

ENGLISH LEARNING FOR CURIOUS MINDS



Episode #569
Luigi Mangione | Folk Hero or Cold-Blooded Murderer?
19th Sep, 2025

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Transcript

[00:00:05] Hello, hello, hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English, 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.

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge, and today it's part three of our mini-series on "Young American Outlaws".

[00:00:28] In part one, we learned about the story of Ross Ulbricht, the founder of the drug marketplace Silk Road.

[00:00:36] In part two, we heard about the brilliant but tragically short life of Aaron Swartz, the young man who believed so much in internet freedom that he found himself up against the US government.

[00:00:49] And in today's episode, part three, we are going to be talking about Luigi Mangione, the man who [gunned down](#)¹ the CEO of one of America's largest healthcare companies [in broad daylight](#)².

[00:01:02] So, let's not waste a minute and get right into it.

¹ shot and killed with a gun

² in public, during the day, where everyone could see

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[00:01:08] The two previous characters in this mini-series, Ross Ulbricht and Aaron Swartz, might have committed acts the US government considered “[felonies](#)³” –serious crimes–but they never picked up a weapon and harmed anyone directly.

[00:01:25] In Ross Ulbricht’s case, his critics might say that his drug and [contraband](#)⁴ marketplace indirectly harmed and killed thousands, tens of thousands even.

[00:01:37] And in Aaron Swartz’s case, even his greatest critics would surely agree that the most significant “harm” caused was the potential loss of some corporate revenue and damage to the concept of [copyright](#)⁵.

[00:01:53] And Aaron Swartz, were he still alive today, would [justifiably](#)⁶ question why he was mentioned even in the same sentence as the subject of today’s episode.

[00:02:06] Luigi Mangione, as you will probably remember, murdered a man [in broad daylight](#).

³ serious crimes

⁴ goods that are illegal to buy, sell, or own

⁵ the legal right to control who can copy and use creative work

⁶ with good reason, fairly

[00:02:13] Or to be completely correct, as of the time of recording, [stands accused of](#)⁷ murder, as the case has not yet gone to [trial](#)⁸.

[00:02:23] So here's what happened, as far as we know so far.

[00:02:29] On the morning of December 4th, 2024, the CEO of the American health insurance company, UnitedHealthcare, was in New York City for an investor conference.

[00:02:41] It was nothing out of the ordinary for Brian Thompson.

[00:02:46] The 50-year-old boss of America's largest health insurance company travelled a lot, and Wall Street was a regular [haunt](#)⁹ for him.

[00:02:56] After all, this was a company valued at almost \$500 billion, one that provides medical insurance for 50 million people, or 1 in 6 Americans.

[00:03:09] At 6.40 am that morning, Thompson left the Marriott hotel he was staying at and made the short walk to the hotel where the conference would be taking place.

[00:03:21] Presumably, Thompson thought it would be a day like any other.

⁷ is officially said to have committed the crime

⁸ a meeting in court to decide if he is guilty of the crime

⁹ a place he often went to

[00:03:26] Perhaps a few tough questions from investors, [reassurances](#)¹⁰ that the company was going in the right direction, reminders of how the share price and the company's profits had increased by 50% since Thompson had taken over three years earlier, and how his \$10 million a year [compensation package](#)¹¹ was therefore a small price to pay, and how UnitedHealthcare was delivering excellent service and value for the American people.

[00:03:55] The day didn't [pan out](#)¹² like that.

[00:03:59] Four minutes after leaving his hotel, at 06.44 he was shot multiple times, in the back and the leg.

[00:04:10] Minutes later, the emergency services arrived on the scene to find this corporate [titan](#)¹³ in a pool of blood. He was [whisked](#)¹⁴ to hospital, but pronounced dead less than half an hour later.

¹⁰ words that would make people feel less worried

¹¹ all the money and benefits he got for his job

¹² turn out, happen

¹³ very powerful or important person

¹⁴ taken quickly and suddenly

[00:04:26] To state the obvious, this was huge news. He might not have been a [household name](#)¹⁵, in the category of Elon Musk or Bill Gates, but this was the boss of one of the biggest companies, not just in America, but the whole world.

[00:04:45] There seemed to be no personal motive; Thompson had worked in corporate America his entire life, he hadn't got [tangled up](#)¹⁶ in organised crime or got involved in any kind of serious personal dispute, he was praised by colleagues as a "good, honest man".

[00:05:07] The evidence at the crime scene, however, suggested a motive.

[00:05:12] The words "deny," "defend" and "depose" were found [scrawled](#)¹⁷ on three of the used bullet [casings](#)¹⁸, one word on each.

[00:05:23] This seemed [eerily](#)¹⁹ similar to a phrase often associated with the health insurance industry to avoid paying claims, "delay, deny, and defend".

¹⁵ a person everyone knew

¹⁶ caught or involved

¹⁷ written quickly and messily

¹⁸ the empty shells left after bullets had been fired

¹⁹ strangely, in a way that felt scary or unnatural

[00:05:35] “Delay” refers to how companies drag out the [claim](#)²⁰ process, “deny” means rejecting [claims](#)²¹ outright, and “defend” means engaging in extended legal battles with the [claimant](#)²².

[00:05:50] Suddenly, it seemed like the assassin’s target wasn’t Brian Thompson the man, but rather Brian Thompson the CEO, Brian Thompson as a symbol of the health insurance industry.

[00:06:05] Fortunately for the police, the entire thing, this daylight murder, had been caught on CCTV.

[00:06:14] A huge [manhunt](#)²³ ensued, with the New York City police department offering a reward of \$10,000 for information about the shooter, a reward that was then [upped](#)²⁴ to \$50,000 when the FBI joined in the investigation.

²⁰ a request for money or help because of damage, loss, or illness

²¹ requests for money or help because of damage, loss, or illness

²² the person asking for money or help (by making a claim)

²³ an organised search for the criminal or suspect

²⁴ increased, made bigger

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[00:06:31] As you may well remember, as it all happened less than a year ago, photos started to [emerge](#)²⁵ of the suspected killer. He was tall, white, and young, with a [pearly](#)²⁶ white smile.

[00:06:46] He seemed to be pretty aware of the presence of CCTV cameras, and always covered his face and had his hood up, but he [let down his guard](#)²⁷ a couple of times, once lowering his mask to [flirt](#)²⁸ with a receptionist at a New York City hostel.

[00:07:05] A couple of days later, a backpack was recovered in Central Park, containing Monopoly money and a Tommy Hilfiger jacket.

[00:07:14] But still, no sign of the suspect.

[00:07:18] A few days later, on December 9th, five days after Brian Thompson was pronounced dead, Pennsylvania police received a call from a McDonald's employee.

[00:07:31] There was someone sitting in the restaurant who [bore](#)²⁹ a striking [resemblance](#)³⁰ to the pictures of the suspect in the shooting.

²⁵ appear, become known

²⁶ shiny and white, like a pearl

²⁷ stopped being careful or alert

²⁸ act in a playful way to show romantic interest

²⁹ carried or showed

³⁰ likeness, how much he looked like the suspect

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[00:07:40] The police arrived on the scene and [detained](#)³¹ the man.

[00:07:45] He was searched, and on his person were found a 3D-printed gun and [suppressor](#)³², similar to those suspected of having been used in the shooting. They also found a fake driver's licence and a lengthy letter criticising the US healthcare system.

[00:08:05] It seemed police had found their man.

[00:08:09] He was named as Luigi Mangione, and was a 26-year-old University of Pennsylvania graduate with no [prior](#)³³ criminal record.

[00:08:20] In the letter, which was described by many news outlets as a [manifesto](#)³⁴, Mangione [laid clear](#)³⁵ his motivations.

[00:08:30] It was 262 words in total, so I won't read all of it, but it was enough to [ignite](#)³⁶ a political [firestorm](#)³⁷.

³¹ kept in custody or held

³² a device on the gun to make it quieter

³³ before, earlier

³⁴ a written statement of beliefs or goals

³⁵ showed or explained very clearly

³⁶ start something strong

³⁷ a sudden, large amount of anger or debate

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[00:08:40] In it, he wrote: “**Frankly**³⁸, these **parasites**³⁹ simply **had it coming**⁴⁰.” He **railed against**⁴¹ America’s healthcare system, highlighting the **absurdity**⁴² of a country spending more on healthcare than anywhere else while ranking 42nd in life expectancy.

[00:09:00] In the letter—or **manifesto**—Mangione indirectly confessed to the killing, but showed no **remorse**⁴³, instead **painting himself**⁴⁴ as a warrior for social justice.

[00:09:15] The Manhattan District Attorney didn’t see it that way, and Mangione was **indicted**⁴⁵ with 11 different charges relating to the murder.

[00:09:25] This was on December 17th, 2024, and he has remained in police **custody**⁴⁶ ever since.

³⁸ honestly, in a direct way

³⁹ people who live off others without giving anything back

⁴⁰ deserved what happened to them

⁴¹ spoke very strongly against

⁴² the state of being silly, foolish, or unreasonable

⁴³ feeling sorry for doing it

⁴⁴ showing himself in this way

⁴⁵ officially charged

⁴⁶ being kept by the police or in prison

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[00:09:34] Now, on one level, this is a straightforward, **clear-cut**⁴⁷ case. A man was murdered **in cold blood**⁴⁸ by another. The accused has not denied it. Murder is a very serious crime, and Luigi Mangione will go to **trial**, most probably be found guilty, and be **sentenced**⁴⁹ in accordance with the law.

[00:09:59] It's a murder case, one of almost 20,000 every year in the United States, and this seems relatively simple.

[00:10:08] But there are many aspects of this case that are unusual.

[00:10:14] Mangione was not a **hardened**⁵⁰ criminal. He had no **prior** criminal convictions, was not known to the police, and his profile was far from typical for someone facing murder charges.

[00:10:28] He had gone to an expensive, private secondary school and graduated at the top of his class. He had studied computer engineering at the Ivy League University of Pennsylvania, one of the top universities in the country, and had had a few highly-paid jobs working in technology.

[00:10:47] He was young, tall, and handsome.

⁴⁷ simple and easy to understand

⁴⁸ on purpose, without emotion or pity

⁴⁹ given a punishment by a court

⁵⁰ experienced in crime or violence

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[00:10:51] He had suffered from some [chronic](#)⁵¹ back problems, so there was a personal reason for him to feel [animosity](#)⁵² towards the healthcare system, but it was nothing particularly out of the ordinary.

[00:11:05] And as more details emerged about Mangione, his [manifesto](#), and the crime, instead of criticism, there were widespread social media posts in support, [portraying](#)⁵³ him as a sort of 21st-century [folk hero](#)⁵⁴, a figure willing to stand up against an [unjust](#)⁵⁵ system.

[00:11:28] The hashtag #FreeLuigi started to [trend](#)⁵⁶; you could buy t-shirts and mugs with his face on, in a sort of Che Guevara style.

⁵¹ lasting a long time, not going away

⁵² strong dislike or hate

⁵³ showing or describing

⁵⁴ a person admired by ordinary people for being brave or rebellious

⁵⁵ not fair

⁵⁶ become popular

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[00:11:38] The McDonald's employee who called the police after recognising him received death threats, and the branch of McDonald's where he was [apprehended](#)⁵⁷ by police was [inundated](#)⁵⁸ with negative reviews.

[00:11:52] So why did this case capture such a strange kind of public imagination?

[00:11:58] Well, part of the answer lies in the target.

[00:12:03] Brian Thompson might not have known Luigi Mangione, but he wasn't some random [passer-by](#)⁵⁹.

[00:12:10] He wasn't an unlucky victim of circumstance.

[00:12:14] He was the very visible head of the most powerful health insurance company in America, the face of an industry that is one of the most controversial in the country.

[00:12:25] As I'm sure you know, healthcare in the United States has long been a political battleground.

⁵⁷ caught, arrested

⁵⁸ flooded or overwhelmed by too many of them

⁵⁹ a person walking past a place

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[00:12:32] Medical bills are the [leading](#)⁶⁰ cause of personal [bankruptcy](#)⁶¹. Stories of patients being [denied](#)⁶² life-saving treatment because of insurance [loopholes](#)⁶³ are depressingly common.

[00:12:45] And around 30 million Americans have no health insurance at all.

[00:12:52] So when Luigi Mangione's letter was published, when people saw the words he had [scrawled](#) on those bullet [casings](#) and read his note, his [manifesto](#), for some the [narrative](#)⁶⁴ [shifted](#)⁶⁵.

[00:13:07] It wasn't simply a story about a young man accused of murder. It was presented as an act of rebellion against a system that millions believe to be broken.

[00:13:19] For some, Brian Thompson wasn't an unlucky casualty; he was far from innocent.

⁶⁰ main, most important

⁶¹ the state of not being able to pay debts

⁶² refused, rejected

⁶³ small gaps in the law that allow people to avoid rules

⁶⁴ the story or explanation of events

⁶⁵ changed from one thing to another

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[00:13:26] He was the boss of a company that made billions of dollars in profits by [denying⁶⁶](#) payouts to its customers, causing them anything from [distress⁶⁷](#) to [bankruptcy](#) to not being able to pay for life-saving treatment.

[00:13:40] He was the [figurehead⁶⁸](#) of an organisation that, to its biggest critics, directly resulted in the early deaths of thousands of people every year.

[00:13:52] Mangione needed to take drastic action for the country to [wake up⁶⁹](#), and if a man needed to die for the insurance industry to be fixed, so be it.

[00:14:04] To Luigi Mangione's most ardent supporters, Brian Thompson, and anyone [presiding over⁷⁰](#) this broken healthcare system, [had it coming](#).

[00:14:14] Others, of course, saw it very differently.

[00:14:18] Whatever [grievances⁷¹](#) Mangione may have had with the American healthcare system, he had still taken a gun and ended a stranger's life.

⁶⁶ refusing, rejecting

⁶⁷ strong pain, worry, or sadness

⁶⁸ someone who had the position of leader

⁶⁹ realise something important

⁷⁰ being in charge of or leading

⁷¹ complaints or feelings of unfair treatment

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[00:14:27] To his critics, he was no hero, just a murderer who tried to [disguise](#)⁷² his crime with political [slogans](#)⁷³.

[00:14:36] And interestingly enough, support for Mangione wasn't as [clear cut](#)⁷⁴ as right versus left.

[00:14:44] [For starters](#)⁷⁵, Mangione's own politics were unclear. He was painted as an extreme leftist by the right-leaning press, but he expressed both praise and criticism for politicians on the left and right; he had no clear political ideology, other than a [visceral](#)⁷⁶ hatred of corporate [greed](#)⁷⁷.

[00:15:09] And in terms of where support came from after his arrest, it wasn't black and white.

⁷² hide, give a different appearance to

⁷³ short, memorable phrases

⁷⁴ simple and easy to understand

⁷⁵ to begin with, first of all

⁷⁶ deep and strong

⁷⁷ a strong desire to have more money or things

[00:15:16] Those on the political left, especially on the extreme left, were more likely to [side with](#)⁷⁸ him, but he also had support from some figures on the right, who [railed](#) [against](#) corporate [greed](#) and [cronyism](#)⁷⁹.

[00:15:30] And this support wasn't a [niche](#)⁸⁰ thing.

[00:15:34] According to one survey done shortly after his arrest, 47% of people identifying as “very liberal” reported having a favourable or extremely favourable opinion of Mangione.

[00:15:49] And it was a similar story when it came to age. Younger Americans were more likely to view him positively, with 39% of 18-29-year-olds saying they viewed him either positively or very positively. 32% of this age group said they didn't know, and only 29% said they viewed him unfavourably.

[00:16:13] To repeat that, more young Americans viewed him favourably than unfavourably, and this was a man whose only public act, the only reason his name was known, was that he murdered a man [in broad daylight](#).

⁷⁸ support

⁷⁹ unfair help given to friends, especially in business or politics

⁸⁰ relating to just a few people

[00:16:30] Naturally, as the public support, especially among younger Americans, was clear, the comments sections of newspapers were filled with opinion pieces about what went wrong.

[00:16:41] How did things get so bad?

[00:16:44] Is there such public distaste with corporate **greed**, especially among young people, that people believe such a **drastic**⁸¹ action is justified?

[00:16:53] Is the healthcare system so truly broken that murdering one of its executives is **lauded**⁸² as a public service?

[00:17:03] While all of this discussion was going on, there was also the question of what punishment should await Luigi Mangione?

[00:17:11] In the United States, as you may know, there are both state and **federal**⁸³ crimes, so he could be charged under New York and **federal** law.

[00:17:23] The importance of this comes down to the question of the death penalty.

⁸¹ very extreme and serious

⁸² praised, said to be very good

⁸³ connected to the central government of the US

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[00:17:28] For the most serious crimes — murder, terrorism, [treason](#)⁸⁴ — the state can and does [pursue](#)⁸⁵ the death penalty.

[00:17:38] New York State, where the crime was committed, no longer uses capital punishment, but this case was so high-profile, and the murder so symbolic, that prosecutors began exploring the possibility of [federal](#) charges.

[00:17:55] And at the [federal](#) level, the death penalty is still very much [on the books](#)⁸⁶.

[00:18:02] This is where politics [elbowed](#)⁸⁷ its way into the judicial system.

[00:18:07] Donald Trump, during his first term, was a vocal supporter of capital punishment, even authorising a record number of [federal](#) executions in his final months in office.

[00:18:19] He argued that it was a [deterrent](#)⁸⁸, and in the case of [heinous](#)⁸⁹ crimes like terrorism or murder of public officials, it was not only justified but necessary.

⁸⁴ betraying your country

⁸⁵ push forward, have as a goal

⁸⁶ officially part of the law

⁸⁷ forced its way in, pushed in roughly

⁸⁸ something that stopped people from doing something bad

⁸⁹ very shocking and evil

[00:18:32] And shortly after being [sworn in](#)⁹⁰ for his second term, he signed an executive order pushing for capital punishment to be used whenever appropriate. The order was somewhat [vague](#)⁹¹, but specified crimes in which a law-enforcement officer was killed or capital crimes committed by an illegal immigrant.

[00:18:56] To some, especially conservative commentators, the [cold-blooded](#)⁹² killing of a CEO was exactly the sort of thing Trump was referring to.

[00:19:07] They [seized on](#)⁹³ the [manifesto](#), the [scrawled](#) messages, and the symbolism of the act.

[00:19:14] They argued that this wasn't just a killing; it was domestic terrorism.

[00:19:20] That Mangione hadn't just murdered Brian Thompson the man, but had attempted to [intimidate](#)⁹⁴ and [destabilise](#)⁹⁵ an entire industry, perhaps even the American state itself.

[00:19:34] What's more, he showed no [remorse](#), no guilt for what he had done.

⁹⁰ officially started by taking an oath

⁹¹ not clear

⁹² done without emotion or pity

⁹³ quickly took hold of it to use it

⁹⁴ frighten, scare

⁹⁵ make weak or unstable

[00:19:40] In their eyes, if the death penalty wasn't used here, when should it be?

[00:19:47] But from the other side, the case looked very different.

[00:19:51] Opponents of capital punishment pointed out that the United States is one of the last Western democracies to still execute its citizens.

[00:19:59] They argued that the death penalty doesn't [deter](#)⁹⁶ crime, that it's applied inconsistently, and what's more, that executing Mangione would risk turning him into exactly the kind of [martyr](#)⁹⁷ he seemed to want to be.

[00:20:16] If his face was already on Che Guevara-style t-shirts, flags and mugs, executing him would [send this into overdrive](#)⁹⁸.

[00:20:27] So the debate [spiralled](#)⁹⁹.

[00:20:29] Should the state be making an example out of Mangione, in the [harshest](#)¹⁰⁰ possible way?

⁹⁶ prevent or discourage people from committing crimes

⁹⁷ a person who died for his beliefs

⁹⁸ make it much stronger or more active

⁹⁹ grew quickly and out of control

¹⁰⁰ most severe or strict

[00:20:35] Or would doing so only validate his claim that the system is unjust and brutal?

[00:20:42] And hanging over all of this was a deeper, uncomfortable question: what pushed him to do this in the first place?

[00:20:51] Mangione wasn't a hardened criminal.

[00:20:53] He wasn't a man with a long record of violence, or a member of an organised gang. He was a university graduate, a young man who, [on paper](#)¹⁰¹, had every advantage. A bright student, top of his class, with degrees and good jobs behind him.

[00:21:11] By most measures, the sort of person you might expect to be working within the system, not [lashing out](#)¹⁰² against it.

[00:21:20] That, in some ways, is part of what made this case so [unsettling](#)¹⁰³.

[00:21:25] If someone like Mangione could be radicalised to the point of taking a gun and carrying out a public assassination, and if there was so much public support for him after he did it, then what does that say about the level of anger [simmering](#)¹⁰⁴ beneath the surface in American society?

¹⁰¹ according to facts

¹⁰² suddenly attacking or shouting in anger

¹⁰³ making people feel worried or nervous

¹⁰⁴ slowly building up under the surface

[00:21:44] And this is where his story connects back to the others in this mini-series.

[00:21:50] Ross Ulbricht, Aaron Swartz, and now Luigi Mangione, three very different young men, all accused of crimes, but each one surrounded by a heated political debate that turned them from defendants in a courtroom into larger-than-life symbols of something much bigger.

[00:22:09] Ulbricht, for his supporters, wasn't just a man who ran an online drug market; he was a digital [pioneer](#)¹⁰⁵ pushing back against government control of the internet.

[00:22:19] Swartz wasn't just someone accused of illegally downloading academic journals; he was a visionary, a [martyr](#) for the principle that knowledge should be free.

[00:22:30] And Mangione, at least to some, isn't just a man accused of murder; he's a warrior against a system that many see as unjust [to its core](#)¹⁰⁶.

[00:22:42] In the case of Mangione, he is the only one whose case is still pending. Ulbricht is free; Swartz is dead.

[00:22:51] His next trial date is set for September 16th, the week this episode will be released.

¹⁰⁵ someone who did something first

¹⁰⁶ completely, all the way through

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[00:22:58] Trump's appointed Attorney General, Pam Bondi, has publicly instructed [federal](#) prosecutors to [seek¹⁰⁷](#) the death penalty.

[00:23:06] No doubt the outside of the courthouse will be packed with supporters holding #FreeLuigi signs, while the officials inside decide on where the process will go next.

[00:23:17] The evidence that he pulled the [trigger¹⁰⁸](#), and that this was a [premeditated¹⁰⁹](#) murder, seems [insurmountable¹¹⁰](#).

[00:23:24] There seems to be little doubt that Mangione will be found guilty; the only question is how history will remember him: as a murderer, a [martyr](#), or something in between.

[00:23:38] OK, then, that is it for today's episode on Luigi Mangione, and with it comes the end of this three-part mini-series on Young American Outlaws.

[00:23:47] I hope it's been an interesting one and that you've learnt something new.

[00:23:50] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode, and of this mini-series in general.

¹⁰⁷ try to get

¹⁰⁸ the part of the gun he pulled to fire it

¹⁰⁹ planned before doing it

¹¹⁰ impossible to overcome

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[00:23:56] Ross Ulbricht, Aaron Swartz and Luigi Mangione.

[00:23:59] What do you think about their stories, and their crimes, or [alleged¹¹¹](#) crimes?

Is it fair to [lump¹¹²](#) them all in a similar category?

[00:24:07] Are there similar stories in your country?

[00:24:10] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:24:13] You can head right into our community forum, which is at community.leonardoenglish.com and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:24:22] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds by Leonardo English.

[00:24:27] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

¹¹¹ supposed or assumed

¹¹² group them together without care

Key vocabulary

Word	Definition
Gunned down	shot and killed with a gun
In broad daylight	in public, during the day, where everyone could see
Felonies	serious crimes
Contraband	goods that are illegal to buy, sell, or own
Copyright	the legal right to control who can copy and use creative work
Justifiably	with good reason, fairly
Stands accused of	is officially said to have committed the crime
Trial	a meeting in court to decide if he is guilty of the crime
Haunt	a place he often went to
Reassurances	words that would make people feel less worried
Compensation package	all the money and benefits he got for his job
Pan out	turn out, happen
Titan	very powerful or important person

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Whisked	taken quickly and suddenly
Household name	a person everyone knew
Tangled up	caught or involved
Scrawled	written quickly and messily
Casings	the empty shells left after bullets had been fired
Eerily	strangely, in a way that felt scary or unnatural
Claim	a request for money or help because of damage, loss, or illness
Claims	requests for money or help because of damage, loss, or illness
Claimant	the person asking for money or help (by making a claim)
Manhunt	an organised search for the criminal or suspect
Upped	increased, made bigger
Emerge	appear, become known
Pearly	shiny and white, like a pearl
Let down his guard	stopped being careful or alert
Flirt	act in a playful way to show romantic interest

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Bore	carried or showed
Resemblance	likeness, how much he looked like the suspect
Detained	kept in custody or held
Suppressor	a device on the gun to make it quieter
Prior	before, earlier
Manifesto	a written statement of beliefs or goals
Laid clear	showed or explained very clearly
Ignite	start something strong
Firestorm	a sudden, large amount of anger or debate
Frankly	honestly, in a direct way
Parasites	people who live off others without giving anything back
Had it coming	deserved what happened to them
Railed against	spoke very strongly against
Absurdity	the state of being silly, foolish, or unreasonable
Remorse	feeling sorry for doing it

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Painting himself	showing himself in this way
Indicted	officially charged
Custody	being kept by the police or in prison
Clear-cut	simple and easy to understand
In cold blood	on purpose, without emotion or pity
Sentenced	given a punishment by a court
Hardened	experienced in crime or violence
Chronic	lasting a long time, not going away
Animosity	strong dislike or hate
Portraying	showing or describing
Folk hero	a person admired by ordinary people for being brave or rebellious
Unjust	not fair
Trend	become popular
Apprehended	caught, arrested
Inundated	flooded or overwhelmed by too many of them

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Passer-by	a person walking past a place
Leading	main, most important
Bankruptcy	the state of not being able to pay debts
Denied	refused, rejected
Loopholes	small gaps in the law that allow people to avoid rules
Narrative	the story or explanation of events
Shifted	changed from one thing to another
Denying	refusing, rejecting
Distress	strong pain, worry, or sadness
Figurehead	someone who had the position of leader
Wake up	realise something important
Presiding over	being in charge of or leading
Grievances	complaints or feelings of unfair treatment
Disguise	hide, give a different appearance to
Slogans	short, memorable phrases

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Clear cut	simple and easy to understand
For starters	to begin with, first of all
Visceral	deep and strong
Greed	a strong desire to have more money or things
Side with	support
Cronyism	unfair help given to friends, especially in business or politics
Niche	relating to just a few people
Drastic	very extreme and serious
Lauded	praised, said to be very good
Federal	connected to the central government of the US
Treason	betraying your country
Pursue	push forward, have as a goal
On the books	officially part of the law
Elbowed	forced its way in, pushed in roughly
Deterrent	something that stopped people from doing something bad

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Heinous	very shocking and evil
Sworn in	officially started by taking an oath
Vague	not clear
Cold-blooded	done without emotion or pity
Seized on	quickly took hold of it to use it
Intimidate	frighten, scare
Destabilise	make weak or unstable
Deter	prevent or discourage people from committing crimes
Martyr	a person who died for his beliefs
Send this into overdrive	make it much stronger or more active
Spiralled	grew quickly and out of control
Harshest	most severe or strict
On paper	according to facts
Lashing out	suddenly attacking or shouting in anger
Unsettling	making people feel worried or nervous

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Simmering slowly building up under the surface

Pioneer someone who did something first

To its core completely, all the way through

Seek try to get

Trigger the part of the gun he pulled to fire it

Premeditated planned before doing it

Insurmountable impossible to overcome

Alleged supposed or assumed

Lump group them together without care

Language spotlight

1. In broad daylight

- **Meaning:** happening openly and publicly, during the day, when people can see
- **Synonyms:** openly, publicly, out in the open
- **Antonyms:** secretly, in hiding, undercover
- **Examples:**
 - The bank was robbed **in broad daylight**, shocking everyone.
 - He was attacked **in broad daylight**, right in front of a busy café.

2. Had it coming

- **Meaning:** someone deserved the bad thing that happened to them
- **Synonyms:** deserved it, brought it on themselves
- **Antonyms:** undeserved, unfair, innocent
- **Examples:**
 - After years of cheating his business partners, he really **had it coming**.

- Some people said the corrupt politician **had it coming** when he was finally arrested.

3. In cold blood

- **Meaning:** done deliberately and without any emotion, pity, or mercy
- **Synonyms:** deliberately, ruthlessly, mercilessly
- **Antonyms:** impulsively, accidentally, mercifully
- **Examples:**
 - The soldiers killed the prisoners **in cold blood**.
 - The crime was shocking because the victim was murdered **in cold blood**.

4. Let down one's guard

- **Meaning:** to stop being careful or cautious, making yourself vulnerable
- **Synonyms:** relax, stop being cautious, lower your defences
- **Antonyms:** stay alert, remain cautious, be on guard
- **Examples:**
 - She finally **let down her guard** and told him the truth.

- The football team **let down their guard** and the opponents scored.

5. Wake up

- **Meaning (figurative):** to become aware of something important or surprising
- **Synonyms:** realise, become aware, open your eyes to
- **Antonyms:** ignore, overlook, stay blind to
- **Examples:**
 - People need to **wake up** to the dangers of climate change.
 - It's time to **wake up** and see how unfair the system really is.

Quiz

Listening Comprehension Multiple Choice Questions

1. What comparison did the narrator make between Ulbricht, Swartz, and Mangione?
 - a) All three were famous musicians
 - b) All three were young Americans who broke the law to fight injustice
 - c) All three became politicians
 - d) All three worked for UnitedHealthcare

2. How did people online react to Mangione's arrest?
 - a) Everyone condemned him
 - b) His arrest was kept secret
 - c) Nobody paid attention
 - d) He was praised as a hero by some and criticised by others

3. How did the narrator describe UnitedHealthcare?
 - a) A small local company
 - b) A titan of American healthcare
 - c) A family business
 - d) A non-profit organisation

4. Where was Luigi Mangione arrested?
 - a) On a train
 - b) In his apartment
 - c) At a McDonald's
 - d) In a hospital

5. What detail about the bullet casings made the killing unusual?
 - a) Words were scrawled on them
 - b) They were made of gold
 - c) They were found miles away

- d) They disappeared from the crime scene

True or False

6. Brian Thompson was killed in broad daylight. (True/False)
7. Luigi Mangione had a history of violent crimes. (True/False)
8. The phrase “Delay, Deny, Defend” is connected to insurance companies refusing to pay claims. (True/False)
9. New York State currently uses the death penalty. (True/False)
10. Mangione’s case “ignited a firestorm” of debate about justice and healthcare in America. (True/False)

Fill-in-the-Blank

11. Or to be completely correct, as of the time of recording, stands _____ of murder, as the case has not yet gone to trial.
12. There was someone sitting in the restaurant who _____ a striking resemblance to the pictures of the suspect in the shooting.
13. Those on the political left, especially on the extreme left, were more likely to _____ with him.

14. At the federal level, the death penalty is still very much __ the books.
15. Mangione, at least to some, isn't just a man accused of murder; he's a warrior against a system that many see as unjust to its ____.

Vocabulary Practice

16. What does “**whisked**” mean in the phrase “whisked to hospital”?
- a) Moved quickly
 - b) Hit hard
 - c) Left behind
 - d) Treated carefully
17. What does “**gun down**” mean?
- a) To run away from police
 - b) To shoot and kill someone with a gun
 - c) To write graffiti on a wall
 - d) To speak loudly against someone

18. What does “**folk hero**” mean?

- a) A criminal hated by everyone
- b) A leader of a political party
- c) A person admired by ordinary people for standing up against power
- d) A famous singer

19. What does “**trial**” mean in the podcast?

- a) A medical test
- b) A sports competition
- c) A court process to decide guilt or innocence
- d) A short trip

20. What does “**clear-cut**” mean?

- a) Secret and hidden
- b) Very confusing
- c) Surprising or shocking

d) Easy to understand, with no doubt

Answers

1. b) All three were young Americans who broke the law to fight injustice
2. d) He was praised as a hero by some and criticised by others
3. b) A titan of American healthcare
4. c) At a McDonald's
5. a) Words were scrawled on them
6. True
7. False
8. True
9. False
10. True
11. accused
12. bore
13. side
14. on
15. core
16. a) Moved quickly
17. b) To shoot and kill someone with a gun
18. c) A person admired by ordinary people for standing up against power
19. c) A court process to decide guilt or innocence
20. d) Easy to understand, with no doubt