



TOPICS

American Movies – The Manchurian Candidate; blue laws; expression versus term versus idiom; What name do you go by?; en masse

GLOSSARY

thriller – a very exciting film with a lot of action and suspense

* Juno likes watching thrillers that take place in space and involve aliens.

prominent – very important and well known by others

* Some of the most prominent scientists in the field attended the conference.

to brainwash – to use certain techniques to completely change someone's opinions or beliefs

* Louisa joined a church that brainwashed her and told her to stop seeing her family and close friends.

assassin – someone who kills other people for political reasons; a murderer who kills important or powerful people

* An assassin would have to get through a lot of security to kill the President.

to incriminate – to make someone seem guilty of a crime, or to show that someone has broken the law

* George says he's innocent, but his fingerprints at the scene of the crime incriminate him.

sleeper agent – a spy who is in another country, but does not have a specific purpose or goal until the agent is given a mission or job to accomplish

* Do you think that there could be sleeper agents within the highest levels of government?

nightmare – scary dream; bad, frightening dream

* Inga had a nightmare last night that she was being chased by monsters.

to commission – to officially ask someone to create a piece of music, play, artwork or other creative work

* The city commissioned a mural for the side of its downtown building.



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blue law – a type of law that enforces certain moral and/or religious standards

* The blue laws in this state don't allow bars to remain open after 1:00 a.m.

Sabbath – a day of religious worship, where businesses may be closed and little or no work is done

* In the old days, most businesses closed on the Sabbath so that families could go to church and spend time together.

to reserve – to put or set aside and used only for a specific purpose

* Were you able to reserve a good table at the restaurant for our dinner tonight?

to repeal – for laws that were once in place to be eliminated

* The healthcare law is in danger of being repealed because of its high costs.

car dealership – a business that sells new or used cars

* Let's go to the car dealership and see if we can find a car that we can afford.

expression – a group of words frequently used together to represent a specific meaning; a movement of muscles in the face that shows how a person feels or what they mean to say

* My mother doesn't like it when we use the expression "Shut up!" when we speak to each other.

term – a word used in a specific situation; a length of time, used especially for politics, schools, and contracts

* We don't understand some of the terms used in this legal document.

idiom – a word or group of words with special meaning and whose meaning cannot be discovered from defining each individual word

* When Joanna says that she's "seen the light," she means that she now understands something that she didn't before.

What name do you go by? – What name do you like to be called by?; What name do you use in your daily life and are known as by other people?

* I know that your full name is Rodrigo Luis Gonzalez, but what name do you go by: Rodrigo Luis, Rodrigo, Roddy, or Rod?

en masse – in a group; all together

* If we complain en masse to the professor that the guidelines she gave to the class aren't clear, do you think she'll be angry?



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Dry Counties

A county is a geographic area inside a state, and each state can have several or many counties. A “dry county” is a county that makes the sale of alcoholic beverages illegal. The specific laws are a little different in each of the counties, but the general law in a dry county “states” (says) that alcohol cannot be sold in that county.

There are dry counties in many different places in the United States. The majority of the dry counties are in the South. There is a region in the U.S. known as the “Bible belt.” Many people who live in the “Bible belt” are more religious than Americans in other parts of the country. The most popular religion in this region is a socially conservative form of Protestantism called “evangelical Protestantism.” The Protestant religion “discourages” (tries to get people not to do something) drinking alcohol. Their beliefs are “reflected” (shown) in the laws in dry counties in the South.

Dry counties were also created to limit the drinking of alcohol for other reasons. One reason is the “potential: (possible) health and safety problems that can be caused by drinking alcohol. Another reason is the concern for “public order” (people following the law).

“Critics” (people who disagree) of dry counties say that there are many “disadvantages” (bad or negative things) to limiting the sale of alcohol in a county. Alcohol is taxed. These taxes are a form of “revenue” (money) for wet counties. A “wet county” is one that allows the sale of alcohol. When a county is dry, the people who live there often drive to the closest wet county to buy their alcohol. The taxes from the sale of that alcohol then go to the nearby county rather than the dry county.

Another disadvantage to a dry county is created when people drive to wet counties to drink. These people have to drive back to their homes in the dry county. This means that there is more risk of people driving after they have been drinking alcohol. Many accidents are caused by people driving after they have been drinking.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast English Cafe number 393.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Cafe episode 393. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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On this Café, we're going to continue our series on American Movies, focusing on "The Manchurian Candidate." We're also going to talk about something known as "blue laws" – laws that enforce moral or religious standards, and as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with the continuation of our series on the famous American movies. Today, we're going to talk about the 1962 movie or film called "The Manchurian Candidate." This film is a thriller. A "thriller" (thriller) is a very exciting film where there's lots of action and lots of suspense. You're waiting to find out what happens. The thriller, "The Manchurian Candidate," is a movie about the Cold War, that time when the US and the Soviet Union were both trying to increase their control, or prevent the other country from controlling, other areas around the world.

The film is based on a 1959 book, novel of the same name, *The Manchurian Candidate*, which was written by Richard Condon. The main idea of the movie is that a prominent or very important conservative political family has a son, and the son has been brainwashed. "To brainwash" (brainwash) – one word – means to use certain psychological techniques to change this person's opinions and beliefs. "Brainwashing" was a very popular idea in the 50's, 60's, when I was growing up, in the 70's and 80's. There was often talk about different political or religious groups "brainwashing" people, changing their views, but doing it in a way that was somehow dishonest or not correct.

In this story, the young man is brainwashed to become an assassin. An "assassin" (assassin) is someone who kills other people, usually political leaders. Assassinations are usually done for political reasons. Abraham Lincoln was assassinated. President John F. Kennedy was assassinated – killed for some sort of political effect. This young man in the movie is brainwashed to become an assassin for the Communists – so, the enemies of the United States.



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He's brainwashed so that when he sees a certain thing, he does whatever is suggested next, or whatever he is ordered to do. In this case, whenever he sees the playing card of the Queen of Diamonds, which is one of the cards you would use to play a game like poker for example, then he does whatever is suggested. Specifically, he kills the person he's supposed to kill – the target – as well as anyone who might see him kill that person, any witnesses that see him. Then he immediately forgets what he has done so that he cannot incriminate himself.

“To incriminate” (incriminate) means to make someone seem guilty of a crime or to indicate that someone has broken the law, has done something illegal. Here, the young man is told, is brainwashed, to forget after he kills someone so that he doesn't accidentally incriminate himself. He doesn't say something or do something to make people think that he was the person who was the assassin. All of this brainwashing makes this young man the perfect sleeper agent. A “sleeper (sleeper) agent” is a spy who is in another country, who was sent to another country, but doesn't really do anything, waits for the moment when he or she is somehow activated, is somehow told, “Okay, now we want you to do something.” Often, a sleeper agent will try to get a position in the government or perhaps even in the other government's intelligence service in order to get information. That's what a sleeper agent is. In this case, the sleeper agent is activated or made to go into action when he's shown this playing card, this Queen of Diamonds, and given instructions about the next person he's supposed to kill.

One of the soldiers who served with that young man in the Army begins to have nightmares – very scary dreams – and remembers just enough about this brainwashing experiment that he himself also experienced, that he's able to figure out what's happening. He tries to warn the other man but, well, I won't tell you what happens at the end. I don't want to ruin or spoil the end of the movie for you. It's a very exciting movie, a very suspenseful movie which is why of course, we call it a thriller.

In 1962, this film, “The Manchurian Candidate,” was directed by a famous film director, John Frankenheimer. The leading actors were Frank Sinatra, who of course, is famous also as a singer, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh, Angela Lansbury, Henry Silva and James Gregory. The film received two nominations for an Academy Award, an Oscar, and it was considered by the American Film Institute to be the 67th best movie of the 20th century or of the first 100 years of movies.



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The movie was made again. It was adapted for film again, just a few years ago in 2004. This new version of the film was directed by Jonathan Demme. The stars were Denzel Washington and Meryl Streep, among others. The plot or the story of the movie is very similar to that of the book and that of the 1962 movie, but the setting, the background for the movie, is changed from the Cold War and the Korean War of the 1950's to the Persian Gulf War. Apparently, the Minnesota Opera, from the state where I was born, Minnesota, is also commissioning a new opera based on *The Manchurian Candidate*. "To commission" means to pay someone to write, usually an artistic work like a song, or play or an opera. There is going to be (and maybe by the time you listen to this episode) an opera based on *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Today, some people use the "Manchurian Candidate" to describe someone who has been brainwashed into saying certain things, or acting in a certain way, someone whose mind is being controlled by others. I think the original movie, "The Manchurian Candidate," is probably the best of the two. If you have a chance to see it, I'm sure you will enjoy it.

Now let's turn to our next topic which is blue laws. A blue law is a type of law that enforces or tries to make people follow certain moral standards, often, standards that come from some religious belief. Blue laws tell people how they should behave by making certain kinds of actions illegal, or against the law. Blue laws used to be very strict back in the 19th century. People were even arrested by the police for doing things, for example, on Sunday, such as playing cards or sports. In some areas of the United States, that was illegal, because Sunday was, at least for the Christian people, the Sabbath – the holy day.

Christians are supposed to consider Sunday the Sabbath, and therefore not do any other sort of work. It was thought that the Sabbath should be reserved or set aside only for worshiping and praying to God. Any other sorts of activities were considered at least in some places illegal. Now, I don't want to give you the idea that all places had blue laws or that the blue laws resulted in thousands or hundreds of thousands of people being arrested. It probably wasn't that way. Most people believed that the Sabbath, that Sunday, should be a day of rest, and so it wasn't really necessary. The culture informed people and people tend to follow the culture around them.

The first blue laws in the United States go back to 1617, even before we were a country, in the state of Virginia. In Virginia, people had to go to church and the people could be arrested if they didn't go to church. Some other blue laws in



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different places didn't allow people to travel or to play or even to cut their hair on Sundays.

Over the years, many, in fact, most of these laws have been repealed. “To repeal” (repeal) means to no longer have that law, to take it back, to get rid of it. Some of these old blue laws are actually still technically laws, but they're not enforced by the police. You're not going to get arrested for playing football on Sunday, for example. These laws were usually laws for a certain city or area but sometimes they were state laws. They affected everyone living in that state.

Although we've gotten rid of most blue laws, laws that try to enforce a certain kind of moral action or conduct, there are some blue laws that are still enforced, that are still being followed. The most common blue law that we still have in the United States refers to the sale of alcohol. In some places, it is not possible to buy alcohol from a store on Sunday. When I was growing up, alcohol was only sold in certain stores, and I believe it was not possible to buy alcohol on Sunday where I grew up, and that's still true in some areas of the United States.

In some states hunting, going out in finding and killing animals, is prohibited on Sunday. It's illegal to hunt on Sunday in some areas. In Massachusetts and Connecticut, two states in the eastern part of the United States, it is illegal for stores to be open on Thanksgiving and Christmas. On those two national holidays, the stores have to be closed, even the food stores, the grocery stores. That's a kind of blue law, telling businesses they can't do certain things on these national holidays. The idea in part is to give people a chance to rest, of course, as well as, in the case of Christmas, I suppose, to participate in religious observances, religious services related to the holiday.

In at least 13 states as of the time we recorded this episode, it was illegal for businesses that sell cars, what we call “car dealerships,” to sell or trade a car on Sundays. Other states have similar restrictions, sometimes only allowing these car dealerships in certain areas of the state to sell cars on Sunday. These types of laws, some people might think, are bad for businesses. However, in some places, car dealerships have supported these blue laws because it lets their employees take a day off of work without losing business to other car dealerships that might remain open. Without the blue laws, the dealerships would probably have to be open every day and the employees would never get a rest. So, there are some positive aspects and positive things that come from blue laws. Certainly, blue laws help a community, an area, remember the importance of certain things by prohibiting people for example, from working, and I think some people would say that's a positive thing.



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Now, you may be asking yourself, “Why are these called *blue* laws? Why not red laws or green laws or pink laws?” It might've been because the laws, when they were written out on pieces of paper, were put in books that had blue covers. It's also possible, some people say, that the laws were written on blue paper. Most historians, however, don't think these explanations are correct. Apparently, in the 1600's, in the 17th century, when many of these blue laws were put on the books – that is, were made part of the legal code of the colonies – the word “blue” was a disparaging term used to insult people.

The term “disparaging” (disparaging) means to insult someone, to make someone look bad, or to say something negative about someone. So, to call someone “blue” was considered an insult. Usually, it was a way of insulting people who had very strict laws, rules that prohibited them from doing a lot of different things and that in a way, these were people who didn't like these rules – to insult people who had them. And so to call someone “blue,” then, had this relationship with inflexible moral rules – rules that couldn't be bent, that couldn't be ever changed. So the phrase “blue laws,” probably refers to that idea, the idea that people who follow these sort of laws or want these sort of laws are blue, and again that's an insult, but, now the term is neutral. We don't consider it an insult. Certainly the word “blue” isn't used to insult someone anymore.

Now let's answer some of the questions that you have sent to us.

Our first question comes from Qadir (Qadir) in Afghanistan. Qadir wants to know the difference between “expression,” “term,” and “idiom.” I use all three of these terms quite a bit when I'm explaining things, so it's a good idea to explain how I explain things. Let's start with the word “expression” (expression).

An “expression” is a group of words that you frequently use together. Any phrase or sentence or clause could be considered part of an expression. Sometimes, “expression” is used to refer to what we would also call a “saying” – a traditional expression, such as “You should look before you leap.” You should be careful and look to see what you're doing before you start an action or an activity. An expression could also just be a short phrase that refers to something. Expression is also a physical movement, a physical movement of your face. We talk about the “expression on his face.” “He had a smiling expression,” or a “happy expression.” That's another word or another use of the word expression.

“Term” (term) is usually a word that is used for a very specific purpose, a very specific situation. We could talk about a “scientific term.” A scientific term would



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be a word or a group of words that would be used to describe a certain phenomenon, a certain situation, a certain concept in the area of science. So, “photosynthesis,” for example, is a scientific term. It’s a word used in a very specific situation.

“Term” can also mean a length of time. Just like expression, it has another meaning. A length of time can also be called a term, especially when we’re talking about government positions. In the United States, the president of the United States has a four year term – four years where he is president. And then he or she can try to be elected again, but there is a limit to the number of terms a president can have. A president can only have two terms in the office of presidency.

Finally, “idiom” (idiom) is a group of words whose meaning cannot be discovered from looking up the individual words. So it’s an expression, it’s a type of expression where if you just look up the individual words inside of the expression, you won’t know what it means. So, if we said that “The cat kicked the bucket,” well, you can look up the verb “to kick” and the noun “bucket” in the dictionary, but that won’t tell you the meaning of that expression because it’s an idiom. It means something special. “To kick the bucket” means to die – in this case, just an example...I mean, you know, the cat.

Expression is the most general word of these three. Term is one specifically used for certain area, a certain situation, a certain profession, perhaps. An idiom is a special kind of expression where the individual words mean something different than the words put together.

Our next question comes from Wen Qian (Wen Qian), originally from China, now living in the Big Apple – New York City. The question has to do with a question, which is, “What name do you go by?” If someone says, “What name do you go by?” they’re asking you what name they should call you. What is your name that you use in daily conversation?

For example, in some countries people have many different names. In a Spanish-speaking country you might have a man named Jose Angel Cardenas Gonzales and you say, “Well, that’s a very long name. What name do you go by?” What name should I call you, since you’re not going to call him Jose Angel Cardenas Gonzales every time. And someone may say, “Oh, I *go by* Jose,” or “I go by Angel.” Sometimes people who have longer, more formal sounding (I guess we could say) first names use a nickname. So, someone’s name maybe James but they go by Jim or Jimmy. Someone’s name might be Penelope but



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they go by Penny. The name you “go by,” in other words, is not always your legal name – the name that’s on your birth certificate or your driver’s license. It’s a name that you use every day in conversation. Sometimes it’s the same.

My legal name is Jeffrey Lawrence McQuillan. My full name is Jeffrey Lawrence Edward McQuillan. Edward is from my confirmation – a name that you take during a certain religious ceremony. Jeffrey, however, is a word that only my mother would call me. In the United States, the tradition is that your mother or your father are usually the only ones that would call you by your full name – usually when they’re mad at you...as my mother – well, she wasn’t *always* mad at me, sometimes. I go by Jeff not Jeffrey. Sometimes, people who have difficult first names, especially if they move to a different country and people aren’t used to their names, might come up with another name – a nickname even, that people can call them that might be easier for them to pronounce.

Finally, Alexey (Alexey) in Russia wants to know the meaning of an expression he heard – “*en masse*” (en masse) – two words. The expression *en masse* is, as you might have guessed, originally French. It means in a group, all together, all at one time. It’s often used in describing the movement or the change of a large group of people either going towards one direction, or leaving to a certain place altogether. “We decided to leave *en masse* to go down to the bar and celebrate my friend’s engagement,” my friends upcoming wedding. That might be one possible use of that expression.

If you have an expression, a term, an idiom that you’d like to ask us about, feel free to e-mail us. Our e-mail address is eslpod@eslpod.com

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again right here on the English Café.

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