

# GANGSTER SLANG

Ameche: Telephone  
Babe: Woman  
Baby: A person, can be said to either a man or a woman  
Bangtails: Racehorses  
Barbering: Talking  
Be on the nut, to: To be broke  
Bean-shooter: Gun  
Beezer: Nose  
Bent cars: Stolen cars  
Berries: Dollars  
Big house: Jail  
Big one, the: Death  
Big sleep, the: Death  
Bim: Woman  
Bindle: 1. of heroin: Little folded-up piece of paper. 2. The bundle in which a hobo carries all his worldly possessions.  
Bindle punk: A hobo or derelict hired to do rough or unpleasant work. (Could perhaps refer to a small time drug dealer.)  
Bindle stiff: One who steals a hobo's bindle  
Bing: Crazy ??  
Bird: Guy  
Blip off: To kill  
Blow: Leave  
Blow one down: Kill someone  
Blower: Telephone  
Bo: Pal, buster, fellow, as in "Hey, bo"  
Boiler: Car  
Boob: Dumb guy  
Boozehound: Drunkard  
Bop: To kill  
Box job: A safe cracking  
Brace (somebody): Grab, shake up  
Bracelets: Handcuffs  
Break it up: Stop that, quit the nonsense  
Breeze: To leave, go. Also breeze off - get lost  
Broad: Woman  
Bucket: Car  
Bulge, as in "The kid had the bulge there": The advantage  
Bulls: Cops (perhaps plainclothes detectives)  
Bump: Kill  
Bump off: Kill; also, bump-off - a killing  
Buncoing some (people): Defrauding some people  
Bunk: 1. As in "That's the bunk" - that's false, untrue. 2. As in "to bunk" - to sleep  
Bunny, as in "Don't be a bunny": Don't be stupid.  
Burn powder: Fire a gun  
Bus: Big car  
Butter and egg man: The money man, the man with the bankroll, a yokel who comes to town to blow a big wad in nightclubs.  
Button: Face, as in "a poke in the button"  
Buttons: Police  
Butts: Cigarettes  
Buy a drink: To pour a drink  
Buzz, as in "I'm in the dump an hour and the house copper gives me the buzz": Looks me up, comes to my door  
Buzzer: Policeman's badge  
C, or C-note: \$100, also a pair of C's = \$200  
Cabbage: Money  
Caboose: Jail  
Call copper: Inform the police  
Can: Jail  
Can-opener: Safe cracker who forces open cheap safes  
Case dough: "Nest egg ... the theoretically untouchable reserve for emergencies"  
Cat: Guy  
Century: \$100  
Chew: Eat  
Chicago overcoat: A coffin

Chick: Woman  
Chilled off: Killed  
Chin: A conversation; also chinning = talking  
Chin music: A punch on the jaw  
Chinese angle, as in "You're not trying to find a Chinese angle on it, are you?": a strange twist of easy virtue  
Chisel: To swindle or cheat  
Chiv, chive: Knife, or other stabbing or cutting weapon  
Chopper squad: Guys with machine guns  
Clammed: Close-mouthed, as in clammed up  
Clean sneak: An escape with no clues left behind  
Clip joint: In some cases, a night-club where the prices are high and the patrons are fleeced. A casino where the tables are fixed  
Clipped: Shot  
Close your head: Shut up  
Clubhouse: Police station  
Coffee-and-doughnut, as in "These coffee-and-doughnut guns are ...": Could come from "coffee and cakes," which refers to something of little value.  
Conk: Head  
Cool, as in "He cooled me": To knock out  
Cooler, the: Jail  
Cop: 1. Detective, even a private one. 2. To win, as in a bet  
Copped: Grabbed by the cops  
Copper: 1. Policeman. 2. As in "All time served except his copper"  
Corn: Bourbon (as in corn liquor)  
Crab: Figure out  
Crate: Car  
Creep joint: ?? Can mean a whorehouse where the girls are pickpockets, but that doesn't fit here  
Croak: To kill  
Croaker: Doctor  
Crushed out: Escaped (from jail)  
Cush: Money (a cushion, something to fall back on)  
Cut down: Killed (esp shot?)  
Daisy: None-too-masculine  
Dame: Woman  
Dangle: Leave, get lost  
Darb: Something remarkable or superior  
Deck, as in "deck of Luckies": Pack of cigarettes  
Diapers, as in "Pin your diapers on": Clothes, get dressed  
Dib: Share (of the proceeds)  
Dick: Detective (usually qualified with "private" if not a policeman)  
Dingus: Thing  
Dip: Pickpocket  
Dip the bill: have a drink  
Dive: A low-down, cheap sort of place  
Dizzy with a dame, to be: To be deeply in love with a woman  
Do the dance: To be hanged  
Dogs: Feet  
Doll: Woman  
Dope: 1. Drugs, of any sort. 2. Information. 3. As a verb, as in "I had him doped as" - to have figured for  
Dope fiend: Drug addict  
Dope peddler: Drug dealer  
Dormy: Dormant, quiet, as in "Why didn't you lie dormy in the place you climbed to?"  
Dough: Money  
Drift: Go, leave  
Drill: Shoot  
Drink out of the same bottle, as in "We used to drink out of the same bottle.": We were close friends  
Droppers: Hired killers  
Drum: Speakeasy  
Dry-gulch: Knock out, hit on head after ambushing  
Ducat: Ticket  
Duck soup: Easy, a piece of cake  
Dummerer: Somebody who pretends to be (deaf and?) dumb in order to appear a more deserving beggar  
Dump, as in "We did the dumps": Roadhouse, club; or, more generally, any place  
Dust: 1. Nothing, as in "Tinhorns are dust to me". 2. Leave, depart, as in "Let's dust". 3. A look, as in "Let's give it the dust"  
Dust out: Leave, depart  
Dutch: 1. As in "in dutch" - trouble with the police. 2. As in "A girl pulled the Dutchact" - committed suicide.  
Egg: Fellow  
Eggs in the coffee: Easy, a piece of cake, okay, all right  
Elbows, as in "And there's no elbows tagging along": Police

Electric cure: Electrocution  
Fade: Get lost  
Fakeloo artist: Con man  
Fin: \$5 bill  
Finder: Finger man  
Finger, as in put the finger on: Identify  
Flat: 1. Broke 2. As in "That's flat" - that's for sure  
Flattie: Flatfoot, cop  
Flimflam: Swindle (Op, 23, 251)  
Flippers: Hands? (Lake, 139)  
Flivver: A Ford automobile  
Flogger: Overcoat  
Flop: 1. Go to bed. 2. As in "The racket's flopped" - fallen through, not worked out  
Fog: To shoot  
Frail: Woman  
Frau: Wife  
From nothing, as in "I know from nothing": I don't know anything  
Gashouse, as in "getting gashouse": Rough  
Gasper: Cigarette  
Gat: Gun  
Gate, as in "Give her the gate": The door, as in leave  
Gaycat: "A young punk who runs with an older tramp and there is always a connotation of homosexuality"  
Gee: Guy  
Geetus: Money  
Giggle juice: Liquor  
Gin mill: Bar (speakeasy?)  
Gink: Guy  
Girlie: Woman  
Give a third: Interrogate (third degree)  
Glad rags: Fancy clothes  
Glaum: Steal  
Glomming: Stealing  
Go climb up your thumb: Go fly a kite, go stick your thumb up your ass  
Go over the edge with the rams: To get far too drunk  
Go to read and write: Rhyming slang for take flight  
Gonif: Thief (Yiddish)  
Goofy: Crazy  
Goon: Thug  
Goose: Guy  
Gooseberry lay: Stealing clothes from a clothesline  
Gowed-up: On dope, high  
Grab (a little) air: Put your hands up  
Graft, the: 1. Con jobs 2. Cut of the take  
Grand: \$1000  
Grift, as in "What's the grift?": What are you trying to pull?  
Grifter: Con man  
Grilled: Questioned  
Gum, as in "Don't ... gum every play I make": Gum up, interfere with  
Gum-shoe: Detective, also gumshoeing = detective work  
Gun for: Look for, be after  
Guns: Hoodlums  
Hack: Taxi  
Half, a: 50 cents  
Hammer and saws: Police (rhyming slang for laws)  
Hard: Tough  
Harlem sunset: Some sort fatal injury caused by knife  
Hash house: A cheap restaurant  
Hatchetmen: Killers, gunmen  
Have the bees: To be rich  
Have the curse on someone: Wanting to see someone killed  
Head doctors: Psychiatrists  
Heap: Car  
Heat: A gun, also heater  
High pillow: Person at the top, in charge  
Highbinders: 1. Corrupt politician or functionary. 2. Professional killer operating in the Chinese quarter of a city.  
Hittin' the pipe: Smoking opium  
Hitting on all eight: As in cylinders, in good shape, going well

Hock shop: Pawnshop  
Hogs: Engines  
Hombre: Man, fellow  
Hooch: Liquor  
Hood: Criminal  
Hooker, as in "It took a stiff hooker of whiskey": A drink of strong liquor  
Hoosegow: Jail  
Hop: 1. Drugs, mostly morphine or derivatives like heroin. 2. Bell-hop (Lake, 73)  
Hop-head: Drug addict, esp. heroin  
Horn: Telephone  
Hot: Stolen  
House dick: House detective  
House peeper: House detective  
Ice: Diamonds  
In stir: In jail  
Ing-bing, as in to throw an: A fit  
Iron: A car  
Jack: Money  
Jake: Okay  
Jakeloo: Okay  
Jam: Trouble, as in "in a jam"  
Jasper: A man (of a certain type?)  
Java: Coffee  
Jaw: Talk  
Jerking a nod: Nodding  
Jingle-brained: Addled  
Jobbie: Guy  
Joe: Coffee, as in "a cup of joe"  
Johns: Police  
Joint: Place, as in "my joint"  
Jorum of skee: Shot of liquor  
Joss house: Temple or house of worship for a Chinese religion  
Juice: Interest on a loanshark's loan  
Juju: Marijuana cigarettes  
Jump, the: A hanging  
Kale: Money  
Keister: Suitcase, also spelt keyster (Also means buttocks or safe/strongbox)  
Kick, as in "I got no kick": I have nothing to complain about  
Kick off: Die  
Kisser: Mouth  
Knock off: Kill  
Knockover: Heist, theft  
Lammed off: Ran away, escaped  
Large: \$1,000, as in "twenty large"  
Law, the: The police  
Lay: 1. Job, as in Marlowe saying he's on "a confidential lay"; or more generally, what someone does, as in "The hotel-sneak used to be my lay"  
Lettuce: Folding money  
Lit, to be: To be drunk  
Loogan: Marlowe defines this as "a guy with a gun"  
Look-out: Outside man  
Lousy with: To have lots of  
Lug: 1. Dumb Guy. 2. Bullet 3. Ear.  
Made: Recognized  
Map: Face  
Marbles: Pearls  
Mazuma: Money  
Meat, as in "He's your meat": There's your man, in this case, there's the guy you'll follow  
Meat wagon: Ambulance  
Mesca: Marijuana  
Mickey Finn, take a: 1. Take off, leave. 2. A drink drugged with knock-out drops.  
Mill: Typewriter  
Mitt: Hand  
Mob: Gang (not Mafia)  
Moll: Girlfriend  
Monicker: Name  
Mouthpiece: Lawyer  
Mud-pipe: Opium pipe

Mug: Face  
Mugs: Guys (esp. dumb)  
Mush: Face  
Nailed: Caught by the police  
Nance: An effeminate man  
Nevada gas: Cyanide  
Newshawk: Reporter  
Newsie: Newspaper vendor  
Nibble one: To have a drink  
Nicked: Stole  
Nippers: Handcuffs  
Nix on (something): No to (something)  
Noodle: Head  
Nose-candy: Cocaine, Heroin in some cases  
Number: 1. A person, can be either a man or a woman. 2. To work someone over, as in “you really did a number on that guy.”  
Off the track, as in “He was too far off the track. Strictly section eight”: Said about a man who becomes insanely violent  
Op: Detective (esp. private), from “operative”  
Orphan paper: Bad cheques  
Out on the roof, to be: To drink a lot  
Oyster fruit: Pearls  
Pack: To carry, esp. a gun  
Palooka: Guy, probably a little stupid  
Pan: Face  
Paste: Punch  
Paw: Hand  
Peaching: Informing  
Peeker: Detective  
Pen: Jail, penitentiary  
Peterman: Safecracker who uses nitroglycerin  
Pigeon: see Stool-pigeon  
Pill: 1. Bullet. 2. Cigarette  
Pinch: An arrest, capture  
Pipe: See or notice  
Pipe that: Get that, listen to that  
Pipes: Throat  
Pistol pockets: ?? heels?  
Pitching woo: Making love  
Plant: Someone on the scene but in hiding  
Plugs: People  
Pooped: Killed  
Pop: Kill  
Pro skirt: Prostitute  
Puffing: Mugging  
Pug: Boxer  
Pump: Heart  
Pump metal: Shoot bullets  
Punk: Hood, thug  
Puss: Face  
Put down: Drink  
Put the screws on: Question, get tough with  
Queer: 1. Counterfeit. 2. Sexually abnormal  
Rags: Clothes  
Ranked: Observed, watched, given the once-over.  
Rap: 1. Criminal charge. 2. Information, as in “He gave us the rap”. 3. Hit  
Rappers, as in “There were a couple solved for the record, but they were just rappers”: Fakes, set-ups  
Rat: Inform  
Rate: To be good, to count for something  
Rats and mice: Dice, i.e. craps  
Rattler: Train  
Redhot: Some sort of criminal  
Reefers: Marijuana cigarettes  
Rhino: Money  
Ribbed up, as in “I got a Chink ribbed up to get the dope”: Set up, arranged for? “I have arranged for a Chinese person to get the information”?  
Right: Adjective indicating quality  
Right gee: A good fellow  
Right guy: A good fellow  
Ringers: Fakes

Rod: Gun  
Roscoe: Gun  
Rub-out: A death  
Rube: Bumpkin, easy mark  
Rumble, the: The news  
Run-out, as in to take the: Leave, escape  
Sap: 1. A dumb guy. 2. A blackjack  
Sap poison: Getting hit with a sap  
Savvy?: Get me? understand?  
Sawbuck: \$10  
Scatter, as in "And don't bother to call your house peeper and send him up to the scatter": 1. Saloon or speakeasy. 2. A hideout, a room or lodging.  
Schnozzle: Nose  
Scram out: Leave  
Scratch: Money  
Scratcher: Forger  
Screw: 1. Leave, as in "Let's screw before anybody pops in" 2. Prison guard.  
Send over: Send to jail  
Shamus: (Private) detective  
Sharper: A swindler or sneaky person  
Shatting on your uppers: To be broke  
Shells: Bullets  
Shine: 2. Bootleg whiskey.  
Shiv: Knife  
Shylock: Loanshark  
Shyster: Lawyer  
Silk, as in "all silk so far": All okay so far  
Sister: Woman  
Skate around, as in "She skates around plenty": To be of easy virtue  
Skipout: Leave a hotel without paying, or a person who does so  
Skirt: Woman  
Slant, get a: Take a look  
Sleuth: Detective  
Slug: 1. As a noun, bullet 2. As a verb, to knock unconscious.  
Smell from the barrel, have a: Have a drink  
Smoked: Drunk  
Snap a cap: Shout  
Snatch: Kidnap  
Sneak: 1. Leave, get lost, as in "If you're not a waiter, sneak" 2. Type of burglary, as in as in "The hotel-sneak used to be my lay"  
Sneeze: Take  
Snooper: Detective  
Snort (as in of gin): A drink  
Snow-bird: (Cocaine) addict  
Snowed: To be on drugs (heroin? cocaine?); also snowed up  
Soak: To pawn  
Sock: Punch  
Soup job: To crack a safe using nitroglycerine  
Souping the kidneys: ?? driving fast?  
Spill: Talk, inform. spill it = tell me  
Spinach: Money  
Spitting: Talking  
Square: Honest, "on the square" = telling the truth  
Squirt metal: Shoot bullets  
Step off: To be hanged  
Sticks of tea: Marijuana cigarettes  
Stiff: A corpse  
Stool-pigeon or Stoolie: Informer  
Stringin': As in along, feeding someone a story  
Sucker: Someone ripe for a grifter's scam  
Sugar: Money  
Swift, to have plenty of: To be fast (on the draw)  
Tail: Shadow, follow  
Take a powder: Leave  
Take it on the heel and toe: Leave  
Take on: Eat  
Take the air: Leave  
Take the bounce: To get kicked out (here, of a hotel)  
Take the fall for: Accept punishment for

Tea: Marijuana  
That's the crop: That's all of it  
Three-spot: Three-year term in jail  
Throw a joe: Pass out ??  
Throw lead: Shoot bullets  
Ticket: P.I. license  
Tiger milk: Some sort of liquor  
Tighten the screws: Put pressure on somebody  
Tip a few: To have a few drinks  
Tip your mitt: Show your hand, reveal something  
Tooting the wrong ringer: Asking the wrong person  
Torcher: Torch singer  
Torpedoes: Gunmen  
Trap: Mouth  
Trigger man: Guy who does the shooting on a job  
Trip for biscuits, as in "You get there fast and you get there alone -or you got a trip for biscuits": Make the trip for no purpose, achieve no results  
Trouble boys: Gangsters  
Turn up: To turn in (to the police)  
Twist: Woman  
Two bits: \$25, or 25 cents.  
Up-and-down, as in "to give something the up-and-down": A look  
Uppers, as in "I've been shatting on my uppers for a couple of months now": Broke  
Vag, as in vag charge, vag law: Vagrancy  
Vig, Vigorish: Interest on a loanshark's loan  
Weak sister: A push-over  
Wear iron: Carry a gun  
Wheats, as in "a stack of wheats": Pancakes  
White: 1. Good, okay, as in "white dick". 2. As in a gallon of - gin  
Wikiup: Home  
Wire, as in "What's the wire on them?": News, "What information do you have about them?"  
Wise, to be: To be knowledgeable of, "put us wise" - tell us  
Wise head: A smart person  
Wooden kimono: A coffin  
Worker, as in "She sizes up as a worker": A woman who takes a guy for his money  
Wrong gee: Not a good fellow  
Wrong number: Not a good fellow  
Yank: ?? tough situation?  
Yap: Mouth  
Yard: \$100  
Yegg: Safecracker, "who can only open a rather cheap and vulnerable safe"  
Zotzed: Killed









