



ESL Podcast 64 – Missing Persons (4)

GLOSSARY

to be kidnapped – to be taken by force, usually to get money for one's return

* Monroe's daughter has been kidnapped and no one knows where she is.

incredulously – being unwilling or unable to believe something; without the wish or the ability to believe something

* When Gina told her family that she was dating a famous movie star, everyone looked at her incredulously.

ransom – money that must be paid for the return of someone or something taken and held by force

* If you don't pay the ransom of \$5,000, we will kill your dog!

to demand – to say that one wants something in very strong way, without giving the other person an option to refuse

* The workers demanded higher pay and better working conditions.

come on – something one says to encourage someone else to do something or to hurry up

* I know you don't want to see this movie, but come on! I went to the movie you wanted to see last week.

smog – a mixture of fog and air pollutants (very small pieces of harmful material in the air) that causes a brown appearance in the sky

* Serious athletes don't want to run long distances in an area with this much smog, since they're worried it would be bad for their health.

nightmare – a bad dream; a dream about unpleasant things

* Whenever my son has a nightmare, he comes into our room and wants to crawl into bed with us.

pileup – a car crash involving several or many vehicles; a major road accident

* When the truck hit the car, it caused a 10-car pileup.

justifiably – with good reason; able to be defended

* Mona was justifiably angry when she found out that her sister was secretly dating her boyfriend.



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caffeine – a substance in tea, coffee, and other things that makes one feel more awake and nervous

* College students often use caffeine to stay up late to finish assignments or to study for exams.

addict – a person dependent on a substance, such as drugs or alcohol, and cannot stop taking it or using it without feeling very bad

* Regina is a chocolate addict, eating eight candy bars a day.

impatiently – without patience; easy to be irritated or bothered because one wants something to happen more quickly

* Luis waited impatiently for his wife while she took her time in selecting a dress to buy.

obscenity – bad language; a word or phrase that offends others

* Don't shout obscenities while there are young children in the room!

muscular – with a lot of big muscles on one's body; with well-developed muscles

* The football player had very muscular legs from working out and playing every day.

dingy – without much light and no bright colors, appearing uninteresting

* When Michael got his first job after college, he moved his mother from a dingy one-room apartment to a big, bright condo.



CULTURE NOTE

The Challenges of Modern Actors in Period Movies

Many actors have changed their appearance dramatically for a “role” (acting part). Some lose a lot of weight, while others “buff up” (make their muscles larger). Some wear “prosthetics,” such as false noses, teeth, and hair. But what if the role “calls for” (requires) a more “fundamental” (basic or deep) change than an actor can’t achieve? That’s the problem “casting directors” (people who select actors for parts in TV shows and movies) have when casting for “period movies” (movies set in the past).

At the 2012 Academy Awards, which are awards given out to the best films each year, two period films were “nominated” (eligible to win): Lincoln and Les Miserable. Both films were period movies and called for period “authenticity” (realness; seeming true).

In the film Lincoln, the “lead” or main actor, Daniel Day-Lewis, looks and sounds like the American image of President Lincoln. To achieve this, he wore make-up, hair pieces, and period clothing. He even used clothing and make-up to “cover up” (hide) “tattoos” (permanent ink writing or drawings under the skin) on his hands and arms. However, there was one thing he could not hide, even with make-up: his “pierced ears” (holes in his earlobes used to wear earrings).

Les Miserable “posed” (provided) a major challenge to casting directors. The story, based on a Victor Hugo novel, takes place in 19th century France and many scenes involve “street urchins” (poor young children living on the streets) and “waifs” (homeless and helpless people, usually girls and young women). With better “nutrition” (more and better food for the body), “dentistry” (healthcare for teeth and the mouth), “fitness regimens” (exercise habits), and even “plastic surgery” (medical procedures to change the way one looks), finding actors who looked “starved” (thin from hunger) and “neglected” (not cared for) was difficult. One of the lead actors, Anne Hathaway, played a starving woman in the film. She lost 25 pounds (11 kilograms) to play the role, but in one scene, she shakes out her long, shiny, healthy hair that may be more appropriate in a shampoo commercial.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 64 – Missing Person, Part 4: “Meeting at the Café.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 64. I’m your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

This episode is the fourth in our 12-part special series: Missing Person, a murder mystery. In our previous episode, Dr. Reeves and his student, Anne Prado, were in the bathroom of Anne’s sister, Sarah. Sarah and her husband, Bill, are missing. It turned out that the noise they heard in the bathroom was just a little cat. So, they looked around the apartment and tried to find something that would tell them what happened to Sarah and Bill.

Dr. Reeves noticed that there were some pills on the table next to their bed in the master bedroom. Those pills, according to Anne, were for Bill’s leg, which he had hurt playing football in college. Dr. Reeves told Anne that they should go to the police, but Anne said the police wouldn’t help. Then, at the end of the episode, Anne received a telephone call. When Anne got off the phone, her face was very sad, and she said, “Something terrible has happened!”

Now, we continue with part 4 of Missing Person: “Meeting at the Café.”

[start of story]

“We have to go, Dr. Reeves!” Anne said excitedly. “That was Bill on the phone. He’s at a restaurant called Café Pico. Sarah’s been kidnapped!”

“Kidnapped? Are you sure?” I asked, somewhat incredulously.

“I’m sure. Someone has taken Sarah,” Anne replied. “Bill said that a man is holding her, and he will kill her if we don’t give him the ransom he’s demanding.” Anne was pulling me to the door of the apartment. “Come on! Bill said he will explain at the restaurant.”

I closed the door to the apartment and followed Anne down the stairs and to my car. The weather was typical for Los Angeles: sunny, 75 degrees, with brown smog covering the city. L.A. is a city of dreams. But for some people, it’s a city of nightmares.



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Anne and I drove down Robertson Boulevard in my old red Mustang, going around cars as fast as we could without causing a pileup.

“Where is this café again?” I asked her.

“On Robertson and Pico, next to a bookstore,” Anne answered. She was justifiably nervous. You could see it in her eyes.

Arriving a few minutes later, we found a place to park in front of the bookstore and walked into the café. Bill was there waiting for us.

“Bill! Oh my God, Bill, what happened?” Anne hugged Bill, who looked tired and worried.

“Oh, this is my friend, Dr. Darren Reeves.” Anne said. “Dr. Reeves, this is Bill. Dr. Reeves is my professor at USC. But he’s also a very good detective. When I found out that you and Sarah were missing, I went to him for help.”

“It’s good to meet you, Bill,” I said.

“Um, yeah, I’m glad to meet you, too,” Bill said.

Bill, Anne, and I sat down at a table in front of the café. The waitress came to take our order. I asked for a glass of iced tea. I’m a bit of a caffeine addict, truth be told.

“Bill, tell us what happened to Sarah. Is she okay?” Anne asked impatiently.

“Sarah is fine now,” Bill said. “But for a while, I thought both of us would be killed. Two days ago, a strange man knocked on our door at the apartment. I opened the door, and before I knew what was happening, he had a gun in my face and was shouting obscenities at me.”

“What did he look like?” I asked.

“He was tall and muscular,” said Bill, “but he wore a ski mask, so I couldn’t see his face very well. He had a mustache, I think. It all happened so fast.”

“That’s okay. Go on,” I said.



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“Well, the man took Sarah and me and put us in a car. He put a small towel around our eyes, tied our legs and hands together, and then drove us to another place. We were forced out of the car and into a small, dingy room.

“We were given food twice a day. I’m not sure how many kidnappers there were holding us there. I heard several voices outside the door, maybe three or four, I’m not sure. Finally this morning, about an hour ago, I was let go and given a message: If I want Sarah to be set free, I have to pay a ransom of \$500,000.”

[end of story]

Our episode begins with Anne trying to get Dr. Reeves out of the apartment as soon as possible in order to meet Bill at a café. Bill had called Anne and told her to come to a café to meet with him. Anne says to Dr. Reeves, “That was Bill on the phone.” The expression “that was” – and someone’s name – “on the phone” means that is the person who just called. Bill told Anne that Sarah had been “kidnapped.” “To kidnap” (kidnap) someone means that you take someone away and you ask for money in exchange for the person being returned unharmed, or safe.

“Are you sure?” Dr. Reeves says, “somewhat incredulously.” “To be incredulous” is to doubt what another person is saying, to think that what someone else is saying is probably not true. The adverb “incredulously” is how he asks the question – with some doubt. But Anne assures Dr. Reeves that Bill’s story is true.

She tells him that Bill said that a man would kill her sister, Sarah, if they didn’t give him the ransom he was demanding. “Ransom” (ransom) is the word for the money you give to someone who is a kidnapper, someone who kidnaps. The money that you pay is called “ransom,” and is usually used with the verb “to demand.” “To demand” is to say “You must do this” – it’s like an order. Kidnappers demand a ransom.

Anne says to Dr. Reeves, “Come on!” The expression “Come on!” in this case means “Hurry up, follow me, come with me.” We also sometimes use that expression when we don’t believe something. Someone tells us something that we don’t think is true, and we say, “Oh, come on,” meaning “That can’t be true. I don’t believe you.” It’s an informal phrase, something you would say to a family member or a friend.

As they are walking to his car, Dr. Reeves says that it’s a typical day in Los Angeles: “sunny, 75 degrees, with brown smog covering the city.” “Smog” (smog) is a word that comes from the words “smoke” and “fog.” It generally means



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pollution, which is why it's brown, and this smog is "covering the city," meaning it's all over the city. Dr. Reeves says, "L.A. is a city of dreams. But for some people, it's a city of nightmares." A "nightmare" (nightmare) is a bad dream.

Anne and Dr. Reeves drive quickly down Robertson Avenue, which is a big street here in Los Angeles, and they try not to cause a "pileup." A "pileup" (pileup) is when a bunch of cars get into an accident. When we say, "There's a pileup on the freeway," we mean that several cars are involved in a single accident. Dr. Reeves says that Anne looked "justifiably nervous." "Justifiably" is another adverb. The adjective "justifiable" (justifiable) means that it makes sense, that there is a good reason for something to happen. The verb "to justify" means to give an explanation or to give a reason. So, "justifiably," as an adverb, means that it makes sense – that there is good reason for her to be nervous.

Dr. Reeves says, "You could see it in her eyes." In this case, "to see it" means to notice something and to know that it's true. Dr. Reeves can tell that Anne is nervous by looking in her eyes – he can see it in her eyes. When Dr. Reeves and Anne arrive at the café, Anne introduces Dr. Reeves to Bill. Dr. Reeves says, "It's good to meet you," which is a common expression when you're first meeting someone: "It's good to meet you" or "It's nice to meet you." Bill responds by saying, "I'm glad to meet you, too."

They sit down. Dr. Reeves says, "The waitress came over to take our order," meaning she asked them what they were going to drink or eat. Dr. Reeves orders a glass of iced tea and says, "I'm a bit of a caffeine addict, truth be told." "Caffeine" (caffeine) is something that is in coffee and tea and some sodas. It's a drug that makes you more awake and sometimes a little nervous.

An "addict" (addict) is someone who is addicted. The verb is "to be addicted," and it means that your body needs a drug so much that you cannot live without it, the way some people become addicted to heroin or cocaine. Dr. Reeves isn't actually addicted to caffeine, but he uses the term "addict" because some people seem like they are addicted to caffeine. He also uses the expression "truth be told." It's somewhat of an old-fashioned expression. "Well, truth be told, I don't really want to go to the movie." It is used when you are being very honest – more honest than usual – with someone.

Anne asks Bill what happened to Sarah, and she asks this question "impatiently" –another adverb. "To be impatient" (impatient) means that you can't wait; you want to find out right away or do something right away. And "impatiently," as an adverb, is how she asks this question. Bill says that a strange man had come to their door, and when Bill opened the door, "before I knew what was happening" –



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before he could figure out what was going on – “he had a gun in my face and was shouting obscenities at me.” An “obscenity” (obscenity) is a vulgar or bad word, a swear word – something that you would not say to someone you liked. This strange man was shouting obscenities at Bill.

Dr. Reeves asks Bill what this man looked like, and Bill answers, “He was tall and muscular.” “Muscular” comes from the word “muscle,” and means someone who has a lot of muscles. I’m not particularly muscular, for example. Bill says that the man was wearing a “ski mask,” and you’ll remember that a “ski mask” is a hat that covers your whole face so people can’t see who you are. It is used by people to keep warm when they ski. He says that he thought the man had a mustache, but “It all happened so fast.” The expression “it all happened so fast” means something took place, but you didn’t really have time to figure out what was going on.

Bill explains that the kidnapper took him and Sarah and put them in a car and put a small towel around their eyes. When there is something around your eyes like that, we call that a “blindfold” (blindfold), all one word. If you have a blindfold over your eyes, you can’t see anything. Bill says they were then driven to another place and put into a small “dingy” room. The adjective “dingy” (dingy) means something that is very dirty, and that has been dirty for a long time. So, a “dingy room” would not be a very nice place.

Finally, Bill says that this morning, the kidnappers had “let him go,” meaning they let him leave, and told him that if he wanted Sarah to be free, he had to pay a ransom of \$500,000.

On the next episode of Missing Person, we’ll learn more about the ransom demand made by the kidnappers.

Now let’s listen to the story, this time at a normal speed.

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From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.

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