

LISTENING TASK 1

David Shankbone: One of the issues that you're really known for speaking about is the use of famous actors to actually do the voiceovers. What is your central problem with that?

Billy West: My problem with it is if they were judged by the same standards that we have to try to get work with, they would be pretty poor, you know, as voice performers.

David Shankbone: What standards are those?

Billy West: The standards are is, you know, if you have a really special voice you can go around and do that voice and make a living that people just instantly love it. But nobody is instantly in love with like, you know, the usual suspects' voices that we see in the cartoon movies now.

David Shankbone: Like Robin Williams, or—

Billy West: Well, no, he's different. He understands character. I mean, he understands like — characterizations and voice changes, and so does Mike Myers, and so does Eddie Murphy.

David Shankbone: And Jerry Seinfeld as well, in *Bee Movie*?

Billy West: Uh, no.

David Shankbone: That's— that's not it?

Billy West: No, that's not it because he's doing a character that looks exactly like him and sounds exactly like him. I mean, Will Smith does characters that are drawn to look like him and sound like him. And I wish I had that luxury, you know? I mean, nobody draws a character to look like me and sound like me for me to just step in and be the perfect person for the role, you know what I mean?

David Shankbone: I understand where your issue is, but since it's seemingly more expensive to hire, uh, you know, a Jerry Seinfeld or Will Smith, what would be the redress for that issue?

Billy West: Um, in what way? What standpoint do I take?

David Shankbone: Well, I guess, you know, if you're saying that it's something that you think is a problem, what's the solution? Not to do characters around stars?

Billy West: No, I don't have an issue with the fact that these movies are being made, you know. If I could audition for them and I didn't get 'em, I still wouldn't have an issue with them. But the thing is that they audition us for these movies and then they play what the A-list people did for these celebrities so they can kind of like, you know, strip-mine the talent's abilities and kind of pass 'em over or toss 'em over to the celebrity, you know, just to make it like better than it would be.

David Shankbone: Yeah.

Billy West: And I'm not a teacher. I'm not a paid teacher.

David Shankbone: You'd spoken about this before. They'll have you come in or someone of your caliber come in and actually shape the voice around the character and then they'll present it to the celebrity as the template?

Billy West: Yeah, and sometimes you'll actually hear stuff that you thought of during an audition because you have to really be on your toes.

David Shankbone: Are you paid for that?

Billy West: Uh, not really. Only a couple gigs did I ever get paid for to scratch a movie for a celebrity who was going to do it but I got paid for it. This theft that goes on at auditions is despicable.

David Shankbone: Are there legal remedies that you could pursue for that?

Billy West: No, how you gonna prove it? I mean, I used to bring a tape recorder around with me but it's like trying to fight City Hall, it is what it is. But that's my real issue with it is that this is an Area 51 for experienced voiceover people who do create characters and not just do who and what they are. You know what I mean? It's like it takes away from the creative process.

David Shankbone: You know, there was a similar issue involved with Crispin Glover where they had taken a likeness, I think, of one of his earlier roles, I think it was Robert Zemeckis, and then had tried to pass it off as him and he sued them for doing that. Are you familiar with that situation?

Billy West: It only means anything to me if he won.

David Shankbone: He did.

Billy West: Oh, he did?

David Shankbone: Yeah.

Billy West: That's very similar. But the thing is he could prove that. But you know, it's dirty business. I won't do it anymore. Yeah, I never really quite got what it was all about is to show up and try to sound exactly like the character and read it and yet you're doing it the way that *you* would do it.

David Shankbone: Has your speaking out — on this issue — hurt you in any way?

Billy West: In what way?

David Shankbone: In your career?

Billy West: No.

David Shankbone: There's no reaction against it from the studios or—?

Billy West: No, they don't care which voiceover person is in the alleyway beating the other one to get a gig, you know. They really don't.

Source: Interview with Billy West by David Shankbone / Public domain (released by the author)

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LISTENING TASK 2

Hey, I'm Glenn Caruso. I'm a teacher at Lake Lure Classical Academy, and I'm here in my English room. I've been teaching about 12 and a half years. I taught on the college level at University of Georgia in Athens. And I also have been teaching here for about the last two years. And I've been teaching journalism, English for 9th grade and English and British literature for 12th grade, and then also digital marketing, marketing technology, and where business is going in the future.

I love helping students find their passions and helping them direct where they might want to go in their life in terms of what colleges to go to or what trades to go into, and ultimately what they may want to do when they get out of school, either high school or college. Figuring out what jobs will give them a sense of fulfillment, passion, make them money so they can live a good life. I love mentoring young people. I love helping them understand more about themselves and how it can apply to their future and their future success, both professionally and personally. How do I connect and map a person's unique attributes and skills to potential roles they may want to consider when they get out of school? And really, I like helping them get off to a running start as they enter adulthood.

I want to make a difference in their lives. I want to be someone they refer to later in life as. Mr. Caruso was one of the biggest influences on my life. He changed my life. He made it better. He helped me understand myself better and what I could do and what I was possible of. He motivated me when other teachers might not have. He cared about me. I want them to remember me that way, that I had an influence on their life and a true impact that made their lives better.

I think there's so much good that artificial intelligence can provide to people. What it can do for education, how it can accelerate, how people learn, how it can be a co pilot for them so that they can think at a higher level. There's also drawbacks, but I think there's more good than bad. And also I know artificial intelligence and generative artificial intelligence, it's out of the box. So we will be living with it. You can't be scared of it. You have to embrace it because it'll be part of our daily lives. To somewhat of an extent, it is already, but within the next three to four years, it will be embedded into everything. And within the next 10 years, how we do work and business and play will be completely different than how we do it now. I think it offers a tremendous amount of potential for society and for people themselves to think again on a higher level and let them use their creativity, human creativity, because artificial Intelligence and robots can't duplicate true creativity.

I was introduced to British literature back in college. I had taken a class 1865 to present and read a number of different English authors. I'm fascinated by the different periods, the different literary periods and how it morphed from the time of Chaucer and Beowulf and then Chaucer into the mid 18th and 19th centuries to today. And just sort of how it reflects culture, which all writing

does, but. But how it reflects writing reflects the society and culture and opinions and thinkings of that particular period. So it's fascinating to read different authors like Jane Austen or Charlotte Bronte or Oscar Wilde or George Orwell or others, many, many others, Virginia Woolf, and see how. What their take is on their own lives and what's happening again around them and how they express that in words and how beautifully they express that in words. Until Chaucer in 1390, English was considered sort of a peasant language. It was French and Latin that people spoke. English would have been equivalent to speaking in text, text messages, as it is today. Chaucer brought English to the forefront with the Cantenbury Tales as the first great novel that was a best seller across all of Europe. And I think that's fascinating to see how that particular author changed the written word and brought English to the number one language that people were writing in and expressing themselves in, although people express themselves in all different languages. But I think that's sort of fascinating that it all came out of Britain and then, you know, there's great authors from every country and every continent. But I have a special interest in Britain and Ireland and European authors in general.

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