

## Catch Word #53 – Rip off

### Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Robin: And Robin and we're here with the Catch Word podcast.

Harp: Yes, the Catch Word podcast at Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com

Robin: And as you know this is the podcast where we take an expression and we break it down with related expressions, synonyms.

Harp: Yes, and if you go to the website you can find the Lipservice which gives you a complete transcript, more explanation and even a quiz.

Robin: Absolutely, so go and check it out.

Harp: So Robin, what is today's Catch Word?

Robin: Today's Catch Word is **rip off**.

Harp: **Rip off**.

Robin: **Rip off**.

Harp: So what is a **rip off**?

Robin: A **rip off** is something that costs more than it's actual **value**.

Harp: OK, so something that is **overpriced**.

Robin: Something that is **overpriced**. So if you buy a pair of socks for \$20 you're probably getting **ripped off**.

Harp: Yeah, if you can buy the same socks for \$2, the twenty dollar socks are a **rip off**.

Robin: Especially if those socks have holes in them and they're not of good quality.

Harp: Yeah for sure, then.

Robin: OK.

- Harp: Should we give a dialogue explaining **rip off**?
- Robin: Absolutely. Hey Harp, did you get the shoes that you were looking for?
- Harp: Yeah, I got them.
- Robin: Seriously, you don't seem so happy. Were they ...
- Harp: I got **ripped off**. I paid a thousand dollars.
- Robin: What? You paid a thousand dollars for those shoes?
- Harp: I know I got completely **ripped off**.
- Robin: Weren't they on sale for seventy-five dollars?
- Harp: Robin, I saw that after and I can't return these shoes.
- Robin: Wow.
- Harp: I got **ripped off**.
- Robin: OK, so in that example Harp paid a lot of money for something that was **worth** a lot less.
- Harp: Exactly I got **ripped off**.
- Robin: Absolutely so this is a perfect example of how you might use that expression. Something can be a **rip off**.
- Harp: Mm-hm yes.
- Robin: Those shoes, because they're not of good quality, are a **rip off** or you can **rip** somebody **off**.
- Harp: So an example of to **rip someone off** is if you sell them tickets for a hundred dollars but they could buy the tickets for twenty dollars.
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Harp: You could **rip somebody off**.
- Robin: So it's kind of like you took more money than you should have taken from them.

- Harp: Yeah, exactly.
- Robin: You took more than what the **value** of the thing that you gave was **worth**.
- Harp: Exactly. So now what's the next expression?
- Robin: The next expression is actually **highway robbery**.
- Harp: **Highway robbery**.
- Robin: **Highway robbery**, and I think this expression, which is related to **rip off** is ... it comes from a long time ago, I guess when people used to travel on roads with all their gold and their money. Sometimes people would come around, **bandits**, thieves and they would take all their possessions.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Robin: So they would walk away with a lot of money.
- Harp: Yup, exactly. I think that's where it comes from as well. So what is **highway robbery**?
- Robin: Basically it's when you pay a big price, enormous price, a huge price for something that shouldn't be valued at that amount.
- Harp: Exactly, so if you buy a purse for ten thousand dollars, that's **highway robbery**.
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Harp: Yeah, you shouldn't pay that much for a purse, you know, it's **highway robbery**.
- Robin: I just want **to point out** as well sometimes we use this expression for events. For example in a sporting event, in a competition, maybe somebody should have won. It's clear to everyone in the world that someone should have won but the judges give it to someone else. Sometimes in those sorts of situations we say, "ah, that's **highway robbery**."
- Harp: Yes, exactly, so in a boxing match if one person should have won but the other guy won, it's **highway robbery**.
- Robin: The one guy, he's dominating, he's winning all the rounds but **all of the sudden** at the end he loses the fight.

- Harp: It's **highway robbery**.
- Robin: It's **highway robbery**. What's the last expression that we have?
- Harp: The last expression is actually the opposite of **highway robbery** and a **rip off**. The last expression is a **steal**.
- Robin: A **steal**.
- Harp: A **steal**.
- Robin: A **steal**. And when would we use an expression like this?
- Harp: Well, something is a **steal** when it's such a good **bargain**. When you can find a pair of shoes for ten dollars that are normally one hundred dollars, that's a **steal**.
- Robin: So it's almost like something is so cheap that we're taking it from somebody. It's almost like we are stealing it from somebody.
- Harp: Yeah, you're paying but not very much so it's a steal of a deal.
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Harp: Should we do a dialogue example for a **steal**?
- Robin: Sure.
- Harp: So Robin did you buy that car?
- Robin: You're not gonna believe this! I bought the car but I convinced them to sell it for 50% off!
- Harp: **No way?**
- Robin: Can you believe that? What a **steal**.
- Harp: You got the car for 50% off?
- Robin: 50% off!
- Harp: That is a **steal**.
- Robin: Absolutely.

- Harp: Wow!
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Harp: Very nice Robin!
- Robin: OK, so in that example, there was something that was so cheap, that cost so little, that I felt that I got a good deal; that it was a **steal**.
- Harp: Yeah, he still paid money but he paid 50% less, so it was a **steal**. So when something is a **steal**, when you buy something at such a low price, it's a really good **deal**.
- Robin: It's an excellent **deal**. It's a good **deal**.
- Harp: It's a good **bargain**. You get something at a good price.
- Robin: Absolutely. So let's just recap. What were the expressions today?
- Harp: We started with **rip off**.
- Robin: A **rip off**, and you can **rip someone off**, you can be **ripped off** or something could be a **rip off**.
- Harp: Exactly. So that's when you pay too much for something that isn't **worth** it.
- Robin: Absolutely, absolutely. The second expression was **highway robbery**.
- Harp: Yes, **highway robbery** and it's very similar to **rip off**. It's when something is **overpriced**.
- Robin: It costs way more than its **value**.
- Harp: Yes and you can also use this in sporting events where someone didn't get what they should have.
- Robin: Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. And the last one was a **steal**.
- Harp: Yes, so when something is a **steal**, it's a good **deal**, it's a **bargain**.
- Robin: It costs way less than its actual **value**.
- Harp: Exactly, so those are the three expressions for today.

Robin: And we hope you enjoyed our episode. Check out our website, once again, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: That's it for us today.

Robin: This has been Robin.

Harp: And Harp.

Robin: And we're signing off.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Robin: Bye.

## Detailed Explanation

### Rip off

A **rip off** is not a good thing. It means that someone paid too much money for something. You feel **ripped off** because you bought something and then later see it for sale at a cheaper price. You might also feel **ripped off** because you realize that the price you paid is generally more than most people would pay. You can also feel that something is a **rip off** if it breaks soon after you buy it.

**Rip off** has a few different forms that we can use. Here is a list with an example for each.

#### A rip off

Example: This new winter coat I got is a **rip off**. I paid a lot of money for it and it doesn't even keep me warm.

#### To get ripped off

Example: I **got ripped off** last week when I bought my new winter coat.

#### To be ripped off

Example: I **was ripped off** last week when I bought my new winter coat.

#### To feel ripped off

Example: I felt **ripped off** when I found out that my new winter coat doesn't even keep me warm.

#### To rip somebody off

Example: That guy at the clothing store **ripped me off** when he sold me this coat last week.



There is also the literal meaning of **rip off**. You can **rip off** a piece of paper. This means that you actually separate two pieces (usually of paper or cloth) with your hands. It is easy to see the difference between this literal meaning and the expression above. The expression is used with people and can be a noun, and the literal definition can only be used with things and is only a verb.

\*It is important to understand that to feel **ripped off**, or to call a purchase **highway robbery** depends on how the person feels about the purchase. If someone buys a very expensive item, but is rich and doesn't care about money, that person would probably not feel **ripped off**. If someone buys an expensive item, and later realizes that it was too expensive and feels unhappy about it, they would probably call it **highway robbery**.

Overpriced

When something is described as **overpriced** it means that the cost of the product was not equal to its value. The price is higher than it should be. For example, if an airplane ticket normally costs \$300, then a ticket for sale at \$500 is **overpriced**.

Value

**Value** and **worth** are two words that are not easy to define. The word **worth** is usually defined by using the word **value** and **value** is usually defined by using the word **worth**.

When talking about money, **value** and **worth** are used to relate an object to money. Here are some examples using value and worth specifically with money.

The **value** of the painting is \$200.  
The bike is **worth** \$200.

What is the **value** of their house?

What is the car **worth**?

(The answer to the above questions would be an amount of money.)



**Value** and **worth** can also be used in more abstract ways, not related to money.

Highway robbery

This expression **highway robbery** likely comes from a time when people were actually being robbed on the road, or highway, while they were traveling. In some countries this still happens. In this case **highway robbery** would be literal, but you would probably not use the expression because it is more casual. When people use this expression no one is actually getting robbed. **Highway robbery** now means that someone paid too much money for something. If you feel **ripped off**, you might also say it was **highway robbery**.

Bandits

**Bandits** is an old-fashioned word for *thieves* or *robbers*. A **bandit** is someone who steals or takes things illegally from others.

In 2001, a movie was released called *Bandits*, starring Cate Blanchett, Bruce Willis, and Billy Bob Thornton. It was about a group of people who robbed banks.

To point out

**To point out** an idea or example means *to suggest* or *to mention*. We use **to point out** when what we are going to say is important information. In this episode, Robin says that he would like to **point out** that you can use the expression **highway robbery** to talk about events. Here are a couple more examples with **to point out**.

Carmen: Is there anything else to talk about before we finish up this meeting?



Isla: I just wanted to **point out** that we still need to discuss the budget.

Frederick: Jeff **pointed out** all of the problems we have been having.

Tyson: That's good. Someone needed to mention them.

Of course, we can also literally **point out** something with our finger too. Here is an example.

Brandon: Do you see that cloud in the sky that looks like an elephant?

Ruby: No, can you **point it out** to me?

### All of the sudden

As Robin is telling a story in this episode he says "... **all of a sudden** ..." in the conversation. This expression is used in telling a story and shows that an action happens that was not expected. For example, it was a sunny day and **all of the sudden** it started to rain. In that case the rain was not expected.

We can use the expressions *all of a sudden* or *suddenly* in the same way.

### A steal

When we say something is a **steal** it is quite the opposite of **highway robbery** or **rip off**. If something is a **steal** it means that the person got it at a very good price. The person did not actually steal anything, they paid for it. The price was so good that it almost felt like it was free!

When we call something a **steal** (the noun) it is always used as an expression to mean that something was bought at a very good price. When we say *to steal* (the verb) it always literally means that something was taken illegally.

Here are a couple of examples to see the difference.

Greg: Do you think that man in the blue hat is going to buy that new laptop?

Yasmina: No, I think he is going to **steal** it! (the verb)

Tatiana: Do you think I should buy that computer?

David: Yes, at that price, it's a **steal**! (the noun)

### Bargain/Deal

Sometimes English is funny and strange! Here is an example:

A **bargain** and a **good bargain** mean the same thing. A **deal** and a **good deal** mean the same thing. This is only true for the nouns. If something is a **bargain** or a **deal**, it means that a good or cheap price was paid. Even though we don't need to say **good deal** to understand that it was a good price, English native speakers often do this anyway!

Here are some examples.

Henry: Did you buy that new bag you wanted?

Hugh: Yes, and I got a really **great deal**!

Julie: What a **deal**! I just paid \$5 for a \$25 shirt!

Pauline: Yeah, that does sound like a **good bargain**.

The verbs **bargain** and **deal** are different from the nouns. *To bargain* means to negotiate a price that could be good or bad. *To deal* means to participate in an exchange or to offer something commercially.

### No way

When we say **no way**, it often simply means *no*. For example: "Do you want to go to Toronto this weekend?" "**No way**, it is too far." In this episode, it is used to express disbelief, to show that you do not believe something. Saying **no way** in this case is like asking, "Really?" or "Is it true?" It is like saying, "Wow, what you said was so good, it is hard to believe!"

*Really* and *seriously* are some synonyms for **no way** in this case. We often show interest by responding to others' stories in this way. Here is an example.

Victor: What's new?

Louie: You will never believe what happened to me. I won tickets to the concert this weekend!

Victor: **No way**.

Louis: Yeah, I just called in and won them. I didn't even have to answer a question.

Victor: **Seriously**? Wow, that's awesome.

Louis: So I was wondering if you wanted to go with me.

Victor: **Really**? I would love to.

**Quiz** (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. If you pay too much for a new shirt and then feel bad about spending too much money on it, you can say that you feel \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) ripped
- b) ripped in
- c) ripped off
- d) ripped in

2. Alex: I am going to sell my car.  
Ellen: How much is it \_\_\_\_\_?

Please fill in the blank.

- a) worth
- b) worthy
- c) ripped off
- d) robbery

3. What are *bandits*, *thieves* and *robbers*?

- a) people who sell expensive products
- b) people who steal from others
- c) people who buy cheap products
- d) people who like money

4. I was walking down the street, and \_\_\_\_\_ I saw someone dancing!

Please fill in the blank.

- a) all of a sudden
- b) all of the sudden
- c) sudden
- d) all of the above

5. *To point out* can mean to physically point at something, or:

- a) to suggest or mention something
- b) to walk or run
- c) to yell or scream
- d) to sleep or lie down

6. **Ryan:** I just bought a car at an excellent price. I saved so much money  
**Matthew:** It sounds like you got \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) to steal
- b) a steal
- c) steel
- d) stolen

7. **Penelope:** I just bought some fruit at the farm market for a good price.  
**Michelle:** Farm markets are a good place to get a \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) deal
- b) robbery
- c) rip off
- d) furniture

8. **Jessica:** I just won a trip to Hawaii.  
**Augusto:** \_\_\_\_\_! You're so lucky.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) A steal
- b) Highway robbery
- c) Too bad
- d) No way

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