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TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN SLANG AND ITS SOCIOCULTURAL CONTEXT. PART ONE

This paper presents an outline of twentieth-century lexical developments in American slang, viewed in its sociocultural context. It is designed as a compact, decade-by-decade overview of the most important events from American sociocultural history, mirrored by new lexical creations in slang—this theme is also discussed in my earlier work (Widawski 2003). The paper is divided into two parts: the first part covers the 1900s through 1940s, while the second covers the 1950s through 1990s. The presentation is based on lexical material from a sizable database of citations from contemporary American sources collected since the early 1990s through extensive fieldwork and research at such academic centers as Yale University, Columbia University, the University of Tennessee and the University of Toronto, including most recent material. The dating is based on several sources including *Oxford English Dictionary*, *Random House Historical Dictionary of American Slang*, and *Dictionary of Modern American Slang and Unconventional English*.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Slang is a highly colloquial style of language which is often misunderstood, misinterpreted, and erroneously perceived either as a substandard or vulgar deviation from the norm. For this reason it should be adequately described. It is perhaps best defined by the following definition, which is rather inclusive and captures various aspects of this complex phenomenon:

‘Slang is an ever-changing, highly expressive style of language. It consists of novel words or standard words used with new meanings that are considered informal and often vulgar. They are used primarily in spoken language in place of standard words, usually to convey some extra information, usually psychological, sociological or rhetorical in nature. The psychological (or behavioral) element includes such information as emotional states, humor, familiarity and secrecy. The sociological element includes solidarity or group identification, distancing, alienation and rebellion against the existing order. The rhetorical element includes informality, conciseness, deliberate vagueness, and forcefulness of expression’ (Widawski: 2003: 3-4).

In short, slang is the most informal style of language, abundant in psychological, sociological and rhetorical implications which, at the same time, constitute the main reasons for using slang (Widawski 2008). If one adds that slang constitutes at least 10% of all words known by the average American (Flexner in

Chapman 1986: xx), it becomes clear that slang is an important part of American English and culture. This latter element is of special importance since, as will be demonstrated below, slang is a highly serviceable lexical vehicle to respond to sociocultural developments.

A good way of looking at slang's importance is to view it in the context of American sociocultural history. To a large extent, slang reflects changes that society has undergone through the years and is a popular chronicler of such changes. Quintessentially sociolinguistic, slang is inherently connected with its users, their culture and their time period. As such, it can be treated as an insightful and culturally revealing aid in understanding Americans and their sociocultural history.

Never has this interrelationship been more visible than in the twentieth century. For it was unquestionably the time of slang. The revolution in communications dramatically shortened the time needed to disseminate neologisms, including slang, to gain broader popularity. National newspapers, radio, telephone, television and the Internet all helped toward this end. The following presentation is decade-by-decade overview of the most important events from American sociocultural history, mirrored by new lexical creations in slang—all of which remain in use today.

1900s

The first decade of the 20th century brought unparalleled development in technology, transportation, telecommunications, boosted by heavy immigration. This was evident in the introduction of corn flakes, ice-cream cones, hot dogs, zipper fasteners, mass-production automobiles, airplanes and skyscrapers. A form of music of that time was ragtime, popularized by Scott Joplin; also evident were the beginnings of jazz and blues. Perhaps more importantly, the public demand for novelty, information, and entertainment led to an explosion of mass media, which was aimed at national, multiclass readership (Lighter 1994: xxvii).

The slang of that period reflects these times. Many expressions are associated with areas of technological advancement and refer to a variety of new products or services. Other are products of journalistic creation, a result of stylistic revolution in the mass media (Steinmetz 2010: 16 and Lighter 1994: xxvii), which allowed more informality and lexical experimentation. Numerous expressions from the period are also associated with immigrants and their languages (Steinmetz 2010: 11-13), especially Yiddish (Widawski 2012: 17-19). Here are a few database examples of slang expressions which made their debut during that period:

arty *adj.* [1901] pretentiously artistic: *He is creating an arty perceptual disorientation* – *New York Times*, 2012

- ball of fire** *n.* [1900] an energetic person: *He was not exactly a ball of fire – Boxing Insider, 2012*
- ballyhoo** *n.* [1901] something meant to attract crowds, esp. advertising or publicity: *The ballyhoo yielded a million bookings – Economic Times, 2012*
- barfly** *n.* [1906] someone who frequents bars: *Lukas is an L.A. drunk attracted to a fellow barfly – New York Daily News, 2012*
- Big Apple** *n.* [1909] New York City: *It's another fabulous morning in the Big Apple! Let's go! – Madagascar, film, 2005*
- Coke** *n.* [1909] Coca-Cola: *Many of us have grown accustomed to having a Coke with a meal – Pasadena Weekly, 2012*
- doodad** *n.* [1905] any unspecified or useless thing: *Authorities noted that some stolen doodads were found inside it – Westworld, 2012*
- eatery** *n.* [1901] a restaurant: *There's a new eatery in downtown Clayton that specializes in just that: hot dogs – Watertown Daily Times, 2012*
- egghead** *n.* [1907] an intellectual: *Most eggheads in New Haven are against such policy – Yale University Student, 2011*
- goo** *n.* [1903] any sticky substance: *The mini pool is full of goo – News, KFVS-TV program, 2012*
- humdinger** *n.* [1905] a remarkable or outstanding person or thing: *In the history of bad ideas this is a humdinger – Bandits, film, 2001*
- info** *n.* [1906] information: *Does anyone know this for sure and, if so, who is the source of such info? – Newark Star-Ledger, 2012*
- joyride** *n.* [1909] a pleasure trip in a car, especially without the permission of the owner: *He stole a car and went on a joyride – Huffington Post, 2012*
- juice** *n.* [1909] gasoline: *They ran out of juice in the middle of the desert – New York University Student, 2012*
- nix** *v.* [1903] to cancel or reject: *This is a way of allowing censors to nix anything they don't want or don't like – Tech News World, 2012*
- peachy** *adj.* [1900] excellent: *Listen everything will be just peachy – Just Friends, film, 2005*
- pep** *n.* [1909] energy or vigor: *Does it make you feel good and give you pep? – Requiem for a Dream, film, 2000*
- riot** *n.* [1909] a very amusing person or thing: *We had a riot doing it! – News, MTV-TV program, 2012*
- sidekick** *n.* [1906] a close associate, especially subordinate: *Jude Law stars as his sidekick, Watson – Chicago Daily Herald, 2012*
- smog** *n.* [1905] fog intensified by smoke: *Smog forms when high temperatures interact with pollutants – Kansas City Star, 2012*
- spork** *n.* [1909] a blend of spoon and fork: *Peggy does not enjoy eating with a spork – Detroit Free Press, 2012*
- straphanger** *n.* [1905] a person who rides the subway or bus: *Wi-Fi is an important benefit for straphangers in NYC subway – Market Watch, 2012*

undies *n.* [1906] underwear: *After shedding her undies on the corner of 44th and Broadway, West was arrested – Huffington Post, 2012*

1910s

The second decade of the century brought the end of America's isolationism and the two-year American involvement in World War I. It resulted in over 100,000 American soldiers dead, and familiarized the American public again with the horrors of war. Lingering memories of war manifested themselves in both the harsh realism of authors like Ernest Hemmingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Dos Passos, and the general public's almost insatiable desire to party – the period is known as the 'Ballroom Decade' – which spilled into the next decade.

The slang of that period reflects these times. Many slang expressions come from military and British slang, introduced through contact during the war (Lighter 1994: xxix). Numerous expressions are associated with partying and playing, and jazz music rooted in African American traditions (Steinmetz 2010: 28). Others come from Yiddish (Widawski 2012: 17-19), resulting from heavy immigration. Here are a few database examples of slang expressions which made their debut during that period:

ace *n.* [1916] a pilot who has shot down many enemy aircraft: *It made him the closest thing to an ace in the modern Air Force – Atlantic Monthly, 2009*

Aussie *n.* [1917] an Australian: *Aussies proved themselves to be wise in the area of finances – Business Insider, 2012*

babe *n.* [1915] a sexually attractive young woman: *Hey babe, let's take a day off from campaigning – Southeast Missourian, 2012*

blah *adj.* [1919] dull or bland: *Her photo shoots are always very blah, you know? – Just Jared, 2012*

buck private *n.* [1918] a private: *In the Army and Marines, a buck private has the lowest rank – Army and Navy, 2012*

copacetic *n.* [1919] fine or passable: *Has there ever been a copacetic roster, acceptable to every major-league town? – Wall Street Journal, 2012*

dog tag *n.* [1918] a soldier's identity disc: *As veterans move through the program, Hansen gives them additional dog tags – Stars and Stripes, 2012*

floozy *n.* [1911] a sexually promiscuous woman: *Her ex ran off with a floozy – New York Newsday, 2012*

get-together *n.* [1911] an informal meeting or gathering: *He was heading back home from a get-together – Washington Examiner, 2012*

goldbricker *n.* [1916] a shirker: *This guy's a fake, a fucking goldbricker! – Big Lebowski, film, 1998*

- hoosegow** *n.* [1911] a prison: *A woman who posed as an immigration attorney to scam immigrants is heading to the hoosegow – Village Voice, 2012*
- Kraut** *n.* [1916] a German, especially German soldier: *We won't let the Krauts beat us after yet another attempt – Yahoo, 2012*
- leatherneck** *n.* [1914] a U.S. marine: *Becoming a leatherneck did little to assuage his dreams – Stars and Stripes, 2012*
- looney** *n.* [1916] a lieutenant: *Some snot-nosed little second looney had me kicked out of the corps – Firewalker, film, 1986*
- low-down** *n.* [1915] the inside story: *We caught up with Wiz Khalifa to get the low-down about what went on during the filming – Entertainmentwie, 2012*
- newshound** *n.* [1918] an investigative journalist: *The story should appeal to newshounds – Kansas City Star, 2012*
- nitwit** *n.* [1914] a stupid person: *Everyone agrees that those who fired him are nitwits – Huffington Post, 2012*
- nosh** *n.* [1917] a snack or light meal: *Hey, it's time for a nosh – Knoxville Metro Pulse, 2012*
- op** *n.* [1916] a military operation: *The night before the op was always horrible – Huffington Post, 2012*
- pineapple** *n.* [1918] a hand grenade: *Throw the pineapple! Throw is, Johnny, come on! The grenade! – Five People You Meet in Heaven, film, 2004*
- recon** *n.* [1918] reconnaissance: *A spy's abilities focus on recon as you send them to cities to dig up details – Now Gamer, 2012*
- schlock** *n.* [1915] something of low quality, esp. inferior merchandise: *I don't think this website needs this kind of schlock – New American, 2012*
- sub** *n.* [1916] a submarine: *With these German subs Israel can strike back no matter what happens on land – Florida Sun Sentinel, 2012*
- typewriter** *n.* [1915] a machine gun: *I got the typewriter gun just like Capone – Gun, film, 2010*
- vamp** *n.* [1911] a seductive and sexually aggressive woman: *The lady is a vamp! – Examiner, 2009*

1920s

The 1920s, often referred to as the 'Roaring Twenties,' brought prosperity and optimism. Jazz music, with performers like Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong, enjoyed national exposure thanks to the spread of radio, while the flappers symbolized a cultural transition into a sexier, more carefree mood. This was also the golden age of silent film with stars like Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolph Valentino, Buster Keaton and Harold Lloyd. One of the greatest highlights of the decade was Prohibition. The failed 'Noble Experiment'

promoted the spread of corruption and organized crime. However, as some linguists point out (Lighter, 1994: xxxii), through journalistic sensationalism and works of fiction, Prohibition fostered the emergence of slang as a characteristically American phenomenon.

The slang vocabulary from that period principally refers to illegal alcohol and the criminal underworld as objects of national attention (Widawski 2003: 318-319). These include references to various kinds and effects of alcohol as well as activities of criminals and law enforcement agents. Equally significant is the theme of enjoyment and relaxation (Steinmetz 2010: 44-45). Here is a sample of slang expressions which originated in that period:

- bimbo** *n.* [1920] an attractive but stupid woman: *She's looking for someone who won't call her a bimbo – San Francisco Chronicle, 2012*
- bubbly** *n.* [1920] champagne or sparkling wine: *Hey honey, have some more bubbly! – Huffington Post, 2012*
- Caddie** *n.* [1929] a Cadillac automobile: *A used Caddie sells for \$20,000 – News, KWTX-TV program, 2012*
- fink** *v.* [1925] to inform on someone to the police: *Jack's an accountant for the Mob. He finked to the FBI – Gloria, film, 1980*
- flapper** *n.* [1921] a fashionable and hedonistic young woman: *I dreamed of going back to the 1920s where I could be a flapper – Huffington Post, 2012*
- flick** *n.* [1926] a motion picture: *The flick features Susan Sarandon and Frank Langella – Spokesman Review, 2012*
- fry** *v.* [1929] to to put to death or to die by electrocution: *I say put him in the chair and fry him! – North Jersey Online, 2012*
- fuzz** *n.* [1929] a policeman or the police: *He got picked by the fuzz for speeding – Auto Spies, 2012*
- goon** *n.* [1921] a hired thug: *They fire the guns directly at Van Damme and his goons – Entertainment Weekly, 2012*
- hijack** *v.* [1923] to commandeer a vehicle and its load: *His car was hijacked while he was still in the vehicle – Republic, 2012*
- hustler** *n.* [1924] a prostitute: *Omar is a 'hustler' or prostitute who works by day as a phone salesman – Gay News Network, 2012*
- it girl** *n.* [1920] a popular and sexually attractive woman: *He took one recent evening to talk about it girls – Broadway Online, 2012*
- jalopy** *n.* [1929] a battered old car: *Can't you make this jalopy go any faster? – Inspector Gadget, film, 1999*
- jive** *n.* [1928] misleading or deceiving talk: *It's the last time you pulled this jive – Last Action Hero, film, 1993*
- junkie** *n.* [1923] a drug addict: *Martinez is a junkie who has been in prison on unrelatd burglary charges – News, CBS-TV program, 2012*
- petting** *n.* [1920] erotic fondling: *You're dating and there's lots of giggling and heavy petting – Atlantic Wire, 2012*

- shamus** *n.* [1925] a private detective: *You're one of those private detectives? A private eye, a shamus? – Curse of the Jade Scorpion, film, 2001*
- speakeasy** *n.* [1920] a bar that sells alcohol illegally: *The building was a speakeasy during Prohibition – San Francisco Chronicle, 2012*
- stoolie** *n.* [1924] a police informer: *He's a stoolie who rats on his own friends – Once Upon a Time in America, film, 1984*
- strip** *v.* [1929] to perform a strip-tease: *She stripped in front of me in my own house – Google News, 2012*
- tearjerker** *n.* [1921] a sad and sentimental song, film or story: *The network is previewing the tear-jerker on its website – People Magazine, 2012*
- tommy gun** *n.* [1929] a sub-machine gun: *She may have a tommy gun hidden in her violin case – E! Online, 2012*
- toughie** *n.* [1900] a tough and menacing person: *She was a toughie, you had to fight – Northern Advocate, 2012*
- two-time** *v.* [1924] to double-cross or engage in infidelity: *She is not two-timing her boyfriend – Examiner, 2012*
- white lightning** *n.* [1921] strong, inferior, home-made liquor: *They used the grapes to create a grappa-like white lightning – Chicago Sun-Times, 2012*

1930s

The 1930s brought the end of prosperity and optimism. Culturally, these were times of further exposure to popular swing and jazz music rooted African American musical traditions. Popular band leaders included Duke Ellington, George Gershwin, Benny Goodman, Count Basie and Glenn Miller. This popularization coincided with the growth of radio entertainment. Prohibition ended. The film industry had grown substantially with the advent of 'talkies' and actors like W.C. Fields, the Marx Brothers, Mae West, Abbot and Costello, Humphrey Bogart, Fred Astaire, Clark Gable, Shirley Temple and Ginger Rogers. Comic books and animated cartoons became an enormously popular art form, with *Mickey Mouse* and *Superman* being the most notable. The most important event of the decade actually started at the end of the 1920s: the Great Depression. It resulted in 4.5 million unemployed by 1930 (Epstein, 1991: 11), or 25% of the total workforce. Thanks to Roosevelt's New Deal, unemployment dropped substantially, but recovery was slow. Millions of Americans struggled to make a living and migrated across the nation.

Slang lexicon of this decade reflects the somewhat contradictory boom in entertainment and slump in the economy (Widawski 2003: 320). And so, much like numerous expressions are associated with the world of entertainment, many also involve destitution, unemployment and coping with the harsh economic

reality (Steinmetz 2010: 61). Moreover, many slang expressions from the period refer to African-American music. Here is a selection of slang expressions which originated in or are associated with the period:

- alligator** *n.* [1936] a devotee of swing music: *He's an alligator, dude!* – *Lost Highway, film, 1997*
- Arkie** *n.* [1930] a migratory worker from Arkansas: *He traveled west with displaced Arkies and Oakies* – *Smithsonian, 2012*
- baddie** *n.* [1934] a bad or wicked person: *He's well-cast in those roles where he's meant to scare you to death as a baddie* – *Kansas City Star, 2012*
- bread** *n.* [1935] money: *Listen, you owed me that bread four weeks ago* – *U Turn, film, 1997*
- cat** *n.* [1931] a devotee of jazz: *We have yet to see these soul-jazz cats play a bad show* – *Nashville Scene, 2012*
- corny** *adj.* [1932] overly sentimental or traditional: *He's so corny and out of touch!* – *New York Magazine, 2012*
- cut** *n.* [1937] a recorded song: *He's in the studio recording a cut for Blues Buddhas* – *My Space, 2012*
- demo** *n.* [1936] a demonstration: *The demo took place at the Rock Avenue baseball complex in Plainfield* – *My Central Jersey, 2012*
- fart around** *v.* [1931] to waste time doing nothing: *They were by no means just farting around on the hill* – *Snowboarder Magazine, 2012*
- freeloader** *n.* [1933] someone who takes something free of charge, specially food or drink: *Bubba is a leech and a freeloader* – *L.A. Weekly, 2012*
- gopher** *n.* [1932] someone who runs errands, especially in the office: *He rose in the ranks by serving as a gopher for Perez* – *Whittier Daily News, 2012*
- gravy** *n.* [1930] money or benefits easily obtained: *They pose a moral problem when they unashamedly grasp for more gravy* – *Forbes, 2012*
- heist** *n.* [1930] a robbery: *The video recorded the heist at 4 a.m. Tuesday at Top One Beauty Supply* – *Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2012*
- jack** *v.* [1930] to steal: *Some kids jacked the car and they took it for a joy ride* – *Mystic River, film, 2003*
- jukebox** *n.* [1930] a coin-operated record player in a bar or restaurant: *It featured jukeboxes popular at the time* – *Savannah Morning News, 2012*
- kickback** *n.* [1934] a commission on a more or less a shady deal: *He was accused of scheming to receive kickbacks* – *News, CNN-TV program, 2012*
- moolah** *n.* [1937] money: *Poor dumb Nagin put his moolah in the bank* – *NOLA Magazine, 2012*
- Okie** *n.* [1935] a migratory worker from Oklahoma: *These pictures don't follow Okies as they leave their world behind* – *Time, 2012*
- payola** *n.* [1938] a bribe paid to a radio station to encourage the playing of a song: *It points to the controversial payola system* – *Examiner, 2012*

- peanuts** *n.* [1934] a very small amount of money: *She attracted a bona fide star, Emily Blunt, to work for peanuts – Miami Herald, 2012*
- pot** *n.* [1938] marijuana: *College kids smoke pot everywhere, and athletes are no different – Sports, CBS-TV program, 2012*
- pricey** *adj.* [1932] expensive: *If something breaks the display, it's going to be a very pricey repair process – Wired News, 2012*
- radioland** *n.* [1930] an imaginary place where radio listeners dwell: *I will help those troubled people in the radioland – Couch Trip, film, 2012*
- skid row** *n.* [1931] a run-down area in town, known for the underworld: *They plan weekly cleanings of downtown's Skid Row – Sacramento Bee, 2012*
- snazzy** *adj.* [1931] stylish or elegant: *Because I'm a snazzy dresser, I tend to attract amazing cocktail conversations – Huffington Post, 2012*

1940s

The 1940s brought U.S. participation in World War II, a transformation of the country's industries for the war effort, and postwar restructuring. The draft reached almost a million men in 1940, a sociolinguistically revealing factor. Many performers were associated with the military such as Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra and the Andrews Sisters. This was also the time of jive and bebop with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker. Other popular musicians included Hank Williams, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter. After the war, food and gas rationing was lifted, and the construction and automotive industries thrived. In 1947, commercial television debuted with *The Howdy Doody Show*, *Hopalong Cassidy* and *The Lone Ranger* being notable.

Slang vocabulary of the time reflects the primary national concern: war. Military slang – heavily used by soldiers, war correspondents, and later, veterans – constitutes an important part of the lexicon from the period (Lighter 1994: xxix). War also saw the adaptation of borrowings through contact with British slang, as well as the German and Japanese languages, and numerous slang expressions are loanwords (Steinmetz 2010: 82). It also brought more obscenity and vulgarity, and contributed to the popularization of the *f-word* and its numerous variants and metaphorical meanings. Here is a sample of slang items which originated in or are associated with the period:

- AWOL** *adj.* [1941] absent without leave: *He went AWOL on the eve of his first deployment to Afghanistan – News, KWTX-TV program, 2012*
- blitz** *n.* [1940] sudden and intensive attack: *The blitz is just one part of this – Chicago Tribune, 2012*
- bonkers** *adj.* [1944] crazy: *Bieber Fans Go Bonkers Over 'Today' Show Performance – Detroit Free Press, 2012*

- fubar** *adj.* [1944] ruined or botched: *You think the mission's fubar, sir?* – *Saving Private Ryan, film, 1998*
- fuck book** *n.* [1940] a pornographic magazine: *You act like you've never seen no fuck book before* – *Down Time, film, 2001*
- fuckface** *n.* [1945] a despicable person: *Where the fuck are the jobs, fuckface?* – *Democratic Underground, 2012*
- fuckhead** *n.* [1945] a despicable person: *Well, this will teach this fuckhead!* – *Better Luck Tomorrow, film, 2002*
- GI** *n.* [1941] a US soldier: *When I was born, the war was over and the GI's were coming home* – *Politico, 2012*
- gobbledygook** *n.* [1944] unintelligible jargon: *They treated us to justifications full of pseudo-intellectual gobbledygook* – *American Thinker, 2012*
- gung-ho** *adj.* [1942] very enthusiastic or zealous: *The party was gung-ho about winning* – *New York Daily News, 2012*
- honcho** *n.* [1947] the boss: *That's what the honchos at the U.S. Golf Association think* – *Washington Examiner, 2012*
- jeep** *n.* [1941] a sturdy, four-wheel drive car: *He saw a green military jeep* – *Atlanta Journal Constitution, 2012*
- joe** *n.* [1941] coffee: *Sergeant, how would you like a nice hot cup of joe?* – *Black Hawk Down, film, 2001*
- macho** *adj.* [1943] ostentatiously masculine or tough: *You're not so macho when you need help to go to the bathroom* – *Washington Times, 2012*
- Molotov cocktail** *n.* [1940] a bottle of flammable liquid used as a weapon: *Police found Molotov cocktails in the apartment* – *Chicago Tribune, 2012*
- no-no** *n.* [1942] something forbidden or unacceptable: *Showing too much skin is a no-no in the office* – *Chattanooga Times Free Press, 2012*
- pinup girl** *n.* [1941] a sexually attractive female model appearing on posters: *She was a popular pinup girl in the fifties* – *Yale University Student, 2011*
- pissed off** *adj.* [1946] angry or irritated: *I guess I could be pretty pissed off about what happened to me* – *American Beauty, film, 1999*
- scattergun** *n.* [1945] a machine gun: *Hey, you wanna shoot that scattergun?* – *Sacrifice, film, 2011*
- shitcan** *n.* [1948] a garbage can: *The script was lousy and ended up in the shitcan* – *New York University Student, 2012*
- snafu** *n.* [1941] disorder or confusion: *Jack, we ought to call it a snafu* – *Frost-Nixon, film, 2008*
- spook** *n.* [1942] a spy or secret service agent: *He was a spook, just like me* – *Recruit, film, 2003*
- Stateside** *adv.* [1944] in or toward the United States: *The first flight Stateside left Guantanamo Bay at 2300* – *Few Good Men, film, 1992*
- walkie talkie** *n.* [1940] a small portable two-way radio: *He heard a tone alert from a walkie-talkie in the car* – *Cape Cod Times, 2012*

- wanker** *n.* [1940] an onanist or despicable person: *I just bought that car, you wanker!* – *Gone in Sixty Seconds*, film, 2000
- zap** *v.* [1942] to kill: *Look, I zap any bastard that screws with me* – *Die Hard 2*, film, 1990

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