

## EPISODE 13: SUPERSTITIONS

C: Let's talk about superstitions, because later I've got a little story explaining why I am a superstitious person. Are you superstitious?

A: Hmm, I think that there's different ways to be superstitious. Obviously I think I know that there's nothing, at least in my opinion, there's nothing related to the supernatural in superstitions, but human beings and human interaction is so complex that... and our self-confidence is so important that I think that if something makes you feel better, makes you feel more comfortable, more whatever you need in that moment, and believing in the superstition does it, then we do it you, you know?

C: So, let's say you're walking down the street and you see **a ladder**; do you walk under the ladder?

A: Oh, that's practical, I mean, but that's a superstition that's based on practicality, I mean where is it more likely something falls off the ladder and hits you if you walk under it or behind it?

C: Yeah, it's so unlikely, yeah, I mean...

A: Really? Really?

C: It's only a second you walk under it...

A: It's only **a hammer**

C: Okay

A: I mean I don't know, like, you have children. Don't you think about the...I don't have children, but I would constantly be weighing the risk-reward of every little decision like that.

C: Yeah, yeah, but you walk around, you can well...fall onto the streets and a car coming, stuff like that.

A: Yeaah, I'm not buying that.

C: Black cat? You see a Black cat, what do you do?

A: I mean, the University of Barcelona is filled with black cats. If that were truly a thing, we would all have died horrible deaths by now.

C: Exactly, nobody should go there.

A: Exactly.



C: And, there's something about salt. Do you have this? Where if you **spill the salt**, you have to throw it over your shoulder

A: I know that that exists, I don't think I've ever witnessed it first-hand, but it's been talked about often...

C: We would do that in Ireland, if the salt spills, we throw it over the left shoulder.

A: With which hand?

C: With your right hand.

A: Of course, because you don't do anything for good luck with your left hand.

C: No, no, no, of course not. But we throw it over the left shoulder cause on your right shoulder is your little angel.

A: OH, and the devil is on the left?

C: Exactly, so it's to keep the devil away...

A: So, you're salting the devil? That's it?

C: Yeah, yeah.

A: Interesting.

C: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A: It's not related to the fact that salt used to be used to a certain degree as currency, you know, like the word salary and things like that. And to show now that we've evolved so much further past the idea of a random object having value, we throw it over our shoulder...

C: I saw that this week, wasn't it something about Donald Trump? And he said that the first currency ever people were dealing in were rocks.

A: I didn't see that. Doesn't surprise me.

C: Any other superstitions you can think of?

A: I mean I have a funny example of why don't, you know, I think professional athletes have a lot of superstition supposedly which is always funny to me. I was thinking about this yesterday I'm a big basketball fan and basketball player, I've played my whole life. As I was watching some highlights yesterday and realize that some of the NBA teams, they have-- I don't know now I think NBA teams have four or five different jerseys like uniforms that they would wear



according to home and away, special theme night, whatever and I was thinking about those superstitions about athletes don't want to change their blah blah blah blah and then you have a different uniform every night, like that would **drive me nuts** if I were a superstitious professional athlete. For me I have a couple of superstitions related to basketball. If I go play basketball and afterwards, I'm shooting around, you know, to like **cool down** afterwards, have to make the last shot before you leave, you cannot leave after missing a shot.

C: Aaah, ok.

A: And it's not that I believe anything will happen but I think it's a positive habit, you know, and I have to do that and in fact usually what I have to do is... it used to be just make ten free throws, then as I got older it became make ten free throws in a row, now it's making ten free throws, five of which have to be swishes, meaning they have to go through cleanly. So, I feel like I think that gives me a sense of evolving as a human being, I have gotten better.

C: As a kid I used to play football, you call it soccer, I call it football. For me, I had to be the last one to go on the pitch that was kind of my...

A: That's some superstar stuff, wow.

C: It wasn't out of being pretentious or something, it was my little superstition to myself, like if I'm the last one out I'm going to have a good game.

A: Interesting.

C: Yes, I would kind of **linger** in the dressing room.

A: This will become difficult on a team where somebody else decided to have this superstition.

C: And what about numbers? Because I think in the States thirteen...

A: Thirteen, for sure. I want to say recently I, in the last year or two, I was on an airplane that didn't have a 13th row. I remember my grandmother's building didn't have a 13th floor, I mean it did, but it was the 14th floor, so like the elevator, you know, would say 11 - 12 - 14, kind of like some *Being John Malkovich* type of thing. And I think that was common for a while at least in the US in terms of tall buildings.

C: Yeah, yeah. There's a band, The 13th Floor Elevators.

A: They were big, they were one of the first psychedelic bands. I think they are from Texas.

C: Texas, yeah, yeah, yeah. Roky Erickson.

A: Ah, so... hence the name, that makes sense.

C: Exactly.



A: Are there other numbers in Ireland that are...?

C: No, for us it's 13 and obviously the day Friday the 13th.

A: Here in Spain, it's not Friday the 13th, it's Tuesday...

C: Why? I mean why...

A: Why? Tuesday is a terrible day.

C: Tuesday is a boring day.

A: Yeah, exactly.

C: I mean, Friday I always thought was something religious, wasn't it like the crucifixion on the Friday and 13, 12 disciples plus one. But then I heard something about... in Italy, it's 17, it's the number because in...

A: Both prime numbers...

C: 17 is because if you write it with Roman numerals it then spells out basically VIXI so V- I- X- I more or less it's only the idea and this is where the Italian superstition comes from, which means "I have lived", which technically means then I am dead so I think it's a that a Friday the 17th or maybe even another day, it might be Thursday the 17th, but in Italy it's different, yeah.

A: I would just like to say that I feel personally like you may be inventing this, not on purpose, if anybody who's listening to this, we'd like to look up the truth behind any of these superstitions and post them in the comments. I think that would be fantastic, because we're not going to do it now cause we're on the microphone, but I'm calling BS on some of these stories.

C: And please please look it up to prove me right here.

A: Wrong.

C: My story. Friday the 13th, February, Friday the 13th 1998. I was living in France at the time, and they have like a midterm where the schools are off, I was working at the school at the time, and so I decided I was going to fly home to see my family. That's flying from Bordeaux to Paris, Charles de Gaulle, and then Charles de Gaulle to Dublin, just cause the flight was cheaper or something. And then in Dublin my brother was gonna pick me up, he was coming down in the car and then he was going to drive me up to Belfast.

A: How long of a drive is that?

C: It's about... it could be up to 3 hours, cause the roads, especially that time.



A: Ok, you make it sound like that's a long drive.

C: Yeah.

A: Cultural differences.

C: Cultural differences. So, I was kind of kidding with the students leading up to this and like Oooooo two flights on Friday the 13th and it's like, obviously **pointing out** that I was not the superstitious person, didn't matter to me. And of course, I was proven wrong, because that day will forever stick in my memory

A: Because it was September 11th?

C: It was... this is very important actually to the story. It was pre-September 11th, and I'll explain why, okay? The first flight from Bordeaux to Charles de Gaulle was cancelled, okay? Now I thought, ugh, this is bad luck.

A: Ok, sorry, can we just pause it. So, this is bad luck - I would absolutely say something like that even though, like I said earlier, I don't really believe in superstitions. Superstition is a little different than bad luck, good luck perhaps.

C: But I think there I was thinking like, it would have to happen on Friday the 13th. I've taken so many flights up to this point and nothing's ever happened, first time something happens Friday the 13th, flight was cancelled. Luckily, I had no luggage with me because I was traveling... traveling light and so I went over to the Air France desk and I said "look, flights are being cancelled", they said "We will put you on the next one to Paris and that wasn't leaving until later much later in the evening so I wouldn't make **my connection flight** and then they said "hey, have you got no luggage?", I said "no, no, I'm just traveling with a little backpack". And they said "we can fly you to Paris Orly now, and when you get to Orly get a taxi and we'll pay for the taxi, bring the..."

A: Oh, yeah, right...

C: Yeah, yeah, this is a true story

A: No, I believe that they said that

C: They said that. It was brilliant, I was like 21, kind of long hair, I have my sunglasses on, traveling light just a backpack, so I had to rush to get to this plane that was about to leave, and I was, you know, taken on to the plane well I am very very well treated up at the front

A: Have we said what airline this is, or does it not matter?

C: This is Air France!



A: Okay!

C: Yeah! But yeah, today's episode is about how to buy Air France and what was really funny was to see other people who are kinda “who is this guy? Why is he getting this special treatment? Young guy and sunglasses.” and they start saying “Maybe his face, maybe he is famous. Isn't he that guy in that band?” and two people asked me for my autograph. Because i am very polite, I was like of course what is your name? \*laughing\* started signing it.

A: Did you sign your name?

C: I... I just made a **squiggle**.

A: Well done!

C: So probably until this day there are some people in France think they've the autograph of I don't know who. Got to Paris, got the taxi. It was paid for.

A: But not at the time. I mean later you were reimbursed...?

C: Yeah, reimbursed.

A: Ok, but they did actually...?

C: Yeah yeah, yeah yeah!

C: I thought you know this already but a bit of a story for Friday the 13th but it doesn't end there. The second fly i board the plane on time. There's no problem or so that. And this time I am at the back of the plane and when i go to take my seat I noticed that there are two **nuns** who were sitting in the same **row**.

A: Together?

C: yeah! Okay...at that point I was yeah this is not bad. Because you know if anything does happen, being in good company here. You know, just turn around and say, “Bless me”. So just as you know i don't really remember the details of this. I sat down, I've got my Walkman on. This is 1998 yeah.

A: Yes

C: Playing cassettes and what not, at some point, the captain makes the announcements and the first day of the typical - estimated flying time etcetera. and mmm like about 30 seconds later, suddenly there is like “Ladies and gentlemen you must evacuate the plane there's a bomb on board.”

A: Oh my god!



C: Those were the exact words “Ladies and gentlemen you must evacuate the plane there's a bomb on board.” now at this point I I don't think I've ever taken the seat belt off faster in my life. I'm jumping up in **the aisle** ready to run off the plane nobody else has reacted,

A: really?

C: Yeah, and I am thinking okay, either they don't understand English, or maybe i just misheard. And it was like people are just really slow to react and by the time in the

A: also, you had no... oh no i guess you had your bag.

C: I just had my backpack. Yeah exactly!

A: Okay! Yeah, so it was also easier for you to just grab it and go.

C: Yeah. And this what I mean I think, you know, pre 2001 you know 09/11. I don't think... you know. Why did they say that? You know.

A: Yeah

C: Why did they say there's a bomb on board? And why didn't they say, you know, there's a technical problem?

A: I still feel like this is the introduction to a Madonna video and the bomb is her. She is a bombshell. She comes out dancing.

C: I wish! I get... We managed to get off the plane. We managed to evacuate.

A: Clearly!

C: You're talking to a ghost. And I do remember, it was really...

A: This is in Paris?

C: This was in Paris. And this was about 5.15 (pm).

A: Sorry, this is in Charles de Gaulle after you...

C: Charles de Gaulle, yeah! In Paris. And I remember being very calm at that moment because i thought “this is how I die”.

A: “Que será, será”

C: I think I was really calm, and I looked over and the nuns were panicking.

A: Who's a person of faith now?



C: I think I even made a joke to them saying like, "well, we'll soon find out now!"

A: No...

C: I was really calm. We got off the plane, we got off the plane, and the police led us to another room, and they explained the situation, they said that there had been a phone call from a legitimate terrorist organization, because they'd given them the password, and--

A: Not one of the illegitimate?

C: I don't know how this works, maybe... But I think, you know, when there is a phone call like this, this procedure is like, they have codewords--

A: At this time people still used phone books, right? So perhaps there was the phone book of official registered terrorist organizations and they saw where the call was coming from.

C: No... I think what it is that they have, you know, internationally, there are kind of like codewords/passwords thing, you know, "we're from this group, okay, what's your password?" And when that happened that was when they called the captain and the captain said, "there's a bomb on board, get off the plane". So, this story continues. The police then said "well, the next thing you have to do is, take all the luggage off the plane, you know, search the plane for a bomb..." and they said, "we don't think there's going to be a bomb, but you know, we have to do this whole procedure". And I thought, "This is going to be hours and hours" and then at that point, you know, 50-60 passengers in the room with the police the next question is "is there anybody here who doesn't have any luggage on the plane?" And I just went like, "Oh God...", **raising my hand**, looking around going "I'm one of many? ..." I'm one of one. I'm the only person with my hand up. And then it gets better, where I am from? Which city?

A: Aaaa, Karachi?

C: Belfast...

A: Aaaa, yes, exactly...

C: Is Belfast famous for anything? at that be I'm especially, the 90's and stuff? So, I'm flying to Ireland on a French aircraft. I'm the only person from Northern Ireland on the plane, I'm the only person without luggage and the police say "well, we'd like to talk to you in another room".

A: And these were all French police?

C: These were French police.

A: In English so.

C: No!





A: No?

C: They were speaking French

A: Okay!

C: But luckily in that time my French was good

A: This is important maybe...

C: Yeah, yeah

A: I was gonna say because that's...

C: Cause it's like... but I...

A: That's some C2 level interrogation in French. Because...

C: This is the problem. This is the problem. When you are in that kind of situation, the police, you just forget all ability to speak any language, or to respond. Their first questions: "what is your name?", and I just said "I don't know".

A: Really?

C: Yeah! HAHA this was kind...

A: Wow! Wait! Weren't you just telling me how cool you were under pressure...

C: Yeah, yeah! It's like...

A: ... while you were insulting the nuns?

C: About 6 hours earlier, I was a rockstar, then I was like insulting them. But this point, I was just useless with authority, and the police were questioning me. I was panicking. All I can think was... I wasn't really worried about going to jail, I just got to think how am I gonna explain this to my mother? In a phone call? I mean she is gonna kill me. So, this why I'm panicking incredibly. They... they don't really suspect me, okay. They let me go, and dah dah dah dah. And then, after couple hours, maybe 5 or 6 hours, they say "Okay, we searched the plane, luggage, etcetera. We can't find any bomb, you know, we think it was a **hoax**. So, you can get back on the plane, and we will fly to Dublin.

A: And this is when Madonna came in and started shooting the music video?

C: Not quite! The Beatles come next. Because... We get back on the plane. Now, lot people are still iffy about this, kinda go and they sit about that...



A: About you!

C: With me especially though!

A: I mean they had noticed that are just like...

C: Yeah, yeah yes! So, at this point I'm... and we get back on the plane and they kinda say just like you know you had a tough day, does anybody want a drink? You know, it's free. We're just ... yeah. So basically, a free bar on the plane.

A: Okay!

C: They were...

A: On the way to Ireland?

C: On the way to Irland. You can imagine what happen next. Do you know who was worst? The nuns! They were pressing those little buttons.

A: Yeah!

C: Double Baileys

A: I mean...They got one sin in life. They gotta do it right. Go hard!

C: Some people... and part of the problem, if you have alcohol on the plane, I think it's something to do so with the cabin pressure, altitude?

A: Yeah, it affects you.

C: It affects you really quickly!

A: Sure! It's the altitude, I don't know. The blood thing... another thing for people to look up and get back to the same comments

C: In the comment, yeah. Or try doubt, and... after I think about half an hour somebody started a little sing along. I think it started with "If we all live in the Yellow Submarine" and it just went to The Beatles, medley, for about an hour.

A: Really?

C: Yeah...

A: That's funny.

C: People were like... it is like a karaoke style.



A: No, you too? It should've been you too, you're going to Irland.

C: Nah nah nah...

A: Oh, wow! This is offensive!

C: it's like...

A: No Pogues?

C: And the end of the story is I, I don't know what, 8, 9, 10 hours delay, whatever. I arrive in Dublin airport. My brother is waiting for me. I'm a little bit **tipsy** at this point.

A: Yeah. Yo! you are.

C: Alright, yeah, yeah.

A: Okay.

C: And he's just furious because he's been waiting 10 hours, and he had no information. He didn't know what was going on, and I said: "Hey! I've got a story for you." and he was like "I don't care about your story, just get in the car.

\*Both laughing\*

C: So, that was why Friday 13<sup>th</sup> will always and for ever get me a little bit of the ...

## Vocabulary bank

**a ladder** = a piece of equipment used to climb up (and down)

**a hammer** = a tool with a wooden handle and heavy metal head

**spill salt** = salt comes out of its container unwantedly

**drive me nuts** = make me crazy

**cool down** = to continue to exercise gently at the end of training (often to avoid injury)

**to linger** = stay in a place longer than normal

**pointing out** = making someone aware of something

**my connection flight** = the second flight before reaching a final destination

**a squiggle** = a short line that curls and loops in an irregular way

**nuns** = religious women

**A row** = a (straight) line of seats

**the aisle** = a passage between rows of seats

**raising my hand** = holding your hand in the air to gain attention

**a hoax** = a deception, something false

**tipsy** = slightly drunk

