

Spontaneous photo shoot

Episode description

In this week's update episode, Andrew shares a story about getting his picture taken in a photo booth. Plus, in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you a useful expression: unbeknownst to [someone].

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hey everyone, it's Andrew here and this is the Culips English Podcast. How's it going? I hope you're all doing well. Thanks for pressing play on this episode and joining me for another English study session. Guys, this is exactly the kind of thing that you need to do to build your English fluency. You could be doing anything else right now, maybe sitting down to relax with your favorite TV show or jamming out to your favorite song. But instead, you decided to challenge yourself and improve yourself, to better yourself by spending time with English and by spending time with me. And I think you made a great choice. I know learning English isn't always fun, easy, or exciting. Sometimes it's a grind, and it's hard work. But one of the things that we do here at Culips is make learning as fun, easy, and motivating as possible. And of course, I'll try to do that in this episode, just like always.

There's a transcript that accompanies this episode and it is 100% free for everyone. I recommend following along with the transcript while you listen. And you can do that just by clicking the link in the description of this episode to download a PDF version of it. Or alternatively, you can visit our website which is Culips.com C-U-L-I-P-S.com and there you can see a digital version of the transcript that looks great on computers, tablets, and smartphones.

If this is your first time listening to Culips, well, welcome. I'm Andrew and I'm an English teacher from Canada, but I'm currently living in Seoul, South Korea with my wife and our dog, Pinky. And at Culips, we make lessons for intermediate and advanced English learners from all over the world who share the same goal. That goal, of course, is becoming fluent in English.

Let's talk about last week for a bit. So, what did you guys get up to last week? Did anything fun or exciting happen to you? I thought I'd tell you about something that I got up to over the weekend. So, on Saturday, my wife and I were out for a walk near one of our favorite neighborhoods in Seoul. And we were just strolling around, walking down the street. Just aimlessly walking with no real destination in mind. And we passed by a photo booth shop. Do you have these places in your country? As far as I know, we don't have them in Canada. But here in Korea, they're super popular, and you can find them all over the place. These photo booth shops are really cool. They're completely unmanned, which means there are no staff that work in the store, it is completely run just by computers. And that's kind of cool, I guess.

So, what you do with these photo booth shops, you just walk into the shop, and when you come in through the door, there are some shelves with costumes on one side, and some mirrors and desks on the other side. Then in the back of the shop, there are two or three photo booths. So, the idea is that you come in and you go to the costume area, you choose some silly costumes, then you go to the mirrors, check yourself in the mirror, make sure you're looking good and to your liking, and then you head to the back for a photo

shoot in the photo booth. It's pretty cheap, it only costs around three American dollars or so to do. And at the end, you get a printout of your photos. Plus, the digital versions of the photos are emailed to you as well.

So anyways, my wife and I, we were walking past the photo booth store. And she was like, "Hey, let's go get our photos taken in this shop. It will be fun!" Now, usually I'm not a very spontaneous person. I'm kind of the type of guy that's like, "Nah, let's just do it next time." But I don't really like that aspect of my personality, to be honest, and I want to change that. So, even though my first reaction inside was like, "Nah, let's just do it a different time." Instead, I was like, very enthusiastic. And I said, "Yeah, let's do it!"

So we went into the store, we checked out the costumes, and they had all sorts of hats and funny glasses, sunglasses, different accessories, wigs, etc., etc. And since I'm bald, my wife immediately suggested that I try on this big black curly clown wig. It kind of looked like an afro. And I did and it was hilarious. It was really shocking to suddenly have such luscious locks. Luscious locks. Have you heard that phrase before luscious locks? Luscious is spelt L-U-S-C-I-O-U-S and locks is spelt L-O-C-K-S. Luscious locks. Let me break this down for you because maybe this vocabulary is new to some of you. So luscious means thick, heavy, wavy, silky, velvety, that kind of thing. And locks means hair. So, when we put them together, then luscious locks means thick, full, long hair. So suddenly, I went from being bald to having these luscious locks. And it was just too funny.

My wife also tried on a wig, and we grabbed some different glasses and some hats and accessories as well. And then we headed to the back for our photo shoot. The photo booths that are in the back of the shop are really high tech. I paid just by putting my bank card into the wall. And then we were good to go. Now I'm calling it a photo booth, but it was actually more like a little private room. And it had professional studio lights installed, plus different colored backgrounds that you could pull down to cover the back wall. So, it was really like a mini professional photo studio. And we decided to take four pictures, but the photo machine actually takes eight shots and then you get to choose your top four from among those eight pictures. So, I paid with my bank card and then we hit the start button and started striking different poses as the camera snapped the photos. We started striking different poses. Wow, this is a cool idiomatic expression to strike a pose. To strike a pose. Strike spelt like S-T-R-I-K-E. So, strike a pose simply means to make a pose for the camera. When you get your picture taken, you need to strike a pose, you need to position your body towards the camera and face towards the camera so that you can get a good photo of yourself taken.



So, it was a blast—a blast means a real fun time—it was a blast getting our photos taken at the photo shop. We only had to wait a couple of minutes once we finished, and then the photos were printed out for us. There were some envelopes at the front of the shop that you could put the photos in. And then we were finished, we just walked out, and we were done. Didn't have to interact with any staff or talk to anybody at all, it was completely an automatic experience. Very, very cool.

So, after we left the photo shop, we went to a nearby cafe to grab a coffee. And while we're at the cafe, my wife got an email and attached to the message, we're the digital copies of the photos. Plus, a totally unexpected surprise. There was a video of our photo shoot attached. Now unbeknownst to us, in addition to the photos, the camera was also filming a video of the entire photo shoot. And we were emailed a time-lapse video of the time that we spent in the photo booth. So, we both thought it was pretty cute and funny. And I'm actually going to post the video to our Instagram stories so you guys can check it out. So, if you're an Instagram user, just visit our Instagram page, which is easy to find just by searching for the Culips English Podcast, and you'll be able to find the video there.

So, all in all, it was a great time, a good experience. And I highly recommend that you guys do something like this if you have this kind of photo booth store in your country, or if you're ever visiting South Korea. It's a cheap and cute activity to do with your family or friends and at the end you have a memory to look back on in the future.

It's time for this week's vocabulary lesson. All right guys, before we wrap up today, let's take a look at one of the interesting expressions that we heard in this episode. I want to spend a few minutes teaching you about it because I think it will be useful on your English-learning journey.

All right, today's expression is: unbeknownst to [someone]. Unbeknownst. Wow, this is a really interesting word a kind of feels like really old fashioned. Almost like Old English or something to me. That's my sense. Let me break it down for you. The pronunciation, one more time is, unbeknownst. Unbeknownst. And the spelling is U-N-B-E-K-N-O-W-N-S-T, unbeknownst. And a full expression is: unbeknownst to [someone]. So, it could be unbeknownst to me, unbeknownst to you, unbeknownst to Jeff, unbeknownst to Jane, we use it like that. Now, did you hear when I said this expression in the episode when I was telling you the story about the photo shop? Let's rewind and go back and take another listen a couple of times to when I used this expression.

Now unbeknownst to us, in addition to the photos, the camera was also filming a video of the entire photo shoot.

Okay, unbeknownst to us. As I mentioned, of course, we can change the pronoun in this expression to reflect whatever kind of sentence we want to make, right? So unbeknownst

to me, unbeknownst to you, unbeknownst to him, unbeknownst to her unbeknownst to them, unbeknownst to us. Whatever, it's all good. But what does it mean? So, when something is unbeknownst to you, it means that you have no knowledge of it. So, when I used this expression, earlier, I said it when I was talking about how my wife and I, we didn't know that the photo booth was taking a video of us. We had no idea, we didn't know at all. So, in other words, it was unbeknownst to us.

Now if you look this up in the dictionary, it will say that it's a formal expression. And while it does kind of look like an old-fashion, formal phrase, I think English speakers use it frequently when we're talking or when we're telling stories in everyday, informal situations as well. I'm speaking informally in this episode, and it just popped out of my mouth while I was telling you guys the story about the photo booth shop. So, I think that just goes to show that we can use it in this kind of informal context too. I've prepared three example sentences with the expression unbeknownst to [someone] to help you understand it better. So, let's take a listen and learn with the examples right now.

Example number one.

Unbeknownst to my parents, my sister surprised them with a party on their 30th wedding anniversary.

OK, let's break down that example. Unbeknownst to my parents. So, in this sentence, the speaker's parents had no idea, right? Unbeknownst to my parents, they have no idea, no knowledge that the speaker's sister was going to surprise them with a party for their wedding anniversary. OK, so unbeknownst to my parents means my parents didn't know, they had no idea. They were clueless.

Example number two.

I tried going to the bistro to get a sandwich for lunch, but unbeknownst to me, they're closed on Tuesdays. So, I had to go to the deli instead.

Let's break down that example. So, the speaker of that sentence tried going to a bistro for lunch to get a sandwich, but unbeknownst to him, the bistro is closed on Tuesdays. So, I guess he was going on a Tuesday, he arrived at the bistro, and only when he arrived did he learn that they are in fact closed on that day. So, he had to go to a different place to get a sandwich for lunch.

Example number three.

The students looked so happy running around and playing during their lunch break, but unbeknownst to them, they would soon have to do a pop quiz in their math class in the afternoon.

Let's break this example down. So, in that example sentence we hear about some students who are enjoying their lunch break on the playground, running around, they're happy, they're having fun. But unbeknownst to them, they have to do a pop quiz in the afternoon. A pop quiz is a surprise quiz, one that you don't know about in advance. So maybe if the students were aware that they had to do a quiz, they would spend some time studying or maybe being stressed out during their lunch break. But because it was a surprise, it was unbeknownst to them, they were just having fun as kids should.

All right guys, we did it. We made it to the end of another episode. Once again, thanks so much for spending some time studying English with me today. I hope you learned something new. And I hope you have a great week of English study up ahead. If you're a Culips Member, guys, we have our monthly live stream happening this month on June 28th at 7:30pm Korean Standard Time. Kassy is away on vacation right now, so I'm pretty sure I'm going to be hosting this live stream on my own. But it will still be fun, we'll have a great time hanging out with the Culips community, spending some time together, and practicing and improving our English together. So, Culips Members, just visit the Culips Dashboard and you can find the information about the upcoming live stream there, and I certainly hope that you will join me. If you're not a Culips Member yet and you would like to join us for the live stream, well, you just have to sign up and become a Culips Member. There are so many benefits that you get when you are a member and to find all the details about signing up and joining Culips as a member, just visit our website Culips.com.

So, I'm gonna leave it at here for today everyone. We have a new Culips episode, another brand-new English lesson coming out a little bit later in the week. And I'll talk to you all then. Take care and see you later, bye!

Episode credits

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