



ESL Podcast 566 – Having a Wild Party

GLOSSARY

to house-sit – to take care of a home while the owner is traveling, often living there for a period of time while watering plants, checking the mail, and more
* The Nakamuras have asked us to house-sit for them next month while they're traveling in South America.

blowout – a big party or another major event involving many people and a lot of noise
* He wants their wedding to be a private, family event, but she's planning a big blowout with hundreds of guests.

ignorance is bliss – a phrase meaning that it is best not to know something; a phrase meaning that not having information about something is better than knowing about it
* - Do you know how many calories are in that doughnut?
- No, and I don't want to know. Ignorance is bliss.

goody two-shoes – a person who always does what he or she is supposed to, never doing anything wrong and never getting in trouble
* All through high school and college, Melissa was a goody two-shoes who never drank, smoke, swore, or stayed out too late with her friends.

to set up – to organize and prepare for an event, especially to put chairs, tables, and other things where they need to be
* They spent hours setting up the lighting and sound system for the concert.

out of hand – out of control; without people being able to control what is happening
* What started as a friendly argument soon grew out of hand and now the two brothers haven't talked to each other in years.

to pound back a few – to have several alcoholic drinks, drinking them quickly, especially because one wants to become drunk
* The researchers asked college students whether they thought it was dangerous to pound back a few every weekend.

breakable – something that can be broken easily, usually made of glass or another delicate material
* During the earthquake, several breakable things fell off the shelves and shattered on the floor.



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to get into it – to have an argument and/or a physical fight; to fight with another person

* Whenever they discuss politics and religion, we have to try to change the subject so that they don't get into it.

to trash – to destroy, break, or ruin something, or to make something very dirty and disorganized by not caring for it

* Blake's parents were very angry when he trashed their car, leaving empty cups, food containers, and candy wrappers on the seats and floor.

tough as nails – very tough; very strong; not able to be hurt by other things or people

* My brother is tough as nails and can beat up your brother!

to bust heads – to hurt another person with physical force; to hit another person and cause pain

* The bartender called the police when one of her customers got drunk and started busting heads.

to keep everybody in line – to do something to make other people follow the rules or behave properly

* Do you think it's easier to keep everybody in line by rewarding them for good behavior, or by punishing them for bad behavior?

to play bouncer – to work as the strong person (almost always a man) who controls who can and cannot enter a party, bar, or dance club, usually based on whether one was invited or whether one is wearing the right type of clothing and has enough money to be there

* Who's the biggest, strongest guy you know? Let's pay him to play bouncer for the evening.

a disaster waiting to happen – something that is going to have very negative results or a negative outcome; a very bad idea

* Letting high school students play with matches near the chemistry lab is a disaster waiting to happen.



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Titanic – a British ship that sank in 1912, killing 1,517 people, used to describe projects and other things that are going to fail and have very negative consequences

* Yao was disappointed to find out that his new employer was just another Titanic with serious financial problems and that it would probably go out of business within the next year.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Paula tell Mitch to “stop being such a goody two-shoes”?
 - a) She wants him to take off his shoes so he doesn’t get the carpet dirty.
 - b) She wants him to stop worrying about what the Abrams want them to do.
 - c) She wants him to stop showing off what a good dancer he is.
2. What does Mitch mean when he says, “things usually get out of hand when people start pounding back a few”?
 - a) He is worried that people will hurt their hands in the party games.
 - b) He is worried that people will not come to the party.
 - c) He is worried that people will drink too much at the party.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

blowout

The word “blowout,” in this podcast, means a big party or another major event involving many people and a lot of noise: “If I ever win the lottery, I’m going to have a big blowout to celebrate with all my friends.” A “blowout” is also what happens when all the air suddenly comes out of a tire and it bursts: “Ahmed had a blowout while he was driving 65 miles per hour on the freeway, and he almost got into an accident.” A “blackout” is the period of time when there is no electricity because there is a problem in the supply system: “Do you have any candles or flashlights in case there’s a blackout?” Finally, a “brownout” is a period of time when there is less electricity than normal in an area: “The city is having a brownout, so people are reducing the amount of electricity they use.”

to trash

In this podcast, the verb “to trash” means to destroy, break, or ruin something, or to make something very dirty and disorganized by not caring for it: “How is it



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possible for children to trash a room so quickly? They were in there for only a few minutes, but there are toys and clothes all over the floor.” The verb “to trash” also means to say very bad things about another person: “The girls stayed up all night, laughing as they trashed the other students at school.” The rude phrases “trailer trash” and “white trash” are used to talk about people who live in trailer parks (mobile homes) with little money and little education: “She grew up being called white trash, but she studied hard, got a good job, and made a better life for herself.”

CULTURE NOTE

A “rave” is a type of “underground party,” or a secret party that few people know about unless they are invited. Raves aren’t held at regular “dance clubs” (businesses where people go to dance and drink), but instead might be at an “abandoned” (empty; no longer used) “warehouse” (a large building used to store goods for later sale) or in an old barn. Raves are usually held in large cities and are almost always for young people in their 20s. “Anywhere from” (within the range of) a few “dozen” (a group of twelve) to thousands of people might go to a rave. “At a minimum” (at least), a rave is an all-night party, but some raves last for several days.

At a rave, people listen and dance to loud, “electronic music” (music created with synthesizers and computers) played by “live” (real and in real-time; not recorded earlier) “DJs” (disc jockeys; people whose job is to choose which songs to play at a party or on a radio station, sometimes speaking between songs). The dancers dance in a “free-form” (without set movements; doing whatever feels right) style. There are also usually many “psychedelic” (with bright, strange colors like those that were popular in the 1960s) lights in an otherwise dark room.

The people who went to raves in the 1980s and early 1990s believed in PLUR: peace, love, unity, and respect, and tried to “instill” (teach and share ideas) those “values” (beliefs about how one should live) at the parties. Today, however, many raves have moved away from those values. Today, many – but not all – raves are “characterized by” (commonly described as; with certain things in common) drug use and “casual sex” (having sex with people whom one doesn’t know well, without any expectation of a long-term, romantic relationship).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – b; 2 – c



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 566: Having a Wild Party.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 566. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. You can go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode that includes, well, everything you need to improve your English.

This episode is called "Having a Wild Party." It's a dialogue between Paula and Mitch about someone who's having a party that's a little too crazy. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Paula: Okay, let's get this party started!

Mitch: I really don't think having a party is such a good idea. We're supposed to be house-sitting, and I'm sure the Abrams wouldn't want their house used for a big blowout.

Paula: Ignorance is bliss. They'll never know. Stop being such a goody two-shoes and help me set up.

Mitch: What if something gets broken or damaged? Things usually get out of hand when people start pounding back a few.

Paula: What do you think I'm doing? I'm moving the breakables to the other room. Nothing will happen.

Mitch: How can you say that? At Kyle's party last month, two guys got into it and ended up trashing his parents' house!

Paula: That's because they didn't have Babbit.

Mitch: What's a Babbit?



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Paula: Babbit is the name of an old high school friend of mine and he's tough as nails. He'll be here to bust heads and to keep everybody in line. Trust me. Nothing bad will happen with Babbit playing bouncer. Where are you going?

Mitch: I'm getting out while I can. This is a disaster waiting to happen.

Paula: You're not staying for the party? You're leaving?

Mitch: Wouldn't you, if you were on the Titanic?

[end of dialogue]

We begin with Paula saying to Mitch, "Okay, let's get this party started!" Let's start our party – our celebration. Mitch says, "I really don't think having a party is such a good idea." It's not a good idea, Mitch thinks. "We're supposed to be house-sitting, and I'm sure the Abrams wouldn't want their house used for a big blowout." "To house-sit" means to take care of someone's home – someone's house when that person is gone, perhaps because they're traveling. You might stay at their house or apartment; you might just go over every day or every week to check to make sure the house is okay, check the mail for example. A "blowout" is a big party, it's something where you have many people and a lot of noise; it's a loud party. Usually, we think about this adjective, "blowout," when we're talking about a party perhaps for college students who are drinking and yelling. That would be an example of a blowout. There are several words in English that use "out." "Blowout" is what we call a compound word; it's the word "blow" plus the word "out" together as one word. For more examples of this take a look at our Learning Guide for this episode.

So Mitch says that he and Paula are house-sitting, are watching this house for perhaps friends or family, the Abrams family, and that they would not want a big party in their house. Paula uses next an expression that is common: "Ignorance is bliss" (bliss). "To be ignorant" means not to know something. "Bliss" is an old word for being very happy. The expression "ignorance is bliss" means that sometimes it's better not to know. If you know, then you'll feel worse; but if you don't know, well then, it's not a problem. For example, someone says to you, "Do you know how many calories are in this doughnut?" If you eat too many doughnuts you'll get fat. Too many calories will make you fat – just ask the average American! That's an example of a place where you could use this expression. Someone says, "Do you know how many calories are in this doughnut?" and you say, "Ignorance is bliss," meaning I don't want to know, I'm happier if I don't know.



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Paula says that the Abrams will never know, they'll never find out – unless they're listening to this podcast! She says, "Stop being such a goody two-shoes and help me set up." The expression "a goody (goody) two-shoes," that's "two (two) -shoes," like what you put on your feet. I'm not sure the origin, where the expression comes from, but "goody two-shoes" is a person who always does what he or she is supposed to. It's really sort of an insulting, negative term; you're saying that this person is always perfect. The idea is that maybe they're a little boring or maybe that they don't like to have fun because they never do anything wrong. Paula wants Mitch to help her set up. "To set up" is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to organize and prepare an event: to put the tables up, to put the chairs by the tables, and so forth.

However, Mitch is worried, he says, "What if something gets broken or damaged? Things (meaning the situation) usually get out of hand when people start pounding back a few." "To get out of hand" means to get out of control. If a teacher says, "My class is getting out of hand," she means the class is getting wild, it's getting loud, she can't control it. Mitch says that this situation will get out of hand – will become uncontrollable when people start pounding a few back. The expression "to pound (pound) back a few," or "to pound a few back," means to be drinking many alcoholic beverages: one beer, one glass of wine, then another beer, then another beer. When you're drinking then quickly, we would say that you are pounding a few back. It means to drink a lot of alcohol quickly.

Paula says, "What do you think I'm doing? I'm moving the breakables to the other room. Nothing will happen." Something that is "breakable" is something that is able to be broken, something that can break easily. There are many words in English that use this "able" (able) at the end, for example: "This is doable." That means you can do it, it is able to be done. So, something that is "breakable," is something that you can break. Paula is moving all of the breakables into another room, where the party will not be. She tells Mitch, "Nothing will happen," nothing bad will happen.

Mitch says, "How can you say that (that's not possible)? At Kyle's party last month, two guys got into it and ended up trashing his parents' house!" When you say two people "got into it" you mean they had a fight or an argument; often it means that they are hitting each other. Well, at a party last month two guys (two men; two boys) got into it (had a fight) and ended up (as a result of their fight) trashing his parents' house. "To trash," here, means to destroy or to break something, or to make something very dirty and disorganized. If the house is full of dirt, and there are things that are broken, and there is glass, for example, on



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the floor, we might say that someone trashed the house. In this case, it was the two guys who were fighting.

Paula says, “That’s because they didn’t have Babbit.” The party did not have Babbit. Mitch says, “What’s a Babbit?” Paula explains, “Babbit is the name of an old high school friend of mine and he’s tough as nails.” The expression “to be tough as nails” means to be very strong; you can’t hurt this person. Usually it’s a big person, a very strong person. “Nails” are little pieces of metal we use to put into wood, usually to connect or put something on the wood. You could also use nails on your wall to put up a picture. Paula says that her old friend, Babbit, is as tough as nails. “He’ll be here to bust heads and to keep everybody in line.” “To bust heads” means to hurt another person with physical force. So, Babbit is going to make sure there are no fights; he’s going to keep everybody in line. “To keep everybody or everyone in line” means to do something so that everyone behaves, no one does anything badly. A good teacher has to keep her students in line, make sure they aren’t doing anything crazy. As your teacher, I hope you’re not doing anything crazy while you’re listening to this episode! Paula says, “Trust me. Nothing bad will happen with Babbit playing bouncer.” A “bouncer” is a strong person, usually a man, who works at a bar or at a party. He makes sure that no one causes any problems, no one gets into a fight. “To play bouncer” means, in this case, to work as a bouncer.

Paula then says to Mitch, “Where are you going?” Mitch says, “I’m getting out (meaning I’m leaving) while I can (while I am able to). This is a disaster waiting to happen.” The expression “a disaster (a horrible thing; a bad thing) waiting to happen” means that you know something very bad is going to happen because what you are doing is a bad idea. A young child in the kitchen while you are cooking is a disaster waiting to happen; something bad is going to happen because the situation is dangerous.

Paula says, “You’re not staying for the party? You’re leaving?” Mitch says, “Wouldn’t you, if you were on the Titanic?” The “Titanic,” you may know, was a British ship that sank in 1912; it went down into the water and killed more than 1,500 people. Nowadays, we often use it in English as an example of a horrible disaster – a huge disaster. Or maybe we say that because it was a terrible movie, I’m not sure!

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

[start of dialogue]



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Mitch: Wouldn't you, if you were on the Titanic?

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. What would happen if I started writing scripts, you may ask. That would be a disaster waiting to happen!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.



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