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## Introduction

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast, a podcast for learners of English all around the world. Hello.

So, this is an Amber and Paul episode, which means that my friends Amber and Paul are joining me on the podcast again today. And I've chosen this time to do an introduction. I think it won't be a 20 minute introduction, but I've gone for an introduction this time.

The reason I've gone for an introduction is because I just have certain things I need to tell you. It's what I'm calling housekeeping, podcast housekeeping, just sort of general podcast admin and other bits and pieces I need to talk to you about. And also a few few words about the episode before you start listening to it, but I promise it won't be 20 minutes or will it?

I don't know. We'll see. So in this introduction first, I just want to tell you about the episodes of this podcast that you can expect to receive before the end of the year.

And it's three, okay, three more episodes including this one until the end of the year, possibly four if you're a premium subscriber. Okay, so three, that's this one, plus two others, and maybe another one if you are a premium subscriber. Now, I know that's quite a lot.

And we're all very busy in December. But you know, you can always save them and listen to them later, maybe in January, when things are a bit quieter. But anyway, I've got three episodes that I have to publish before the end of the year.

So I'm going to tell you about that. And then I'll say a few things to prepare you for this Amber and Paul episode that you're about to hear. And that will be my introduction.

Okay, so two episodes this week, one today, and another one on the 25th of December, that's Christmas Day. And then a third episode next week on Monday, the 29th of December. So yeah, Monday, today, and next Monday, as usual, and then a sort of bonus midweek episode on the 25th of December on Christmas Day.

Now, this makes it seem like I planned this perfectly, so that I could publish a special Christmas gift episode on Christmas Day, the 25th. It seems like I planned that perfectly. But that is not actually the case.

It's more of an accident than anything else. Yesterday, just yesterday, as I record this, I had Amber and Paul here in the

podcast to record an episode for your listening pleasure. And what we recorded just feels like, it feels very much like two distinct episodes.

I would publish it as one, but it definitely feels like it should be two episodes. The first one is the usual catching up session. And that's this episode you're about to hear.

The usual catching up session where we talk about what has happened recently. And you'll hear us Paul's ambitious marathon plans for the next two years. He has plans to run lots of marathons.

That's a lot of running. And yeah, what is he running from? We all wonder to ourselves.

But anyway, a lot of running marathon plans, ambitious international marathon plans. Then we talk about to what extent Amber was involved in the robbery of the Louvre Museum earlier this year. And then it's back to Paul, who was involved just last week in a very dramatic situation in which he, rather like Matt Damon in the Jason Bourne films, nearly had to escape a country in the middle of the night, which would have involved his running skills, running through the night to escape one country and find safety across an international border into another country.

Which country, what happened? Listen on to find out all about that. So that's coming up in this episode, and we'll start in a moment, I promise.

The other Amber and Paul episode that we recorded yesterday is a discussion of the words of the year 2025. Okay, so that will be the

one that arrives on the 25th of December. So definitely two distinct episodes that I think should be published separately.

So that is why that is happening. Now, you might be thinking, Luke, why don't you just publish that words of the year episode on Monday the 29th? Yeah, I would do that.

That would be the normal thing to do. But the thing is, I've got another episode lined up for the 29th next Monday. Sorry this seems so complicated.

And you might be thinking, Luke, do we need to know this? Well, kind of for me, in a way, yes. In a weird way, I feel like you do need to know this because it helps you keep track of what's going on at Luke's English Podcast.

Hopefully your favourite podcast, just your favourite podcast. Anyway, so just the other day, the day before yesterday, I recorded the World News Quiz 2025 with Stephen from the Send 7 podcast. The fourth time that we've done that, the fourth year running.

It's become sort of an end of year tradition. We recorded it a couple of days ago, and I really want to publish that one as the last episode of 2025. Because I can't really publish the World News Quiz 2025 as the first episode of 2026.

It just doesn't seem right. My podcast intuition, my podcasting intuition just tells me, don't do that. The little voice in my head that is responsible for making podcast decisions is in the back of my head going, you know, you can't publish the World News Quiz 2025 as the first episode of 2026.

No, don't do that. So, for the first episode of 2026, when everyone in the world, I assume, is naturally making a fresh start, or so many people in the world at that time of year are naturally making a fresh start and looking at the year ahead, I want to publish something with more of a forward-looking feel to it as the first episode of the year. And I have a specific episode planned for that, something which is much more appropriate as the first episode of the year.

It's about applying good learning habits for 2026. So, that's what I want to publish as the first episode of 2025. I mean 2026, not 2025.

Sorry. And as a result, these other episodes, this little traffic jam of episodes, they all have to go out a little bit faster than normal, so you get extra. So, two Amber and Paul episodes this week.

First one, this one. Next one on Thursday the 25th of December, which is technically Christmas Day. And then the World News Quiz 2025 coming out on Monday the 29th of December.

And then the first episode of 2026 on Monday the 5th of January. And most of you at this point will be thinking, yes, great, Luke. This is fine.

Good. In fact, you don't really need to tell us this. Just do it.

It's fine. Yeah. So, I'm just thinking out loud on the podcast here.

But also, I don't want you to miss those episodes because they will arrive at unexpected...well, one of them will arrive at an unexpected time when you might be busy doing something else. So, I don't want you to miss that, which could happen because like most

people, you're probably incredibly busy at this time of year. So, there you go.

Premium subscribers, I want to give you a premium episode to end the year as well, but I'm quickly running out of time before the school holidays begin and I will have to switch off my microphone, lock up the podcasting room, step away from the podcast for some family time. So, I'm running out of time, but hopefully there will be a P73 part four, which will be pronunciation. No more vocab reviews necessary, just pronunciation or a standalone episode of some kind.

I have something in the pipeline, but it's all a matter of time. It's kind of a race against time that I'm dealing with here. So, that's just an overview of what to expect over the next couple of weeks on Luke's English Podcast.

Thank you for listening to all that fascinating housekeeping, as it is known. So, here we are then with this episode, Catching Up With Amber and Paul Number 16. That's the working title.

I haven't quite decided on the full title of the episode yet, but it's Catching Up With Amber and Paul Number 16, I think. So, just in case you are new to this podcast, Amber and Paul have been guests on the show many, many times. Amber Minogue and Paul Taylor.

All three of us live in Paris, but we are all basically English. I say basically English because it's a little bit complicated, but we are basically English. We all have French spouses, that's French husbands or wives, and we have French-speaking and English-speaking kids.

We've got bilingual kids. And we all first met each other while performing stand-up comedy at shows in Paris. Paul Taylor is a professional stand-up comedian who performs in French and English.

He's recently finished another world tour of his most recent show, which is called F\*\*k Me, I'm French. Okay? It's called F\*\*k Me, I'm French, which is basically about Paul discovering, to his shock and surprise, that he has become French.

And yes, I beeped that swear word because it came without any warning. And so, I chose to beep that one. I don't always beep swear words, and you'll hear me mention that in a moment.

But anyway, I did beep that one. F\*\*k Me, I'm French. That's the name of his show.

I've just said it again. So, he toured this show around the world this year, but now he is back in France. And in fact, he'll be touring France with this show in January, February, and March of 2026.

So, if you live in France, or you live near France, you should see it. Definitely, you should go out and see it. It's 100% in English this time, and you can get tickets at [paultaylorkomedy.com](http://paultaylorkomedy.com).

So, Paul is basically English because he mostly grew up in Canterbury, in the south of England, but he also spent time in France growing up. And as a result, he speaks near-perfect French. Also, his wife is French.

He lives in France, but he doesn't actually have a French passport. But he does have an Irish passport because he's ginger. No, that's not the reason.

Not all ginger people get Irish or Scottish passports just by default. No, he's got an Irish passport because his mum is Irish. He's not even ginger.

He's partially ginger. He's got the ginger gene, a bit like me. I mean, I'm a bit ginger as well, but I don't get an Irish passport.

Because, as I said, gingeriness has got nothing to do with it. Anyway, so he's got an Irish passport. You might be thinking, why is this necessary information?

It all gets mentioned. Paul also does lots of running, including marathons, despite picking up a few injuries earlier this year, which you may have heard him talk about on the podcast. One of the things Paul is known for on this podcast is his laugh, ha ha ha ha ha, which is infectious, meaning that he laughs.

It makes other people want to laugh as well, including listeners. And Lepsters have left comments about this many, many times over the years. So that is Paul.

Amber does many things, and she has many strings to her bow, which just means that she has many skills and does a lot of different things. But at the moment, she mostly works as a professional tour guide in Paris, giving guided tours for tourists in Paris. She knows a lot of things about French history and gives tours of the Louvre and other fascinating places in Paris.

In fact, she did that with Paul and me on this podcast in episode 927, when we did a tour of the Cluny Museum, a mediaeval museum. And in number 753, when we did a tour of the Louvre, and Amber taught us lots of fascinating things. You should listen to those episodes.

They're interesting. Amber spends a lot of time at the Louvre, giving tours and is very familiar with the ins and outs of this massive and fascinating French institution. And of course, you know, as you'd expect, she knows a thing or two about the robbery that happened.

Interestingly enough, she does know quite a lot about that. Is that suspicious? Now, Amber was actually born in South Africa.

So she's basically English, although she was actually born in South Africa, but grew up mostly in South East England before moving to Paris in her twenties. I think it was in her twenties. In terms of comments from Lepsters about Amber, usually people mention her lovely, lovely voice, which is a pleasure to listen to.

And also, she is a voiceover artist, by the way, which is no surprise considering the lovely tone of her voice. As I said, I met Amber and Paul years ago while doing stand-up comedy in Paris, and they have been coming on this podcast to have regular rambling and tangential conversations with me for years and years. The three of us together are known as the tangential trio, which means that we often go on conversational tangents.

You know, basically talking about things, side subjects, and going off from one subject to another. That's what's normal for Amber

and Paul episodes. So Amber and Paul episodes are a big part of this podcast, and it is great to have them back.

Now, I think I've told you pretty much everything you need to know. And how long have I been speaking for? Four, fifteen minutes, is it?

So I should also say that part of the appeal of these Amber and Paul episodes for my audience is that you can listen to an authentic, natural, unscripted conversation between friends in English. We speak to each other more or less exactly as we would normally speak to each other, even when we're not recording a podcast for Learners of English. So we try to speak totally normally and naturally.

And so you can expect, you know, all the normal features of natural English conversation. It's good practise for you. Also, you can expect strong language sometimes.

That means swearing, right? Swear words, the rude words. You know the words, you know them.

They're the first words you learn sometimes. But I just wanted to say, if you're listening to this with children, or you're in a classroom, or you're just basically, you just don't want to hear swear words at this particular moment, I just want to say you should be warned. This is a warning because there is some swearing in this episode.

This is something I've spoken about before. The vast majority of my listeners are fine with some swearing on the podcast. Some people are not so keen on the swearing, but other people totally

love it because, of course, swear words are extremely common in informal spoken English between friends.

And if, you know, you think to yourself, I'm learning English, I also want to learn the swear words for sure. So I keep the swear words in my episodes. I don't edit them out or beep them, usually, except the ones from earlier because they were, you know, because they took you by surprise.

I don't normally beep out my swear words. Sometimes I do. But most people actually, I think, want to hear the swear words and want to know how people actually swear in English.

So that is that. That's why I keep them in. But if swearing is not for you, then there you go.

You've been warned. Okay. By the way, if you want to know more about swearing in British English, specifically, for example, you want to know what the most common swear words are and exactly how rude they are.

And for example, what's the rudest word? You should listen to episode 83 of my podcast, which was called How to Swear in British English. I'm joined in that episode.

It's an old episode now, but I was joined by my brother James. And we talk about just every swear word that we can think of in British English. And we give them all ratings in terms of how rude they are.

And you will discover in that one, how rude the F word is and the S word and exactly how versatile the F word is. And in fact, what the rudest word is in the English language. It's the C word.

You're thinking, which word is that? Some of you like, yeah, of course the C word. Yeah.

I love the C word. Anyway, if you want to learn all about that stuff, then listen to episode 83, How to Swear in British English. Yes.

All right. So there is a PDF transcript for this episode. If you want to read what you are hearing, if you want to know how those swear words are spelled, there's not that much swearing, to be honest.

But anyway, if you want to read what you are hearing word for word, you can check out the PDF transcript. There's a link in the description of this episode and on the episode page on my website. Ho ho ho, you are welcome.

Right. So without further ado, let's get started with this first of two Amber and Paul episodes this week. And here we go.

### **Conversation**

*Amber and Paul are on the podcast. Amber and Paul are on the podcast. Amber and Paul are on the podcast.*

*Amber and Paul are on another podcast. Paul's a very funny boy. His laugh I very much enjoy.*

*Amber's got a lovely voice. If I could choose an accent, hers would be my choice, yeah.*

Here I am in my podcast room and I'm joined again by Amber and Paul.

Hello, guys. How are you?

Hello. Very good. Has the jingle happened yet?

Yeah, I'll find a way to get the jingle in at the beginning. Amber, what's the situation?

We are as ever in the podcast. Hungry to record an episode with you this afternoon.

Hungry, hungry, hungry to record. You're not actually hungry.

Not hungry because we've just had lunch.

A delicious lunch. Yes. OK.

And you're hungry to record something this afternoon. Fantastic. OK, great.

Great, great, great. Paul, you ran you ran 10 kilometres this morning. I did.

Not in order to be here. I've got to get there. I really want to do a podcast.

Yeah. No, I'm in the process of running training for another marathon, of which I'll be doing 10 in the next two years as part of my 40 years challenge. That's the aim.

10 marathons. Yeah. I'm swapping my comedy world tour for a running world tour.

It's like Eddie Izzard. Yeah. Right.

You've become Eddie Izzard. I have. Yeah.

So. So, yeah, I hit 40 in 2026. Yes.

And as a result, I've decided to run the world major marathons, of which there are currently seven, but there will be nine by the time I finish the challenge. And I'm running Paris as a test. So that'll be the 10th one.

Oh, my God. You're going to run all the world's major marathons over the next 10 years. Two years.

Over the next two years.

Yeah. From my 40th to my 41st birthday. OK.

Wow.

So it's over one year, really.

Yes, I see.

I'm building up to it now. The Paris marathons in April, that'll be kind of a test to see if I can train uninjured and do a marathon and not be completely injured by the end of it. And then if that all goes to plan and marathon one is on my 40th birthday in Chicago, that's the first one.

And then the other eight will happen in that year. Amber. And the question being, what are you running from, Paul?

Running from my troubles, running from my troubles, running from my family, running from the depression. Yeah. So I thought, why not?

Yeah. Well, I can't be too often with them. I mean, I've been doing a tour this year, so I've been away from home.

I'm like, oh, I'm not touring next year. I can't just stay at home. I've got to leave.

How can I get away from my family marathon running?

I'll go to a major city somewhere in the world and I'll just run in a circle for about, what, three hours or four hours or whatever.

Yeah, it'll be, initially it'll be four hours and then I might try and bring it down to three and a half hours.

I see. Can you just tell us the locations of these major marathons?

So in order that I will do them, it starts in Chicago, New York, Tokyo, Boston, London.

Wait a minute. You've got Chicago, New York, Tokyo, and then back to Boston. Yeah.

That's logical, isn't it? Well, yeah.

I mean, it's the... It's when they happen. It's just when they happen.

It's when they happen.

Yeah.

You don't choose the order.

Yeah.

I'm doing them, they're all at different times of the year, basically either usually in the autumn or the spring for weather reasons. It can't be too hot or too cold. So they're split.

There's basically, they're split between autumn. So the autumn ones I'm doing starting on my birthday are Chicago, New York. Then the following spring in 27 is Tokyo, Boston, London, Cape Town.

Then the other autumn is Sydney, Berlin, Shanghai. Wow. Amazing.

And I won't be touring, doing comedy. I'll just be doing comedy in Paris for those two years. I mean, I say two years because the Shanghai marathon, the last one is in the end of November in two years time.

Okay. But I'm only starting in like nine months officially. So anyway, yeah.

It's ambitious. Right. Yeah.

So comedy, comedy, comedy in Paris, comedy. And then, oh, I've had enough of this. I'm going to go run around in a circle in Shanghai, back to Paris, comedy, comedy, comedy, comedy, and so on.

And then just keep going off and doing these marathons and then you'll come back by the end of it. You won't be able to do stand-up comedy anymore. It'll be sit down comedy because your legs will be wrecked.

Yeah, exactly. That's basically it. Yeah.

And I'll try and do, my idea is to do like a gig in every city that I go to. I'm bringing Felix, the director. Felix, my cat.

Yeah. Felix, the director that we all worked with on What the Fuck France. Yes.

So he's coming to film all of it. All of them. He's coming with you to film.

Yeah, he's coming to film all of them. And we're going to do like mini... Oh, Felix needs a holiday.

So wait a minute. Here's the actual reason. You're making a TV series.

No, no, no, no, no. It's going to be a YouTube thing. Like I'm just going to put it on YouTube and it's going to be like a mini, you know, like maybe like a 20 minute documentary per city.

Because I've got a chapter for each of the marathons, like in my head, I know what each chapter is. And the idea is to do like a 10, 15 minute gig in each city to intersperse some comedy while I'm with the running. Are you getting any...

And we're going to call it Running Joke. Oh, see what he did. Oh, that's good.

That's good.

Are you getting any funding? I don't know yet. Because there's one thing you paying for this with your money, like it's a personal project.

It's lots of money. You know, obviously, if you want to bring Felix there too, and he's working and he's going to be, you know, he's going to be filming you preparing and then there and then editing and doing all that stuff. That's quite a lot of work.

He's going to need to eat. You know that, don't you?

Yeah. Yeah. So I don't know yet.

Because I feel like I've... I feel like until... So on January the 1st, I don't know when this will come out, but...

Before. So it's pre-Christmas. Okay.

So on January the 1st, I'm going to put a video out on social media announcing what's going to happen. And in that video, I'm like, hey, if you're a brand and you want to partner with a normal person running marathons, as opposed to all these like fit people, you know, because I think the thing that got me off my ass running wasn't watching like really perfect fitness, running influencers who've got perfect bodies and are chasing the perfect time. It was like normal people with normal bodies just being like, I need to get better.

And like watching those, like I feel like you get inspired more by normal people than you do by athletes. So that's kind of my thing. I'm like, hey, if you want to get on board, send me a message.

So we might have funding. We might not. But I'm going in it, into it, knowing that I'm not getting funded.

And if I do, it's bonus. I feel you're really misusing the word normal there quite substantially, because I never look at someone... Well, no, I never look at someone running a marathon.

I think normal. I think, what the fuck?

Abnormal. Really?

Have you not seen like 98% of the people that run marathons are like overweight? It's not about their bodies. It's about their mindset.

Oh, she means mentally ill.

I'm like, again, what are you running from? Have you thought about therapy? No.

I mean, like, I like running 5k and then I feel like I have nailed it. And then I go home. I have no desire to do more.

I didn't used to.

In normal life. I mean, when are you going to need to run that much? I mean, in the modern era.

I will tell you exactly when I almost needed to run.

OK, absolutely. Can we just hold that for a moment, though, because we're going to come to Paul has a story about an experience he had recently, which apparently involved potential life-threatening danger, which would involve running long distance to in order to escape from actually running from something other than just your own self-loathing or whatever it is. Before we get to that, Amber, what about you?

What's been going on with you? Are you ready for Christmas?  
What's what's what's the deal?

What's going on? What's happening with Amber?

I am.

Too many questions.

I'm Christmas ready. Always Christmas ready. Look forward to Christmas.

Are you doing Christmas here?

Christmas here. Christmas here. Hanukkah here.

I'm doing it all.

Doing the whole shebang.

Doing it both. Been in the Louvre. Luke, you know where I am.

That's where I am. I spend most of my time there.

OK. Were you involved in the robbery?

In the heist?

Yes.

No, I was not.

She would say that, though, wouldn't she?

Yeah. But you'd be the least suspicious person. If everyone was looking for a suspect, you wouldn't be one of them.

So maybe you did. Maybe you did get involved. Don't be suspicious.

No, I wasn't. What's under that? What's under my turban?

Yeah. Have you not got the crown? A crown.

A melted up crown. Crown jewel. It's still shut.

They've still shut the gallery where it was. Oh, yeah? Shame.

Because, I mean, they must have collected all the information by now. I just think that they're too embarrassed to open it up again.

Yeah, probably. Yes, I think that's probably the case. It was pretty funny.

So, of course, listeners, we're talking about the audacious robbery at the Louvre Museum, which, you know, you must have heard about. I've talked about it a few times now, so no need to go into it in more detail in terms of defining what it is. But as a Louvre-based tour guide, someone who knows about the museum and spends time there, you actually went there on the day.

You know what they say, like a criminal always returns to the scene of the crime. You actually went there the day of the robbery, am I right? No, I was at the Musée d'Orsay.

Oh, okay. I was opposite. I could see the drum.

Well, they closed it down as well. You were opposite on a walkie-talkie. Yeah.

Run, run!

You were masterminding the whole operation. Right, now get on the scooters. Now, get the saw out.

Saw through the glass. Good. Next.

Yeah. Drop the crown. No, just leave it, leave it, leave it.

Just keep going. Get on the scooter. Yeah.

And so what was your experience of this? What do you think of it?

I think the problem is if the Louvre is fair game for thieves with all the people, and although there were problems with security, every museum is a potential target. And it is true that museums compared to sort of jewellery shops are a lot easier to break into. You know, they don't have state-of-the-art stuff.

They are designed to be on display for people to go and case the joint, you know, in advance. So if you can do that from the Louvre, there are lots of museums that do have valuable things, whether they're jewels or objects, which can be broken down. And I think it really puts an onus on all the other museums to really increase their security.

And that's what's so scary. I mean, obviously it's devastating for the Louvre, but it's dangerous. I thought it was pretty interesting.

They didn't have state-of-the-art security. Like I thought that they would be the most secure places in the world. In the world.

Like more than a jewellery shop. Do you know what I mean? But the thing is, it's open to the people.

It's not at night. They didn't break in when the museum was shut. So, you know, it is designed for you to walk around.

And the glass was bulletproof, but they use like saws. It was incredibly quick. I mean, there were lots of problems obviously with security.

But you know, I mean, if you try to break into, you know, rue de la Paix, you know, where all the like jewellery shops are, forget it. I mean, everything, you know, they've got real security.

Yeah. So it's a lack of funding, isn't it? I mean, who actually owns the Louvre?

Who is responsible for it? It's the government. It's the government, is it?

So is this like cuts? Cuts to public spending that's resulted in this kind of thing? Is that what this is?

Cuts? I mean, cuts, several types of cuts. Tax cuts or spending cuts, not tax cuts.

And window...

Circular saw cuts.

Glass. That joke didn't work. I made a mean of that.

I think when you explain it, it makes it really good though. I don't know. I mean, I think the Louvre has been like complaining.

I mean, it's on strike. It went on strike on Monday. People are complaining about the working conditions and the lack of staff.

You know, when it rains, it leaks, you know, you're walking around, they've got buckets on the floor. And what's really weird is it is quite expensive and it's going up. Next year, it's going up 10 euros for non-EU people.

From what?

Oh, for non-EU. Yeah, I remember reading that. It's 22 euros at the moment and it will be 32 euros for non-EU people.

How do they check that? Do they ask for your passport at the ticket office online? How does that work?

Great question. Great question. It is going to be a whole clusterfuck, won't it?

You know, trying to get... because if you just buy your 22 euro ticket, I mean, they're going to now have to ask to see ID to prove that you're European because... and then that is just going to slow everything down.

And it's already... It's already a nightmare. Very slow.

Yes, exactly. And they already don't have enough staff. And so they say that...

Unless online, you have to upload your passport. But then you could just upload anyone's passport, right? I don't think you do.

I don't think you do. You know, like you do for a visa, you know, like a visa when you go to the US or to the UK now, you upload a photo of your passport. And I guess, I don't know, it's...

like, I understand, you know, if they need more money and whatever, but I feel like that's a really difficult way to manage it. If they can't even sort out two guys, two, as the French would say, *bracassés*, like broken arms, coming in and stealing stuff, they can't manage that. How are they going to manage people frauding their way into the Louvre being like, I don't want to pay 32.

I'll just pretend I'm an EU citizen. Absolutely. Yeah.

Oh dear. So it's really opened up a can of worms there at the Louvre.

It certainly has.

Yes. A complicated situation. Maybe what they should do is just change the name so they don't call it, it's not a museum anymore.

Because if it's museums that are under threat, just call it the museum, the Louvre gallery, and then it'll be right. Or even just sell a few diamonds in the foyer. And then, you know, just they can call it a shop and no one's going to, as you said, no one would attempt to rob a shop, would they?

A shop. How many... It's a stupid idea.

You must get questions all every day from American tourists about it, who are like really excited. Because for them, it's like Ocean's Eleven happened at the Louvre. Like it's a real life Ocean's Eleven.

So they must be really excited to get answers. What are the questions they're asking you? Like, oh my God, were you like there?

Did you see what was going on?

Well, they want to know where it happened and how it was possible. But on Oliver's podcast, I don't know if you listened to it, he...

Oliver G.

Oliver G. The Earful Tower.

Earful Tower.

He interviewed some people who were in the room when it happened.

Wow, he is a good journalist. He's got a nose for a story.

He certainly does.

Sniffs it out. Like a pig searching for truffles.

That's exactly him.

Straight in there. I'll speak to two people who are in the room and give them a good dressing down in the process. Why didn't you stop?

Well, they had a band saw. All right, sorry.

Well, I think what happened was that the staff who were there are not... They're not there to protect the work from being stolen, so to speak. They're there to make sure everyone's okay.

And so when these people broke in, and to be fair, why not? People started feeling they got scared and it could have been anything. It wasn't.

It was a robbery, best case scenario. But it could have been a terrorist attack. It could have been something more nefarious.

And what the staff did and what they should have done is they got everyone out and they made sure everyone was safe. And they're not going to put themselves between someone wielding a saw or maybe more weapons and like the jewels, even though, of course, the jewels are priceless. It's terrible.

And the people heard this noise and it was this terrible noise and this cracking. And they were like, oh, my God, what's going to happen? And they were afraid.

And so they emptied everyone out. And then they ended up evacuating the Louvre completely, obviously, and shutting it down. But in the moment, they didn't know what was happening.

They thought maybe something scary. They're Americans. Of course, their mind goes immediately to the Americans that were in the room at the same.

Yeah.

Of course, they imagine frightening things that sometimes happen in America or people with guns or indeed in other places. But yes, they're immediately in that situation. They panic.

Yes. Fair enough. Rightly so.

Yeah.

Wow. What a dramatic situation. Hello, listeners.

I'd like to just take a pause here and just check in with you and make sure that you're OK. How are you doing out there in podcast land? Are you managing to keep up with this?

I really hope you're enjoying it. Long term listeners might be fine with this and just having a blast catching up with the pod pals in another episode. But of course, for many of you, it might be fairly difficult to follow a conversation like this.

As I've said many times, conversation episodes like this are definitely more difficult than episodes where I'm on my own. So it might be more challenging. But I do want to emphasise that it's still really important that you listen to things like this to train your ear to understand fast, natural, spontaneous, fluent speech.

It is more difficult because we're all speaking relatively quickly, connecting our words together with all the features of connected speech like native speakers do when talking normally. There's some possibly difficult vocabulary flying around. We're good

friends, so we interrupt each other and talk over each other sometimes.

There are those moments of humour where we don't always say exactly what we mean or we might say things just to make each other laugh and then there's laughter going on. But I just want to remind you that there is a full transcript of the episode if you want to check it out. If there are things that you feel like you've missed, you could always check that out.

That would be a good idea. It would definitely help to kind of consolidate, reinforce your learning from this. You'll find the link for the PDF transcript in the description.

It's there for you if you want it. So far in this conversation, we have talked mainly about two things, about Paul's marathon plans and then the Louvre robbery. In terms of the marathon plans, basically, as you heard, Paul is planning to run 10 marathons over the next couple of years in various international locations.

And this coincides with his 40th birthday. We sort of half joke about how Paul is running away from all his problems and from his family. I mean, that's kind of half true.

Maybe it is true, but it's also not true. But anyway, it's kind of just a long running joke really there that Paul is running from his problems. Paul talked about his plans to film these trips, these trips to different cities to run marathons.

He's planning to film them. He's going to bring his producer, is it, or director, his name is Felix, who's worked with him in the past, to film these trips, which will include moments of him performing

comedy on stage in each place and then clips of him preparing and running in each city. And this will be turned into a YouTube series called Running Joke, which is a nice title.

We also explored the idea of potential funding where he might get money if there's some sponsorship that could be done. If not, then he may be prepared to fund it himself. But anyway, that was the marathon stuff.

Then Amber, we turned to Amber and focused on her. And we talked about being ready for Christmas. She talked about the robbery at the Louvre.

We joked about how she was involved in the robbery. Obviously, she wasn't actually involved, of course. As someone very familiar with the museum, Amber gave her perspective on the robbery.

She described how the robbery happened. She gave comments about the implications of this robbery. Basically, those things, those implications are the fact that museums are designed to be open and accessible rather than highly secured, like jewellery shops.

And therefore, they don't have like armed security and stuff like that. And that's one of the reasons that the robbery happened. And one of the reasons that the museum and other museums are targeted.

Amber discussed the lack of funding for the museum, the poor security infrastructure, recent strikes and the wider implications of this robbery for museum security worldwide. We also mentioned the public reaction to the robbery, especially the fact that tourists

seem to be fascinated with it. And also how museum staff understandably prioritised the safety of people working there or visitors.

They prioritise that over protecting the precious objects during the incident. So that's that. Now, at this point, I want to just encourage you to keep listening because Paul is about to describe another dramatic experience that he had recently when he was abroad.

Just before we do that, I want to remind you 20% off Luke's English Podcast premium during the current holiday season. That discount will last for a whole year. But act fast because this offer will end at midnight your time on the 31st of January, 2026.

That's when the offer ends. Signing up to LEP premium will let you access all the other episodes, which I put a lot of effort into teaching you vocabulary in context, giving pronunciation practise, answering listener questions about English and more audio episodes, video versions for each one and PDF worksheets. For the full LEP experience, become a premium LEPster today and get 20% off at [teachaluke.co.uk slash premium](https://teachaluke.co.uk/slash-premium). And yes, you can offer a membership as a gift to a loved one and you get 20% off that as well. You'll find the link in the description. Right then, now that is done.

Let's get back to my chat with the pod pals and let's hear what Paul has to say about his dramatic experience in the West African nation of Benin just a couple of weeks ago. So from one dramatic situation to another, here we go.

From one dramatic situation to another.

It's not actually that dramatic.

Well, it's quite dramatic.

So it could have been. I hinted at this earlier that Paul has a story to tell us about something that happened to him recently. So listen, as Paul has been on a world tour, a world comedy tour, 2025, Paul Taylor.

And he's been going around the world doing stand-up comedy largely in the French speaking world, but not only.

But mostly not in the French speaking world, to be honest. So the whole, like I've done, I think altogether now it's 25 countries. Uh, I think three of which are French speaking, four of which like Monaco, Luxembourg, Belgium and Benin or Benin or Benin.

What do you say? Benin. What do you say?

I'd say Benin. Yeah, but everyone on everyone, because I talked about this in my live yesterday. Everyone's it's been like, they were spelling it out for me in the comments, like B-E-H N-E-E-N, like Benin.

Yeah. Benin. Apparently it's Benin.

Okay. Is how we say it. West African country.

Yes. So there you are. West Africa was the, was it the only West African nation where you perform comedy?

Yes. I was supposed to do, um, Morocco, uh, Northern Africa. Yes.

But the shows got cancelled because no one was coming. This wasn't my own show. This was a comedy festival that was happening.

Right. Which is organised by the Montreux Comedy Festival, which is in Switzerland, which has been a 30 year old comedy festival. And they have different festivals.

They've got one in Lille. They've got, they had one in Montreal. Like they, they do their comedy festival around the world.

So French is, I assume. Is the language.

Is the official, unofficial, the official language.

It is. Yeah. It's the official language.

They have their own language. I can't remember the name. Yeah.

Um, uh, but yeah, French is the, is the language. It's a, it's a French, uh.

Right. So you were there in Benin, uh, as part of this Montreux Comedy Festival thing, performing comedy. First of all, how, first of all, how was the comedy?

Was it good?

It was, yeah, it was, it was better than I thought. Because I was just like, uh, how, first of all, it's not my language, right? It's French.

And, you know, I want to say like, you know, maybe seven times out of 10, it goes well in French. If I do like a 10 minute set, you know, around Paris and in France and wherever. Three times out of 10, sometimes I get looks like what's going on.

So it was in French, but also in front of, uh, uh, uh, uh, I don't know how you say it in English, uh, Benin, Benin noir, uh, Benin noir, uh, audience. Yeah. Benin noir is how they say it in French.

Yes. So it was a local audience. Yeah.

Um, uh, you know, who have probably very little knowledge of differences between England and France. Right. Although of course, England and France being the major arseholes in Africa, um, and everything that we did there.

Uh, so I was like, all right, how is this going to go down? Um, we'll see. And my, my original angle, cause the woman who called me to offer me the gig, um, she was like, oh, it's, it can be funny because you're the only white person on the gig.

Yeah.

Um, and so I was like, oh, it's funny. You should say that because on this tour it spent in the U S I had a lot of black people leave my room thinking.

As you said in the last appearance on this podcast, you told this story before it was, there's a black saxophonist called Paul Taylor, jazz musician, jazz musician.

And so I've had people walk out on me in the U S because they thought I was black Paul Taylor. So that was kind of my angle going into it. I was like, I don't know why I'm here.

I'm the only white person of non African origin on this gala. Why am I here? Blah, blah, blah.

And I did some local stuff as well. So the comedy went pretty well. Like it wasn't amazing, uh, but it was, it was good enough that I was, I was happy with it in retrospect.

In the moment I was like, ah, I wish I'd have done this bit or I'd have changed that. And you know, cause some of the bits didn't go as well as I thought, but in general it was only eight minutes. Right.

So, um, uh, it was okay. So we did the, the, the festival, we were there a few days before, um, uh, arrived a few days before did

some, you know, local stuff. It went to like a, uh, the biggest open air market in West Africa, which was met as an English person.

It's mental one because of the heat and the sun and everything. And two, because of like people, I'm the only white person walking down the street. And so everyone is like tourists, tourists, tourists, bang, let's go and sell him some shit, you know?

Yes.

You get, you're getting hassled by people trying to sell you stuff.

So it's very intense on all of the senses. There's a couple of funny stories that happened, uh, in over there, but the one, the, the, the, the one, the main one was getting back. So we were supposed to leave on Sunday.

Um, the, the, the, the show was on Saturday. We were supposed to leave on Sunday at like one in the morning, Monday. So we had the whole of Sunday and then we were leaving at one in the morning on, because it's the same time zone as France.

So you leave at one in the morning there and you land at eight in the morning here. Um, so, but we wake up on Sunday, uh, with the news, like in the group chat, there's like a clip, a video clip of the local TV channel that had been taken over by eight military guys, um, with guns and stuff announcing a military coup president is ousted. Um, all the borders are shut.

Yes. We're fucking shit up. This is happening.

So wait, but you, you get this in a WhatsApp group.

I wake, yeah. I wake up in the morning at like 1030. I slept really badly there.

Cause it was really hot. Turn the air conditioning on really cold, really hot. So like I'm sleeping like shit.

Uh, so I don't sleep a lot, but so I'm waking up later than normal. So like 1030, 11, I wake up group chat is like a hundred messages long. I'm like, what, what is going on?

And then, so, you know, I go to the beginning and if people are sharing the videos, the screenshots of these eight, this is with all the comedians that are on the tour and the organisers and the organisers. Right. So it's like, you see people back in Paris as well.

So there's like in the group chat, there's everyone there, but then everyone's managers and producers back in Paris. So there's probably about 30 people in this group chat.

You wake up late and you're catching up on the news and you think, oh my God. And you look out the window and you think is what's going on out there. Um, you know, is it all kicking off?

A military coup. Yeah. So just, I mean, I don't know if we need to explain what that is.

It's basically normally when the military, uh, like the leaders of the army or maybe some army leaders decide that they're going to try and take over control of the country and they probably storm into the presidential palace or something and kill or capture the leader and then take over control of the country. And often it's met with obviously a resistance from the presidential security guards or whatever. And there's often gunfighting and all sorts of things.

And maybe violence then erupts in other parts of the country. And you think to yourself, oh my God, um, how serious is this going to be? Uh, they've closed the borders.

No one's allowed to come in or out. What's going to happen?

Yeah.

I'm like, is this where my marathon training is really going to pay off?

Yeah, at some point. So, but by the time I got to the end of the messages, it was like this local people that people know, you know, and they're not stressing out too much. Um, it's, it's kind of hit and miss.

It's like half the group are like worried about what's going on. The other half are like, oh, my friends, friends, uncles, a nephew works at the embassy and apparently there's been gunshots, but apparently it's fine. Uh, you know, but it's, yeah, you're kind of like, okay, so the borders are closed.

We can't leave tonight. We will get text messages from Air France saying flight's been cancelled. It's been pushed back another day.

But of course that can be cancelled again, cancelled again, depending on what's going on. So we've been told to stay in the hotel the whole day, basically. So we spent a whole of that Sunday in the hotel playing card games, really, to be honest, chilled out, like nothing's really going on.

Um, and the streets have been closed by the military. Um, and what ended up happening was basically, uh, there was 14 people involved in it, military people, but the rest of the army were just like, no, no, fuck off. We're all right.

We actually quite like the president and the president is really chill. We met him the night before he came to him. He came to the show and he came in like a baseball cap, polo dress like you with a cap with two security guards, smiling, taking photos.

He was like Barack Obama, but even more chilled out. And most of the country love him because he has created a lot of jobs and development and the country is booming, right. Right.

In West Africa. And so, yeah, the rest of the army were like, nah, we're all right. Thanks.

And the problem is these 14 had like dispersed. So they were trying to find these 14. And so you, you, you, we weren't hearing like gunshots in the distance and stuff going on.

And so we're like, all right, we'll just stay in the hotel then. 14.  
That's quite ambitious.

Yeah. Just like you would like 13 mates and you're like less fucking top of the government.

How many of us? We've got this.

I mean, you'd imagine they'd have spoken to the army beforehand, but obviously not. They're like, everyone's with us. I mean, yeah.

They're like, wait a minute. How many of us are there yet? 14.

We can definitely do this. There probably was more. They were probably on a group WhatsApp being like, hey, are you coming to the picnic at the park this weekend?

Where's Gary? And the hundred people in the group were like, yeah, yeah, we'll go there. And as soon as you show up, it's like, actually, I can't make it because, you know, my kids are a little bit sick.

And so there was only 14 people. To be honest, when you see the TV images, the main guy who's talking, his helmet is like wonky. It looks like it just it looked shit from the start.

Right. It's just like, what is going on here? Oh, dear.

But it was kind of, you know, you don't know where we are because on top of all, there's obviously the whole malaria thing. So I'm taking like medication for malaria. I'm spraying myself with mosquito spray to make sure like I had to spray my clothes with mosquito spray before I like it was like there's all of this extra like shit that you have to deal with going to West Africa.

On top of it, you're like, I don't know what's going to happen. The only thing that kept us calm is like locally, people were like, don't worry about it. It's fine.

Like, you know, we've seen a lot of military coups. Exactly. But then so that evening, when we all sort of, you know, go to bed and whatever in the group chat, the hotel that we're at is not like the main Sofitel.

It's like a main Sofitel on the beach, which was locked down because that's right next to the American embassy. Like all the embassies are in the same sort of place, similar to Paris, right? And so in the evening, my room is sort of looking out towards the beach.

You can't see the beach, but it's in the direction of the beach, the water, this ocean. But a couple of the comedy friends were sleeping out towards the main boulevard street. And they're like, we can hear explosions.

We can hear guns, gunshots. Like, this is really scary. This is like, I don't know, like 11 o'clock at night.

And it's in that moment, I'm like, OK, because they're all talking about if it gets crazy, because on the French embassy's website,

they were like, keep posted on this website, blah, blah, blah.  
Because obviously they'll extradite. They'll get people out.

Yeah, I'm like, I'm not French. Ah. What do I do?

But I'm Irish. Yeah. So I start looking up Irish embassy.

I'm not English.

I'm definitely not English. Yeah, I'm definitely not English.

I'm definitely from a country that didn't fuck this place up. Yeah,  
I'm Irish. We've never done anything to anyone that didn't deserve  
it.

We just drink the Guinness there. So I type, because I'm obviously  
with my travelling on my Irish passport. So I type in Irish embassy,  
Benin.

On the street where next to the venue and the hotel, there's the  
American embassy, the Canadian embassy, the South African  
embassy, all of the embassies. There's no Irish embassy in Benin.  
There's no British embassy.

Is there an Irish pub? There's definitely an Irish pub.

Because there's always an Irish pub.

Like, you could just go there, you'd be safe there. I didn't even think about that. I don't know, probably not.

So then, like, the contacts for the Irish embassy and the British embassy is Nigeria. So at 11 o'clock at night, I open up Google Maps, and I go, how far away is the border with Nigeria?

Is it within marathon running distance? It's 38 kilometres away. And a marathon is what?

42. 42. Yeah.

Perfect. Exactly. It's the last 4K that's the hardest.

Exactly. So that night, when we all go to sleep, and we don't know what's happening the next morning, and people are saying, oh, there's gunshots and bombing. The bombing was Nigeria, who came to the rescue and bombed one of the sites where the military coup people were hiding in.

So they got there because there's a union, kind of like NATO, the West African countries come together. So Nigeria got involved. Anyway, I'm like, okay, if the shit hits the fan tonight, and people storm the hotel, I need to be ready to get out of this place.

So I'd already checked my balcony, looking down into the garden of the hotel. How would I get down? I packed my backpack with my laptop, my charger, my phone charger, and then the mosquito spray, sun cream, my malaria tablets.

Again, it's more Jason Bourne stuff, isn't it? I felt like Jason Bourne, like my passport was in there. I put my running clothes in there, because I decided if I need to leave in the middle of the night, I'll wear my all black outfit out of the hotel.

But I can't run in it, because at 38K, there'll be too much chafing. I don't have Vaseline. It's the chafing that will get you.

Exactly. It's not the bombs. I was worried about the guns.

It's not the guns or bombs. It's the chafing. It's the chafing.

Ah, like at 30K, 32 kilometres away, or whatever it is.

I could have made it. I could have made it to Nigeria, but the chafing got me.

Chafing, listeners, is when, let's say, you're running a marathon, and your legs keep rubbing against each other on the inside of your thighs, and it causes- Or your nipples. Or your nipples, and you get sore skin, red, sore skin. That kind of condition is called chafing.

On the nipples, or the skin between your legs. They're the main areas of chafage. That's chafing.

Blisters, of course, is when it normally happens in your shoes. You get these spots that fill up with water, and they're very painful.

So I packed my running gear in the backpack.

Okay.

But I had my black stuff to leave, but then I packed my running shoes, and I slept in my running socks, because if you're running 38K, you can't be running in cotton socks. You need running socks. Otherwise, you get blisters.

What are running socks? They're just thicker? They're just made out of different material.

Not cotton. To prevent chafing. To prevent blistering, and chafing, and whatever.

It's a whole world, isn't it? It is, isn't it? So I'm just imagining if it actually happened, and you'd leapt over the balcony, and like a superhero, landed in the superhero position on the ground, and then pegged it, and then you would have found a dark alley to switch into your running gear, and then off you go.

Jason Bourne running through the night.

38K. It's one straight line as well. It's just a straight line to Nigeria.

Yeah, it's a straight line. Yeah, it's a straight motorway.

Man, that would have been a great film. Can you imagine?

One man, one border. I'm like, this marathon training might pay off, and it might pay off tonight. The marathon might happen six months earlier than I thought it would.

So yeah, that was like the... You know, I went to bed with it all prepared. Like, I knew where it all was.

I was ready to pick up and leg it if I needed to. Gotta be prepared.

Scouts. Boy Scouts. Were you in the Boy Scouts?

I was not in the Boy Scouts. Oh, well, but you were still prepared. Yeah.

Because that's the Boy Scouts motto, be prepared. You were in the Boy Scouts? How did you do that?

I don't know. It's just very... It's just a liberal situation.

It's just a liberal Scout troop. Yeah, girls were there. I think it's a good idea.

I don't know. It's just like... Fine.

For some reason, but I've always had this thing of like when I was a kid, not even a teenager or early 20s, like if I was in like a train, I'd always visualise... What would happen? Jason Bourne.

Yeah, I'd always... No, I'd always visualise like if the train went over on its side, I'm like looking up at trying to figure out which bit I would try and hang on to. Right.

As it felt so I wouldn't get crushed underneath it or whatever.

Yeah.

And I'd always think of like, oh, there's the emergency. I have this weird... It's probably because I played too many video games like that as a kid where I'm like, oh, I've got to figure out where the breaking the...

Uncharted. The hammer for the window is. So yeah, I was prepared, but luckily nothing happened.

Incredible. Luckily, nothing happened, but you still lived through the preparation and the sort of like planning and obviously the anxiety around it. Like it wasn't, you know, like it turned out fine, but, you know, it might not have.

And it's good to have a plan. No, absolutely.

What a plan. Yeah, brilliant, brilliant, brilliant.

Also, I mean, I'm replying to everyone I know who's hearing about this back like my mum, my dad, because it was more on British news than it was on French news, which is weird.

Yeah.

Because it's a French speaking, but France doesn't care about Africa. I mean, something happened, but it was on like it was front page BBC News. Right, right.

So my dad was like, you know, who's got dementia. He was like, are you all right? What's going on?

My uncle in Australia, my mum, everyone was getting involved. I'm like, I think it's fine. Everything's fine.

Like, and they were obviously giving me advice. Go to the embassy. I'm like, I know, but there isn't one here.

He needed Felix with you to video of montage of you preparing, you know, like stuff being stuffed into a bag and the zip being zipped up and you like putting on your gear.

Exactly.

Preparing yourself. I took a pen in case I needed to stab somebody with a pen like Jason Bourne. Right, right.

Exactly. Just in case. I mean, all of this, obviously, it must have been very stressful.

But I mean, what were you imagining that they would be the, I mean, were you top of the list of their priorities in terms of the military coup? It's like, we've got the, we've got the president. Okay, now, now what's next?

Now we get the comedians.

Well, because the comedy gig, the festival was three days, was three big galas. It was organised also partly by the government. So we didn't know.

Like, it was like, maybe they didn't like the fact that there was Westerners, so to speak, even though they're all of African origin, except for me coming in and spewing their West. You just don't, you just don't know when things go tits up. I mean, when, when it all goes wrong, like maybe it was just the location.

They need something. They need a headquarters. This is a nice hotel.

Like, you don't know. And by, and you know, if you don't prepare.

No, you're absolutely right.

If you fail to prepare, as they say.

Prepare to fail.

Precisely.

I mean, to be honest, I only made that comment so I could make the joke about them trying to, trying to, you know, get you after they've got the president. What's next? You get the comedians.

But do you know what I mean? So that was why I was like, all right, maybe this goes down. And, but I was like, all right, I feel like I've, I'm prepared as much as I can be to escape here.

If I need to. And the border's 38 kilometres away, which was way closer than I thought. In my mind, obviously we have this thing of like, Africa's immense.

It's huge. And it is.

Yeah.

But you go, oh, Nigeria is just 38 kilometres. Togo on the other side was like 45 or something like that.

Benin is very sort of slim country. It is, it is a slim country. Yes.

Oh, you just knew Benin was slim.

I checked it out earlier.

Oh, I was so impressed.

Yesterday, yesterday I did another episode with another podcaster called the World News Quiz. Which listeners should be arriving before the end of the year. And what, in order to prepare for that, I just had to like, I was looking at the map of the world.

And last time there was a question about West African nations. And I was also thinking about you, Paul. I was like, where is Benin exactly?

And I had a little look, looking at all the different nations, just refreshing my memory. And I was like, Benin's a very slim country, isn't it? Yeah.

Yeah. Well, I, so, because of what the Sunday that we were going to leave at one in the morning, that day we were supposed to go to a town about 30 minutes away where they have the point of no return, which is, it's like an arch dedicated to the slaves that got, because a lot of slaves left from Benin, it wasn't called Benin at the

time, but it was, there was like, I think it's the Bight or the Blight of Benin is one of the main places where slaves got sent to North Africa.

Sorry, North America. And so there's a, there's like a memorial. Arch.

Arch, which is in French. It's called La Porte du Non Retour, like the gate of no return in English. It's the point of no return, which is, so there's a lot.

So we, I didn't, the other, the others went out to go see that. I didn't end up going because I, I got pissed off with some of the organisers who couldn't organise that. It was just, we couldn't organise a military coup.

No, exactly. So they annoyed the shit out of me. So I'm like, I can't be asked anymore.

I like, I wanted to go there and enjoy it, like enjoy the, but I was, I was, I was typically Paul Taylor annoyed, uh, about how the, like there was just, it's too complicated to get into, but anyway. Yeah. So yeah.

And so I didn't realise. So then I, you know, I went online and I checked a lot of the history out and, um, you know, to understand what happens during, um, the slave trade and everything.

It was just unbelievable. Just horrendous. Wow.

What an interesting experience. That was incredible. So I won't be going back there anytime soon.

No, no, it sounded like it was actually, despite that it was great.

I had a great time.

Yeah.

No, it wasn't. It's too, it's like I, I go to these places and it's just too hot. I can't, I can't deal with it.

I get this, the amount of sun cream and there was like, you know, mosquito spray you got to put on as well. And you know, you're like, do I put the mosquito spray on first, then the sun cream, then the sun cream. So you're asking chat GPT, like in which order do you put them in?

Cause you don't want to ask a local guy cause you look a right fucking twat.

Sun cream first, then mosquito spray or the other way around.  
Yeah. Yeah.

I would go sun cream then spray. Yeah. I think so.

I didn't, I would suppose. Cause you don't want that spray directly in contact with your skin. Do you?

Yeah.

You're supposed to, I don't know.

It's just, you know, and they've locally, obviously they've got like, um, grandmother remedies for it. Like Artemisia tea. I've never heard of that in my life, but there's a, a tea called Artemisia, which has some properties, but obviously they're bodies.

A metro station.

Artemisia. No, no, it might be back in Paris. So anyway, have you ever been to a West African nation?

No, no.

Okay.

I've only been South Africa.

Oh yeah.

That's it. Nowhere else in Africa. I'd like to go.

Yeah, definitely. It'd be interesting to. Have you?

No, uh, no, I haven't. No, no. I just had to think, well, have I?

No, I haven't actually. No, no, never been. It would be very interesting.

Right. Now here in my, um, in the mind of me.

Yes.

Watch as I attempt to construct some sentences here to lead us from that into, uh, the next thing, which is that. So I'm trying to make a decision now, because as usual, what happens is just tell me what I'm trying to say, please.

You're trying to segue, you'd plan something and now it kind of feels awkward, both in time and tone really. Doesn't it kind of chatting quite a long time? This could be a standalone chat.

Couldn't it?

Well, we're on the borderline. If we'd gone any further than I think that it would have become a standalone chat. But I think that I think I'm doing it.

I'm going to jump into something else at this point. Actually, maybe what I can do is use this sort of segue moment.

Yeah.

This segue moment to actually mentioned something, which is Spotify wrapped.

Oh, yeah.

So in the last episode of this podcast, I talked about Spotify wrapped, uh, uh, that people had been sending me. Right. So my listeners have been receiving this.

Oh, you're in it. Yeah. So, so some of my listeners who listen on Spotify, uh, Spotify listeners.

Hello. Uh, they received their Spotify wrapped and some of them, uh, had me as their number one podcast this year. And they've been sending in the number of minutes that they listened to the English podcast this year.

And so I'm trying to remember exactly what the numbers were from the last episode, but there were a few people. And, um, and by the end of the episode, uh, there was a listener called D simply D on, on, uh, x.com, uh, who had listened for in the region of eight and a half thousand minutes this year. Wow.

I can't remember off the top of my head how many, I think it's about two and a half, uh, episodes a week. I think it is, uh, you know, every week without, without fail for 52 weeks. Um, but, uh, that listener actually previously last time was also the champion, uh, but had something like 18,000 over 18,000 minutes in the year previously.

Um, but since then, uh, I have received a couple of other messages since I published this episode where I detailed those things. And so I have a couple of other things to, you know, I've got updates basically. Please update.

Right. So the first one is from Sylvia, uh, who left a message on Spotify and Sylvia said this, uh, hi Luke, I discovered your wonderful podcast about one year ago. And since then I've been a regular listener of yours.

I'm now stepping out of the ninja zone.

Yeah.

Uh, you were almost in the ninja zone. Weren't you? I was almost in the ninja zone.

You were dressed. You're kind of still dressed like a ninja.

Yeah, I just put the hood up.

Full ninja. Paul is dressed in entirely in black, um, which was his ninja outfit of choice as well. When potentially escaping, uh, to Nigeria, uh, a few couple of weeks ago.

Anyway, Sylvia, I'm now stepping out of the ninja zone to tell you that I've been listening to your podcast for 13,896 minutes. Uh, and when I first read that, I thought, what? 13.89 minutes because being, I think she's Italian or French, Italian or French. Certainly Italian and French and maybe other nations write their long numbers, um, with a decimal point. And for us English speakers, a decimal point, you know, is a decimal point. Um, and we would normally use a comma.

So my first thought was like only 13 minutes. It was 13, 13,896 minutes. What's that in days?

I don't know what that is in days and hours. I was going to ask you, Paul, maybe. 13,000.

13,896 minutes. If you can divide that by.

13,852. What was it? 13,13,896 minutes in hours.

230 hours.

230 hours. Which is. Divide that by 52.

230 hours divided by 52.

Tell us the weekly.

Sorry, I didn't get that too complicated for Siri.

Well, anyway, it's a lot. It's a lot. And that means Sylvia is currently the, the, the champion this year.

Wow. In terms of Spotify listeners. That's a lot of listens.

But that's not the end of it. No. Sylvia does go on to say, I'd really like to thank you for the valuable content you share with us.

Greetings from Italy. Thank you, Sylvia. Greetings from France as well, by way of care of the United Kingdom as well.

Or one of those things. Then. Then I got another message.

This is on Supercast from a premium listener called Marga. How would you say that name? So it's in written in.

Marga. Marga Colon.

Yes. Right. She wrote this.

Hi, Luke. I didn't know anything about the Spotify wrapped 2025 before listening to this episode. And you know what?

It seems like I listened to Luke's English podcast for, ready? 19,478 minutes in 2025. Can you believe that?

I've got the screenshot that proves it. Ha ha ha. Then she wrote to me by email.

If you don't mind, I just want to read that out. So in fact. Okay.

She said, hi, Luke. Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Um, I listened to it in almost all the situations you mentioned while walking, driving at work, doing chores, even sleeping.

Does that count? Well, sometimes my family talk to me and I am with my headphones on. And when they realise they just know I'm listening to you.

I think that's healthier because I am often listening to a podcast and ignoring my family. And it's usually true crime. I'm just listening to people being stabbed to death while I'm cooking.

A nutritious meal for my family.

Um, and she says, thank you. And also points out that she didn't use AI or any translator to write the email, which is respect points for that. Some screenshots from her Spotify wrapped in Spanish.

Could you just read out the. Yeah.

Eh, tus podcast más escuchados. Número uno, Luke's English podcast. Número dos, Luke's English podcast premium.

Yeah. Número tres, nadie sabe nada, which means no one knows anything, which is a cool name for a podcast. The other one is English learning.

For curious minds. And the other one is lo que tu digas, whatever you say. I think something like that.

Okay. Okay. There you go.

So, I mean, I don't know if, um, Marga, I don't know if you're combining your listening numbers from both LEP and LEP premium. Well, that's Spotify that's done that. It's not her.

Yeah, no, but like she will have got, your number one is Luke's English podcast.

Yes. So she's listened to more of you premium than the other ones not premium.

But she might have got this number of minutes from Luke's English podcast, plus this number of minutes from Luke's English podcast premium. And maybe if she adds them together, she might even have even more than 19,000.

Oh, probably, yeah. That is an impressive amount of listening.

Oh, no, look, in fact, she does.

Uh, hold on a minute. Can you read that for me? Has escuchado 29,109 minutos de podcast.

Oh, hold on. That's. All podcasts.

That's all podcasts combined. I can. Okay.

And then is there more? Is there more? Is there more screenshot?

Oh, yeah. Hold on.

Yeah.

So 19,000 is your podcast. Normal. Yes.

Oh, and it doesn't. That's it. Yeah.

It doesn't have, uh, the premium numbers. So that's just one. Cause they're two, technically two different podcasts, right?

There must be repertoried, repertoried.

That's not an English word. Okay. So it's technical.

I don't know how interesting it is for you. Just the normal free feed.

Just one RSS feed.

Normal free feed is all the normal free episodes. The premium feed is the free episodes and the premium episodes.

Right. But they must be categorised as two separate.

They're categorised as two separate feeds. That's right.

Yes. Okay.

And two separate podcasts probably. Two separate podcasts.

Right. So then, yeah.

So the 20, the 19,000 is just your. Yeah. If she adds LEP premium as well, it's going to be more than 19,000.

Last year we did Spotify wrapped. Our Spotify is really weird because everyone just listens on the same. It's like a family Spotify.

Yeah. So the wrapped is really weird. But last year it told us who we'd listen to the most.

And then we got a private message from them.

Oh.

Like it was a musician saying like, thank you so much for listening to my music so much. And I thought that was really sweet.

I did that. Yeah. So Spotify asked you.

That's what I was going to say. Did they ask you to.

They asked me, hey, what, you know, record a message for your Spotify listeners.

Your number one listeners.

Your listeners. And so I did. And then they got the message.

How long was your message? Oh, it was 30 seconds. That's really nice.

And that's what I was wondering if they did. And they did.

Yes. Yes.

Very nice.

That is great. Yeah. No, it's good.

It's all good.

Apple podcast does the same thing. I don't think Apple podcast does the same thing because I didn't get shared.

No one told me about my podcast app that I use. They did a wrapped as well. And they told me.

Why do they call it wrapped? I guess it's like a wrap show. No, like that's a wrap.

You know, this is the wrap up of the whole thing. No, isn't it?

I suppose so. Yeah. Or it's like wrapped up, meaning collated.

The information has been brought together into one package and then given to you like a gift. So I think that's what the sense of it is.

Oh, really? I always just took it as to be like at the end.

Like that's a wrap. That's what they say at the end of a film shoot.

Yeah.

When they filmed the last scene, they say, and that's a wrap. Meaning the filming is done. The project is finished.

Now everyone has a big party, a wrap party. W-R-A-P, wrap party, which means it's all wrapped up, which I don't know. Maybe the canister, the last canister of film is wrapped in sealed tape or something like that.

And then that's it. Now we edit the film and so on. Yeah.

It's funny how like one company will do a thing that's got a specific name and then all the other ones will copy it. Yes. Like I think Spotify were the first ones to call it Spotify wrap.

There's like a YouTube version now. Like you can see which YouTube things. I got a thing about, oh, here's your top YouTube channels, blah, blah, blah.

Yes.

I think Apple Music does a thing. Apple Music will definitely do something.

Probably.

What they've done this year, which has been controversial, apparently is they give you an age.

Apple Music.

Well, they say, this is what you've been listening to. These are podcasts. This is your listening age.

Based on the music, your music listening habits. Here's, you know, your age. So for example, I'm in my seventies because I listen to boomer music.

Yeah.

Mostly. Right. It's either boomer music or it's kind of like ambient music, you know?

Yeah.

So I'm either listening to like the Beatles or Steely Dan or something, or I'm listening to Aphex Twin. It's kind of like those two things. So my age.

Your listening age is old.

My listening age is pretty old. It's like Gen X or boomer. Yeah.

I think that's good. Ours was 31 was our listening age.

Really?

That's a pretty good middle ground between your kids and you both. Yeah, yeah, yeah. That works.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly. Kind of redundant.

It is a bit stupid. It's just like added extra. It's like the same thing with my running stuff.

Like there's so many metrics. You're like, oh, really? Do we really need?

Do you know what I mean? You're like, it's all, you know, it'll be like, oh, you run 1.3 times a week on average. Like that's not a number I need to know.

Like it doesn't because some weeks I'll run four days. One week I won't like it. Why are you giving an average of my lifetime runs?

It doesn't. We don't need

added value.

[Paul]

No, it's not.

It's just added stress.

I'm not running enough. I've got to go. Oh, I'm not young enough in my listening age.

I should start listening to Lizzo or Dua Lipa a bit more. And then that will reduce my, do you know what I mean? It's like, come on, stop adding more stress onto something we don't need.

Less is more. Yeah. Sometimes.

I mean, that's only presuming you want to be young. I think it's better to be old. Be old.

Be what you are, right?

Be what you are. Yeah.

Talking of less is more. I think what we should do now, I've made a decision. I'm going to, we're going to cut here.

That's a wrap. That's a wrap. On this episode.

And if you can stick around and we'll record something else. 52 minutes. And the listeners are going to get double episode this week, I suppose.

Double trouble.

Double trouble. Yes.

The Tangential Trio. Double Tangential Trio. So that's six, you'll get six of us.

We've got a lot better though. Because I feel like in our initial episodes, they were like three hours long in my memory. Or two hours or something.

We've, yeah, we've achieved. We've done long, like long, long episodes.

Yes, we have. Back in the day. I don't know what the, what's happened.

Is it me? Because I often extend those episodes significantly.

So this is now 53 minutes. What will end up being is an hour and 24 because of your intro. Is that what you're saying?

In the past for our episodes, when we first did these sorts of episodes, I felt perhaps justifiably so that I should actually pre-teach a lot of stuff. I know my audience. Obviously, there's a lot of people out there who because that because primarily, because they've been listening to this podcast for a number of years, their English has significantly improved to the point where they don't need the introductions anymore.

But I'm, I think that a lot of people listening actually benefit a lot from 40 minutes of me preparing the ground and explaining this, that and the other in my, in my own way with my own particular set of skills. Okay. So that's why sometimes there's, it's not just 40 minutes of like nothing.

It's 40 minutes of quality in this conversation.

Paul is going to talk about a military coup. Now, this is the thing.

And West Africa, here's, I know, and that, and then everyone's like, I'm so ready to understand these three native English speakers.

We're talking about the Louvre heist. If you want to go back to a couple of episodes ago, here's the full information, the full picture of it.

That's the Louvre, not the loo, ha ha, it's a little joke as well for added value.

I think we should end it there.

Yeah, that's probably as good a spot as anywhere. All right. All right then.

Okay.

So we'll, we'll continue. Yeah. Should we give a spoiler about what the next episode is?

Go on. If they've gotten to the end of it. Go ahead.

Do you want to do it?

Is it the words of the year? It is the words of the year. Perfect.

2025. Six, seven. So that is where we end this first of two Amber and Paul episodes that you're going to get this week.

The second one arriving quite quickly on Thursday, the 25th of December. I don't know when you're listening to this. Maybe it's already available and you can just skip straight over to that and just carry on with this conversation.

And that would be good. That would be a good idea. We're going to talk about the words of the year, and I will let myself explain what that means in the next episode.

A reminder. If you are in France or near France, we just really want to see Paul Taylor doing his comedy on stage, which I recommend. He's great.

He's a great performer. He's brilliant. You've got to go and see his show in English and it's called fuck me.

I'm French. He did that show in Edinburgh at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival last August, and he's been touring it in many places. And now he's going to stay in France for the next three months or so.

January, February, March, he will be doing dates all around the country. So go and see his show. [PaulTaylorComedy.com](http://PaulTaylorComedy.com) is where you can find tickets, shows in many major cities around the country. So if you're in France, go and see him. If you're near France, come to France and then go and see him and you'll have a good time and you'll actually see Paul on stage. You might even be able to say hi to him as well, which would be great.

So [PaulTaylorComedy.com](http://PaulTaylorComedy.com) if you want to get tickets. Okay, that's it for this episode. I'm not going to ramble any more at the end.

It's not part two, but the next episode also featuring Amber and Paul, as I said, will be available very soon, maybe available now. So check it out. I hope you're having a nice December if it is December.

If you're not listening to this in December, I just hope you're having a nice time wherever you are in the world, whatever you happen to be doing at this moment. I will speak to you next time. But for now, it's just time to say goodbye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.