

EPISODE 12: SIX POSSESSIONS

C: Okay so there's a game that I play in class, it's called 6 possessions, okay?

A: Okay.

C: So, I thought we could try it here. Basically, well, part of it is to explain a bit of the difference between "have" and "have got", which for me...

A: Hehehe.

C: I can see you laughing already. Well, for me "have" is a bit more... uh, "have got" is more American English for me: "I've got something."

A: Okay.

C: And probably I would just tend to say "I have", like "I have 5 apartments... because I'm rich."

A: Is this true? Have you been holding out on me?

C: This is hoping. I love when people say "I have 20 years".

A: Oh, yeah.

C: It's just, like, the mistake I just think is fantastic.

A: Yes!

C: Well, first of all, 20 years *old*? "I am 20..." But nobody says "years old".

A: "I'm 20." You're 20 what?

C: Exactly haha. If I have 20—

A: "I'm 20 horsepower strong!"

C: —it's a possession. So, yeah, for me "I have" is... "I've got" maybe a little bit more American, but it's the negative for me. "I don't have" is the negative of "I have," and "I haven't got" is the negative of "I've got".

A: Okay.

C: And "I haven't" is when we use participle.



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A: I agree with that, yes. And I can say “I haven’t got”— I don’t think I ever say that, “haven’t got.”

C: No?

A: In the negative, no.

C: Ah, you say “I ain’t got.”

A: Haha, I absolutely do not. That would—That would drive my mother insane, as the good English teacher that she is, the good prescriptive... well, not completely prescriptive, but quite prescriptive English teacher, she would go insane if she heard me say that. Um, I’m trying to think, because you know it’s always, what is it that they say... “The client who has...” No— “The attorney who has himself for a client has a fool for a client”. You know, whatever it is. It’s the same thing when you try to analyze your own language.

C: You can’t.

A: That you can always say what— you can say what you think you say, but until somebody catches you, so... you’ll have to get back to me later. But I think probably you’re onto something. “I’ve got...”. I don’t know, there’s some subtle differences, and I’m not sure I’m aware of them right now, I’m trying to think, like, do you have a guitar? Do you got a guitar? “Do you got a guitar?” is way more informal than “do you have a guitar”.

C: Do you got? “Have you got!”

A: Do you got a guitar?

C: No, you can’t say...

A: Okay, you can absolutely say “Do you got a guitar?”

C: What?

A: Can a student say it? Absolutely not! Absolutely not! This is—this is native speaker privilege here we’re talking about, but... “have you got a guitar?” I wouldn’t say “have you got”.

C: I’m gonna ask you some things about things you got.

A: Or things that I have.

C: Got it? Heh.

A: Yeah, I have it.



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C: Okay, let's go. Right. Something that you've got, something that, y'know, you own, you possess, uh... If there was a fire in your place of residence, if you live in a house, mansion, flat, apartment... yeah? There's a fire and you can save one object. Now, I'm talking *object*—No people, no...

A: No people, not pets... Food? Does food count?

C: Foods... yeah.

A: Okay, yeah. That's not my answer. Okay.

C: One object, one object.

A: Oof... I—it would either be my pedal-steel guitar or my computer.

C: One.

A: Yeah, I know.

C: You have to choose.

A: I know. What about... a computer shaped like a pedal-steel guitar? Haha. Um, you know, I don't know because, you know, I like to think of myself as a person who's relatively free from material possessions despite the three guitars you can see hanging on the wall around you and the complete studio that we're in.

C: Yeah.

A: Um, I guess I would go with my computer... I guess. What about yourself?

C: Well, I would go with **a plectrum**.

A: Huh, okay. This is... from whom?

C: Do you know what a plectrum is?

A: Of course I know what a plectrum is, I'm a guitarist! Do you know what—do you know what we *really* call it?

C: You say "**a pick**".

A: We say "a pick", absolutely!

C: Ah, okay, okay.

A: Because we invented the guitar hahaha.



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C: Haha, well done!

A: Just for the record, that is not true! The electric guitar, we could say that, that Americans invented the electric guitar. Yes, a plectrum. Uh, most— many Africans say “plectrum” as well, I’m sure, because of the British colonial— *wonderful* British colonial influence.

C: So, I would say “a plectrum.” Now, a plectrum is not an expensive object, as you know, but this plectrum is very dear to my heart because it was given to me by...

A: Jon Bon Jovi.

C: No, hehe. Somebody who’s no longer alive.

A: Def Leopard.

C: Not Def Leopard.

A: By whom?

C: I like to say this, I say to the students, you know, “somebody who’s no longer alive, it’s, you know, it’s a musician, cause—”

A: They say “Bob Dylan!”

C: No, they— first they say “Jimi Hendrix!” Like, what age do you think I am? Then, “Elvis Presley!”

A: Well, Elvis *could* be if you were like a one-year-old and you went to see fat Elvis! No?

C: No, Elvis died the year I was born!

A: Okay, then if you’re less than a one-year-old...

C: Jimi Hendrix died ten years before I was born. No, I got this actually from... Kurt Cobain.

A: Ah! Okay!

C: Now, I think this is a cool story, but, you know, again, when you say “Kurt Cobain”, a lot of people look like “Is that how old you are?!” haha, which is how I feel now.

A: And you say it’s better than Jimi Hendrix.

C: There was a really famous concert there. It was Nirvana, Teenage fanclub The Breeders, uh, three bands played. Northern Ireland has a population of, ah... just about 1 million.

A: Mhm.



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C: I think 800,000 went to the concert?

A: Noooo... Is that true?

C: *Everybody* says they were there.

A: Of course— Oh, well, that's like Woodstock, there were— there were 2 billion people at woodstock in the US, it's amazing.

C: Definitely everybody who was, you know, under 18, well, uh, 16 to 18, *everybody* was—

A: Was this at— was it a football stadium or what?

C: It— No, it was in a very large **venue**, and there were just buses, buses, buses coming, and I was one of those people who I *didn't* tell my parents that I was going to the concert...

A: Okay.

C: And I had official exams the following day.

A: Nice!

C: Yeah. Cause it was around June and *everybody* went to this, it was an amazing concert. We arrived a bit early, we were walking in the park, and we met Kurt Cobain.

A: Wow!

C: And uh... He was really nice, really, really friendly. We said "yeah, we wanna play music and stuff", and he said "well, here," and he gave me a plectrum and he said "when you're famous, use this."

A: Okay, I just— **I have one, one bone to pick here**. By the way, great expression, do you have that expression in your lexicon as well? "I have a bone to pick".

C: Pick that bone!

A: There you go, and it's related to picking. If a— If Kurt Cobain gave it to you, then it is not a plectrum, because our possessions, related to this— to this game, our possessions retain the moniker that is that of the person who they belonged to, so, he was an American, he absolutely did not say "plectrum", he did not have a "plectrum", he had a "pick".

C: He gave me a "pick"?

A: And now it's a plectrum haha.



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C: And now it's a plectrum. Next question! Uh, okay. Something that you've got that either you use every day or you never use.

A: One or the other.

C: One or the other.

A: I mean... Okay. Never use? Mmm. I don't know, like, I like to try to be, uh, pretty minimalist in my— in my things, like I said, despite however many guitars are in vision right here, I *need* all of those and I use all of those supposedly. Um... so, something I use every day, I'm going with my pedal-steel guitar! Every morning, I wake up, I wake up early usually, if my first thought in bed is "oh! It's earlier than I need to get up to go somewhere," then I get up, make my coffee, go sit down with my pedal-steel, I usually put on the computer— maybe watch videos, like, uh, NBA highlights, or something like that from the previous day, but it's a really physical instrument and there's— it really involves your whole body in different ways, so you need to be on it every day. And it— believe me, afterwards it leaves me in like a place of Zen.

C: Okay.

A: What about for you?

C: Uh, cocktail glasses.

A: Interesting! You use them every day?

C: No.

A: Oh. Hahaha.

C: I don't know why, it's like, um, when you move house, move flat?

A: Move? We just say "move."

C: You move.

A: Yeah haha.

C: Um, sometimes we have like a party called "**a house warming**".

A: We have that same concept.

C: Excellent! And people tend to bring gifts.

A: If you have nice friends... haha.



C: ... who earn money. And one time, when we moved, we actually ended up with twenty-four cocktail glasses.

A: Interesting.

C: Cause we got three packs from three different groups of friends of eight cocktail glasses. Now, I don't know, I mean, even if you like cocktails, do you make cocktails at home? Or do you go out to drink cocktails?

A: I mean, we don't make cocktails at home. First of all, it seems like a lot of work, and secondly, it's easier to stay at a healthy weight, to just not drink alcohol in our house, you know? Just because if it's there, I'm gonna drink it, and if it's not, I'm not gonna buy it, so... it's just better not to have it.

C: Temptation is gone. I just don't understand, I mean, uh, we had twenty-four cocktail glasses. It took up half of the cupboard and, you know, it just was rather **pointless**.

A: I would like to— to tell a story that's kind of related to this, it's related to us being here, you know, before we do our interviews here, our *charlas*, our discussions, we usually drink coffee. Today, I don't know if you noticed, but we're drinking out of these glasses, like not paper cups, but actual glasses. They're not coffee cups, but they're glasses. They're nice, you know, like a nice weight, they're pretty— they're pretty real. So— so, a couple of years ago my brother, who is not a materialistic person at all, but, you know, he recently got married, him and his wife moved in together, of course, you know, as you'd want to do after getting married, and they had these really cool short glasses that they really liked, like, they liked them, and they were, you know, completing their kind of "house warming" type of thing and trying to have, like, a set of— a full set of glasses for their new house.

C: Right.

A: And these aren't expensive glasses or **nothing fancy**, they just— they really liked them, because, you know, they're well-weighted on the bottom, they don't break the first time you drop them, you know, these— these are positive qualities in a glass. So he found out that they were manufactured in Italy and no longer sold in the United States. So, he asked me, cause I go home to Chicago, as I said earlier, in— once or twice a year, he's like "Aaron, is it cool if I just order you— order some glasses and you'll bring them home?" I'm like, "Sure, how many are you talking about?" He's like, "twelve." You know? So, so— less than, less than yours. That's why I'm like "okay, no problem", you know? And he looks them up and, like, they're— they're pretty cheap, you know? He's like "they're..." I think he saw that they were... I forget the exact— but they weren't expensive, I don't know, a couple of euros per glass or something. So, he orders them, and they're delivered to my house, and they knock on the door, and I open, and you know what a "pallette" is? Like, a shipping pallette? You know?

C: Right.



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A: Yeah? It's a quarter of a pallette of glasses, so basically a meter and a half tall, you know, of glasses, and I'm like "Lee!", my brother, I'm like, "what did you do?", and he went back and he checked, he's like "I don't know, it was like ninety bucks for these glasses! So I figured it was, you know, twelve glasses for ninety bucks". It was— it was seventy-two glasses for ninety bucks! So now we have a full set at our house, we have a full set at the studio, and I still brought sixty back to him in the US on various trips. I would get there and have a pack of three glasses wrapped in a T-Shirt, and... every time.

C: Ah, that makes me think that I've got a friend, Rebecca, a Swedish friend, and it's really nice, she's got a collection of glasses from all her life. What she does is, whenever she travels, she goes to a **flea market**...

A: Okay.

C: And she buys some sort of vintage— like a wine glass or a glass, so she doesn't have any glasses that match.

A: Sure.

C: In her house.

A: That's great!

C: It's really nice, actually. I've never thought of that, and she's really—

A: Oh, that's— that's cool.

C: Do you have any collections? Were you somebody who collects?

A: I'm not a big collector for collecting's sake, you know like a baseball card person, which in the US is a big thing, people collect baseball cards. John Mayer, the guitarist, he collects watches, um... I have a collection of musical instruments, but it's because I use them for playing and recording and everything else. That would probably be the biggest thing. You— you seem like a stamp collector.

C: Oh, no, no, hehe.

A: No? Rocks?

C: Uh, records.

A: Rock records, okay.

C: Rock records.

A: Do you consider yourself a record collector?



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C: Since, uh, the age of six, yeah.

A: Okay!

C: Now, *vinyl*, vinyl records.

A: Real records.

C: Yeah, real records, yeah.

A: Um, could you estimate, or is it embarrassing?

C: Um... thousands? Yeah. I mean, 3-4 thousand? I could— I couldn't really count them now.

A: Okay, so let's calculate that weight, because a— a proper vinyl, the vinyl itself is now 180 grams, so let's say the average is 150 over the years, because they were different, so 150 grams x a couple of thousand is... Let's see, 150 x a thousand... that's a *lot*.

C: That's *a lot* a lot.

A: That's a few tonnes, I believe, right?

C: Yeah. And that's the brilliant thing, nobody can steal them.

A: Yeah. Nobody wants to.

C: Nobody wants to. How about something in your flat —decoration, um, something **on display**— that you find... you know, you want to show people when they come in, you want them to say "hey, what's that?"

A: Sure! Um, we actually, uh, our living room, or living room/dining room, that kind of, I don't know... and that's not *cocina americana*, whatever it is, our living room/dining room was kinda one decent-sized room. On the walls, we have different posters and I love all those posters. We have one from the movie Idiocracy.

C: Yeah.

A: Which was, I don't know, are you familiar with the movie?

C: No.

A: Really?

C: Tell me.



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A: Oh, okay. I'm not gonna—we don't have time to go into details. Watch this movie—uh, there's nothing to spoil. It's a movie that takes place, uh, I don't know, it was made in the early 2000s, about an army guy --it's a comedy called "Idiocracy"--, army guy who is put into, like, a suspended animation, you know? Cryogenic-whatever. And then they forget about him and he wakes up, I don't know, X amount of years later, hundreds if not a thousand years later, and just, society has gotten dumber and dumber with every succeeding generation, and now it kind of reads like a documentary. So, we have an idiocracy poster. Actually, um, designed and signed by Shepard Fairey. I love that poster. Not because of any, any physical possession thing, but because it's such a—a combination of artistic style and graphic design and a wonderful movie, and it's just all there, in **a frame** on our wall. Yeah! What about for you?

C: Uh, similar. I've got movie posters, because one of the things that I really don't like in people's homes... when they have framed pictures of themselves. And that is like a little—something that really drives me mad.

A: What about full-sized nude paintings of themselves? That's cool, right?

C: That could be understandable, under certain circumstances. But I really don't like when you have photos of yourself and that, it kind of **freaks me out**.

A: Okay. I'm trying—I'm trying—I'm visualizing our livingroom to see. Maybe we have one of us dressed up, is that allowed?

C: I love some—Recently I was looking at some photos of when I was a kid, and there's some great photos from my house, because basically there were three kind of posters, well, **framed pictures**, in our living room. Um, one was of the family together. Then one was of the Pope.

A: Hahaha okay.

C: Of course. Irish.

A: Ireland, yeah.

C: In the background. And the other was Johnny Cash.

A: Ooo!

C: Because people don't realize Johnny Cash in Ireland is as big, if not bigger than Elvis. So that's...

A: Wow!

C: You've got Johnny Cash, the Pope, and the family. That's the Holy Trinity.

A: It is a—a—sort of Holy Trinity.



Vocabulary bank

a plectrum = a pick = a small piece of plastic used to play (strum) a guitar

a venue = a place where an organized event (like a concert) happens

I have a bone to pick = I have something I want to talk (seriously) about

a house warming = a party celebrating a move to a new home

pointless = not having sense or purpose

nothing fancy = something casual, not expensive or glamorous

a flea market = a type of street market to sell second-hand goods

on display = put something somewhere for people to see it

a frame = a structure that surrounds a picture/window/door etc.

freaks me out = drives me crazy

framed pictures = pictures in a structure often hanging on walls or on display



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