

1920's SLANG DICTIONARY

Throw lead: Shoot bullets

Ticket: P.I. license

Tiger milk: Some sort of liquor

Tighten the screws: Put pressure on somebody

Tin: Badge

Tip a few: To have a few drinks

Tomato: Pretty woman

Tooting the wrong ringer: Asking the wrong person

Torpedoes: Gunmen

Trap: Mouth

Trigger man: Man whose job is to use a gun

Trouble boys: Gangsters

Twist: Woman

Two bits: \$25, or 25 cents

U

Under glass: In jail

W

Weak sister: A push-over

Wear iron: Carry a gun

Wise head: A smart person

Wooden kimono: A coffin

Worker, as in "She sizes up as a worker":

Wrong gee: Not a good fellow

Wrong number: Not a good fellow

Y

Ya Follow: do you understand?

Yap: Mouth

Yard: \$100

Yegg: Safecracker who can only open cheap and easy safes

Z

Zotzed: Killed

A

Ab-so-lute-ly: Affirmative

Alderman: A man's pot belly

All Wet: Describes an erroneous idea or individual, as in, "he's all wet."

Ameche: Telephone

And How: I strongly agree!

Ankle: (n) Woman; (v) To walk

Applesauce: an expletive same as horse-feathers, As in "Ah applesauce!"

Attaboy: well done! also Attagirl!

B

Babe: Woman

Baby: A person, can be said to either a man or a woman

Bangtails: Racehorses

Barber: Talk

Be on the nut: To be broke

Bean-shooter: Gun

Beef: A problem or complaint

Bee's Knees: An extraordinary person, thing or idea.

Beezer: Nose

Behind the eight ball: In a difficult position, in a tight spot

Bent Cars: Stolen cars

Big Cheese, Big Shot - The boss: Someone of importance and influence

Big House: Jail

Big One: Death

Big Sleep: Death

Bim: Woman

Bindle: the bundle in which a hobo carries all his worldly possessions

Bindle punk or bindle stiff: Chronic wanderers, migratory harvest workers, and lumber jacks.

Bing: Jailhouse talk for solitary confinement

Big Cheese: The most important or influential person; boss.

Bird: general term for a person, sometimes meaning "odd," i.e. "What a funny old bird."

Bit: Prison sentence

Blip off: To kill

Blow: Leave

Blow one down: Kill someone

Blower: Telephone

Bluenose: A prude.

Bo: Pal, buster, fellow.

Boiler: Car

Boob: Dumb guy
Bootleg: Illegal Liquor
Boozehound: Drunkard
Bop: To kill
Box: A safe or a bar
Box job: A safecracking
Brace (somebody): Grab, shake up
Bracelets: Handcuffs
Break it up: Stop that, quit the nonsense
Breeze: To leave, breeze off: get lost
Broad: Woman
Bruno: Tough guy, enforcer
Bucket: Car
Bulge, The: The advantage
Bulls: Plainclothes railroad cops; uniformed police; prison guards
Bum's rush, To get the: To be kicked out
Bump: Kill
Bump Gums: To talk about nothing worthwhile
Bump off: Kill; also, bump-off: a killing
Burn powder: Fire a gun
Bus: Big car
Butt Me: Give me a cigarette
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, nose, end of jaw
Button man: Professional killer
Buttons: Police
Butts: Cigarettes
Buzz: Looks person up, comes to persons door
Buzzer: Policeman's badge

C

C: \$100, a pair of Cs = \$200
Cabbage: Money
Caboose: Jail
Call copper: Inform the police
Can: Jail, Car
Can house: Bordello
Can-opener: Safecracker who opens cheap safes
Canary: Woman singer with sweet voice
Caper: A criminal act or robbery
Carry a Torch: Suffering from an unrequited love.
Case dough: Nest egg
Cat: Man
Cat's Meow: Something splendid or stylish

Skid rogue: A bum who
Skirt: Woman
Slant, Get a: Take a
Sleuth: Detective
Slug: a bullet or to knock
Smoked: Drunk
Snap a cap: Shout
Snatch: Kidnap
Sneeze: Take
Snitch: An informer,
Snooper: Detective
Speakeasy: An illicit
Spiffy: Looking elegant
Soak: To pawn
Sock: Punch
Soup: Nitroglycerine
Soup job: To crack a
Spill: Talk, inform
Spinach: Money
Spitting: Talking
Square: Honest
Squeeze: a female companion
Squirt metal: Shoot
Step off: To be hanged
Stiff: A corpse
Sting: Culmination of
Stool-pigeon: Informer
Stoolie: Stool-pigeon
Stuck On: Having a crush
Sucker: Someone ripe
Sugar: Money
Swanky: Ritzy
Swell: Wonderful

T

Tail: Shadow or follow
Take a powder: Leave
Take on: Eat
Take for a Ride: Drive off with someone in order to bump them off
Take the air: Leave
Take the bounce: To get kicked out
Take the fall for: Accept punishment for
That's the crop: That's all of it
Three-spot: Three-year jail term

R

Rags: Clothes
Ranked: Observed, watched,
Rap: Criminal charge
Rappers: Fakes, set-ups
Rat: Inform
Rate: To be good, to count
Rats and mice: Dice, i.e. craps
Rattler: Train
Red-light: To eject from a car
Redhot: Some sort of criminal
Reefers: Marijuana cigarettes
Rhino: Money
Right: Adjective indicating
Ringers: Fakes
Ritzy: Elegant.
Rod: Gun
Roscoe: Gun
Rub-out: A killing
Rube: Bumpkin, easy mark
Rumble, the: The news

S

Sap: A dumb guy
Sap poison: Getting hit with
Savvy: Get me? Understand?
Sawbuck: \$10 bill (a double
Schnozzle: Nose
Scram out: Leave
Scratch: Money
Scratcher: Forger
Send over: Send to jail
Shamus: (Private) detective
Sharper: A swindler
Sheba: A woman with
Sheik: A man with sex
Shells: Bullets
Shiv: Knife
Shylock: Loanshark
Shyster: Lawyer
Sing: Make a confession
Sister: Woman
Skate around: To be

Cat's Pajamas: term of endearment as in "I think you are really really cool".
Century: \$100
Cheaters: Sunglasses
Cheese it: Put things away, hide
Chew: Eat
Chicago lightning: gunfire
Chicago overcoat: Coffin
Chick: Woman
Chilled off: Killed
Chin: Conversation; **chinning:** talking
Chin music: Punch on the jaw
Chinese squeeze: Grafting by skimming profits off the top
Chippy: Woman of easy virtue
Chisel: To swindle or cheat
Chiv: Knife, "a stabbing or cutting weapon"
Chopper squad: Men with machine guns
Chump: person marked for a con or a gullible person.
Clammed: Close-mouthed (clammed up)
Clam: A dollar
Clean sneak: An escape with no clues left behind
Clip joint: In some cases, a nightclub where the prices are high and the patrons are fleeced
Clipped: Shot
Close your head: Shut up
Clout: Shoplifter
Clubhouse: Police station
Con: Confidence game, swindle
Conk: Head
Cool: To knock out
Cooler: Jail
Cop: Detective, even a private one
Copped, to be: Grabbed by the cops
Copper: Policeman
Corn: Bourbon ("corn liquor")
Crab: Figure out
Crate: Car
Croak: To kill
Croaker: Doctor
Crush: An infatuation.
Crushed out: Escaped (from jail)
Cut down: Killed

D

Daisy: None too masculine

Dame: Woman

Dance: To be hanged

Dangle: Leave, get lost

Dapper: A Flapper's father

Daylight, as in "fill him with daylight": Put a hole in, by shooting or stabbing

Dead Soldier: Empty beer bottle

Deck, as in "deck of Luckies": Pack of cigarettes

Derrick: Shoplifter

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

Dish: Pretty woman

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: Attractive woman

Dolled Up: All dressed up

Dope fiend: Drug addict

Dope peddler: Drug dealer

Double-Cross: Cheat or stab in the back

Dough: Money

Drift: Go, leave

Drill: Shoot

Drop a dime: Make a phone call, sometimes meaning to the police to inform on someone

Droppers: Hired killers

Drum: Speakeasy

Dry-gulch: Knock out, hit on head after ambushing

Duck soup: Easy, a piece of cake

Ducky: Very good

Dumb Dora: Stupid Female

Dummerer: Someone who pretends to be deaf and/or dumb to appear a more deserving beggar

Dump: Roadhouse, club; or, more generally, any place

Dust out: Leave, depart

O

Off the track, said about a person who becomes insanely violent

Op: Detective

Orphan paper: Bad checks

Out on the roof: To drink a lot, to be drunk

Oyster fruit: Pearls

P

Packing Heat: carrying a gun

Pal: a man

Palooka: Man, probably not very smart

Pan: Face

Paste: Punch

Patsy: Person who is set up; fool, chump

Paw: Hand

Peaching: Informing

Peeper: Detective

Peepers: Eyes

Pen: Penitentiary, jail

Peterman: Safecracker who uses nitroglycerin

Piece: Gun

Pigeon: Stool-pigeon

Pinch: An arrest, capture

Pins: Legs

Pipe: See or notice

Pipes: Throat

Plant: Someone on the scene but in hiding, Bury

Plug: Shoot

Plugs: People

Poke: Bankroll, stake

Pooped: Killed

Pop: Kill

Pro skirt: Prostitute

Puffing: Mugging

Pug: Pugilist, boxer

Pump: Heart

Pump metal: Shoot bullets

Punk: Hood, thug

Pushover: A person easily convinced of something.

Puss: Face

Put down: Drink

Put the screws on: Question, get tough with

L

Lammed off: Ran away, escaped

Large: \$1,000; twenty large would be \$20,000

Law, the: The police

Lead: "fill ya full of lead": the term used for bullets

Lead poisoning: To be shot

Lettuce: Folding money

Lid: Hat

Line: Insincere flattery.

Lip: (Criminal) lawyer

Looker: Pretty woman

Look-out: Outside man

Lousy with: To have lots of

M

Mac: a man

Made: Recognized

Map: Face

Marbles: Pearls

Mark: Sucker, victim of swindle or fixed game

Maroon: person marked for a con or a gullible person.

Meat wagon: Ambulance

Mickey Finn: A drink drugged with knock-out drops

Mill: Typewriter

Mitt: Hand

Mob: Gang (not necessarily Mafia)

Mohaska: Gun

Moll: Girlfriend

Monicker: Name

Mouthpiece: Lawyer

Mugs: Men (especially refers to dumb ones)

N

Nailed: Caught by the police

Nevada gas: Cyanide

Newshawk: Reporter

Newsie: Newspaper vendor

Nibble one: To have a drink

Nicked: Stole

Nippers: Handcuffs

Number: A person

E

Egg: Person who lives big

Electric cure: Electrocutation

Elephant ears: Police

F

Fade: Go away, get lost

Fakeloo artist: Con man

Fall Guy: Victim of a frame up

Fella: a man

Fin: \$5 bill

Finder: Finger man

Finger, Put the finger on: Identify

Flaming Youth: Male counterpart to a flapper.

Flapper: A stylish, brash young woman with short skirts and shorter hair.

Flat Tire: A dull-witted or disappointing date.

Flattie: Flatfoot, cop

Flimflam: Swindle

Flippers: Hands

Flivver: A Ford automobile

Flogger: Overcoat

Flop: Go to bed or fallen through, not worked out

Flophouse: A cheap transient hotel where a lot of men sleep in large rooms

Fog: To shoot

Frail: Woman

Frame: Give false evidence against someone

Frau: Wife

Fry: To be electrocuted

Fuzz: police

G

Gal: Woman

Gams: A Woman's Legs

Gasper: Cigarette

Gat: Gun

Get Sore: Get mad

Getaway sticks: Legs

Giggle juice: Liquor

Giggle Water: Liquor

Gin mill: Bar or a place that serves hard liquor

Glad rags: Fancy clothes

Glaum: Steal
Goofy: Crazy
Goog: Black eye
Goon: Thug
Gooseberry lay: Stealing clothes from a clothesline
Gowed-up: On dope, high
Grab (a little) air: Put your hands up
Graft: Con jobs or cut of the take
Grand: \$1000
Grift: Confidence game, swindle
Grifter: Con man
Grilled: Questioned
Gumshoe: Detective
Gumshoeing: Detective work
Gun for: Look for, be after
Guns: Pickpockets, Hoodlums
Guy: a man

H

Hack: Taxi
Half, a: 50 cents
Handcuff: Engagement Ring
Hard: Tough
Harlem Sunset: Some sort fatal injury caused by knife
Hash House: A cheap restaurant
Hatchet men: Killers, gunmen
Have the Bees: To be rich
Head doctors: Psychiatrists
Heap: Car
Heat: Police
Heater: gun
Heebie-Jeebies: The jitters.
Heeled: Carrying a gun
High-Hat: To snub.
High Pillow: Person at the top, in charge
Highbinders: Corrupt politician or functionary
Hinky: Suspicious
Hitting the pipe: Smoking opium
Hitting on all eight: In good shape, going well
Hock shop: Pawnshop
Hogs: Engines
Hombre: Man, fellow
Hooch: Liquor
Hood: Criminal
Hooper: Dancer.

Hooker: as in "a stiff hooker of whiskey": A drink of strong liquor
Hoosgow: Jail
Horn: Telephone
Hot: Stolen
Hotsy-Totsy: Pleasing.
House dick: House/hotel detective
House peeper: House/hotel detective
Hype: Shortchange artist

I

Ice : Diamonds
Ing-bing, as in to throw an: A fit
Iron: A car

J

Jack: Money
Jalopy: An old car.
Jam: Trouble, a tight spot
Jane: A woman
Java: Coffee
Jaw: Talk
Jingle-brained: Addled
Jobbie: Man
Joe: Coffee, as in "a cup of joe"
Johns: Police
Johnson brother: Criminal
Joint: Place, as in "my joint"
Juice: Interest on a loanshark's loan
Jug: Jail
Jump, The: A hanging

K

Kale: Money
Keen: Attractive or appealing.
Kick off: Die
Kiss: To punch
Kisser: Mouth
Kitten: Woman
Knock off: Kill