Episode #220
The Real Peaky Blinders
17th Dec, 2021

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge, and today is the start of another mini-series, this time a 4-part mini-series.

[00:00:31] And the subject of this mini-series will be **gangsters**[1] and **villains**[2], organised criminals with **illegal**[3], **brutal**[4] but interesting stories.

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[1] members of organised criminal groups

[2] bad people who break the law

[3] not allowed by law

[4] violent and cruel

[00:00:41] In part one, today's episode, we'll talk about The Real Peaky Blinders, the **gangsters** and criminals who **roamed**[5] the streets of Birmingham, in England, in the late 19th and early 20th century.

[00:00:54] Then in part two, which is going to be one of our member-only ones, we'll move **stateside**[6], to the United States, to listen to the story of America's most **notorious**[7] organised criminal, Al Capone.

[00:01:08] In part three we will remain in America, and this time follow the story of the most famous bank robber of the 20th century, John Dillinger.

[00:01:19] And then in part four, we'll come back to the United Kingdom, to the East End of London to be **precise**[8], and hear about Reggie and Ronnie Kray, the two twins who **terrorised**[9] the streets of London in the 1960s.

[00:01:34] This mini-series has been hugely interesting to make, so I hope you'll enjoy it.

[00:01:40] OK then, the Real Peaky Blinders.

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[5] moved about without a specific destination

[6] to the United States

[7] famous for something bad

[8] exact, accurate

[9] filled with terror

[00:01:45] A quick administrative point if you've never watched the series, and you've never even heard the name "Peaky Blinders".

[00:01:53] It doesn't matter at all - you don't need to have seen it to enjoy this episode.

[00:01:59] So, with that out of the way, **let me paint you a picture**[10], a picture that will be familiar to those of you who have seen the series.

[00:02:08] The year is 1919 and the location is Birmingham, an industrial city in the Midlands of England.

[00:02:19] A good looking, clean **shaven**[11] man wearing a wide hat and a fine suit rides an elegant black horse slowly down a long street of **back-to-back**[12] brick houses populated by Chinese immigrants who look out at the horse and its **rider**[13], their eyes full of fear.

[00:02:41] Going about their business on this street were the poorly dressed working-class inhabitants of Birmingham, England.

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[10] describe you something, create an image through words

[11] shaved, having his beard cut

[12] built right next to each other

[13] a person who travels on a horse

[00:02:48] As the people of this inner-city street become aware of the identity of the **stony-faced**[14] man on his magnificent horse, they continue to **scatter**[15] indoors, clearly afraid of being near him.

[00:03:04] Further down the street a young Chinese girl, a **fortune teller**[16], appears in front of the horse and, when asked to tell the rider's fortune, blows a bright red powder into the horse's **nostrils**[17]; this shot, a beautiful piece of cinematography, **lingers**[18] as the film moves into Tarantino-like slow motion.

[00:03:30] As the girl runs away, the man on the horse shouts out the name of the horse that will win a certain race, telling the listeners not to tell anyone else.

[00:03:41] The man's name is Thomas Shelby, and he is the **protagonist**[19] of this series, "Peaky Blinders", which first **aired**[20] in 2013 and has gone on to be a **cult**[21] **hit**[22].

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[14] showing no emotion

[15] move apart in different directions

[16] a person who is believed to be able to predict someone's future

[17] the two openings in the nose through which one smells and breathes

[18] takes a lot time to disappear

[19] main character

[20] broadcast, shown on TV

[21] popular among a particular group

[22] success

[00:03:57] Without revealing too much for those of you who haven't watched the series, "Peaky Blinders" follows the story of Thomas Shelby as he battles local gangs, expands his criminal **enterprise**[23] throughout the UK, meets **gypsies**[24], communists, fascists, Russian **aristocrats**[25], Italian criminal gangs, Irish **separatists**[26], **corrupt**[27] policemen, politicians, Prime Ministers, and generally fights with anyone who gets in his way.

[00:04:28] This series has won **critical**[28] **acclaim**[29] for its cinematography, its use of music, its actors, and its narrative.

[00:04:37] But did Thomas Shelby actually exist, and who were the real "Peaky Blinders"?

[00:04:45] Well, unfortunately Thomas Shelby is an invented character.

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[23] organisation

[24] Romani people, traditionally travelling from place to place, living across Europe and North and South America

[25] people with high social rank

[26] people who believed their nation should be independent

[27] acting illegally or in an dishonest way on order to gain money

[28] of critics (the people who review works of art)

[29] approval, praise

[00:04:49] The Peaky Blinders, on the other hand, existed, and a lot of the events of the series have some historical truth to them, but, as is often the case with dramas **inspired by**[30] historical events, the real history was quite different.

[00:05:08] So, in this episode we are going to **unpack**[31] the Real Peaky Blinders, and I'm happy to report that the true story is very interesting, **albeit**[32] slightly less **dramatic**[33].

[00:05:21] Let's start by reminding ourselves that Victorian England, that is England of the mid to late 19th century, was not a great place to be if you were poor.

[00:05:33] And given that around 25% of the population in the late 19th century lived below the **subsistence level**[34], that is the level at which you have enough money to eat, it wasn't a great place to live for large parts of the population.

[00:05:51] The Industrial Revolution, which had started in the 18th century, had **sucked** [35] very large numbers of working class people, who had previously lived and worked in the countryside, into the cities.

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[30] influenced by, that got the main idea from

[31] reveal, explain or analyse

[32] although

[33] exciting or impressive

[34] standard of living that provides for the basic needs only

[35] drawn, pulled

[00:06:06] Here people lived in crowded **urban**[36] spaces with poor **sanitation**[37].

[00:06:12] And the population of English cities expanded quickly.

[00:06:17] Birmingham, which will be the setting for today's episode, and the home for both the real and **fictional**[38] Peaky Blinders, went from 74,000 people to over 630,000 during the 19th century.

[00:06:33] Life was hard. Pay was poor, living conditions were **cramped**[39], worker protections were almost **non-existent**[40].

[00:06:42] Men **tended**[41] to work in the factories, or in some sort of manual **trade**[42], and women, **broadly speaking**[43], would remain at home, bringing up an average of 5 children.

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[36] in the city

[37] conditions related to public health

[38] imagined, not real

[39] without having enough space to live

[40] not existing, absent

[41] were likely to

[42] type of job, craft

[43] generally speaking

[00:06:55] For both men and women, there were very few **legitimate**[44] ways of relaxing, there wasn't much to do in terms of **leisure**[45].

[00:07:05] There were practically no open spaces, parks or places for people to have fun.

[00:07:11] For this new **breed**[46] of mainly male industrial workers, the typical activity after long working hours, six days a week, would be drinking in the pubs.

[00:07:23] And for many the **twin**[47] activity of going to the pub would be fighting.

[00:07:30] Small gangs of often young men would **form**[48] and one of the main ways they would **blow off steam**[49], they would relax and escape from the **monotony**[50] of their daily working lives would be to fight each other.

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[44] allowed by law

[45] the time when they weren't working, free time

[46] kind

[47] connected, linked

[48] begin to exist, be created

[49] get rid of negative energy, release strong emotions

[50] a boring or not interesting situation

[00:07:44] **Alongside**[51] this, **petty crime**[52] was **rife**[53], it was very common.

[00:07:50] Since the 1850s there had been groups of mainly young men who would go around the city **picking people's pockets**[54], robbing them, taking their money, and generally causing a **nuisance**[55], causing problems.

[00:08:05] This was partly due to the fact that there were very few economic opportunities for young people, and school was still not **compulsory**[56], it wasn't required. It was also due to the fact that there was little chance of being punished for it.

[00:08:22] There was no official police force until 1856 in the UK, so these young men were able to commit crimes without much fear of being caught.

[00:08:34] After the introduction of the police to Birmingham, they started to **crack down on**[57] these young men.

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[51] together with

[52] minor or not serious crime

[53] very common

[54] stealing people's valuables from their pockets

[55] annoyance, problems

[56] required

[57] start dealing with them, take measures against them

[00:08:41] But instead of simply stopping committing crimes, these young men fought back against the police. They would fight the police, throwing rocks at them, attacking them with **belts**[58] and hammers, and generally causing a **nuisance**.

[00:08:58] In the early years of the existence of the police force, policemen were **severely**[59] **outnumbered**[60] by the young men they were at war with.

[00:09:07] And policemen would expect to be regularly attacked by these young men.

[00:09:12] In 1873 there were 450 policemen in Birmingham, and 473 recorded **assaults** [61] on policemen. So each policeman could expect to be attacked at least once a year.

[00:09:26] These groups of young men, the **nemesis**[62] of the police force, became known as "sloggers".

[00:09:33] This is an unusual word in English as it generally either describes the process of hitting an object, a cricket ball for example, very hard and successfully or, usually as a noun, meaning something that is hard or difficult – so you might say that climbing a particular mountain will be a hard slog.

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[58] bands or strips of leather worn around the waist to support clothes

[59] extremely

[60] less in number than

[61] attacks

[62] the main and difficult to defeat opponent

[00:09:57] Sloggers in the sense of violent people means men who go around terrorising others and **beating them up**[63], usually in the case of the Birmingham sloggers, with **fists**[64] and the large **buckles**[65] of **belts**.

[00:10:12] was in the 1880s that we first started hearing about a gang of sloggers that calls itself the Peaky Blinders.

[00:10:23] They weren't **sophisticated**[66] criminals, they didn't have **sprawling**[67] criminal empires and **alliances**[68] with other gangs. They were rough, tough, street fighters.

[00:10:34] They would rob and steal, they would **extort**[69] local businesses, and they would fight with policemen and other gangs **alike**[70].

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[63] hitting them, causing them physical injuries

[64] hands with the fingers held tightly in

[65] pieces of metal used to fasten or tie together the two ends of a belt

[66] experienced, skilled

[67] spreading out over a large area

[68] agreements to work together

[69] get money for them using unfair ways or force

[70] in the same way

[00:10:43] And unlike the **glamorous**[71] and at times honourable Peaky Blinders of the TV series, the Real Peaky Blinders were **far from it**[72].

[00:10:53] There is a police record of a police officer **encountering**[73] six or seven gang members who had been "drinking all the day and fighting all the evening".

[00:11:05] When the police officer arrested one of them for "**lewd**[74] language", that is for **swearing**[75], his friends came to release him. One of the friends, a 19-year-old boy, threw a **brick**[76] at the policeman's head, killing him.

[00:11:22] Another story has a peaky blinder seeing someone order a non-alcoholic ginger beer at a pub, and, for the crime of wanting a non-alcoholic drink, he was brutally attacked and his **skull**[77] **fractured**[78].

[00:11:38] Let's just say that the real Peaky Blinders were incredibly violent criminals.

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[71] attractive and stylish

[72] the opposite

[73] meeting by chance

[74] very rude in a sexual way, vulgar

[75] being rude, insulting

[76] a block of hard material used for building walls

[77] the bones of the head that surround the brain

[78] cracked

[00:11:44] Soon enough the term "Peaky Blinder" became **synonymous**[79] with a particular type of Birmingham **small-time**[80] violent criminal.

[00:11:54] Although the Peaky Blinders towards the end of the 19th century actually contained up to 50 different street gangs, many of them shared a particular sense of style.

[00:12:06] The Peaky Blinders TV series has the characters all wearing a particular type of hat that would be pulled down over their head, and in the hat these men would have put sharp **razor blades**[81] that they would use to **slash**[82], to cut, their enemies faces.

[00:12:26] There is historical evidence of them wearing particularly **fashionable**[83] hats, which would often be **pulled down**[84] over one eye.

[00:12:35] But, as far as these hats containing **razor blades** and being used as weapons, I'm afraid to say that there is really no historical truth to it.

[00:12:46] There's simply no evidence that the hats were ever used as weapons.

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[79] having the same meaning

[80] not very important

[81] sharp-edged pieces of metal used for shaving or cutting hair

[82] cut with a sharp blade

[83] characteristic of a particular popular style

[84] pulled in a lower position

[00:12:51] Firstly, these men would use **hammers**[85], **bricks**[86] and heavy **belts** to fight.

[00:12:57] A hat, even if it had a sharp **razor blade**[87] in it, would just not be a very good weapon in the kind of fight that they would be involved in.

[00:13:07] Secondly, the sort of small **disposable**[88] **razors**[89] that they use in the TV series weren't actually invented until the start of the 20th century, and they would have been a **luxury**[90] item, not something that was affordable to an **impoverished**[91] member of a street gang.

[00:13:25] But you might be thinking, "**hang on**[92], you started by saying that the series starts in 1919, and after World War II, so **disposable razor blades** would have been invented by this time"

[00:13:39] Well, if this was what you were thinking, well done.

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[85] tools consisting of a flat piece of metal fixed on a wooden stick or handle

[86] blocks of hard material used for building walls

[87] a sharp-edged piece of metal used for shaving or cutting hair

[88] designed for being thrown away after being used

[89] small devices with a sharp blade for shaving or cutting hair

[90] expensive and difficult to get

[91] very poor

[92] wait for a short time

[00:13:43] The series does take place in the post-war period, but the real Peaky Blinders had **disbanded**[93] at least 20 years before this, the original Peaky Blinders had disappeared.

[00:13:57] Instead, they were replaced by new kinds of gangs, led by more **sophisticated** and more **ambitious**[94] criminals, men who were much more like the Thomas Shelby of the TV series, much more like the **fictional** Peaky Blinders.

[00:14:14] These **sophisticated** and **ambitious** criminals also exist in the TV series.

[00:14:20] The series has characters such as a man called Billy Kimber, who controls the **racetracks**[95], the places where horse races take place.

[00:14:30] There's also another character called Alfie Solomons, a Jewish **gangster**[96] from London.

[00:14:36] And another called Charles Sabini, an English-Italian **gangster** also from London.

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[93] stopped being a group

[94] having strong desire to be successful and powerful

[95] the places where horse races take place

[96] a member of an organised group of criminals

[00:14:43] These three men really did exist, and the genius of the series is to transport a small violent street gang from the 1880s to the post-war period, in the 1920s, and to have this **fictional** gang fight against all of the real historical characters.

[00:15:04] And this world, this **underworld**[97] of post-World War I England, is full of fascinating people.

[00:15:12] Billy Kimber, a real-life **gangster** who we meet in the first series of Peaky Blinders, was a **sophisticated** criminal who controlled the **bookkeeping**[98] activities at race tracks, that is the **betting**[99] on the result of horse races.

[00:15:29] This was one of the only forms of **gambling**[100] that was allowed in Britain, and indeed almost all other forms of **betting** were illegal until 1960.

[00:15:40] The result of this was that **betting** on horse races was an incredibly popular activity, and one where a lot of money was won and mainly lost.

[00:15:52] It was also a rough world.

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[97] the world of criminals or organised crime

[98] the job of keeping a record of the money spent or received by an organisation

[99] the action of risking money on the result of a race

[100] playing games of chance for money

[00:15:55] **Petty**[101] criminals would **roam**[102] around **racetracks** waiting to see someone who had **won big**[103], who had won a large amount of money, and then rob them, they would steal their money.

[00:16:06] And organised criminals took it a step further.

[00:16:11] They would **intimidate**[104] the **bookkeepers**[105], forcing them to pay them a **proportion**[106] of their profits, and then pay them for protection from other criminal gangs.

[00:16:22] **Put short**[107], controlling the race tracks was very **profitable**, and Billy Kimber and his gang, known as the Brummagem Boys or the Birmingham Boys, had a **monopoly**[108] on race tracks in the Midlands area.

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[101] not important

[102] move about without a specific destination

[103] won a lot

[104] make someone be afraid, frighten

[105] people whose job is to keep a record of the money spent or received by an organisation

[106] part

[107] to explain it in a few words

[108] complete control of

[00:16:37] Given how **profitable**[109] this activity was, there were **fierce**[110] fights over control of the **racetracks**.

[00:16:44] Kimber tried to push south to gain control over the more **lucrative**[111], the more **profitable** **race tracks**[112] in the south of the country, but was pushed back by the English-Italian **gangster**, Sabini, another character you'll come across in the Peaky Blinders series.

[00:17:03] The **rivalry**[113] between these two gangs was played out at the **race tracks**, where they would fight each other with **belts**, **hammers** and **bricks**, and **culminated**[114] in something called the Epsom Road Battle.

[00:17:17] In 1921, after a race at a town called Epsom, to the south of London, Billy Kimber's men waited for Sabini's men to return home to London.

[00:17:28] They **hid in wait**[115] on the main road between Epsom and London, knowing that this would be the route that Sabini's men would take to return to the city.

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[109] making a profit, making money

[110] violent and frightening

[111] producing a lot of money

[112] the places where horse races take place

[113] competition for the same objective

[114] reached its final stage

[115] waited while being hidden

[00:17:39] When what they thought was Sabini's **crew**[116] arrived, they blocked the road, and a group of 60 men **jumped out**[117] with **axes**[118], **bricks** and **hammers**, and violently attacked them.

[00:17:51] **Terrified**[119] residents and **onlookers**[120] **cried out**[121] as they called the police, fearing that this was a riot by Sinn Fein, the Irish **separatists**.

[00:18:03] Only afterwards would Kimber's men find out that it was a case of **mistaken**[122] **identity**[123] - the men weren't Sabini's at all, they were from a group of **bookmakers**[124] from Leeds.

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[116] group

[117] suddenly came at them from a hiding place

[118] tools used for chopping wood, consisting of a metal edge and wooden handle

[119] very frightened

[120] people who were watching but weren't involved

[121] screamed aloud, spoke very loudly

[122] false, wrong

[123] the process of recognising who they were

[124] persons whose job is to take bets (especially on horse races) and pay out winnings

[00:18:16] This mistake cost Kimber **dearly**[125]. Not only did he understandably **aggravate**[126] the Leeds **bookmakers**, but 23 of his men were arrested and **imprisoned** [127] and all of Sabini's men got away.

[00:18:31] Kimber's **bid**[128] to take control of the southern **racecourses**[129] had failed, and he would actually end up making peace with Sabini, and retiring to the south coast of England where he died in a **nursing**[130] home in 1945 at the age of 63.

[00:18:48] And as for Sabini, he too seemed to live to a **ripe old age**[131], at least for a **gangster**. He died peacefully at home in 1950, aged 62.

[00:19:01] So, as to the question of who the real "Peaky Blinders" were, the criminals called "Peaky Blinders" were **small-time**, violent criminals, certainly not the kind of people that you would like to meet on a dark street, and not the sort of people you would like to be caught ordering a non-alcoholic ginger beer in front of.

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[125] very much

[126] annoy, cause trouble

[127] locked into a prison

[128] attempt or effort

[129] grounds or areas for horse racing

[130] providing care for old people

[131] very old age

[00:19:23] In the interests of balance, there are some similarities between the Peaky

Blinders of the TV series and the real criminals they are named after.

[00:19:33] The real Peaky Blinders wore smart clothes, they were violent, and they were

mostly young men.

[00:19:39] But that's about where the similarities end.

[00:19:43] The world in which the Peaky Blinders of the TV series is set, on the other

hand, certainly did exist.

[00:19:50] There was a **well-developed**[132] criminal **underworld**, which centred around

the **race tracks**.

[00:19:56] Criminal gangs violently fought each other for control of the **gambling** sites,

and winning this control could be very **profitable**.

[00:20:05] But, the Real Peaky Blinders were never in that world, not at that time at

least.

[00:20:11] By the start of the 20th century they had **fizzled out**[133], the **small-time** gangs

of Birmingham, which by this time were all given the **generic**[134] name of the Peaky

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132 having grown, large

133 ended in a weak way

134 general, not specific

Blinders, had **disbanded** and been replaced by these more sophisticated, better

organised and better managed criminal **enterprises**[135].

[00:20:32] **Enterprises** run by men such as Billy Kimber and Charles Sabini, men who

were just as violent and **ferocious**[136], but fought with their brains as well as their **fists**.

[00:20:44] So then, who were the real Peaky Blinders?

[00:20:47] They were **small-time** criminals, **ruffians**[137] and **villains**.

[00:20:51] They were certainly products of a **cruel**[138] system that denied them economic

opportunities. But they were violent, aggressive, and at times **murderous**[139] **thugs**[140],

and Birmingham is certainly a safer place without them.

[00:21:08] OK then, that is it for part one, this exploration of The Real Peaky Blinders.

[00:21:14] For those of you who have seen the show, I hope you enjoyed it and it **shed**

some light[141] on the truth behind the series.

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[135] organisations

[136] cruel and violent

[137] violent criminals

[138] causing pain and suffering

[139] involving murders

[140] violent criminals

[141] helped to explain

[00:21:22] And if you have never seen the TV Series Peaky Blinders, perhaps you'll be interested in giving it a watch now. If you have Netflix, it should be on there, and I'm sure you'll enjoy it.

[00:21:33] And if you're interested in reading more about the real Peaky Blinders, then there's an excellent book by a historian named Carl Chinn called Peaky Blinders - The Real Story, which I would highly recommend, and was very helpful when researching this episode.

[00:21:50] As a quick reminder, this is part one of a four-part series. Next up is the Chicago **mob-boss**[142] Al Capone, then we have the Depression-era bank robber John Dillinger and then it's the London **gangster** twins, The Krays.

[00:22:06] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:22:10] Did you know that the real Peaky Blinders actually aren't much like the Peaky Blinders you might have seen on the **screen**[143]?

[00:22:17] If you've seen the series, what did you like about it? Who was your favourite character, and why?

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[142] criminal organisation boss, mafia-boss

[143] TV

[00:22:24] And on an English language level, what did you think of the accent? I know

that the accent from Birmingham, the **Brummie**[144] accent, is one that lots of English

learners have a tough time understanding, so I would love to know what you thought.

[00:22:39] You can head right into our community forum, which is at

community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:22:48] The place you can go for all of that is leonardoenglish.com.You've been

listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:22:59] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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[144] from Birmingham

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Gangsters	members of organised criminal groups
Villains	bad people who break the law
Illegal	not allowed by law
Brutal	violent and cruel
Roamed	moved about without a specific destination
Stateside	to the United States
Notorious	famous for something bad
Precise	exact, accurate
Terrorised	filled with terror
Let me paint you a picture	describe you something, create an image through words
Shaven	shaved, having his beard cut
Back-to-back	built right next to each other

Rider   a person who travels on a horse

Stony-faced   showing no emotion

Scatter   move apart in different directions

Fortune teller   a person who is believed to be able to predict someone's future

Nostrils   the two openings in the nose through which one smells and breathes

Lingers   takes a lot time to disappear

Protagonist   main character

Aired   broadcast, shown on TV

Cult   popular among a particular group

Hit   success

Enterprise   organisation

Gypsies   Romani people, traditionally travelling from place to place, living

across Europe and North and South America

Aristocrats   people with high social rank

Separatists   people who believed their nation should be independent

Corrupt   acting illegally or in an dishonest way in order to gain money

Critical	of critics (the people who review works of art)
Acclaim	approval, praise
Inspired by	influenced by, that got the main idea from
Unpack	reveal, explain or analyse
Albeit	although
Dramatic	exciting or impressive
Subsistence level	standard of living that provides for the basic needs only
Sucked	drawn, pulled
Urban	in the city
Sanitation	conditions related to public health
Fictional	imagined, not real
Cramped	without having enough space to live
Non-existent	not existing, absent
Tended	were likely to
Trade	type of job, craft

Broadly speaking	generally speaking
Legitimate	allowed by law
Leisure	the time when they weren't working, free time
Breed	kind
Twin	connected, linked
Form	begin to exist, be created
Blow off steam	get rid of negative energy, release strong emotions
Monotony	a boring or not interesting situation
Alongside	together with
Petty crime	minor or not serious crime
Rife	very common
Picking people's pockets	stealing people's valuables from their pockets
Nuisance	annoyance, problems
Compulsory	required
Crack down on	start dealing with them, take measures against them

Belts	bands or strips of leather worn around the waist to support clothes
Severely	extremely
Outnumbered	less in number than
Assaults	attacks
Nemesis	the main and difficult to defeat opponent
Beating them up	hitting them, causing them physical injuries
Fists	hands with the fingers held tightly in
Buckles	pieces of metal used to fasten or tie together the two ends of a belt
Sophisticated	experienced, skilled
Sprawling	spreading out over a large area
Alliances	agreements to work together
Extort	get money for them using unfair ways or force
Alike	in the same way
Glamorous	attractive and stylish
Far from it	the opposite

Encountering   meeting by chance

Lewd   very rude in a sexual way, vulgar

Swearing   being rude, insulting

Brick   a block of hard material used for building walls

Skull   the bones of the head that surround the brain

Fractured   cracked

Synonymous   having the same meaning

Small-time   not very important

Razor blades   sharp-edged pieces of metal used for shaving or cutting hair

Slash   cut with a sharp blade

Fashionable   characteristic of a particular popular style

Pulled down   pulled in a lower position

Hammers   tools consisting of a flat piece of metal fixed on a wooden stick or

handle

Bricks   blocks of hard material used for building walls

Razor blade   a sharp-edged piece of metal used for shaving or cutting hair

Disposable	designed for being thrown away after being used
Razors	small devices with a sharp blade for shaving or cutting hair
Luxury	expensive and difficult to get
Impoverished	very poor
Hang on	wait for a short time
Disbanded	stopped being a group
Ambitious	having strong desire to be successful and powerful
Racetracks	the places where horse races take place
Gangster	a member of an organised group of criminals
Underworld	the world of criminals or organised crime
Bookkeeping	the job of keeping a record of the money spent or received by an organisation
Betting	the action of risking money on the result of a race
Gambling	playing games of chance for money
Petty	not important
Roam	move about without a specific destination

Won big   won a lot

Intimidate   make someone be afraid, frighten

Bookkeepers   people whose job is to keep a record of the money spent or received by an organisation

Proportion   part

Put short   to explain it in a few words

Monopoly   complete control of

Profitable   making a profit, making money

Fierce   violent and frightening

Lucrative   producing a lot of money

Race tracks   the places where horse races take place

Rivalry   competition for the same objective

Culminated   reached its final stage

Hid in wait   waited while being hidden

Crew   group

Jumped out   suddenly came at them from a hiding place

Axes	tools used for chopping wood, consisting of a metal edge and wooden handle
Terrified	very frightened
Onlookers	people who were watching but weren't involved
Cried out	screamed aloud, spoke very loudly
Mistaken	false, wrong
Identity	the process of recognising who they were
Bookmakers	persons whose job is to take bets (especially on horse races) and pay out winnings
Dearly	very much
Aggravate	annoy, cause trouble
Imprisoned	locked into a prison
Bid	attempt or effort
Racecourses	grounds or areas for horse racing
Nursing	providing care for old people
Ripe old age	very old age

Well-developed   having grown, large

Fizzled out   ended in a weak way

Generic   general, not specific

Enterprises   organisations

Ferocious   cruel and violent

Ruffians   violent criminals

Cruel   causing pain, unfair and merciless

Murderous   involving murders

Thugs   violent criminals

Shed some light   helped to explain

Mob-boss   criminal organisation boss, mafia-boss

Screen   TV

Brummie   from Birmingham

We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.

What did you like? What could we do better?

What did you struggle to understand?

Let us know in the forum *community.leonardoenglish.com*