

The OSU Random, Unorganized Collection  
of Speech Act Examples\*

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1. **Background remarks.** The material in section 3 below was assembled during (and after) a seminar on speech acts, taught jointly by David Stampe and me at Ohio State in the Winter Quarter of 1975. My original intent was to assemble some examples, taken from ordinary speech, of small bits of English discourse (single sentences, or sentence fragments, occasionally short sequences or exchanges) that were in some way problematic for linguistic analysis. These were to serve as spurs to discussion in the seminar and to thought and reflection outside it. Very quickly the project ballooned: 51 examples on 14 January, another 59 on 28 January, another 68 two days later, another 46 later this same day, and so on through 24 February, when the total stood at 739. A July addendum brought this total to 777, all distributed on dittos to the members of the seminar and to a number of interested outsiders; a small appendix of eight further examples did not reach the ditto stage, but is included below.<sup>1</sup>

Clearly it was only too easy to collect specimens for my purposes: so much of ordinary speech is problematic from the point of view of general principles relating sound, meaning, use, and context. There are at least two sorts of difficulties in deciding what to say about particular examples. First, it is often hard to say when meanings are *conveyed* by sentences and when they are *expressed* by them, to say whether the way we take a sentence can be accounted for by chains of common sense inference, or whether this understanding is conventionally ('idiomatically', or 'formulaically') associated with a form or construction in the sentence. More towards the conveyed/inferential side are examples like (1).

- (1) a. If I were you, I'd kill myself.
- b. I would go myself, but I'm in traction.

Clearly on the expressed/conventional side are the lexical and syntactic peculiarities of examples like (2).

- (2) a. Go fly a kite!
- b. What's it with Jackie?

A second difficulty is that it is often hard to draw a line between the use of a construction or form and the quotation of someone else's creation. Does (3) involve a sentential idiom of English, or is it in effect a quotation from the media?

- (3) Eat your heart out, Aristotle Onassis!

2. **Problematic examples.** The specific difficulties associated with particular examples can be grouped into four types: syntactic, lexical, or even phonological peculiarities; uses of sentences that are

somewhat or greatly at variance with the literal meanings of those sentences; intonational contours; and material modifying the force of an utterance or adding some force to the existing one. I will illustrate these categories briefly.

First, syntactic, lexical, and phonological peculiarities. These may be associated with specific sentence types in both direct and indirect discourse, or they may be restricted to root S constructions. Of the first type are double wh constructions, which occur only in interrogative clauses, whether direct or indirect:

- (4) a. Who went where? [direct question]  
b. What a beautiful rider { Sarah is!  
\*who is!?  
\*is who?! } [direct  
exclamation]  
c. I wonder who went where. [indirect question]  
d. \*Everyone who went where got a teddy bear. [(indirect)  
relative]

Similarly, *hold it* 'stop' occurs only in imperatives, direct or indirect:

- (5) a. Hold it!  
b. \*He held it. [= He stopped]  
c. I told him to hold it.  
d. \*I knew he had held it. [= I knew he had stopped.]

Peculiarities of the second type--uses of linguistic forms which are restricted to root S's--are exemplified by all ordinary explicit performative verbs and hedged performative verbs:

- (6) a. I bid two hearts.  
b. I order you to leave.  
c. Let me offer you some squid canapés.  
d. I must inform you that you are to be impaled.  
e. I would like to request a bath towel, please.  
f. I can reveal that your application for sainthood is favorably looked on in powerful circles.

Here the bidding, ordering, offering, and so on are performed only by direct constructions like the ones above, and not by indirect constructions. A great many elliptical constructions are also restricted to root S's:

- (7) a. Into the warehouse with them!  
b. \*I insisted that into the warehouse with them.  
c. Why not paint your house ultramarine.  
d. \*I suggested why not paint her house ultramarine.  
e. Me take the garbage out!?  
f. \*I couldn't imagine { why  
that } me take the garbage out.  
g. Take a chicken; sauté until brown.  
h. \*I told him to take a chicken, and advised him to sauté until brown.

Indeed, some phonological reductions are restricted to root S's with particular uses: many English speakers have s'pose for suppose only in root S's where suppose has its 'parenthetical' or 'expressive' sense--(8a) and not where it has its 'reportive' sense (8b).

- (8) a. I { suppose } you like the abstract expressionists.  
          s'pose
- b. Moses { supposes } his toeses are roses.  
                  \*s'poses

Finally, there are many linguistic forms associated with specific contexts, participants, registers, or styles. For instance, the sequence (9) could only have taken place on the telephone. Similarly, (10) must be printed on a (label on a) container. And (11), if used to refer to the addressee, is distinctly casual and American and masculine, normally used only by (certain) males to other males they already know.

- (9) A. Is this Samuel Johnson?
- B. Sorry, this is James Boswell.
- (10) Contains no noxious chemicals.

- (11) How's the { boy } ?  
                  kid

Next, there are sentences with common uses that are somewhat or greatly at variance with their literal meetings. I have in mind here such familiar examples as (12) used as a request for the addressee to pass the salt (rather than as a question about the propinquity of the salt to the addressee), as well as (13), intended as a piece of advice (rather than as a simple assertion of what the speaker would do if he were in the addressee's place, and (14) (addressed to a stranger writhing on the sidewalk, his face contorted in pain), functioning not as a request for information, but rather as a way of opening a discourse preparatory to an offer of help.

- (12) Can you reach the salt?
- (13) If I were you, I'd learn Mandarin first.
- (14) Are you ok?

Then there are intonational contours conventionally associated with specific uses of certain sentences or constructions. The intonation on tag questions is a case in point:

- (15) You don't have your shoes on, { do you? }  
  do you?

The first conveys that the speaker assumes that the addressee doesn't have shoes on, that the speaker has some reason for thinking this assumption might not be correct, and that the speaker is asking the addressee to tell him whether or not this assumption is correct. The second conveys that the speaker believes that the addressee doesn't have his shoes on and that the speaker is asking the addressee for a confirmation of this belief.

Finally, there are particles and other elements that begin, conclude, or interrupt sentences. These either modify the force of the utterance or add a force to the existing one. Here I include vocatives, both calls and addresses--(16a, b)--and epithets--(16c),

- (16) a. Matilda, where are you?  
b. I suppose, son, that you'll be wanting your own kingdom soon.  
c. Look, you bastard, I can't take much more of this.

expletives of various sorts (*damn, shucks, heck, My God, thank goodness, (oh) boy, hey, wow, gee*), pause elements (*uh, oh, ah, mm, well, you know, like, don't you see*), introductory particles (*well, now, so, all right, ok, listen, hey, look, say, tell me, by the way, incidentally*), parentheticals (*I guess, they say, I don't think*), politeness elements (*hello, hi, so long, goodbye, see you, how are you?, how do you do?, nice to see you, thanks, thank you, no thanks, don't bother, you're welcome, please, excuse me, pardon, sorry*), agreement and disagreement particles (*ok, yes, sure, right, all right, no, no chance, not on your life, possibly, maybe, I suppose*), and response particles (*here! yes! yo! what!?*).

One way to gauge what might be placed on the lists is to ask: if you were trying to translate this into another language, would it give you trouble because of the disparity between form and use? Or, is this likely to give trouble to a non-native speaker of English because of the relationship between form and use?

3. **The list.** Some of the examples below are not new, but are lifted bodily or paraphrased from the literature on speech acts, semantics, and syntax by such writers as Sadock, G. Lakoff, Fillmore, Green, Elliott, Akatsuka, Bolinger, Davison, Morgan, Shopen, Ross, McCawley, Fraser, Emonds, P. Lee, and Heringer, none of whom I will cite or credit here. Some were collected (by Ann Zwicky and me) from a series of movies made between 1930 and 1960 and shown on television during the period of the speech acts seminar. Most were simply overheard.

Many of the examples are supposed to be read with characteristic intonations. I rely on the acting abilities of the reader. Many also make sense only in some rather narrow context, which I assume the reader can supply. What goes into the supplying of such contexts is, of course, a big part of what makes the examples intriguing in the first place.

There are overlaps and duplications. Moreover, there is no rationale whatsoever to the order of the examples; they appear randomly and without organization, just as I found them. The examples are reproduced here with their original numbering, which is somewhat capricious.<sup>2</sup>

1. (Just) { think about } Martha's running for president!  
          { imagine }



2.
  - a. Him having to wash his own dishes!
  - b. Him with(out) hair!
  - c. Me take the garbage out?
3. If you would leave the room, Mrs. Lee,... [instruction to leave]
4.
  - a. Someone's going to get a spanking!
  - b. Someone hasn't eaten his dinner!
5. I'll teach you (how) to steal sheep!
6. What did I tell you! [wá'ɾəd ày tɛlyə]
7.
  - a. ((Do) you) know what (I did)!
  - b. Guess what (I did)?
  - c. What do you think (I did)!
8. Where do you get off telling me what to do!
9. Talk about complex variation!
10. { Don't  
How about } let's do that!
11. You give me that!
12. You undo it!
13.
  - a. Don't you touch me!
  - b. Don't you dare (touch me)!
14. Oh, don't be sick!
15. Let's { suppose that you are the Queen of Romania.  
let x equal 2.  
consider the alternatives. }
16. (Now) { see  
look } what you've done!
17. You can say that again!
18. You bet your { life  
sweet ass } (I'm going to talk to him)!
19. No way (that I can do that)!
20. Tell it to the Marines!
21. Aw, { come  
go } on!
22.
  - a. Come off it!
  - b. Cut { it  
that } out!
  - c. Knock it off!
  - d. Move it!
  - e. Fuck off!
  - f. Hold it!

23. a. { Suppose }  
Assume } (that) we're in China, then...
- b. { Supposing }  
Assuming } (that) they are Communists, we're in trouble.
24. Let x equal 24. Then...
25. I'll thank you to watch your step!
26. { Do I have }  
Have I (ever) got } a car for you!
27. Have you heard the one about the traveling salesman and the pregnant kangaroo?
28. How many times { have I told you } { that I'm not Portuguese }  
do I have to tell you { to wipe your mouth } ?
29. a. If I've told you once, I've told you a thousand times!  
b. If I've seen one, I've seen a thousand!
30. Look who's here!
31. a. { Here comes }  
There goes } John!  
b. Here I am!
32. Where's the fire?
33. What's with him?
34. How's it going?
35. How's your ass?
36. So's your old man!
37. You're telling me!
38. What's up?
39. What's going on?
40. How've you been?
41. What's { the matter }  
wrong } ?
42. How about that!
43. I'll take that money!
44. I'll have some cake, please!
45. I'll finish it, I will!
46. Want some help, do you?
47. Did you hear that? ['why aren't you obeying/responding?']
48. Be { advised }  
warned } that dogs are not admitted.

49. Thank you! [perfunctory, with intonation either (a) falling from extra high, or (b) rising]
50. Take two before bedtime.
51. I'll be damned if I'll eat fish fingers!
52. { The hell with  
Screw  
Shit on } the opposition!
53. What's { it  
up } with Jackie?
54. What { 's  
was } that?
55. Don't { hand  
give } me that!
56. (So) who's asking personal questions?
57. I'll be { a blue-nosed gopher  
damned } (if it isn't raining)!
58. Passengers { are requested not to flush  
will please refrain from flushing } toilets  
while the train is standing in the station.
59. You're { fired  
hired } !
60. a. I'll bet you didn't do it! [\*You're on!]  
b. You didn't do it, I'll bet!
61. [I'll bet you \$10 you can't swallow asbestos!] You're on!
62. a. Damn it!  
b. Bless you!  
c. Screw the Board of Regents!
63. That's a good boy!
64. You see! [I told you so!]
65. a. That's enough!  
b. I've had it!  
c. That's it!
66. a. How (very) beautiful!  
b. What a (very) fine cat (you are)!  
c. It's so (very) silly!  
d. He's such an ass!
67. What { on earth  
the hell  
in the world } (is going on here)?!

68. Why (not) paint your house purple?
69. See here, my friend!
70. I say!
71. Now, now, dear.
72. I can't imagine what she sees in him!
73. Eyes right!
74. Left face!
75. Hands off!
76. Into the wagon with them!
77. One more beer and I'm leaving!
78. No money, no service.
79. Not that jar, you don't!
80. Not on your life!
81. Considering that she's only six, she's a pretty good lion-tamer.
82. I would go, but I'm cooking.
83. If you paid your bill, you could get the heat turned back on.
84. Having trouble with that fire, are you?
85. a. Nice weather, isn't it?  
b. Having trouble with your Sanskrit, aren't you?
86. [Did you do well?] Is the Pope Catholic? [= 'Yes']
87. If that's a good answer, I'm Harold Macmillan!
88. You know, I think that's a pit viper.
89. You want to turn right at the corner.
90. You'll see that the grammis fits into the clistor.
91. { Note  
Notice } that the answer is absurd.  
Observe }
92. Eat your heart out, Paul Newman!
93. I question that this is the best solution [\*You questioned that...]
94. What do you say, dear?
95. What's become of Waring?
96. I'm not putting on my hat today!
97. She might (just) as well walk this way.
98. Give it up, why don't you?
99. You('d) better clam up, Dick.
100. a. Why díd you go?  
b. What wíll you see?

101. Take New York; it's full of ethnic minorities.
102. a. So they say.  
b. So I've heard.  
c. So you say!
103. You must be Solomon Marcus.
104. [You ask about my introduction to raw clams] That would be the 14th of January.
105. You { ask about this bracelet  
wonder why I'm wearing a chicken suit } . [That's because...]
106. a. Go fly a kite!  
b. Go soak your head!  
c. Go jump in the lake!
107. You come home and what do you see? An unmade bed, ...
108. { I hate to tell you this  
You'll probably be sorry to hear about this } , but there's  
You probably know this already } , a spider on your knee.
109. Don't be { so stupid  
such a fool } !
110. Whatever are you doing?!
111. That's a promise!
112. You have my word (that I never touched the cookie jar.)
113. { Who are you  
What gives you the right } to tell me what to do?
114. Since when are you responsible for these kids?
115. I'll choose my own clichés, thank you.
116. Well, I never!
117. [British] That's torn it!
118. a. That dirty swine!  
b. You son-of-a-bitch!  
c. You lexicalist!
119. What makes you say that?
120. [Hey, Harry!] What?
121. I don't suppose { you have a can opener on you, do you?  
you'd have a can opener on you, would you? }
122. Would you be the lady of the house?
123. [Would you like another drink?] { Oh, don't bother.  
(I) don't mind if I do. }



124. a. Everyone out of here!  
b. Into the room, men!
125. Who am I speaking to, please?
126. Mary Martin, please.
127. Next!
128. Have you ever { heard of }  
          { seen }                            anything like that!
129. Well, look at Little Lord Fauntleroy!
130. As I was saying, ...
131. a. Will you take the garbage out, or do I have to?  
b. You can damn well take out the garbage!
132. I know I should apologize for my appearance... [Oh, that's all right.]
133. How's the { kid }  
          { boy } ?
134. I hear you've got a new wombat.
135. You know what you can do with your pool cues.
136. So who are you? Prince Valiant?
137. Shall we say \$500, Sir Alfred?
138. How to open the safe? Raffles paced about the room in feverish thought.
139. Is that you, honey?
140. Where are you?
141. { This is Herman Melville. }  
      { Melville speaking. }  
      { Melville here. }
142. Here/Come/Fetch/Sit, Fido! [addressable only to domesticated animals]
143. [Thank you, Jacques.] Thank yóu, sir.
144. You're (entirely) welcome.
145. { Once more  
      A little wider  
      A bit (more) to the left } , please!
146. All right, Mr. Jones, your pies are ready.
147. All right, all right, you can take the car!
148. { Let me tell you }  
      { I'm telling you } , I'm really tired.
149. I don't know about that. [= 'I'm not sure I believe that']
150. Take it or leave it!
151. What if you had to leave town suddenly?

152. Who or what did you see?
153. Who went where?
154. How come you aren't drinking anymore?
155. Don't tell me you broke another Ming vase!
156. I ask you, gentleman, if this is a reasonable course of action.
157. If I were  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{you} \\ \text{in your place} \\ \text{in your shoes} \end{array} \right\}$ , I'd kill myself.
158. The name of Paul Revere's horse was \_\_\_\_\_.
159. The name of Charles' favorite, please.
160. President opens fun fair; festival to continue three days.
161. Boy, is syntax ever easy!
162. It's  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{a} \\ \text{(just) the} \end{array} \right\}$  most beautiful house!
163. [Take a chicken.] Boil until tender.
164. a. Contains no phosphates.  
b. Bottled in Kentucky.  
c. Open here.
165. [I saw Nancy downtown yesterday.] That's funny; I thought she was in Cleveland this week. Are you sure it was Nancy?  
[Query: What does that refer to?  
Second query: Why thought instead of 've been thinking, when speaker obviously doesn't accept the previous speaker's assertion?  
Third query: What does it refer to?]
166. It's a girl!
167. a. Pedestrians on berm.  
b. Falling rocks.  
c. Low-flying aircraft.  
d. Deer crossing.  
e. Fallen rocks.  
f. Zebra crossing.
168. Let's hear it for the French-speaking Walloons!
169. Down with male chauvinism!
170. Off the pigs!
171. (Hoo)ray for Foster Kane! [cf. # 52]
172. Mother knows best, dear.
173. Don't we like our oatmeal bath, Mr. Mankiewicz?
174. (There will be) no talking in the showers.
175. What will you have, ladies?
176. If out of order, call Ohio Bell central office.

177. Depressed? Lonely? Call 555-1010 for instant help.
178. Will trade stuffed bear for mint copies of Wonder Warthog.
179. A. D. Zwicky will supply dramatic readings upon request.
180. Previous parenthesis should be marked as #179.
181. It is almost too easy to collect specimens.
182. You know that gear with the little crystal teeth? Well, I think  
I just broke one of them.
183. a. Enter here.  
b. No exit.
184. What have we here?
185. What's all this, now?
186. I didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition!
187. [A: You're hired!] B: How do I fill out this form? Will I  
answer the phone? Do I do filing?
188. You can't do better than to buy a car from Mad Dog McGoon.
189. I should have thought you'd detest Maple-Clam Surprise.
190. Trust me.
191. { Don't give it a thought }  
    { No trouble (at all) }      [= 'you're welcome']
192. May all your children be acrobats!
193. I hope you drown in the damn lake!
194. Shut up and deal!
195. Oh, please, let me win this one!
196. Way to go, big red bear!
197. I can sing anything you can sing!
198. Things are rough all over, fella.
199. You never can tell with guys like that.
200. You just can't trust Munchkins. [Note: the problematic point is  
just]
201. Even big boys have to eat their spinach, Johnny.
202. You finish that homework or I'll know the reason why!
203. [A: My behind hurts!] B: You'll think your behind hurts!  
    [= 'I'll spank it until it really hurts']
204. She really gave him what for.
205. Someone to see you, doctor.
206. [A: What's wrong with you?] B: Would you believe leprosy?  
    Jungle rot? Poison ivy?

207. Anyone who hates dogs and children can't be all bad.
208. a. Happy birthday!  
b. Merry Christmas!
209. a. Good morning/evening/night!  
b. Sleep tight!
210. Be a good girl, honey, and pick up your room.
211. I don't have to remind you that these flasks are likely to explode. [Note: this is a reminder.]
212. I'm afraid (that) you flunked the exam. [Notes: Asserts that you flunked. Synonyms of afraid--scared, frightened, anxious--don't work this way. Even sorry, which ought to (given its meaning), doesn't; I'm sorry you flunked is not an announcement of the flunk. The next two examples, however, are.]
213. I'm sorry, but you flunked the exam.
214. I'm sorry to say that you flunked the exam.
215. { The results are to be found } on the table  
{ You will find the results } in the back of the room.
216. If you're looking for the results, { they're on the table }  
{ you'll find them on the }  
table  
[Query: what sort of if-clause is this?]
217. Fancy an idiot like him knowing anything like that!
218. If you're ever in Disneyland (again), look me up. [Query: what does ever contribute?]
219. Double or nothing!
220. Chicago or bust!
221. Freedom now!
222. { I couldn't care less. }  
{ I could care less. }  
[Note: It's not hard to see how the first comes to convey 'I don't care'. The common use of the second in the same way is baffling.]
223. Time will tell.
224. I told you so! [nyah! nyah! nyah!]
225. a. (No) can do!  
b. Will do! [\*Won't do! (in the sense 'I won't do it')]
226. a. Just a minute/second!  
b. Wait up (for me)!
227. Coming!
228. Wait up (for me)!
229. [A: shall we move on?] B: Anything you say.

230. It couldn't have happened to a nicer guy!
231. { There's something } you should { know (about me) }  
{ There are a few things } { be warned about }
232. { Don't (ever) }  
{ Never } darken my door again!
233. Why did you have to { tell me } that!  
{ say }  
[Note: the have to is the anomaly]
234. [card playing]  
a. Hit me!  
b. I'll see you.  
c. I'll raise you ten.
235. [auctions]  
a. Five dollars has been bid.  
b. Do I hear ten?  
c. Sold to the lady in the trench coat!
236. I can't tell why I love you, but I do.
237. I promise you that if you don't shut up I'll slap you.
238. He insisted on \$500 a week, and why not?
239. I cried for you, but did you cry for me?
240. [She left because she was underpaid and because she couldn't stand the city.] Good reasons both.
241. I don't (quite) know how to { say } this, but I just  
{ tell you } suddenly realized that I no longer love Alys.
242. Must you talk with your mouth full?
243. I wonder if some good little boy is going to eat up all his spinach.
244. [A: How's it going?]  
B: { Me? I can't complain/kick. }  
{ Don't ask! }
245. My dear, I wish there was some way I could help!
246. Is that so!
247. To whom it may concern:
248. You lived with her for ten months, { right }  
{ is that so } ?
249. { Please welcome } the lovely and talented Shirley  
{ (And) now (here's) } Shameless!
250. Sol Hurok proudly presents the Tarzana, California, Balalaika Band!



251. a. May I be excused?  
b. You're excused.
252. That's easy for you to say.
253. Watch it! [= 'Be careful']
254. You should have seen the way she reacted when she heard that the Albanian team had won!
255. I'll tell you something interesting about this guy: he's really freaky about lobster salad.
256. There's something I want to ask you: why do you insist on wearing one gold earring?
257. { I have } someone I want you to meet. Heloise, this is  
There's } Abelard. Abelard, Heloise.
258. You can have this lovely embroidered shin-warmer for only \$19.95.
259. I think you probably ought to know that there's some chance it might be better if you could possibly manage to hold the spoon in your right hand.
260. Don't you want somebody to love, fella?
261. You aren't shy, are you, big boy? [Note: no falling intonation on are you]
262. [cf. 255-7] James, there's something you ought to know: Herbert and I have met before, back in Ypsilanti.
263. Just think! Julia Child right here in my kitchen, and I haven't a thing to offer her!
264. Me, the guy who wrote the Olentangy Symphony, and you want me to copy the harmonica parts for a street singer!
265. That's enough out of you!
266. Do you understand/realize { how rude you sometimes are  
the gravity of your situation  
that you've just synthesized horse  
dung } ?
267. I couldn't help noticing you were speaking Basque. [Do you know where I could hire some shepherds?]
268. They say it's going to rain tonight.
269. Far be it from me to criticize a great artist like Liberace!
270. This guy comes up to me and says 'Ooga-booga!'
271. This stuff isn't bad, for a Wisconsin burgundy.
272. (You) pinch my ass one more time and I'll slap your nose off!
273. Don't (you) slap my nose, or I'll stamp my feet and cry!

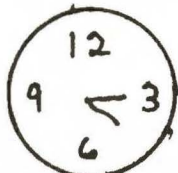
274. a. (Just) listen to that train (rush past)!  
b. (Just) watch that guy (bust bricks with his ears)!
275. Like I said to Arlene, you can't depend on marmosets.
276. After him, men!
277. After you, Mrs. Robinson.
278. I'm just dying to see your etchings.
279. a. Watch your language!  
b. [British] Language!
280. Butt out!
281. Tit for tat!
282. It takes one to know one!
283. Believe me, he was really angry!
284. I wouldn't (go so far as to) say that!
285. Don't hesitate to ask any questions you might have.
286. (The) last I heard of him, he was in Hong Kong.
287. How's this for a pirouette?
288. After all, how abstract  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{is phonology} \\ \text{could phonology be} \end{array} \right\} ?$   
[Implied answer: not all that much.]
289. All alone by the telephone, and what should I do?
290. Lamont, it's you!
291. You do what you like and I'll do what I like.
292. Give him an inch and he takes a mile.
293. On the telephone with me right now is a young hairdresser from  
Lima, Ohio.
294. Into the arena came six pious Christians and two dispirited lions.
295. If  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{only I'd} \\ \text{I'd only} \end{array} \right\}$  known what you wanted!
296. How's tricks?
297. They don't call him Stud for nothing!
298. And how!
299. [Poor man!] He was so nice and good and live-and-let-live.
300. a. Have a pleasant day!  
b. Have a good time!  
c. Have fun!
301. Am I right in thinking you're the Prince of Pruzistan?
302. [Two more orders!] As if I didn't have enough to do!
303. [A: Let me see a size 10 Möbius strip, please.] B: Here you  
are, sir.

304. Just forget you ever saw/knew me.
305. It's a date!
306. You wouldn't have a Kabardian-Miwok dictionary in here, would you?
307. [A: Why shrimp in beer? B: Why not?] A: You got me (there).
308. Cheese it, the cops! [Note: OED has citations from early 19th c.; suggests cheese is from cease]
309. What are you doing here? [= 'Why are you here?']
310. Leave/keep Marie out of this! [= 'Don't discuss Marie anymore']
311. You and your funny ideas!
312. [A: Have you seen the baby?] B: See it! I found it.
313. You talk too much! [= 'Shut up!']
314. Hey, what's the idea?
315. Over my dead body!
316. Come on, honey. [= 'Let's go!']
317. If it isn't asking too much, could I have my teddy bear back?
318. [A: I want you to wash the dog.] B: Who, me?
319. Who's got a cigarette? [= 'Someone, give me a cigarette']
320. Chances are, there isn't a single joint left in the house.
321. Stabbed through the ribs, and not more than an hour ago, either!
322. Where do you think you're going? [= 'You're not going to go anywhere!']
323. Watch your step! [Note: both more literal and more figurative sense.]
324. Mind the step! [British]
325. Watch your head!
326. Aw, come on! [= 'I don't believe what you say']
327. See that you're not followed. ['see' = 'insure'; see = see to it]
328. Go ahead (and do it).
329. Maybe it would be kinder to talk to her later.
330. I could really use a beer, Sammy.
331. He'll be here, you can depend on that!
332. Hey, what is this? [= 'What's happening here?']
333. Thanks to you, I am happy again.
334. I think you('ve) got something there, Jack. [= 'That's a good idea', 'I think you're right']
335. Would you (please) not practice the piano now.
336. So what!
337. Ok, you asked for it!

338. Oh, { for the love of Mike } , can't you see he loves you?  
for Christ's sake }
339. You can give me a shine, boy.
340. [A: I got a job] B: No kidding!
341. I don't have to stand here and be insulted!
342. You wanna back off, buddy?
343. Are you gonna fool around, or are you gonna play golf?
344. a. How's that (again)?  
b. What was that?
345. Just what is that supposed to mean, Gladys?
346. a. Who asked you?  
b. Says who?  
c. Oh, yeah!  
d. Says you!
347. Who are you calling a drunk?
348. Never mind those fruit bats, George!
349. What do you say we go and get some ice cream!
350. I'm sorry, but I didn't catch/hear/get/understand what you said.
351. How much money you got?
352. Each to his own.
353. Listen, fella, don't call this number again.
354. I don't blame you for being angry, but try to understand my position.
355. Nobody can talk to me like that (and get away with it)!
356. I'd be obliged if you'd give her a message.
357. I won't take no for an answer.
358. What are you trying to pull, buster?
359. Who are you trying to kid, lady?
360. [A: Fascinating, isn't it?] B: Fascinating my ass!
361. a. She's (as) tall as can be.  
b. I love her as much as can be.  
c. I love her as much as tongue can tell.
362. a. He's going to live, don't you think?  
b. Do they eat lettuce here, do you think?
373. Buzz off!
364. Can it!
365. Hold it down!
366. Down in front!
367. Speak of the Devil!

368. (You) seen one, you seen'm all. [Note logic.]
369. Thanks, but no(,) thanks.
371. How's that for a soufflé?
372. a. Atta boy/girl!  
b. \*That's a boy/girl! [asterisked as an equivalent to the preceding]
373. I dare say!
374. I'll say!
375. You don't say?!
376. Are you ready for this (one)?
377. Does a chicken have lips? [= 'No'; cf. questions about the Catholicity of the Pope]
378. Hang a Louie/Ralph. [= 'Turn left/right']
379. You know that car you used to have? [What do you mean, 'used to'?)
380. a. You bet.  
b. Sure. [= 'Thank you']
381. Baby needs new shoes! [Note: an invocation to Lady Luck]
382. I've been there (myself) (, fella) [= 'I understand your problem']
383. [Hurts?] I'll show you 'hurts'. [cf. # 203]
384. Stop it, you two/ ??three/ \*four!
385. a. Break it up!  
b. Clear out!
386. I care?
387. Who's next?
388. Unhand that woman!
389. I don't mind telling you; I'm pissed.
390. And that's (absolutely) my final offer.
391. a. Up the I.R.A.!  
b. Up yours!
392. Faroese Talmud student wishes to share spacious apartment with same. [Note: the oddity is same.]
393. Suffice it to say, he's rich.
394. For what it's worth, it's kosher.
385. Beats ((the) hell out of) me.
396. [card-playing] I'm out.
397. As long as { I'm thinking about it  
you're here  
I've got you on the phone } , are you circum sized?



398. I don't think you realize/appreciate the gravity of the situation.
399. Bite your tongue!
400. Knock on wood.
401. It's a good book, (even) if I do say so. [Note: bizarre position of stress]
402. Take my word for it, it's cold.
403. [initiating a discourse:] No, don't tell me. Let me guess:  
Lady Godiva!
404. Guess who!
405. Do you carry gelignite?
406. Are you ready to order?
407. Can I take your order?
408. Just (bring me) a glass of water.
409. Nothing for me, thanks.
410. Thank you. Call again.
411. Yes! We're open! [sign on a closed shop]
412. Sorry! Closed. [sign on a closed shop]
413. Back at  [sign on closed shop at 4:00]
414. This is my parting shot.
415. There's plenty more where these came from.
416. You're darn tootin' (that isn't a garter snake)!
417. Wait till you see what I've done!
418. (Wait till you) get a load of these papers!
419. You know me, Miranda.
420. Well, no harm in asking!
421. a. No doubt about it.  
b. No question.
422. It's about time you got here?
423. I'd be happy/glad if you'd turn off that buzzer. [cf.: If you'd turn off that buzzer, I'd be happy/glad.]
424. Step lively!
425. Stick 'em up!
426. One if by land, two if by sea.
427. There's no smoking in here, Mr. Curtis.

428. Chimpanzees are forbidden in Hall, Ms. Goodall.
429. (Now) let's not get abusive, Mr. Harmon.
430. How's about some hash? [Query: Where on earth does the [z] come from?]
431. What do you say { about going to the store  
we go to the store  
let's go to the store } ?
432. I stand corrected.
433. Your money or your life!
434. That's him, all right.
435. You'll take these and like it!
436. That settles it! No more ice cream for you!
437. To be sure.
438. Take ten, boys and girls!
439. Swing it, honey!
440. Let's have that again! [= 'Please repeat']
441. That's nothing! [Wait till you see the next one!]
442. a. Calling all cars!  
b. Paging Miss Steinem!
443. Not many guys would have the guts to admit that they cry at Shirley Temple movies!
444. And what will the lady/gentleman have?
445. Get your hands up!
446. As a matter of fact, ...
447. It's a deal!
448. I call that a great shot!
449. Ok, shoot! ['Go ahead and speak']
450. If anyone can do it, Tarzan can!
451. [A: You're a dirty pig!] B: You're another! [Note: You too! is literal]
452. Not so fast, fella! [= either 'Don't go/do that so fast' or 'Just a second']
453. Why don't you people go back where { you belong  
you came from } ?
454. No kidding!?! Izzat so!?! [# 246]
455. (You) know something, honey? (I really don't think you should wear green lipstick.) [cf. # 255-7 and 262; and contrast with (you) know what?]

456. I still say the worst trip was when we got lost in White Plains.
457. Remember how we used to dangle our feet in the creek? [I'd like to do that again.]
458. For an exciting surprise, send two dollars to Corn Porn Products, Racine, Wisc.
459. No lie!
460. Let me at 'em!
461. I'm not exactly delighted with this situation either, you know.
462. This has been Charles Kuralt. [Note: can be used only by radio/television announcers at the end of a program. Query: Why on earth the present perfect?]
463. a. Seriously, folks.  
b. All joking aside, folks.
464. I can (just) see it now: me in the White House, ...
465. I'd do anything for a fix.
466. That's Adams: A, D, A, M, S.
467. That's 'Zwicky', not 'Zickwich'.
468. You're sick—S, I, C, K, sick.
469. Would I cheat you? Look, Mike, this is me, Andy, your old friend! Remember me?
470. Pan American Flight 1602 now loading at Gate X-59.
471. All aboard!
472. Last call!
473. { Once and for all }  
{ For the last time } , ...
474. You owe it to yourself to try this exciting new product.
475. You'll never know (just) how much I love you, Todd.
476. I think that stinks, if you'll pardon the expression.
477. Now arriving from New York at Gate 251--TWA flight EZ-7. [cf. # 470]
478. And while you're at it, ...
479. Do you think you could lend me a tenner until pay day?
480. [A: Would you care for another dilled shrimp?  
B: Oh, I wouldn't think of taking the last one!]
481. Would you { like }  
{ care for } some of Acapulco's finest? [cf. be pleased/attracted by, love, find to one's taste, etc.]
482. Hello in/out there!
483. Is there a doctor in the house?

484. (Is (there)) anyone { home  
(in) { there } } ? [cf. Is there  
someone here?]
485. [A: Thank you.] B: It was a privilege.
486. [Me want to live with you?] Are you crazy? [= 'of course not']
487. I can take a hint; I'm leaving.
488. Another country heard from!
489. Make { that  
mine } a double, Harry.
490. That's { it  
all } ! [= 'This is the end']
491. You ain't just whistlin' Dixie!
492. If you think I'm going to wash your socks for you, you've got  
another think coming!
493. You make me { sick  
puke } , (you and your (damned) Masonic  
secrets)!
494. What say we take in a Japanese monster flick?
495. Eating just isn't my thing right now, ((do) you) dig?
496. I'm not Santa Claus, after all.
497. You're the patsy, get it?
498. That'll be the day!
499. How time flies (when you're having fun)!
500. You can't deliver that speech and remain in Minneapolis.
501. I must be sick, or things wouldn't waver like this.
502. If you need any help, I'll be right here in the next room.
503. May/can I help you?
504. Ready or not, here we come!
505. If you think of anything you want moved, feel free.
506. Let's hope he can do it this time.
507. We can't all be Noam Chomsky(s), you know.
508. A gentleman would have opened the door for me. [reproof]
509. a. Where's the fire, buddy?  
b. What's the rush, mister?
510. (Now) that's a (real) pancake!
511. { As the old saying goes }  
{ As they say in France } , blood is thicker than water.
512. I kid you not!



513. Well, here goes nothing!
514. Where did you learn to kiss like that, baby?
515. It's the only way to travel!
516. Once upon a time...
517. There once was a man named Oedipus, and...
518. They don't make them like that anymore!
519. When they made him, they broke the mold.
520. The struggle of class against class is what struggle--a what struggle? [Note: read with falling intonation, this is a quiz question; with rising intonation it's a reclamatory question or an incredulity question]
521. Who cares (about your troubles)?
522. Suppose we get on with this, gentlemen. [= 'Let's get on with this']
523. Begging your pardon, sir, there's a monkey on your back.
524. Not meaning to bother/trouble you sir, but you seem to have a scimitar stuck in your shoulder.
525. We don't use words like 'barf' at the dinner table, Susie.
526. Can't you put two and two together?
527. Can't you tell your ass from  $\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{your elbow} \\ \text{a hole in the ground} \end{array} \right\} ?$
528. a. You have to see it to believe it!  
b. It has to be seen to be believed!
529. If you don't mind my saying so, I think that wearing lavender underwear in the Packers' locker room would be a mistake.
530. If you ask me, I think you should forget linguistics and take up mah-jongg professionally.
531. a. Dear Mom:  
b. Sincerely (yours)  
c. Regards  
d. Peace  
e. Love/regards to Rex and Tillie.
532. Sure enough, that's just what he did!
533. She's really sump'n else!
534. If you're not headed anywhere in particular, maybe you could ride along with me.
535. I could (just) cry (, it's so awful)!
536. a. Not so rough!  
b. Take it easy!
537. a. What's your pleasure, gentlemen?  
b. Name your poison, friend.
538. I wouldn't touch that with a ten-foot pole!



539. What hole did you crawl out of?
540. What's this 'Uncle Mike' business/stuff?
541. I'm with you. [= 'I agree']
542. You shoulda smelled that room! [cf. # 254]
543. a. May I be the first to congratulate you on winning the Nobel Prize in Linguistics?  
b. Let me be the first to congratulate you!
544. (Just) what do you intend to do about the garbage on the kitchen floor?
545. (And) whose little boy are you?
546. Why, you brute! Hitting a poor old man (like that)!
547. What I'm thinking is: suppose we let him have the money, then maybe he'll go away.
548. Run for your life!
549. It's good/great to be back!
550. Whistle? What whistle?
551. Given the way he drinks, it's amazing he's still alive.
552. You're not fit to clean the boots of a man like that!
553. Welcome to the Villa America!
554. [Of course I trust him; he's a friend of Jack's.] That's enough for me!
555. Read and weep!
556. I could sure go for some lobster!
557. a. Have a seat!  
b. Take a load off your feet!
558. Now then, Mr. Katz.
559. You wait and see, she'll want me back!
560. a. Give us a dime, ol' buddy.  
b. We'll be seein' ya. [Note: both us and we here are used by a single speaker to refer to himself]
561. { ((Have) you) got }  
D'ya have some change so I can take the bus?
562. Bully for you!
563. Don't (even) ask!
564. You think a dance hall girl was a dirty life! You oughta be proud.
565. a. It staggers the imagination!  
b. I don't believe a word of this!
566. This is really something!

567. I don't believe a word of this!
568. Well, I wouldn't say that, exactly, ...
569. Do I have the pleasure of addressing Alex Comfort?
570. If you'll excuse the intrusion, captain, I'll go on with my work.
571. You see before you a young woman who can read 20,000 words a minute.
572. I stand before you a chastened man.
573. Ok, Swami, or whatever your name is, we'll be back with this Christ Consciousness racket in just a minute.
574. (Going) { up }  
{ down } , please.
575. What kept you so long?
576. My word!
577. { Allow }  
{ Permit } me to introduce myself.
578. And of course { I'm not forgetting }  
{ I shouldn't forget } our special guest star,  
Myron Breckenridge!
579. Don't get me wrong!
580. Take my word (for it)!
581. Well, { listen to }  
{ look at } you!
582. Oh, { come now }  
{ come, come } , Sue, that isn't an oryx!
583. You must be satisfied, or your money back.
584. Give { my }  
{ our } best to Sally.
585. Little { do you }  
{ does he } know!
586. If there's one thing I hate, it's people with clammy hands!
587. It may interest you to know that hamburgers are harmless.
588. Would you happen to know where Riga is?
589. Unless I miss my guess, that's a Rhodesian ridgeback.
590. I hear tell that there's a strange creature in that swamp.
591. That's what you think!
592. No shit! [falling intonation]
593. You double-cross me and I'll be in the D.A.'s office so fast it'll make your head spin!

594. For your information, buddy, 'faggot' is a fighting word.
595. He's kind of { --know what I mean?--pushy  
pushy, if you know what I mean } .
596. He's a--how do you call it?--male chauvinist pig.
597. Altamont was, { as he put it  
in his words  
as he said } , a 'bum trip'.
598. This is, { so to speak  
in a manner of speaking  
as it were } , virgin territory.
599. And at that point Robin, literally, crashed.
600. a. Shake!  
b. Put it there!
601. I'm going to get him if it's the last thing I do!
602. Take it from { a friend  
me } : You're wild!
603. Take my word for it: it'll never be so nice again!
604. Do let's have an ice cream! [British]
605. { Look  
Listen } , you, that won't do! [Note: this is an address  
use of you--also a put-down]
606. That's nothing to me! [= 'I don't care']
607. { Be good enough to  
Be so good as to  
Have the goodness to } come by our house at 4 tomorrow.
608. What say?
609. [British] Good game, what?!
610. Come and get it!
611. Come what may, we'll stick together.
612. I got news for you, sister.
613. What'll it be, ladies? [cf. # 175]
614. Heave ho!
615. Now for a little fancy foot work!
616. (Would you) { care  
like } to join me in a cup of tea?
617. What made you ask about that?
618. Don't try anything funny!
619. (As) I was about to say, guano futures look promising.

620. When she fixes things, she really fixes things.
621. You (just) can't beat hot soup on a cold morning!
622. { To my knowledge  
(As/so) far as I know } , this is the best brand of snake  
oil on the market.
623. [calls in children's games]  
a. Ollie, ollie, oxen free!  
b. King's x!  
c. Come out, come out, wherever you are!  
[see Iona and Peter Opie, The Lore and Language of  
Schoolchildren, Children's Games in Street and Playground]
624. Round and round she goes, where she stops, nobody knows!
625. Nice going!
626. It would be a good idea if you kept quiet.
627. Get lost!
628. You know who he takes after! [Speaker to her daughter, re her  
grandson, with intended reference to her son-in-law]
629. That's a fine way to behave!
630. Hang loose, boy!
631. That's cute! [= 'that's stupid/awful']
632. Are you serious? [= 'I can't believe that']
633. May I have your attention!
634. What do you say, Buzz? [= 'Do you agree/consent?']
635. You know something: you read too many comic books.
636. You shouldn'a called me that!
637. Sounds good!
638. Start moving! Get going!
639. Nobody asked you to put your two cents in!
640. If you find anything more, just remember old Putty-Nose.
641. You lookin' for a sock on the button?
642. [A: I'm going to give it to him the first time I see 'im!]  
B: Yeah? You and who else?
643. I suppose you've heard?
644. Don't take it like that, Tom.
645. While we're on the subject, I wish you'd stay home a little more.
646. Well, for cryin' out loud!
647. He'll be here any minute.
648. You're a swell dish! I think I'm gonna go for you!
649. What's eating you?
650. If I don't want to, I don't have to!

651. a. Leave it to me, kid!  
b. Step on it!
652. In a pig's eye!
653. Guess I'll call up Gwen.
654. You stay put, if you know what that means!
655. Oh, Tommy, I could love you to death!
656. [A: I ain't runnin!] B: Who said you were?!  
[Note: stressed on were, although said is also possible.]
657. I'll bring Tom back if it's the last thing I do! [same as # 601]
658. It is a problem that we, the public, must solve.
659. She's anybody's girl.
660. Congratulations (on your new book).
661. Kansas City, here I/we come!
662. Are you sick, or what?
663. Come on and be my party doll!
664. To each his own. (There's) no accounting for tastes.
665. And now "Cinderella", as told by Betty Friedan.
666. Best of all, you can do it easily.
667. Little realizing that Tully was Cicero, Willard spoke opaquely.
668. You wouldn't want to insult a lady would you?
669. Money cheerfully refunded if not completely satisfied.
670. Five'll get you ten we goofed.
671. That's more than I can say for my filustricator.
672. [Jury foreman:] The jury finds the defendant not guilty.
673. Mummy, my foot! [That's just a cricket bat wrapped with adhesive tape.]
674. No more monkey business, ((do) you) hear/understand?
675. On to the presidential palace!
676. Use your head!
677. James Beard at your service, madame!
678. For once in your life, do the right thing!
679. How dare you (enter without knocking)!?
680. (I) swear to God, I never touched the whipped cream!
681. I'm for going to the flicks. What about you? [= 'What do you think?']
682. I'll have no more of this generativist talk.
683. I'm no stranger to { Hollywood }  
depression .



684. You wouldn't by any chance have a native speaker of Samoan in your class?
685. Behold the king!
686. Get me a camel, and make it quick!
687. Get a move on!
688. That's easier said than done.
689. With friends like you guys, who needs enemies?
690. Like it or not, you're going to have a test on Friday.
691. Like father, like son.
692. The more, the merrier.
693. Hut, two, three!
694. Sound off!
695. I haven't the foggiest!
696. I'll fix that guy's wagon!
697. Let a guy talk to you, will ya! [Note: two different readings with different intonations--request or challenge; also note that a guy refers to the speaker]
698. Name one person who got ahead without a high school diploma!
699. I should say not!
700. What's it to you!
701. [A: Martin Gardner!] B. { Here Present } , { teacher professor }
702. All present and accounted for!
703. Nobody's perfect, (you know)!
704. I wouldn't have any idea, I'm afraid.
705. Pipe down!
706. Monte Carlo is { pretty as a picture }  
\*pretty as Arles }
707. Needless to say, ...
708. { Let me }  
{ I'll } worry about that stuff.
709. Anyone ever tell you you're cute?
710. Oh, let me have the strength to finish these lists!
711. If it's good enough for Gerry Ford, it's good enough for me!
712. Do I get my money or not?
713. For one thing, ... For another, ...
714. What's the big idea?!
715. Mild? You wouldn't believe how mild!



716. I won't go back! I'll kill myself first! [Note: It's the first that's in question]
717. That goes double (in spades) (for me)!
718. I'll be brief, Miss Sharp: We'd like you to be our dean.
719. In a word, no.
720. Drop dead!
721. There, there, dear.
722. We'll be calling/talking to you.
723. Now you're talking!
724. In you go!
725. Wash your car, mister?
726. This is your last chance!
727. It bears repeating that modern linguistics is structuralist.
728. I can tell (that) you're on the level.
729. By George, she's got it!
730. I'll teach you a lesson you'll never forget.
731. Let's have one, for old times' sake!
732. I've had it (with guys like that)!
733. It's only a matter of time (until we find the elixir)!
734. You gotta be kidding! Mr. Mooney give you a job!?
735. a. He's a real Republican.  
b. He's a real fuck-off.
736. A: What do you call that little black bug? B: It's a flea.
737. A: What do you call carbonated beverages? B: I call them sodas, but some people call them cokes, or pop.
738. A: What do you call your invention? B: I call it a derivational constraint.
739. Ten Tips for Weight Control: Avoid fats and starches. Exercise regularly. Think thin. Keep celery in the refrigerator...
740. Suppose you come down from there. [= 'Come down'; from the movie, 'A Severed Head']
741. That takes the cake!
742. You'd better believe it!
743. You know it! [stress on both you and know]
744. Don't I know it!
745. Take care!
746. Wait a sec!
747. [A: Can I?] B: Sure you can!

748. Knock on wood!
749. Speak of the devil!
750. What with...and all that, I didn't sleep a wink.
751. a. Will attack if aroused.  
b. Will bite when challenged. [zoo signs]
752. You're just unhappy, that's all!
753. May I have the pleasure of this dance?
754. Long time no see.
755. I've got your number!
756. (It's (been)) nice { meeting you  
to meet you } .
757. Look here, fella!
758. You betcha!
759. Suit yourself.
760. So there!
761. Where does it hurt?
762. To make a long story short, ...
763. Search me!
764. Don't hold your breath!
765. Hold your horses!
766. Look, nobody calls John Wayne a fascist, not while I'm around!
767. That's for me to know and (for) you to find out.
768. I would deem it a pleasure (if you would...)
769. Take a tip from me!
770. Famous last words!
771. Don't think I'm telling you what to do, but...
772. Don't get me wrong!
773. Whose socks are these on the living room floor? [not an information question]
774. What is this junk on your bed? [not an information question]
775. Who knows? [stress on knows--why?]
776. (It's (been)) nice { to know you  
knowing you } . [the acquaintance does not necessarily cease after this utterance]
777. Why oh why are speech acts so hard to analyze? [cf. \*Who oh who did you see? etc.]
778. You heard what I said!
779. a. Is that a dumpling, or is that a dumpling?  
b. Can that guy fly, or can he fly!

780. You're the { boss }  
                  { doctor } .
781. a. It won't make me dopey or anything, will it?  
      b. They were playing or something.  
      c. If you're sick, or whatever, stay home.
782. Not that he ever complained.
783. Not from me, you didn't get it!
784. I { was just going to ask }  
      { just wanted to know }       why he was crying.
785. The transformation into a werewolf isn't all on the minus side.  
      [from the movie 'I was a Teenage Werewolf']

### Notes

\*It was through the encouragement of Georgia M. Green and Nancy M. Yanofsky that this article came to exist. This is the version of 7 April 1981.

<sup>1</sup>I am indebted to the registered students in the seminar (Gregg Eiden, Marion Johnson, and Robbie Kantor) and to the auditors (Jeanette Gundel, Nancy Levin, and Ann Zwicky) for their many comments and suggestions.

<sup>2</sup>Examples 363 through 415 were supplied by J. M. Sadock; they were suggested by examples earlier in the list, but are reproduced here without back references. Examples 626-37 are from the beginning of the movie 'Rebel Without a Cause'. Examples 638-58 are from the movie 'Public Enemy'.