time.
And they asked if they
could go to the park,
and I didn't think
anything of it.
I said, "Yeah, of course
you can go to the park."
And, you know,
Morgan said goodbye
and told me she loved me.
After playing on the playground
equipment for a while,
they went into the bathroom,
all three of them.
She didn't want to go to sleep,
so she didn't sit there
with her eyes closed,
and at some point, Anissa
hit the front of her head
and caused the back
of her head to...
slam against the wall.
Basically.
And Morgan said, "I thought we agreed
that you were going to do this."
Did Payton tell you anything
about what Payton
was thinking about that?
I don't think she understood
what was going on.
Thank you!
- Hey, that's what I wanted.
- Ooh.
It's a super-fancy
touch screen one.
I want that one.
It's already charged...
and there's already
some books on it for you.
Wow.
Can we put it together?
Mm-hmm. What do you think?
Pretty cool? Yeah?
I had the conversation

with Morgan...
the birds and the bees
conversation.
I explained about the changes that
you go through during puberty,
and I explained
about getting your period.
And I finish, and she looks
at me, and she goes,
"Mommy, I don't think
I believe you."
"That doesn't really happen."
Thank you!
You're welcome!
Morgan did believe in Santa,
the Tooth Fairy,
and the Easter Bunny,
and actually believed
in Santa until she was 11.
And I guess I just thought,
"What parent tells their
child that Santa's not real?
Who's... who's in a hurry
for their child to grow up?"
There are a lot
of strange things
in the world
that we just can't explain.
So we just make up things
to try to help explain them.
To believe in something...
I don't know,
the Loch Ness Monster
or the boogeyman...
isn't... that hard
to believe that people
actually do believe it.
You can't say for sure
that it is real or not.
And I do believe
that they did believe
that it was real.
What is it about certain kinds
of storybooks

that make kids more or less likely
to believe that they're real?
What is it about aspects
of the Internet that affects
whether kids think things
on it are real or not real?
I think the concept of what's real
has always been pretty messy.
Technology is creating
these new situations
in which it's becoming
even messier.
These two girls, maybe they
were both strong believers,
but then the fact
that they were both together
was creating an even
stronger context for belief.
That's kind of how Santa Claus
works or is perceived to work.
Sort of like
"The Believers' Club."
There's this big fear that if I stop
believing I won't get the presents.
What is the benefit
of being a believer?
Feeling like you're special,
you're a part of something,
that you can become
a part of just by believing.
That's a lot easier
than a lot of other clubs,
you know,
especially at that age.
But all you need to do for the
Slenderman club is just believe.
If there's one thing the cult
of Slenderman is about,
it's about making
it all believable,
especially by remaining
unverifiable.
And that's really kind of
how folk belief works.

Because you can't prove
beyond a shadow of a doubt
that Slenderman is fake or real.
Hey, guys, it's Shane.
So, ever since I found out
about Slenderman,
he's been haunting my dreams,
like every single dream.
And I'm really scared,
so I'm going to show you
a picture...
I'm... I'm just going to show you
some pictures that I got of him.
There it is.
Look at this.
Look right there
in the background.
- Right there.
- See, it's Slenderman.
That's my... that's my sister
when she was young.
And then we found that
in the background.
Oh, it's really scary.
Um, Bye.
Cartwheel.
Round off.
Oh my god, my stomach is killing me.
Back walkover.
Crappy back walkover.
Mine... ugh.
Mine, too.
Back walkover.
Oh my god.
Round off. Sam, we need to do...
Sam, we need to do this later.
Can you go a little bit longer?
No, we'll just stop
this one and then we'll...
and then we'll just do
another one later,
'cause my st... oh my god, I feel like
I'm about to throw up right now.
All right, just hurry up

and do one more.
- What the fuck?
- Oh my God! Run! Run!
Run! Run!
Oh my god, run! No, run!
The moment you know about him,
he knows about you.
Oh my god,
I'm so scared right now.
Like there's no way
to summon him,
but there's no way to get him to,
like, stop following you around.
I remember when I was like 13,
one of my birthday parties,
we had this big plan
me and three of my friends
were all going to get together,
we were going to bring
our cameras
and sneak out into the woods
and try to find him
with our cameras.
And I was out there
for like two hours.
If I encountered him...
I would explain myself
and be like,
"I don't think you're that bad.
"Personally, I think
you're kind of cool.
I wouldn't mind doing
what you're doing."
Since I had
no social life back then,
basically my whole life
was on the Internet.
And since
it was there, like, 24/7...
I would just gradually get
more and more attached to it.
And the thing that kept coming
up would be Slenderman.
Back then I believed, like every

fiber in my body, he was real.
All right, and the
game has started.
If everybody knows
that is Slenderman,
then I think that's sufficient
to define it as a replicator.
Genetic viruses spread
from body to body.
And so... a meme that
has great spreadability...
deserves to be called
a virus of the mind.
- Ooh! A note.
- No!
No, I don't wanna get it.
No, you have to get it.
You have to get it. You have to.
You get it. Then he's gonna come.
Get it.
Okay.
Just keep walking. Just
keep walking. Why?
Because he's finding you!
A virus of the mind spreads
by being listened to or seen
by the sense organs.
When one brain picks it up,
it will have a tendency
to pass it on to another brain
and another brain and so on,
so it will spread exponentially.
And it's empirical fact
that this happens.
The Slenderman case
is a very powerful example
of peer-to-peer horizontal transmission.
It does happen.
Meow, meow, kitty.
That's right, come here.
Were you sleeping as usual?
Yes, you were.
Stand up straight.
I think you should wear

your badge from Webelos Camp...
because there's only two people in
your whole pack that have that badge.
Okay. All right. All
your pins are secure?
Yes. You don't want to
be losing them. Right?
Yeah.
Life is good.
You're all geared up, all right?
Okay. Get ready to put that thing away.
All right?
Okay. I don't want to
get any grief about,
"Oh I just got to finish this
level," or whatever else.
All right?
Aiden?
Yeah.
Yay?
- Are you okay, Aiden?
- Yeah.
You sound a little sniffley.
This whole event, from start
to finish, has been a tragedy.
But you have to be angry
at the situation.
I'm angry at the situation...
and my daughter
is not the one...
that spent upwards of seven days
in the hospital
recovering from this.
And I'm angry
about the situation.
So, if I'm angry about it...
you know, this other family sure as
hell has a right to be angry about it.
You know, they could...
you know, slam the door
in my face, or, you know,
punch me in the face and knock
me on my ass and you know...
they would probably

be justified in doing so.
I'm sure they have a lot
of the same questions I do.
Did you come to any conclusions about
Anissa, as far as a diagnosis?
The predisposing
characteristics that...
made her susceptible
to the delusional disorder...
is what's referred
to as a schizotypy.
It's a diminished ability
to determine
what's real and what's not real.
A lot of people have
varying degrees of this.
Adults may have, simply, eccentric
religious or spiritual beliefs
or... conspiratorial beliefs
or things like that
and live out their life
with no problems at all.
I've done quite a
bit of research
on the early stages
of psychopathic personality
in adolescents
over the last 20 years.
Based on your experiences
and testing of Anissa,
she does not carry
that particular diagnosis.
No. She doesn't have...
she has, really, no
characteristics of a psychopath
or a sociopath or
anything like that. Okay.
Morgan and Anissa came out
of the bathroom.
Payton said that she didn't
want to play hide and seek,
but Morgan said
that the next game
that they played

could be her choice.
Payton said that...
Anissa pulled her deeper
and deeper into the woods.
And then...
Anissa says, "Now!"
And Anissa turns her back.
Morgan got on top
of Payton's legs.
She sat on her legs, and then she
got her face real close to Payton
and whispered in her ear,
"I'm so sorry."
And then started stabbing her.
What, ultimately,
was Morgan diagnosed with?
The final diagnosis,
both in the psychological report
and in my report
are schizophrenia,
unspecified, 295.90...
oppositional
defiant disorder, 313.81...
and bronchial asthma,
mild, intermittent, J45.2.
What is schizophrenia?
Schizophrenia is
one of the most serious
and one of the most studied
mental illnesses
of human beings.
Approximately 1% of the population
succumbs to schizophrenia.
It is a psychotic illness.
It's through a combination
of genetic predisposition
and then stress
placed on the person
to begin manifesting symptoms.
Patients lose track of reality
in a number of ways.
One would be hallucinations.
One could hear voices,
one could see visions,

one could feel
things crawling on them.
Delusions, on the other hand,
don't have to do
with sensing something,
they have to do with a thought.
So, for example, believing that
Slenderman is real is a delusion.
Saying that you saw Slenderman
is a visual hallucination.
Is the pile getting bigger?
Ha!
Jumping in the leaves.
And that's one of my favorites.
I raked up a bunch of leaves
in the back yard and...
she came flying in.
Nice action shot.
Yeah, it's hard
for us to imagine
that she was having problems.
It's hard to process.
None of us...
saw this coming.
Morgan recalls having
hallucinations
as early as three.
She remembers...
seeing ghosts at night,
as young as three,
that would bite her
and pull her hair.
But from what I understand,
for the most part
they were friendly, too.
She even said that she... she
tried to tell us about it once,
and that we just told her
to go back to bed,
but I don't have
any recollection of that.
And really,
how often do your children
tell you at bedtime that

they're seeing something
or hearing something
when they're that age?
"A monster's in my closet,"
or "something's under my bed,"
you know, just because
they don't want to go to bed.
It's hard
because I haven't been able
to discuss these things
with Morgan,
because she's
been incarcerated...
for the entire time
that I've... I've known...
that she's... that she's
had these symptoms.
She expressed the ability
to see and hear things
that other people are
not able to hear or see.
Things like unicorns.
She at one point digressed
into fairly rambling discussion
about a student in her class
being a pegasus.
When I saw her last week,
a few days before,
Snape had come to visit her
and kept her up

until 3:

by Morgan's report.
Snape?
Snape.
- Who is that?
- A "Harry Potter" character.
She also will say not just
that she's heard things,
but that since
as early as three,
she's had some
sensory-perceptual distortions.
She might see a person

change slightly or see colors.
She doesn't...
have much concern
about whether she gets
a long prison sentence,
because, wherever she is,
she will use Vulcan mind control
to make herself feel, to make
herself believe whatever she likes.
And so, even under
very stressful circumstances,
she doesn't feel
the stress because of this...
what she described
to be Vulcan mind control.
How about her... her cell?
I would consider
her cell disorganized.
She has papers scattered
about the floor.
Have you ever suggested
picking them up?
Yes, I have. And she stated
that she liked the papers there
because they made it feel
less empty.
- And she is in the room alone?
- Correct.
She said, "Seeing my friends",
"none of these things
are dangerous.
These friends can't disappear.
They're important to me."
Was she referring to real world
friends or fictional friends?
Fictional, I believe.
She's not allowed
to hug her family or touch them?
- Not in our facility.
- Right.
She made clear
that her primary concern
was with her relationship
with Slenderman,

and she felt like
if she says the wrong thing,
if she somehow
upsets Slenderman,
not only hers but her family's
lives could be in danger.
With childhood schizophrenia,
almost everyone
develops, eventually,
negative symptoms
and cognitive symptoms.
What's unique
about Morgan's circumstance
is that a severe course
is so predictable.
Well, we knew her diagnosis before we
went to meet them at the hospital.
We had a conference call
with two of the doctors,
so we were...
we were prepared.
And the reason that
we all went up there, actually,
was so that we could tell Morgan
what her diagnosis was.
And we thought that it would
be helpful for her to know
that her father also...
had the same mental illness,
because we had never told her
previously that Matt had schizophrenia.
We were very worried about
the way that she might react
to learning that
she has schizophrenia
because Morgan...
Morgan's a very smart girl,
and she's been reading... Which
makes me think that she knew.
Yeah. I think when they told
her, she was probably like...
Not surprised..."Well, that's
what I would've guessed...
if I had

to diagnose myself."
What I think is
that Morgan knows
that other people
don't see her hallucinations,
but they're still
very real to her.
Like, in her head they are real,
and they're there with her.
They're there. But I
think that she knows
that other people
don't see them.
Otherwise, why would
she make an attempt to...
- Cover it up. Mm-hmm.
- ...hide them from us, exactly.
It's because
she doesn't want to lose them.
She's afraid they would
be taken from her.
This is the doll house,
or the components
for a doll house,
that Morgan made
while she was housed
at Washington County
Juvenile Detention Center.
And she just put so much...
detail into it, it's amazing.
She's not allowed
to have scissors,
so all of these...
all of these tiny little
pieces she ripped by hand.
This is a television,
and these are
some of her little cartoon
characters that she likes to draw.
This actually, I think,
is a character
that's modeled after Spock.
When I watched her
do a couple of the dolls

and the...
and the clothing,
and she said what was surprising is
how few times she had to start over.
Like, she was able to just be
meticulous about... Here's some food.
I think this is salad and a piece of pizza.
A salad and a piece of pizza.
Here's a little laptop computer.
See there's even
detail on the screen.
Look at the cute little heart
on the front of the computer.
This looks like it's another TV.
Oh, and there's...
how appropriate.
There's a courtroom drama
playing in the background.
When I ask her what she wants
to watch on TV that night...
it's one of the things I usually ask
her when I talk to her on the phone...
she'll say that it depends
on whose turn it is to decide.
And she's in a cell by herself,
so she's the only person there.
I do a lot of stuff with
running numbers in my head.
I do...
I try to put up static,
almost, is how I describe it.
I wish that I could talk
to her about...
like, I have... right now,
there's like patterns
of light and geometric shapes
that's, like, always racing.
Like always, like right now.
Pshew, pshew, pshew,
pshew, pshew, pshew.
I always wanted to know
if she sees that stuff, too.
Everything seems normal to me,
because it's... it's my everything.

This is how
I've always seen things.
So, it doesn't seem weird
to me that like,
"Oh that's not how
you see street lights?"
or "Oh, that's weird."
I don't know if that was everyone that
had like a weird little visual...
thing going on...
like the glaring demon, devil.
Like that you're like, "Okay,
this is clearly not real."
But it doesn't matter.
Like, I've had where...
like you...
you can see it
and you know it's not real...
but it totally doesn't matter, because
you're still terrified of it.
Like, I know that there's...
I know the devil's
not in the backseat,
but the devil is in the backseat.
You know?
Yeah, sometimes
you know it's not real,
but it still smells, tastes,
and looks real, so it's real.
Could you just describe,
in general terms,
what you found in the bedroom
when you went through it?
There were...
numerous... notebooks
and pieces of paper
with drawings
and writings pertaining
to the Slenderman character.
Where was
all this stuff located?
All in Morgan's bedroom.
When you ask Morgan...
"What if Slenderman

doesn't exist?"

She can't tolerate that.

She becomes

somewhat oppositional,
and says she knows it's true,
and it can't be proven
untrue, so it's true.

Did Morgan use the words

"It had to be done?"

Yes.

Did you tell her to say that?

I did not.

She's volunteering this to you?

Correct.

That seems like

an unusual thing to say.

It does. Did you ask her
what she meant by that?

I did. And did you have to
ask her multiple times?

I did.

Okay, after you asked her
multiple times

what she meant

by "It had to be done,"

what did she offer you

or what did she say?

She told me

that the man ordered it.

Yes, I did.

She held up three fingers.

Like three?

Three.

What did that... did you try to
understand what that meant?

I asked her if that meant
three years ago,

and she said,

"No, at age three."

She believed that

she communicated telepathically
with Slenderman, and that...

once the communication began,
that she had to do

what it was
that Slenderman demanded.
And if she didn't do
what was demanded,
her family wouldn't be safe?
She wouldn't be safe,
her family wouldn't be safe.
Dr. Robbins,
was Morgan's entry
into this particular crime
because of her psychosis?
I believe so.
It bears saying
that schizophrenia,
in and of itself,
is not a dangerous illness.
There are many 35-year-olds
who have schizophrenia
who don't have
to be incarcerated,
who can be managed
in a community.
However, there's
a second part to that.
When your delusion...
when your fixed delusion
tells you to kill people...
and when your...
insight doesn't allow you
to seek treatment,
then schizophrenia
becomes dangerous.
It is a dangerous
illness untreated...
and hence...
we're here.
You are just so lost
in your illness
that no one knew about...
and then for people just to hate
her like that, just hate you...
"I hate that little girl.
I hope she burns."
Like, having people

call my house and tell me,
"You're going to burn in hell
and so is your daughter."
People don't understand that...
she loves Bella.
We love Bella...
so much, and she still talks
about her like they're friends.
Oh my god. She loves
her like I love her.
And like, for people to talk about
her the way they do, it's like...
Morgan loved Bella.
She's... like, how sick are you
that you would do that
to your best friend?
Because you're afraid
of something happening,
or because you want
something happen.
You want to become something...
because your illness dictated that
this is something you need to be.
Just blows me away...
that people are like that.
It just makes me sad.
I wish people knew.
The regular ones are just the regular
cat treats that you're used to.
Just to say,
"I love you, kitty."
Cat Snacks are only 2.99
at your local grocery store.
Thank you.
Detective, did you have a chance
to watch that compilation?
I saw the compilation.
And would you agree
that that's you present
in that room with Morgan Geyser?
Those were...
pieces of the interview
that was me and Morgan together.
Did you tell Morgan she could

have parents available
to talk to before
you interrogated her?
I did not tell her that,
because that wasn't an option.

You weren't going to let
her parents be present?
Correct. Or let her even have
a phone call to talk to them?
Um, we did not offer her
a phone call.

At some point were you
provided with Anissa's phone?

Yes, I was. Did you
have a chance to look
at any of the... messages
on that phone?

Yes, I did.

It says, "This is my final
wish to those who care..."

Mm-hmm.

Where did you locate
the suspects?

They were located right
by I-94 in Waukesha County.

Did you notice anything
about Anissa's emotional state
when you had contact with her?

She said she was scared,
and I asked what was
she scared of?

And do you recall
what she said to you?

She made mention
that if she told me,
I would think
that she was crazy,
and I told her that I didn't
think anybody was crazy.

Okay.

Can you ask the question
again please?

One of the first communications
before any

of the search requests
was found on Anissa's phone
that was provided
by her parents, correct?

Correct. It was basically
a goodbye letter.

Correct?

Yes.

And basically indicated that
people should remember
who she was,
not grieve for her...
and that she
wouldn't do them harm.

- Correct.

- Nothing further, Your Honor.

Aiden? Wrap it up, chief.

we got places to go.

All right? We have
to run over to the school
for a mandatory meeting
about iPads...
setting up their iPad...
and using their iPad, and...
the disadvantages they'll be at
if they're not allowed
to use their iPad.

You know?

I don't think anybody can
really, you know, begrudge me
for thinking
the way I do about...
a bunch of fifth graders
getting iPads.

You know, based on what this
family has been through.

At the same token...

you know, I don't want
to hinder his learning.

I guess I just need to...

get over my own
reservations about it.

And about the iPads.

If I'd had my way,

he wouldn't have one.
You have a child that is...
incarcerated, for lack
of a better term...
but your other life
still has to go on,
so you still have to be able
to support your other children
with the activities
that they're in, and...
you do your best
to support your children
that you can't have access to...
and have to explain
to Anissa that,
"Well, I might not be able
to come up on Tuesday,
"because Aiden has
a pack meeting.
I have to be there
for that."
I've had conversations with...
my oldest son.
I was out in the backyard. He comes
outside, he says to me, "What's wrong?"
That's when I told him...
it's just stressful as hell...
trying to keep everything as
balanced as it can possibly be.
You never get a day off...
and it wears on you.
It just really wears
the shit outta ya.
Because you have
to do so much more...
to try to keep everybody
in a positive place,
including yourself.
It's...
It's mentally...
and emotionally
and physically just draining.
I knew it was always a risk,
simply because of... genetics

that one of our children
might develop schizophrenia.
I never thought something
like this would happen.
Matt is so...
He's so high functioning
and he's so... stable.
I just know that he's
developed an awareness
of what's real and what's not.
And I think, for Morgan,
those lines are
still pretty blurry...
but it's all
still very real to her.
In general, Morgan's just
becoming more and more lost
and involved in this world
of imaginary friends
that she has.
The best possible situation would be
that she ends up in an environment
where she can receive treatment
for her schizophrenia,
and that would be
a psychiatric facility.
Not prison.
She can't go to prison.
I think it's kind of
cruel of the courts...
to have a law where
you can take two girls
who are not
troublemakers prior...
And they did not try
to hide what they did.
They did not lie
about what they did.
They were very truthful for it.
And it's like they're being
punished extra because of it.
Well, let's hope the judge
is gonna have some good news.
Some very good news.

The two young girls accused of stabbing their classmate are back in court.

WISN 12 news' Hillary Mintz is live in Waukesha County with the very latest.

Hillary.

Well, Melinda, for pretty much the past year since the stabbing happened, a judge here

at the county courthouse has been trying to figure out "Should Morgan Geyser and Anissa Weier be tried as adults or juveniles?"

That decision is expected to come today, and the stakes in that decision are extremely high.

The victim, 13-year-old Payton Leutner, has physically recovered, but they say she is still dealing with the emotional damage.

The court's prepared to proceed with the ruling. The court easily finds that this is a violent, premeditated, personal offense.

There was a conscious decision made at the time of the offense to let the victim die. They told P.L. that they would leave to get her help. They did leave... and they left, walking to the Nicolet National Forest to locate the Slenderman Mansion and then meet up with Slenderman. This is charged

as an attempted murder,
but you have to keep in
mind for both defendants
that this was in fact... this
was an effort to kill someone,
not a mistake
by hitting them too hard,
not a mistake by
pushing them too hard.
The issue of brain development
is important
for the court to consider.
They were young
when the offense occurred,
but they get older
every day, frankly.
They're a year older today.
But what happens at age 18?
And in this court's view,
that's a critical factor
for the court to evaluate.
There would be
no oversight, no control,
no ways to ensure public safety.
They've committed
an offense that is serious.
It's... it's, frankly, vicious.
There has to be assurance that
that doesn't happen again,
that a serious offense
is dealt with on a serious basis
that offers protections
to everyone.
On that basis then,
I'll order that the defendants,
Ms. Geysler and Ms. Weier,
be retained
in the adult jurisdiction.
As so ordered.
There were tears and some
surprise here in court
as a judge denied a motion
by lawyers for both girls
to have their cases handled

in juvenile court.
Anissa Weier's lawyer
went on to say
they'll be discussing
the possibility of an appeal.
The victim's father here said
they wouldn't be commenting,
though the family
did appear to be upbeat
following this decision.
I'm sure that they would
have been found eventually.
I think they never would have
made it to the state forest.
From Waukesha
to the Nicolet State Forest
is a good four-
to five-hour drive.
And they thought
they were going to walk that?
They had no idea of what it would
take to walk that distance.
The judge ordered that Anissa have
no contact with the Internet.
The judge also ordered
that, you know,
she have no contact
with the co-defendant.
Morgan has no access
to the outdoors.
Not even a window to look out.
Morgan says that
this doesn't bother her,
because she doesn't want
to go outside anymore.
One of the things that Anissa
and her had talked about was,
no matter what happened...
they would always be together.