



TOPICS

Dishonest political strategies; the Black Dahlia; treatment versus therapy; ending intimate letters and emails; you're entitled to your opinion

GLOSSARY

primaries – elections in each state where people vote for the candidate whom they think should represent the political party that they are registered with

* If you are a registered Republican, then you have to vote for a Republican in the primaries, but during the real elections on November 4, you can vote for anyone from any party.

platform – the set of things that a candidate says that he or she believes in and what he or she promises to do after being elected

* The senator ran on a platform that included providing more money for education and healthcare.

push poll – a type of dishonest political strategy in which a survey or questionnaire is used not to find out what people think about an issue, but instead to make them begin thinking about an issue more often and/or in a certain way

* The mayoral candidate used a push poll to try to make voters think that his plan to improve public transportation was the most important issue facing the city.

misleading – making one more likely to believe something that is not true

* Evelyn pretends to be very poor, telling everyone that she earns only \$20,000 each year, but this is misleading, because she has almost \$1,000,000 in savings.

illegitimate – referring to a child who was born outside of a marriage; born to unmarried parents

* Carl has always been sensitive about being an illegitimate child.

attack ad – an advertisement created to say negative things about another political candidate and make voters dislike him or her

* Did you see the attack ad that accuses the presidential candidate of using drugs when he was in college?



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print – referring to things printed in newspapers and magazines and on posters
* The company wants to redesign its print ads so that they are more similar to its television ads.

smear campaign – a combination of many negative and/or dishonest political strategies that are designed to make another candidate look bad
* The presidential candidate was the victim of a horrible smear campaign that made her lose hundreds of thousands of votes.

mud slinging – the practice of saying negative things about another person, especially in an election campaign
* I am so tired of the political mud slinging that I don't even want to vote in the elections anymore!

dahlia – a large, brightly colored flower
* They are going to plant dahlias in front of their house this spring.

mutilated – cut, hurt, and/or damaged very badly so that something does not look like what it actually is
* This film shows the horrors of war where soldiers mutilated the people they fought against, cutting off their arms and legs.

treatment – something one does to improve one's health or well-being; steps to help someone stop being reliant on drugs or alcohol
* Selena takes medication and does exercises as part of her treatment to recover from her injuries.

therapy – something one does to improve one's health or well-being, often used to describe the healing process of mental or emotional illnesses
* After the war, Bill had nightmares every night, but his therapy is helping him.

XOXOXO – letters used in place of the words "hugs and kisses," often at the end of a letter or email
* Jason thought Alicia was flirting with him when she signed her email to him "XOXOXO, Alicia," but that's how she signs all her emails.

you're entitled to your opinion – a phrase used to mean that you don't agree with someone, but understand that they have a right to have a different idea about something
* I think Jorge was wrong when he said that Mary is too skinny, but he's entitled to his opinion.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Los Angeles Noir Mystery Writer, Raymond Chandler

“Noir” is a French term used to refer to crime “dramas” (exciting, suspenseful stories). A “noir mystery” is a mystery with tough characters and “bleak” (not happy or nice) settings. Many writers in Los Angeles are famous for writing about noir mysteries. One of these famous noir mystery writers was Raymond Chandler.

Raymond was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1888 and “raised” (grew up) in Great Britain. In 1912, he came back to the United States and then decided to live in Los Angeles. He tried to work as a “bookkeeper” (accountants; someone who keeps the financial accounts of a business), but was unsuccessful and was “fired” (was told to leave the company).

At this point, Raymond began to try to write “to make a living” (to earn enough money to live on). He started by writing for inexpensive fiction magazines known as “pulp fiction.” His first story was published in 1933 and his first “novel” (fictional book), The Big Sleep, was published in 1939. He wrote many stories and novels, almost all of which were in the noir mystery “genre” (category of writing or film). His books became very popular, and he is still considered the most well known noir mystery writer.

In 1946, Raymond wrote a “screenplay” (written instructions and conversations for making a movie) called The Blue Dahlia. It is also about a murder mystery. The film was “playing” (in theaters) when the Black Dahlia murder described in this English Café occurred. Therefore, Elizabeth Short’s nickname as the Black Dahlia was probably created by people who liked watching The Blue Dahlia.

Raymond was sick for a long time at the end of his life. He died in 1954.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 133.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode one-three-three (133). I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. You can also visit our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional courses in business and daily English we think you'll enjoy.

On this Café, we're going to be talking about elections, and in particular, what we sometimes call "dirty tricks" during elections. We're also going to be talking about the Black Dahlia, who she was, and why she is so famous here in Los Angeles. As always, we'll answer a few of your questions as well. Let's get started.

As you probably know, there is a lot of excitement in the United States every four years about the presidential elections. So, on this Café, we're going to talk about some of the dishonest, or not honest, political strategies that are used in some U.S. elections. Presidential elections have two parts in the United States: the first part are the primaries. The word "primary" means first, in some instances; the primaries are the first elections that help determine who the "candidates," or the representatives from each party will be for the presidency. We pick the candidates that will "run against" each other – that will oppose each other in the second election, which is sometimes called the "general" election.

Naturally, being "elected," or chosen by a majority of votes, is difficult. Candidates use many different strategies to get elected. Normally they try to talk about their platform. A "platform" (platform) is a set of beliefs that a candidate has about certain important political issues. A platform also includes what he or she promises to do after being elected. Some candidates believe that talking about the platform that they have is not enough, so candidates begin to use, unfortunately, dishonest political strategies to attack or criticize their opponents. An "opponent," is someone who is running against you, or someone you are fighting against, someone who "opposes" you. In the 2008 elections in the United States there are two people who are fighting each other in the Democratic Party, one of the two major political parties in the U.S.; they are Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. They are, in 2008, the two opponents for that "nomination,"



or that election to become the candidate for the second, or general election in November of 2008.

One type of dishonest political strategy is known as a push poll. A “poll” (poll) is a survey or a questionnaire where people are asked for their opinions about something. With a normal poll, an organization usually spends a lot of time “developing,” or writing, the survey questions and then identifying a group of people whom they want to ask for their opinion. Then, after asking the questions, they spend a lot of time “analyzing,” or looking at the results, what we would call the “data” (or “data,” both pronunciations are correct), then they “publish,” or let other people know about their results, often in the newspaper.

A push poll is different, however, because the people who organize a push poll don’t actually collect or analyze the information, or at least not very much. In a push poll, the “pollsters,” the people who give the poll, who ask the questions, have a short list of questions they ask, but the real purpose of those questions is to get people to start thinking about the issue, or topic, or subject in a certain way. The push poll’s organizers are not really interested in people’s opinions or their answers to the questions. Instead, they want to make sure that people become aware of a certain issue and begin to talk about it with their friends, family members, the people they work with so that it becomes something that is important in the elections.

The problem with push polls is that they often have misleading questions. Something is “misleading” if it makes one more likely to believe something that is not true. If something is “misleading,” it is false or it is not completely true. For example, in the 2000 elections, one push poll asked people in South Carolina, “Would you be more likely or less likely to vote for John McCain (one of the candidates) for president if you knew he had fathered (or was the father of) an illegitimate black child?” The word “illegitimate” means not legitimate. That is, it’s used to refer to a child who is born outside of a marriage, where the mother is not married.

Now, John McCain never had an illegitimate child. He and his wife had adopted a daughter from the country of Bangladesh. However, most voters did not know this and when they heard the question, they began to think that it might be true that McCain had fathered an illegitimate black child; that would have been a very bad thing for him to have done, according to some voters, if it were true. The problem is it wasn’t true; it was a lie. But because they asked that question, people begin to think about it and believe it. This type of push poll can change someone’s decision about whom they will want to vote for.



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Push polls are viewed very negatively by professional politicians – or some professional politicians, but they are actually illegal only in one state, New Hampshire, which is in the northeast part of the U.S.

Another dishonest political strategy that some candidates use to hurt their opponents is what we call “attack ads.” “To attack” means to fight someone, to try to harm them or injure them. An attack ad is an advertisement on radio, TV, or “print” (that is, a newspaper or magazine) that says bad things about another candidate. In the past, attack ads were used to attack a candidate’s platform – their positions on certain issues. Now, however, they are often used to attack a candidate’s personal life or their beliefs. In American politics, your personal beliefs and personal life are very important. People may vote for you or not vote for you based on what you do in your personal or private life, so these kind of attack ads can be very effective.

When many attack ads are used with other “accusations,” statements that you have done something wrong, the political strategy is known as a “smear campaign.” Normally to “smear” (smear) means to rub something so that its color moves from one surface to another. For example, a woman’s lipstick may be smeared after she kisses someone. So, if your wife comes home and her lipstick is smeared, you might want to ask a few questions! A painting might be smeared if you touch it before the paint is dry, that’s “to smear.” A “smear campaign” is the combination of many different negative political strategies that a candidate may use against his or her opponent to make them look bad in the eyes of voters. “In the eyes of voters” means in the opinion of people who are voting. This is also sometimes called “mud slinging.” “To sling” (sling) means to throw something. “Mud” is basically dirty earth, water mixed with soil – mixed with what you would dig out of the ground. “Mud slinging,” then, means throwing dirt or saying something negative about another candidate to make him or her look bad.

It would be nice if our presidential elections used only honest and fair strategies. Unfortunately, we have already seen some dishonest political strategies in past elections, and they will probably continue as we have more elections in the future. These terms, then, are ones you may see in the newspaper when talking about the election: mud slinging, smear campaigns, push polls, and attack ads.

Now we’re going to turn to a very different topic, the Black Dahlia. The Black Dahlia is a nickname that refers to a well known, or famous murder. A “nickname” is another name, usually a shorter name, for a person or a thing. For



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example, my real name is Jeffrey, but my nickname is Jeff. When I was younger, I had another nickname, Shorty, which my friends used to call me because I was shorter than the other boys in grade school. I didn't like that name very much, so we don't use that anymore – please! I prefer Jeff. Anyway, the phrase Black Dahlia is used as a nickname for the woman who was murdered, as well as the case itself – the murder itself. A “dahlia” (dahlia) is a type of flower; I'm not really sure why they use that nickname for this murder.

The woman's real name was Elizabeth Short. She was born in the State of Massachusetts, which is on the East Coast of the United States, in the northeast. But, she was murdered here in Los Angeles, in 1947, right after World War II; she was only 22 years old. Her murder is an unsolved mystery. A mystery is something that happened that people can't explain, or something that doesn't have an easy answer. An “unsolved mystery” is a little redundant – it means the same. A “mystery” is something that you don't know the answer for; “unsolved” means we haven't figured it out. In any case, the Black Dahlia is definitely an unsolved mystery, perhaps one of the most famous in Los Angeles history. We don't know how or why this woman died, or who murdered her.

Now, Elizabeth Short was a very troubled young woman, meaning she had many problems in her life. During the last six months of her life, she lived in many different places and didn't really have a real home. She died a very violent death. Something that is “violent” is done to hurt someone with very strong physical actions. When they found her body in a park, it had been mutilated. “To mutilate” (mutilate) means to damage or cut something very badly to make it look almost like it isn't even a human being. Her body was cut in half and her face was cut from each corner of her mouth to her ears. So, it was a very ugly scene.

The murder was widely “publicized,” meaning it was described in many, many newspapers and news reports. The police interviewed thousands of people, but never determined who actually did the crime – who committed the crime. “To commit a crime” means to make the crime happen. There was so much interest this particular murder that 60 people actually confessed to having committed it, saying that they were the murderer, but the police decided that none of those people was the real, or actual, murderer. Most of them confessed just to get attention from the media – from the newspapers.

Even today, the Black Dahlia murder continues to interest many people. There have been many books and films that have been made about the young woman and her murder, but the facts of the case still remain a mystery. Her death probably will continue to be a mystery, since this murder happened more than 60



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years ago. If you're interested in this kind of mystery case, there was a movie made just a couple years ago called The Black Dahlia, based on a book by the same name.

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

Our first question comes from Kenji (Kenji) in Japan. Kenji wants to know the difference between "treatment" and "therapy" (therapy). Both "treatment" and "therapy" are related to helping people become more healthy, of healing or curing their sickness. When you have a disease or an injury, "therapy" is something that you get – you receive – in order to help you. The same is true for "treatment." They sometimes mean the same thing. You can say, "She is undergoing," or "She is receiving treatment for cancer." Or, you could say, "She is undergoing cancer therapy." They mean the same thing.

"Treatment" is often used to describe, however, a particular medicine or cure that is being used with someone who is sick. For example: "The doctor gave his patient antibiotics as a treatment for her condition." The particular substance is antibiotics, that's the drug that the doctor gives the patient as treatment for her condition. You can also use this in a non-medical way. You can say, "He was arrested for his harsh treatment of the employees." "To treat someone harshly" would be to be mean to them, not to be kind to them.

"Therapy" is often used to talk about mental and emotional illnesses, especially if somebody uses this to say that you need therapy, without saying what kind of therapy. This means the person thinks that you are crazy, basically! So, "therapy" usually is used by itself to mean "psychotherapy," going to a psychiatrist or a psychologist and getting help for your mental problems. "Therapy" is also used in physical situations. For example, if you break your leg, you may then have to do special exercises as part of your "physical therapy."

As in the case of "treatment," you can use the word "therapy" in non-medical situations. Someone may say, "Music is my therapy" – music is what helps me, it helps heal me.

Manfred (Manfred) in Germany wants to know how you end an email that is for someone that you love, someone that you are "intimate" with, meaning, in this case, very close or romantic. How would you end an intimate letter or an intimate email?



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Well, the most common ways of ending it, before your name, is to use the word “love” – “Love, Jeff,” or “Love always.” You could also say, “Lots of love.” Another possibility, a little less common, is “Hugs and kisses.” That might be something that a teenager might write. There are two letters that people use at the end of intimate emails or letters, “XO,” you might see “XOXOXO.” “X” is supposed to be “hugs,” and “O” is “kisses.” If you think about an “X,” you kind of get the idea of one that is for “hug,” and why “O” is for “kisses.” You, of course, would never want to write a note to your boss with “XOXOXO,” unless you were in love with him or her – then you have other problems!

Joyce (Joyce), from I don’t know where, wants to know what the expression “you’re entitled to your opinion” means. Your “opinion” is your view or attitude about something – your thoughts about something. “To be entitled” means that you have a right to, that you have the option of having this particular thing, either morally, ethically, or perhaps even legally. Someone may say, “You are entitled to park your car on the street” – it is legal for you to do so, you have that right.

When someone says, “you’re entitled to your opinion,” usually they’re saying this when two people are talking about a topic and they disagree – they have different views or feelings. One person may use this expression, “you’re entitled to your opinion,” to basically end the argument – to stop the debate, to say, “we don’t agree, so we’ll stop talking about this.”

Depending on how it’s said – whether you say it very nicely, or whether you say it not very nicely – it can have a little different meaning. If you say it politely, you are saying that you respect this other person’s opinion even though you don’t agree with them. A polite conversation, for example might be: “This restaurant is the best in town,” and someone else says, “Well, you’re entitled to your opinion, but you should try our restaurant and maybe you’ll like it better.”

An impolite, or not polite, use of this expression would be, for example, two people talking: one says, “I think that my artwork – my paintings – are the best in the gallery.” Another girl says, “I disagree. I think my paintings are better.” The first woman may say, “You’re entitled to your opinion,” and the other may say, “So are you.” Not a nice or polite way of using that expression.

If you have a question – a polite question for us, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We’ll see you next time on the English Café.



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