

Chatter Box #28 – Paul’s travel stories of North America

Transcript

Maura: Hello everybody, this is Maura and today with me is my friend Paul.

Paul: Hello.

Maura: And this is the Chatter Box podcast at Culips, that’s C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and you can go to our website and check out the Lipservice by first becoming a member. In the Lipservice, you’ll find the transcripts for this episode, detailed explanations, and a quiz. This episode we’re going to speak with my friend Paul, who is visiting North America for the first time. Paul and I met about 4 years ago when we both worked in Japan, and he is originally from Britain, so he lives in England and this is his first trip to the United States and Canada. So, we’re going to talk a little bit about his time so far. So Paul, say hi!

Paul: Hi.

Maura: So, first tell everybody a little bit about yourself: So, what you do in Britain, where you live, all that kinda good stuff.

Paul: Well I’m 27. I live in London, but originally from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in the Northeast of England. I work for Sony Pictures and I’m a broadcast coordinator, making sure everything that goes out **on air**, television that is, is correct.

Maura: And what did you study to get a job like that?

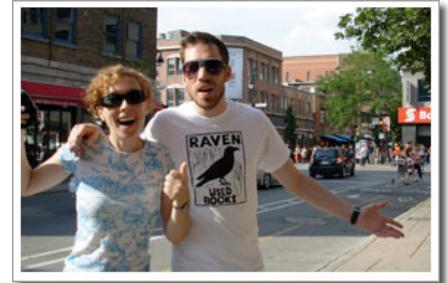
Paul: I studied broadcasting at university.

Maura: And why did you decide to move away from your hometown to London?

Paul: Because there’s no jobs in my hometown and the media is mainly based in London or Manchester, in the UK, so it’s easier to get a job there.

Maura: OK, and how do you like London? I’ve been there a couple times. It’s a pretty big city, exciting city, lots of stuff going on.

Paul: Yeah, it’s fun. It’s very vibrant. There’s lots of museums and, like, art projects to go to. There’s always something happening. You can go out every night. You can go out every day and do something.



- Maura: OK, cool. So, how did you end up planning a trip to North America?
- Paul: Well, a friend of mine is American and he was telling me about **Independence Day** and how his family celebrate it in Greenfield, **Massachusetts** and he invited me along. So I thought, hey, let's go to America. So we decided to go to New York and then his hometown for 2 weeks, and additionally to that I thought I'd come and see you in Montreal.
- Maura: Yeah, good idea! So, what did you do in New York City?
- Paul: So I flew into New York, **JFK Airport**. My flight was delayed by 5 hours so we just had to go straight to my friends' apartment in Brooklyn, and we went there and chatted to them for a while, then went to bed. The next morning, we decided to go to the **High Line**, which is the old **Meatpacking District** of New York. And they've converted an old railway line into a park, where you can walk along and it's quite green and open and really really nice. However, it was really hot that day and I think there was a **heat wave** on.
- Maura: Yeah, there still is.
- Paul: So we couldn't walk very far, because my skin doesn't do so well in the hot weather.
- Maura: You didn't put any **sunscreen** on?
- Paul: No, I forgot.
- Maura: I see.
- Paul: So we cancelled that, and we decided to go to **Coney Island**. There's a fun fair there and it's by the sea so we thought it would be nice and cool.
- Maura: That sounds fun.
- Paul: However, on the way there, a lot of the roads were closed off as there was a gay pride festival on and we just decided to hang 'round there and stay in that area because it was **too much hassle** to make it all the way to **Coney Island**. And it ended up being actually very very fun. Everyone was very happy and vibrant. There was lots of people singing and dancing, many different cultures, and lots of people wearing different costumes, which was quite funny.
- Maura: That sounds cool. So what did you do after your time in New York?

- Paul: So after New York, I headed to western **Massachusetts**, a town called Greenfield, to see my friend's family and experience **Independence Day** in America, which was a first for me.
- Maura: Yeah, I've never experienced **Independence Day**, but I imagine it would be pretty huge over there.
- Paul: Yeah, they have lots of flags out in the street and there's a big festival in the town square with fireworks, and stores with **candyfloss**, and clams, and roasted chestnuts; the usual kind of festival stalls. We spent the day preparing for it, getting food for the **barbecue** and making different types of salads, like potato salad and green salad, and then we sat out on the lawn and waited for his family to **come 'round**, which was, like, 20 members, and all his friends as well from high school. And then in the... there was like a square green park and a mountain at the top with like a high tower, and the fireworks were set off from there at about 10 o'clock at night. And everyone gathered 'round and watched and there was, like, stalls with **candyfloss** and, I don't know, clams, and face painting and all your kind of typical fair kind of things, and that went on until midnight.
- Maura: Cool, yeah, it sounds very small-town America.
- Paul: Yeah, it was good. It was a little bit like **Guy Fawkes** in Britain, but with warmer weather.
- Maura: Oh, what's that?
- Paul: **Guy Fawkes** is a festival in Britain celebrated on the 5th of November to remember a plot to blow up parliament in London.
- Maura: Interesting. So, after you spent a couple weeks in the US, then you got on a bus to come visit me.
- Paul: That's correct.
- Maura: And tell everybody what you've done so far since you've been in Montreal.
- Paul: Well, while being in Montreal I've been wandering around the city, just kind of exploring and going to different restaurants, eating different types of food, meeting different types of people. I didn't expect there to be... for there to be, so much French language here. I was quite surprised by it and **taken aback** a little.
- Maura: And you did one very exciting thing the other night: you went to Taco Bell.

- Paul: Ah yes, I ate at Taco Bell. I've never been to Taco Bell before, but I've heard a lot about it in movies and was quite excited. And there's a song I like, which talks about this **legendary** place called Taco Bell.
- Maura: So, was it all you hoped it'd be?
- Paul: And more.
- Maura: OK, cool. So what are some differences that you've noticed between North America (so anywhere in the US or Canada) and the UK?
- Paul: The portions of food in North America are a lot larger and seem a bit more unhealthy. While I was in America, I seemed to just eat lots of meat, but maybe that was because it was the time of the year, and with the 4th of July. And vehicles are a lot bigger in North America. Everyone seems to drive 4x4s and Hummers, which is not so common in Britain. Also there's lots of Japanese cars, which I've noticed. There's lots of Toyotas and Hondas, which I found quite unusual, we have more of a mix in Britain.
- Maura: You also told me that you've had some problems with tea here.
- Paul: Ah yes, it's really difficult to get a good cup of English tea in the United States and Canada.
- Maura: So you're looking forward to that when you go home?
- Paul: Yes, I'm looking for a good **cuppa** when I get home and a **chinwag** with my friends over some tea.
- Maura: What's a **chinwag**?
- Paul: A chat!
- Maura: That's really funny. I get it, the chin moves around when you talk. That's funny. So, as I said earlier, Paul and I met when we were both teaching English in Japan, so of course we have to talk a little bit about Japan too. Now Paul, what are some memories that you have of your time in Japan?
- Paul: I've got lots of memories. It was quite an exciting time for me. I remember the people being very warm and open, especially in **Ise**, in a more rural part of Japan. I really liked the food over there. At first I was a bit **taken aback** by raw fish, but I ended up loving it and now I really really like sushi. Udon and ramen are really nice. I quite liked the Japanese culture and their convenience and **can-do** attitude, which was quite good.

- Maura: So when you first lived in Japan you lived in a smaller area and then you moved to Tokyo, right? Which is where we met. So what happened when you left that small town, Paul?
- Paul: The town **threw a little party** for me in a restaurant, where we had lots of food and drinks and they bought me presents and they all said goodbye and sang songs for me.
- Maura: Aw, did you cry?
- Paul: I cried and cried 'cause they were very nice people and it was such a delight to be waved goodbye like that.
- Maura: That's very sweet. OK, I have another question for you about slang and idioms and expressions because there are often differences between the expressions we use over here in North America and the expressions that are used in the UK or Australia. So I was wondering if you've noticed anything over here that you didn't really understand, or maybe you heard some expressions that you weren't familiar with.
- Paul: Most of them I've heard before, because Britain is influenced by American movies and TV shows, so a lot of the terminology I've heard before, so it's not really difficult for me to understand. However, on the other hand, I think for Americans to understand terms that I use is more difficult because they don't have so many movies or TV shows from Britain. Or if they do they change them to American-**ify** them.
- Maura: Yeah, I think that's true for sure. Sometimes if I start watching a movie from Australia or Britain, at the beginning it takes my ears a few minutes to get accustomed to the different accent. But most of the time I think we're able to figure out what the other person is saying, it's usually not a problem. Um, could you give us an example of some expression or slang that's used in Britain?
- Paul: **Chinwag**, could be one, which we've just used. Well there's a slang word from my hometown, which means *of course* or *yes*, but a very strong yes, and people would say **whey aye**. So for example, someone might ask me if I'm going to the restaurant tonight and I would say *whey aye*, which means of course I am, there was no doubt in that.
- Maura: That's cool, that's the first time that I've heard that. Cool, thanks.
- Paul: You're welcome.

- Maura: And thanks so much for coming to visit and for letting me interview you for Culips.
- Paul: Oh, you're welcome. Any time.
- Maura: OK great. So that's about it for our interview, and don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, where you can find the transcript for this episode and lots of other great stuff. So, this has been Maura and my friend Paul.
- Paul: Hello! Goodbye!
- Maura: And I'll talk to you later. Bye!

Detailed Explanation

On air

If something is **on air** or **on the air** it means that it is being broadcast. Paul is a broadcast coordinator so that is why he was talking about shows **on air**. **On air** can be used to talk about radio or television, and it means that the words, or words and sound for television, are being transmitted and shared with the public.

Also, the verb *to broadcast* can be replaced with *to air*.

Here are a couple of examples:

Lisa: Let's **air** that story from yesterday.

Oscar: Good idea. I think the public needs to hear about it.

Ned: Quiet!

Peter: Oh, are we **on the air**?

Ned: Not yet, but we will be in a moment. We're almost back from the commercial break.

Independence Day

Every country has a day that they celebrate their country. In the United States this day is called **Independence Day** and is on July 4. It is called **Independence Day** or the Fourth of July. This day is celebrated to remember when Americans gained independence from Britain. Most offices and places of work are closed in the U.S.

The typical celebrations on this day are as Paul described: lots of barbecues, fireworks, family and friends gathering together.

Massachusetts

This is the long name of the state where Paul spent **Independence Day**. He spent the holiday in Greenfield, **Massachusetts**. Greenfield is a small city, not too far from Boston.

JFK

Paul arrived at **JFK** airport in New York. **JFK** represents John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who was an American politician that was assassinated in 1963. He is a much beloved political figure in the U.S.A. This airport is named after him. He is often referred to simply as **JFK**. There is also a film about his life called **JFK**.

The High Line

The **High Line** is an old railway through New York City that is being reconstructed as a kind of park with grass and flowers. It has already partly been reconstructed, which is the part that Paul visited, but there is also more to develop.

The Meatpacking District

When Paul talks about visiting the High Line in New York, he also says that he was in the Meatpacking District. The **Meatpacking District** is an area in New York City, which used to be a place where meat was packed up to be sold. This area contained many slaughterhouses and packing plants. In the 1990s the area began changing, with luxury shops opening in the area. It is now one of New York's most fashionable areas.

Heat wave

A **heat wave** happens in the summer, when there is a period of extreme heat and humidity. Every summer there is usually at least one **heat wave** in Canada and it can last for days or weeks. When Paul was in North America he was here during a **heat wave**, which affected both New York City and Montreal.

Sunscreen

Sunscreen is a lotion or cream that has been created to protect people's skin from the sun. There are also the words *suntan lotion* and *sunblock*, which can be used interchangeably. These terms are very similar but there is some distinction. *Sunblock* is used to completely block the sun, so as not to burn or tan the skin. **Sunscreen** is used in much the same way, although it technically only *screens* the sun, letting through some radiation. *Suntan lotion* can be used to help the sun tan a person's skin.

Paul forgot to put on sunscreen, so his skin was sensitive to the sun. It is also hotter in most parts of Canada and the US in the summer than it is in Britain.

Coney Island

This is an area of New York with an amusement park along a beach on the Atlantic Ocean. It has gone through many changes over the years and has varied in popularity with tourists. It's not just a tourist attraction though, many people live, work, and go to school in the area as well.

Too much hassle

In this episode Paul uses the expression **too much hassle**. Something is described as a **hassle** when it is not convenient or not easy to accomplish. We could say that something that is **too much hassle** is too much trouble, so we decide not to do it.

Paul says that going to Coney Island was **too much hassle**. It was **too much hassle** because the roads were blocked, so it was not convenient and it would have taken a lot of time to travel there.

There are many variations using the word ***hassle***. We can say it is ***a hassle, too much hassle, too much of a hassle, too big a hassle, or to big of a hassle.***

Here are some examples with ***hassle***:

Kevin: Why didn't you come to the party?

Patrick: I was all the way on the other side of town. It was **too much of a hassle** to get a cab across the city.

(Travelling far across the city and finding a cab to get across the city made going to the party a hassle.)

Hilda: How is your project coming along?

Tyler: It is such **a hassle** to find all the documentation that I need.

Hilda: Why is that?

Tyler: It's really time-consuming to locate the documents and it takes hours to find just one of them.

(Finding all the documentation is a complicated, long process, so it's a hassle.)

Ryan: I have to change over all my credit cards and bills because I moved.

Irene: What a big hassle! I hate having to do that.

Hassle can also be verb, ***to hassle***. In this case it means to trouble or to bother.

Candyfloss

When Paul is speaking about Independence Day celebrations, he says that there was **candyfloss**. **Candyfloss**, which is more often called cotton candy in the US and Canada, is coloured sugar that has been spun on a stick. It is often sold at amusement parks or large gatherings in the summer.

Barbecue

During Independence Day celebrations there are also lots of **barbecues**. If you are travelling in the US or Canada you might often see the word written as *barbeque* or *BBQ* in short form, but it is still said as **barbecue**.

Come 'round

Like some of the other expressions used by Paul in this episode, this is a more British expression. **To come around**, or **to come' round** means to arrive or to show up. Paul says that they waited for family and friend to come 'round, or in other words they waited for family and friends to arrive.

Here are a couple more examples with **come 'round**:

Greg: What time are you going to be at Jane's tonight?

Ben: I think I'll **come 'round** at 8 o'clock.

Gisele: Sam **came 'round** yesterday, finally.

Jill: Did he tell you he was coming or did he just show up?

Guy Fawkes

Guy Fawkes is the name of a British historical figure who participated in many battles in his lifetime. He lived until the beginning of the 17th century. His name is now mostly connected to the Gunpowder Plot, which is the plot to blow up parliament that Paul is talking about in this episode.

The Guy Fawkes celebration happens on November 5th and often includes fireworks.

To be taken aback

Paul has been **taken aback** a few times during his travels! **To be taken aback** means to be surprised, and possibly confused or disturbed. A person is **taken aback** when something is not as they expected.

Paul was **taken aback** by how much French is spoken in Montreal. He was not expecting it to be so French and so he was surprised. He might also have been confused because he does not speak French!

Paul also says that he was **taken aback** by raw fish when he first moved to Japan. In this case, he likely means that he was disturbed because eating raw fish was not something he was used to. But after some time, raw fish became one of Paul's favourite things to eat!

Here are a couple more examples with **taken aback**:

Sylvia: I was really **taken aback** when I got to this country because women are treated differently here than we are in Canada.

Adam: Yes, it takes some time to get used to it.

Matthew: How does Joan like school in America so far?

Bill: At first she was **taken aback** by all the reading she had to do, but she is doing OK.

Legendary

If a something is **legendary**, it means that it is great! If something is **legendary** it is popular with people and has also existed for some time. **Legendary** is an adjective, from the word *legend*, which is an incredible and memorable story. Something **legendary** is a so great and famous that many people speak about it.

A popular American television called *How I Met Your Mother* has a funny character on the show that often calls things **legendary**. People, places, and things can be described as **legendary**, and it simply means that they are great, exciting, and interesting!

Cuppa

This is another British term, and in this episode it is a Brit who says it! A **cuppa** is slang for a cup of tea. The word **cuppa** likely comes from saying *cup of* quickly. You might also hear people say **cuppa** in North American, but it will usually also be followed by what is in the cup.

Here is an example of the difference between what you might hear in Britain and in North America.

Brit: I am looking forward to a good **cuppa**.

North American: I am looking forward to a good cuppa coffee.

(Also, in North American we do not often write **cuppa**. It is more often just a fast pronunciation when we say *cup of*.)

Chinwag

The word **chinwag** is also a new term for Maura. Even though she doesn't understand right away, she is able to make the connection to **chin** and **wag**. When someone **wags** their **chin** they are talking, and so **chinwag** means talking or having a chat.

Can-do

Paul says that he liked the Japanese **can-do** attitude when he was in Japan. This can be understood by looking at the two words: **can** and **do**. If a person has a can-do attitude, it means that they think they **can do** anything! A can-do attitude means that you find a way to solve problems and face challenges because you believe you **can do** it! A can-do attitude is a great thing to have.

To throw a party

When someone **throws a party**, they do not physically throw anything. To throw a party is an expression that means the same as *to have a party* or *to plan a party*.

Here is one quick example: two sentences with exactly the same meaning.

Bob **throws** great **parties**. OR Bob has great parties.

-ify

The suffix **-ify** is added to the word *American* by Paul. This is not a real word, but a word from Paul's imagination. To **American-ify** something is to make it American. This suffix is part of many real words, but it is also used casually and added to words to make a new sense of the word.

The suffix **-ify** means to *make*. Here are some examples of real words that use this suffix and their meanings.

magnify – to make bigger
intensify – to make more intense
beautify – to make beautiful

Here are some other examples adding **-ify** to the end of words to create new words. These words with **-ify** are not real words, and there are none specifically that are in popular use.

Fiona: What did you at Chad's place?

April: I had to party-**ify** the place. There were lots of people but the mood seemed too serious.

Justin Timberlake's first album is called Justified and the name uses this **-ify** concept a bit. *Justified* is actually a word, but it is also very similar to his name Justin. The album name can have the true meaning of justified but it can also mean that you have been made to be more like Justin!

Whey-aye

As we mention many times at Culips, there are many, many slang terms in English, and some are very specific to certain regions. Where Paul is originally from, in the North of England, and also into Scotland, people say **whey aye** to mean *yes, of course*.

Here is the example that Paul uses in this episode:

Jon: Are you going out to a restaurant tonight?

Lynn: **Whey aye**.

Quiz

1. Which of these expressions is related to Paul's job as a broadcast coordinator?

- a) in the air
- b) on air
- c) around air
- d) vibrant

2. Which holiday did Paul celebrate in the US?

- a) JFK
- b) High Line
- c) Independence Day
- d) Meat Packing

3. What was the weather like when Paul was in New York?

- a) It was a bit chilly.
- b) It was cloudy.
- c) There was a rainstorm.
- d) There was a heat wave.

4. Why did Paul NOT go to Coney Island?

- a) It was too much hassle.
- b) It was closed.
- c) The car broke down.
- d) The trains weren't working.

5. What is the name of the candy that Paul talks about?

- a) candyfloss
- b) flosscandy
- c) funnyfloss
- d) crunchycandy

6. When I visited the new restaurant downtown, I didn't know that the food was going to be so different. I was really _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) back talking
 - b) take behind
 - c) taken aback
 - d) big talk
7. What British slang does Paul use to talk about a cup of tea?
- a) not my cup of tea
 - b) cuppa
 - c) mugger
 - d) tea bag
8. Holly and Krista had a chinwag. What does that mean?
- a) They had a conversation.
 - b) They got makeovers.
 - c) They danced.
 - d) They drank tea.
9. Paul says that they American-ify some British movies or television shows to show in the US. What does this mean?
- a) to make less American
 - b) to make more American
 - c) to be not sure if you are American
 - d) to make Asian

Answers: 1.b 2.c 3.d 4.a 5.a 6.c 7.b 8.a 9.b