



## ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal

### GLOSSARY

**to step down** – to resign an important position; to quit a high-level job or position

\* The candidate knew he would lose the election and decided to leave the race.

**resignation** – a formal statement or letter stating that one is leaving or quitting one's job; a formal announcement that one will no longer be in a position or job

\* He hated his job as a garbage man so he gave his boss his letter of resignation.

**allegation** – statements that someone has done something wrong or illegal, possibly not true; an accusation

\* Newspapers have made allegations that she stole money from her company. However, so far there is no evidence to support these allegations.

**affair** – a short sexual relationship, usually a secret

\* The secretary is having an affair with the company's executive.

**pregnant** – when a woman has a child grow inside her womb (stomach); when a woman is carrying a baby

\* My friend just told me he is going to be a father. His wife is three months pregnant!

**to go public** – to tell something private to a lot of people; to confess something that one has done

\* Thousands of newspapers were sold when the president went public about her plans to fix the healthcare system.

**to deny** – to state that something is not true; to tell others that what has been said about oneself is untrue

\* He denied breaking the window, but I am sure he did it.

**made up** – a created or invented story that is not true; an imagined or false story or idea

\* Never believe anything he says. He always makes things up.

**to cover up** – to hide the truth; to try to prevent others from knowing the truth

\* Some people believe that the government covers up the existence of aliens, but they do exist.



---

**ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal**

---

**a lot to lose** – when one has many things to lose, for example, one's job or reputation

\* She is rich, respected, and successful. She should be careful because she has a lot to lose.

**to lose (one's) head** – to not have good judgment because of emotions such as love or anger; to do something that one would not normally do because of strong emotions or not having enough time to think

\* My brother deleted my assignment from the computer. I was so angry that I lost my head and threw a glass of water at him!

**public eye** – having the attention of many ordinary people; being known by the general public

\* She is a famous actress so she gets no privacy. She's always in the public eye.

**to play with fire** – to be involved in a dangerous or serious situation; to do something that may cause a serious or bad result

\* He didn't know that insulting the border guards was playing with fire.

**embarrassment** – feeling shame; feeling uncomfortable because of something negative about oneself or about something that one has done

\* She went red with embarrassment when her mother showed her new boyfriend some old photographs.

**extenuating circumstances** – reasons why a crime or something wrong that one has done seem less serious; reasons or circumstances for getting less punishment than one would normally get for doing something wrong

\* The man was accused of robbery, but because of extenuating circumstances, he didn't go to prison.

**serves (someone) right** – a phrase used when one believes that another person deserves the punishment he or she receives

\* My friend just got a divorce and lost his house. It serves him right because he was unfaithful to his wife.



## ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. Which of these is an example of losing one's head?
  - a) Being pregnant.
  - b) Being the president of a university.
  - c) Saying angry things to the president of the university without a good reason.
2. Why does the professor want to cover up his affair?
  - a) Because it serves him right.
  - b) Because he has a lot to lose.
  - c) Because he likes wearing make up.

### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **resignation**

The word “resignation,” in this podcast, refers a letter you write or a statement you make which states that you are quitting your job or position: “I have to quit my job for personal reasons so I gave my boss my resignation today.” It relates to the verb “to resign” which means to quit or leave your job by telling your boss: “She resigned today because she was offered a better job with a different company.” The word “resignation” can also mean that you accept something even if you don’t like it because it can’t be changed easily: “They accepted the insurance company’s decision not to rebuild their house after the storm with resignation.” Or, “He accepted his fate with resignation.” One’s look, expression or tone can be described as “resigned”: “The woman said in a resigned tone that she had been waiting for three hours and will continue to wait.”

#### **to cover up**

In this podcast the expression “to cover up” means to hide or conceal the truth from people or to keep something a secret: “The man was actually going to Italy to sell his company’s secrets and used the conference to cover up his true purpose.” In the U.S., “cover-up” is also a name for a type of make-up or cosmetic used by women to hide flaws on their faces: “When she woke up she had an ugly blemish on her nose and she had to hide it with cover-up so no one would see it.” A cover-up is also a piece of clothing that women wear, usually over their bathing suit: “She came out of the swimming pool, dried herself with a towel, and put on her cover-up so she wouldn’t get cold.”



---

**ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal**

---

**CULTURAL NOTES**

In the U.S., a company or organization's "image" (how the public sees and understands the company) is very important. While a good image can help the company "achieve its aims" (be successful), a bad image can mean the "collapse" (failure) of that organization. There are several ways that companies in the U.S. help "promote" (encourage the popularity or sale of something) a good image.

One way is to give money to "charity" (a system of giving money, food, or help to those who need it). Many big companies give millions of dollars a year to charities such as The Red Cross and The Salvation Army. Others create their own charitable organizations, build hospitals or found universities. For example, Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft, also established the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in 1997 and "donated" (to give something to someone, usually money) 350 million dollars in 2005 alone.

Companies also "sponsor" (finance; to support a person or organization, usually by giving money) famous events such as the Olympic Games to promote a positive corporate image. Coca-cola, Samsung, Visa and Kodak are a few of the top sponsors for the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games. The Olympic Games are seen as an event that "unites" (joins together) the different cultures of the world in a peaceful way. As sponsors, companies can share this image.

A less "honorable" (respectable; honest and fair) way that companies change their negative image into a positive one is to fire an employee and use them as a "scapegoat" (a person who is made to take the blame for something someone else did). The fired person therefore takes much of the negative association with them and the company is no longer blamed for the illegal or dishonest acts.

---

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



---

**ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal**

---

**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 371: A Scandal.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 371. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) and download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you to improve your English even faster. You can also take look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has additional courses in business and daily English we think you'll enjoy.

This episode is a dialogue between Caridad and Nate; it's called "A Scandal." A "scandal" is when someone does something wrong, and everyone is very angry – very upset about it. Usually, it's something that happens to a very public person, like a president or a governor. This is a scandal about the president of a university. Let's listen.

[start of dialogue]

Caridad: Look at this! The president of McQuillan University is stepping down. He submitted his resignation this morning after an undergraduate student made allegations that they had an affair and that she's pregnant with his baby.

Nate: That's terrible. Maybe they were in love.

Caridad: In love? He's married and has four kids, and when she first went public about the affair, he denied it and said that she had made up the whole story. Would someone in love try to cover up something like this?

Nate: Who knows? The president of a major university is a person with a lot to lose. I'm not making excuses for him, but maybe he lost his head.

Caridad: Of course he had a lot to lose. Anyone who is in the public eye like he is shouldn't be playing with fire. He's an embarrassment to his family and to his university.

Nate: I still think there could be extenuating circumstances. All you know you've learned from one newspaper article.



## ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal

---

Caridad: That much is true, but I know one thing: Whatever happens to him, it serves him right!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins when Caridad (or Caridad, in Spanish) says to Nate, “Look at this! The president of McQuillan University is stepping down.” “To step down” is a phrasal verb meaning to quit, usually a very important job – to resign from an important position. The president is stepping down; he’s leaving, he’s resigning. “He submitted his resignation this morning after an undergraduate student made allegations.” Your “resignation” is your formal letter saying that you are leaving a particular job. The word “resignation” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of that.

Well, the reason that the president is stepping down is that an undergraduate student has made allegations that they had an affair and that she is pregnant with his baby. Well, this is getting interesting! An “undergraduate student” is a student usually between the ages of 18 and 22 who is studying to get a bachelor’s degree at the university. An “allegation” is a statement that someone else has done something wrong or illegal. It might be true, it might not be true; we don’t know.

The woman here is making an allegation that she and the president had an “affair,” a short, secret usually, sexual relationship, often between one person who is married and another person who might be married, might not. The affair resulted in a “pregnancy,” the woman is pregnant. “To be pregnant” is when a woman has a child that is beginning to develop inside of her – to grow inside of her. We sometimes say the woman is “carrying a baby,” she’s pregnant; she’s going to have a baby.

Nate says, “That’s terrible. Maybe they were in love” – maybe the president and this young student were in love. Ah, love! Caridad says, “In love? He’s married and has four kids.” She’s not very happy with Nate’s explanation; she says he’s married and has four children, and when the student first went public about their affair, he denied it. “To go public” means to tell something that would normally be very private or secret to many other people. This is what has happened; the woman has told everyone else.

He denied the affair. “To deny” means to say it wasn’t true, that didn’t happen. He also said that the women made up the whole story. “To make something up” means to create or invent a story that isn’t true. In this case, it would be to tell a lie; to say this is something that happened that didn’t actually happen. That’s to



## ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal

make up something. If someone says to you, “Oh, you just made that up,” they mean you invented that; that’s not actually true, that’s false. Not a nice thing to say, unless, of course, it’s true!

Caridad says, “Would someone in love try to cover up something like this?” “To cover up” is another phrasal verb meaning to hide the truth, to prevent others from trying to find out the truth. This happens often with government officials when they do something wrong, and what they did wrong may not be illegal, but because they’re embarrassed and they don’t want other people to know, they try to cover it up. They try to prevent other people from learning about it, and this is often what gets them into real trouble, because they lie to the police or lie to some other person, and it’s the lie that gets them in trouble. It’s the lie that is often illegal or against the law. So, if you do something wrong, don’t try to cover it up. I never do; if I did, my wife would discover the truth anyway!

Caridad is saying that the president and this student are not in love because if they were, he would not try to cover it up. Nate says, “Who knows?” He’s not sure. “The president of a major (or important) university is a person with a lot to lose.” If you say someone has “a lot to lose,” you mean they have many things that they could lose if something bad happens, their job for example. He goes on to say, “I’m not making excuses for him, but maybe he lost his head.” “To lose your head” means not to have very good judgment, not to make a good decision because of some emotion such as love or anger. You do something that you would not normally do; this is to lose your head. Women have this effect on many men!

Caridad says, “Of course he had a lot to lose. Anyone who is in the public eye like he is shouldn’t be playing with fire.” “To be in the public eye” means that everyone is watching you, that you are a popular or famous person. I am not in the public eye, except, of course, on ESL Podcast, when I’m in the public ear – I guess! We don’t say that; we only use the expression “public eye,” we would never say the “public ear” – I just made that up!

Caridad says that he should not be playing with fire. “To play with fire” means to be involved in a dangerous situation, to do something that could hurt you, just like playing with fire could burn you – could hurt you. The president, Caridad says, “is an embarrassment to his family and to his university.” “Embarrassment” means to feel shame, to feel uncomfortable because of something negative that you have done or someone else has done to you. The president is “an embarrassment to his family,” meaning his family is embarrassed by him; they feel shame because of him.



---

**ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal**

---

Nate says, “I still think there could be extenuating circumstances.” “I still think,” meaning I don’t agree with you – I think it is still possible that there could be extenuating circumstances. The “circumstance” is the situation; “extenuating” means there are reasons – excuses – that could explain it that would make the person less guilty, less liable for doing something wrong. So, “extenuating circumstances” are reasons why someone has done something wrong that make it seem less serious.

Nate says, “All you know you’ve learned from one newspaper article.” Caridad says, “That much is true, but I know one thing: Whatever happens to (the president of McQuillan University), it serves him right!” The expression “to serve someone right” means the person deserves the punishment. It’s a phrase we use when you think another person should be punished, something bad should happen to them because of what they did. Of course, there’s no such thing as McQuillan University, and there’s no president of McQuillan University – just wanted to remind you of that!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Caridad: Look at this! The president of McQuillan University is stepping down. He submitted his resignation this morning after an undergraduate student made allegations that they had an affair and that she’s pregnant with his baby.

Nate: That’s terrible. Maybe they were in love.

Caridad: In love? He’s married and has four kids, and when she first went public about their affair, he denied it and said that she had made up the whole story. Would someone in love try to cover up something like this?

Nate: Who knows? The president of a major university is a person with a lot to lose. I’m not making excuses for him, but maybe he lost his head.

Caridad: Of course he had a lot to lose. Anyone who is in the public eye like he is shouldn’t be playing with fire. He’s an embarrassment to his family and to his university.

Nate: I still think there could be extenuating circumstances. All you know you’ve learned from one newspaper article.





---

**ESL Podcast 371 – A Scandal**

---

Caridad: That much is true, but I know one thing: Whatever happens to him, it serves him right!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by someone who is never an embarrassment, Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2008.