

Real English 60 - Santa and Don Ray

Santa Claus: Now, let me tell me what, kids. Don't ever become homeless. You're gonna have to strive like me.

Intro of a Chuck Berry song:

*...runnin' wild,
Cruisin' and playin' the radio
With no particular place to go.
Ridin' along in my automobile,
I was anxious to tell her the way I feel.
So I told her softly and sincere,
And she leaned and whispered in my ear.
Cuddlin' more and cruisin' slow,
With no particular place to go.*

Interviewer: Okay, what's your name?

Don Ray: Don Ray Cole.

Interviewer: Don Ray? And where do you live?

Don Ray: Miami... South Beach, Miami.

Interviewer: And your name, what is your name, sir?

Santa Claus: My name is Santa Claus.

Interviewer: Santa, how long have you been on Miami Beach?

Santa Claus: 38 year[s].

Interviewer: And Don Ray?

Santa Claus: How long you been here?

Don Ray: 'Bout 15.

Interviewer: 15 years.

Don Ray: Yeah.

Interviewer: And what do you do?

Don Ray: Time.

Santa Claus: You're looking at it.

Interviewer: Time.

Don Ray: Right. My backyard, my front yard. That's what it's called.

Santa Claus: People pay to get our home.

Don Ray: Absolutely.

Interviewer: How do pe-... how do people treat you?

Don Ray: Like shit.

Interviewer: Everybody?

Don Ray: Well, not, not everybody, no.

Interviewer: You have a problem with the, uh, police?

Santa Claus: No, the police have a problem with us. They don't like homeless people.

Don Ray: The police have a problem with us.

Interviewer: Don Ray, how did you become homeless?

Don Ray: Oh, well, uh, you know, uh... This is a good story now. Now I'm glad you asked because, uh, in 1995, I've been homeless since 1995, but, uh, from the time I was 13, I've been married. My mother signed papers, you know, and I've been married. And, uh, 13, uh, I was born in 1957, and from 13 until 1995... I've had, you know, I'm disabled, I'm totally disabled, 100%, ten, 110% disabled.

Interviewer: Do you get any money from the government?

Don Ray: Yeah, absolutely.

Interviewer: You get a monthly check or something?

Don Ray: Absolutely. Because I'm totally disabled, I cannot work, but from [the] time I was 13 till 1995 I'd always had a woman that worked, you know? And, uh...

Interviewer: What happened?

Don Ray: She got pissed off by something. I don't know what it was and, uh, we broke up and, uh, I've been down here.

Interviewer: How did you get disabled?

Don Ray: Uh, motorcycle wrecks. I'm a biker. A wannabe biker now...

Interviewer: Yeah, right.

Don Ray: ...but I'm an old biker.

Interviewer: Got you.

Don Ray: Motorcycle wrecks.

Interviewer: Are we ready for the harmonica yet?

Santa Claus: Let me tell you what, my friend...

Mike Marzio: What's your story?

Interviewer: Yeah, how did you become homeless?

Santa Claus: I fell off of a ladder one day. I came up a 40 footer onto a damn step ladder and fell off the step ladder. I've got paint in one hand, [a] brush in other hand, and I thought I could balance myself and I broke my ass. [I] Had history in Dallas. I went to Dallas cuz (because) I had to live with a girl. And I had my surgery in Dallas. I was gangrene, near death; and that's why I like "The Yellow Rose of Texas".

Interviewer: Excellent! Excellent, Santa! Very well.

Santa Claus: I do 'suck and blow' good. But I do it outside the bathroom!

Interviewer: We won't pursue that.

Santa Claus: Okay, yeah.

Interviewer: So, Santa, you're disabled too then.

Santa Claus: Yeah, I've been broke hip, like, for 5 years.

Interviewer: So you get help from the government as well?

Santa Claus: No! I got about 10 checks coming, and you see this hand? Ain't nothin' in that motherfucker, is it?

Interviewer: Empty.

Santa Claus: But I got like 8 or 9 thousand dollars coming. But it's all in the mail, and it's all being checked out, and now they're okaying me. I got since April. I turned 62 in Ap... in April, 14th. Now I got all those checks coming.

Interviewer: Checks in the mail.

Santa Claus: Checks in the mail. I get out here and I suck and blow this harmonica all day, I look stupid like Santa Claus, but it makes my money. I can afford to drink and smoke and eat.

Interviewer: That's pretty much it, right? That's all you care about, right?

Santa Claus: What would you do if you had a million? Same thing!

Interviewer: It's a good question. I don't know.

Santa Claus: If you had a million, you'd smoke, drink and eat! That is what I do with my pennies I get. But now, let me tell you what. They come down every day from the motel, they see Santa Claus, they talk to me, take pictures of me. And when they get ready to get on the plane, they give me their buck and their Bourbon and shit they got left you can't take it on the plane. So, I drink free all day.

Don Ray: You... Ever become homeless. It's a matter of fortune. It's not a matter of choice.

Interviewer: It could happen to anybody.

Don Ray: It can happen to anybody.

Santa Claus: But you understand right now: most people in America if you miss a check for 2 or 3 months, you are homeless!

Interviewer: Yeah.

Santa Claus: What if they get laid off?

Interviewer: It doesn't take much.

Don Ray: And you got no choice. It's a motherfuckin', it just happens. Excuse my language.

Santa Claus: Wait a minute. There's people out here that wanna (want to) be homeless.

Don Ray: Excuse my language.

Santa Claus: There's people out here that wanna be homeless. I don't wanna be homeless.

Don Ray: Oh, yeah!

Santa Claus: The first check I get is going to an apartment. The first check I get, I'm inside! But I ain't got much checks yet.

Interviewer: Right.

Santa Claus: So, I'm still out here. But I gotta (have got to) look funny and play music to entertain the group. I'm not a bum.

Don Ray: That's not necessarily true or false...

Santa Claus: I am not a bum!

Don Ray: ...because I wanna (want to) tell you, I draw checks, 2 checks a month, on 1st and 3rd. Social Security, SSI. But, uh, how do you get that first month's rent, that last month's rent, that security deposit and everything without spending any money? You ain't got nobody (anybody) to help you out, you ain't got no family. I ain't got no family. I ain't got no friends.

Interviewer: Right.

Don Ray: You know, so, you can't do it like that.

Interviewer: What's your biggest problem?

Santa Claus: Drinking. No, no!

Don Ray: Drinking.

Santa Claus: But wait a minute, my sexual life is not bad. But I can't afford Viagra now. I got a choice: vodka or Viagra and, you know, what comes first.

Interviewer: That's a hard one.

Santa Claus: That's a hard decision to make.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Don Ray: I ain't got that problem yet.

Interviewer: Still virile. Don Ray is still virile.

Don Ray: Absolutely.

Santa Claus: Why do I get robbed all the time?

Unknown homeless: Cuz (because) you get the wrong friends.

Don Ray: Because you pick you wrong friends.

Unknown homeless: Thank you!

Santa Claus: I got no friends!

Unknown homeless: No, you get acquaintances, not real friends.

Santa Claus: Right.

Unknown homeless: The difference between acquaintances and real friends...

Santa Claus: I have lost three, three-wheelers, I've lost thousands of dollars' worth of clothes cuz (because) I go to sleep.

Unknown homeless: Yeah.

Santa Claus: And bam!

Interviewer: They rob you.

Unknown homeless: They always... Anybody, I mean... They always (indistinct) a week. They always do this, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Unknown homeless: That's what it is.

Santa Claus: You noticed that I don't have shoes?

Unknown homeless: Which is wrong but...

Interviewer: I see not now.

Santa Claus: I lost a goddamn pair of New Balances right over here sleeping!

Don Ray: I thought he was watching your mouth because...

Santa Claus: Brand new New Balances. And... they're gone.

Interviewer: Goodbye!

Unknown homeless: Goodbye!

Don Ray: Hasta la vista, baby!

Interviewer: Hasta la vista, baby!

Unknown homeless: Hasta la vista, baby!