
On the Interactional Unpackaging of a 'Gloss'

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On the interactional unpackaging of a ‘gloss’

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ABSTRACT

In the reporting of a situation or event, a speaker can sometimes be seen to have omitted or ‘glossed over’ a constituent component. There are times when that component is something a speaker would rather not have the coparticipant know. Sometimes, however, the speaker is willing, indeed eager, to share this material with the coparticipant, but is constrained from simply producing it then and there (the matter being possibly bizarre, risqué, or in other ways problematic). In either case, whether the problematic component is delivered or not (i.e., whether a ‘gloss’ is ‘unpackaged’) can depend upon what the coparticipant does. This report focuses on the ways in which a coparticipant’s activities are implicated in the maintaining as-is, or unpackaging, of a ‘glossed’ component. (Sociology, psychology, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, sociolinguistics)

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon I’ll be reporting on here emerged from a two-year study of ‘Troubles-Telling in Ordinary Conversation,’ funded by the Social Science Research Council. Although I noticed the phenomenon in the course of that study, and much of the data I’ll be considering here has to do with various sorts of ‘troubles’, the phenomenon is not exclusive to such talk; it is not bound to talk about troubles.

The phenomenon emerged in the following way. As I worked with ‘troubles-tellings’, I found that that activity frequently converged with other sorts of businesses, and that convergence was consequential for the shape of the troubles-telling. For example, a troubles-telling might converge with an ‘arrangements-making’ – a possible ‘trouble’ standing as a possible ‘obstacles to a plan’. Or, for example, a troubles-telling might converge with an ‘inquisition’ – a possible ‘trouble’ alternatively constituting a possible ‘misdeed’.

While focusing on the convergence between troubles-tellings and inquisitions I noticed a recurrent feature of the troublesteller-cum-transgressor’s talk: It included intensely detailed descriptions. And that ‘detailing’ seemed to constitute ‘evidence’ in the building of a case for ‘not transgression, trouble’.

And recurrently, another feature would be present: Some bit of that detailing turned out to be what I'm calling a 'gloss'. Most roughly, a gloss can be a 'generalization' and/or somewhat inaccurate and/or incomplete and/or a masking or covering-up of 'what really happened'.

What seemed to be going on, then, was selective detailing/glossing to best support the case being built.

But one feature of the glosses was that, upon their occurrence, they seemed to constitute perfectly adequate detailings, that is, perfectly adequate narrative/descriptive components. They didn't, upon their occurrence, strike me as inaccuracies, inadequacies, lies, and so on. But once – however it came about – the gloss was 'unpacked' and its constituent details exposed, one could see that, and how, the gloss had been deployed for the case being built.

Having noticed that sort of phenomenon in inquisitional talk, I began to notice a range of 'glosslike' occurrences in other types of interaction.

Now, any report component might in principle be characterized as a gloss of some sort, that is, never really broken down into its bedrock details. I am not taking on that sort of issue. I am focusing on the sequential/interactional workings of conversation, which leads me to an interest not in glosses in general and not to such a question as *just what* is a gloss? Rather, I am led to an interest in those places in conversation where one among the myriad glosses becomes available as such, and especially to places where a gloss becomes unpackaged; to the question *just how* does that unpackaging occur over the course of interaction. I will be considering five cases of the phenomenon:

1. Unpackaging via inquisition
2. Achieving an environment for unpackaging
3. Crossconversation absence/presence of an environment for unpackaging
4. Misapprehension of an inauspicious environment as auspicious
5. Possible closing down of an incipient unpackaging

UNPACKAGING VIA INQUISITION

The first case under consideration exhibits a convergence of a troubles-telling with an inquisition. In this telephone call between a husband (S) and wife (T), the alternation is between 'illness' and 'malingering'. And in a combined attempt to elicit appropriate responses to a troubles-telling (see, e.g., lines 17–20) and defend against the possibility of malingering, the wife produces a segment of enormously fine detailing (see lines 5–20). A glossary of transcript symbols is provided in the Appendix.

1. [TCI(b):9:2-3:Standard Orthography]
- 1 S: I just called to make sure you were you know,
- 2 (0.2)
- 3 S: 'hh I didn't know whether you'd gone to work or what you
- 4 kno.w.
- 5 T: I was going to go: to work,hh hhhh I got a:fter you

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- 6 left I thought well I'll eat some breakfast and then I
7 will go: to wor:k.hh
8 (0.3)
9 T: 'hhhhh A:nd so: I: a:te a muffin?hh 'hhhh and chee:se,hh
10 (0.7)
11 T: 'hhhhh A:nd then I went to the bathroo:m?
12 (1.5)
13 T: 't'hhhh There was, h
14 (1.6)
15 T: A:nd I had a spoonful of cereal,
16 S: Mm hm,
17 T: 'hhh And then I got a real bad stomachache.
18 (1.7)
19 T: Like (.) when: (.) someone tied a knot in my stomach.
20 (0.2)
21 T: → 'hhh So I lay down and the next thing I know it was
22 eleven o'clock:hh-hh
23 S: heh-heh-heh-heh-heh-hih-hih-heh=
24 T: =So I didn't go:.
25 S: Ah.
26 (0.3)
27 S: No that's: okay,
28 (0.5)
29 S: Mh,
30 (1.2)
31 S: They can get along without you for a day or two,
32 T: nUhhhh
33 (1.4)
34 S: °(Well)°=
35 T: =hhhh
36 (0.9)
37 T: I had all kinds of weird drea.ms.hh-hh
38 S: °hh! hn huh°
39 (0.2)
40 S: → 'hhh You been laying down on the couch or in the bedroom
41 T: → In the bedroo:m, sleeping,
42 S: (Uh huh)

There is also what turns out to be a gloss. That it is a gloss is not available in the primary telling, but emerges later as a consequence of the recipient's activities. The gloss in question, "So I lay down," occurs at line 21. It is exposed as a gloss at lines 40–41.

Upon its occurrence, "So I lay down" is a perfectly reasonable, adequate descriptive component. However, once the recipient questions it, it turns out that it was at least ambiguous and perhaps specifically implicative of an activity which would tend to support the case being built – but an activity which did not actually occur. That is, what is implied is that with an intention to go to work, she just *lay down on the couch*, where what actually occurred might better be characterized as: Abandoning the intention to go to work, she *went back to bed*.¹

And, at least in the United States, there seems to be a strong distinction between 'bed' and 'couch' with regard to 'commitment to business as usual'. So, for example, in the following fragment, that someone "was lying on the couch out in

front'' is announced attendant to, and may stand as an exhibit of, her proposed status as ''better.''

1a. [NB:II:4;R:1:Standard Orthography]

- 1 E: I HAD A LITTLE O:Peration on my toe this week I had to
 2 have (0.2) *u toenail TAKEN O:FF, hh
 .
 13 N: Did you have to go in the hospi ↑ ta ↑ l?
 14 E: n:No:: I just had a
 15 lo:cal deal an:d uh it wasn't any fu:n but I'm BETTER I
 16 was: lying on: the cou:ch out in front

Now, in Case 1, the unpackaging of the gloss is a direct result of the recipient seeing it as a possible gloss, retrieving it, and picking it apart. In the other materials I will be considering, the unpackaging of a gloss, while it is very much the result of some activities by a recipient, does not have that inquisitional character. Indeed, whether or not the recipient sees that there is something to be unpackaged is unavailable. Rather, the recipient's activities may be roughly characterized as providing an environment in which the as-yet-unrevealed matters may be safely, appropriately, comfortably, and so on and so on, produced.

ACHIEVING AN ENVIRONMENT FOR UNPACKAGING

The two fragments which make up Case 2 are taken from a very long telephone conversation between two middle-aged sisters, one of whom has just returned from a visit with a friend of hers who has recently found a prosperous husband and is now living in a California desert resort town. During that visit, the two women indulged in some nude swimming.

The gloss here is a matter of incompleteness, not inaccuracy. Over the course of the conversation with her sister, we find repeated mentions of the nude swimming incident. The two fragments shown here include the first and last references to the incident. There are others. And one might dismiss these repeated references as just something people tend to do. She enjoyed it, it was a bit naughty, she just keeps mentioning it. She is 'rambling', and people do, after all, ramble.

But it turns out that there is more to it, and that the repeated references are attempts to find an environment in which the more-to-it can be properly, comfortably told.

Briefly, we can inspect each of the fragments for what the recipient does, with regard to the sort of environment being established.

2a. [NB:IV:10;R:3:Standard Orthography]

- 1 L: Jesus Christ you should see that house E(h)mma you have ↓ no
 2 idea.h hmmhh
 3 E: I bet it's a drea:m(With the swimming POO:L
 4 ENCLO:SED, HU:H?
 5 L: u-

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- 6 L: Oh::: Go:d we 'hhihhh uh hū ↑ We swam in the n:ude 'hh
 7 Sunday night u(h)ntil abo:ut two o'clock.
 8 E: [ehh h e h]heh'huh hja:h ha: (HUH
 9 L: [↑ HA: HA: ↓ :
 10 [he:hhhh] ↓ OH:: well I bet the moonli:ght and the beautiful
 11 stars th-uh ↑ WIND BLEW TERRIBLY ↓ THOU:GH
 12 i-Ye:ah? the wi:nd blew down there and the wind blew today
 13 but oh: God coming home through the canyon tonight oh man=
 14 ((sniff))
 15 E: =i:t was horrible. Man I really held on to that ↓ ca:r.
 16 L:

To this first mention of nude swimming the recipient first of all produces some laughter (see lines 6–8). In another study, we have observed that while laughter may appreciate, it does not necessarily affiliate. It recurrently works as a pre-affiliation, preceding and setting up a 'safe' environment for some talk in which the recipient of a problematic position-statement or activity-report exhibits that he or she feels the same way, does the same things, and so on (see Jefferson, Sacks, & Schegloff 1984).

However, in this fragment, the laughter is followed by an utterance which tends to disaffiliate from the business of nude swimming. Here, the recipient follows her laughter with an innocuous/romantic reference to the setting, "I bet the moonlight and the beautiful stars" (lines 11–12). And she uses this reference to the setting to move to the canonical 'neutral topic', the weather, "the wind blew terribly though" (line 12).

And the teller takes up that most innocuous topic and with it closes off the report of the swimming, and indeed the report of the whole trip (see lines 13–16).

Now, people with 'more to tell' can and do find ways to return immediately to the topic being moved away from by a recipient. But in this case, it appears that the teller is gauging her recipient's attitude and seeing that this clearly is not the place to pursue the matter.

Almost forty minutes further into the conversation, an Nth reference to the nude swimming occurs. And on this occasion we find an altogether different type of response by the recipient and an altogether different outcome.

2b. [NB:IV:10:R:56-58:Standard Orthography]

- 1 L: So THEN when Dwight le(h)eft we(h)e / took the suits off
 2 (h)and s:wam around in th e nu:de / eh HUH-ʔ and took a=
 3 (E): (θ)
 4 L: = ↓ su:nba:th in the nu:de / and ↓ everything / hhh hhh
 5 E: Well you
 6 know E:vvie and ↑ I used to do that on the ↑ r:ivers if the
 7 fellows would go down get gasoline for their boa:ts,h 'hhhh
 8 She'd say do you mi:nd we'd be in a c:o:ve but we'd TAKE IT
 9 ou:t (.) under the wa:ter. You know because: uh: (.) ee
 10 we're QUT in the O ↓ PEN. You know 'hhhh But we'd just slip
 11 our bathing s:uit ↓ ow: and g-and ° ↑ swim around in that°
 12 r:IVer tha(.)t uh Colorado River til: 'hhh'h (.) Ghho:d

- 13 what a thri ↓ * :ll.
 14 (0.2)
 15 E: I always h:ave ↓ liked to swim in the °nu//:de. ↓ °
 16 L: [M E] : TOO YOU
 17 KNOW and we 'hhh And then 'hh ri:ght eh: theh (.) there's
 18 ↑ two places where the ho:t water comes in and you can get
 19 rhi:ght up close to them / and it just feels like you're /
 20 [ta]king a 'dou:CHE, 'ch'uh 'uht' uht' a h 'ahh [hhhHHU:H'HHUH'HHU:H] HA:h ha=
 21 E: [a h h ah:] ah:] e h:] []
 22 L: = [] a h h ah:] ah:] e h:] []
 23 E: = [] a h h ah:] ah:] e h:] []
 24 L: = A,nd we:-
 25 E: I C'N ↑ S.EE Y.OU ↑ TW O KI ↓ :D S (AW:-)
 26 L: [A:ND ↑ SH E was on ONE
 27 EN:D I was over the other end with ur legs up you know and=
 28 E: °Oh::: G o : : d ↓ isn't she ↓ / cu::te?°
 29 L: = [] Jeeyj(h)ss [f(h)elt s(h) o g(h) 'oo:d [hna:h ha:h]=
 30 L: = hu uh hu
 31 E: [°Oh:°] she's *a cut ↓ *ey.=
 32 L: = O h: (G O L D she's uninhibited,
 33 E: [G O L D she's uninhibited,

Here the recipient provides explicit affiliation. She starts off with a story of her own participation in nude swimming (lines 5–13). Note that the story is both circumspect and romanticized, ending up with its focus not so much on nude swimming, but on “that Colorado River” (line 12). Thereafter, however, she produced a policy statement which affiliates with nude swimming, per se, “I always have like to swim in the nude” (line 15).

And it is *just* then, and perhaps specifically *only* then, that the teller produces the as-yet-untold materials (see lines 15–20). In this regard, the ‘just (and perhaps only) when’ can be tracked in fine detail across this interactional bit. The thoroughly enthusiastic assessment, “God what a thrill” (lines 12–13), gets no response. It is possible that this utterance is problematic for its affiliation with nude swimming due to its juxtaposition with “and swim around in that river that uh Colorado River”; that is, the ‘nude’ aspect has become a bit removed. On the other hand, the affiliative policy statement, “I always have liked to swim in the nude,” is responded to with alacrity; the response occurring at a ‘recognition point’ for “in the nu//:de” (see lines 12–14 vis-a-vis lines 15–16).

Further, upon the occurrence of the affiliative policy statement, the one who has been repeatedly volunteering talk about her nude swimming is now in a position to talk on a “ME TOO” basis, her talk now exhibited to have been occasioned by her recipient’s.

And in terms of assessing the ‘safety’ of an environment, the teller can be seen to have accurately gauged the situation here. In the recipient’s response to the now-unpackaged materials, we find the classic pattern of laughter as a preaffiliation followed by explicit affiliative talk (see lines 21–26).

The affiliation in this case might be characterized as ‘second best’ or ‘in lieu

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of'; that is, an exhibit of openness to the problematic description ('I can see you two kids') substituting for a 'me too' statement or story. In any event, the 'eyes on the activity' provided here stands in sharp contrast to the 'looking away' to 'the moonlight and the beautiful stars' provided earlier.

But it can be noted that the teller has not been given *carte blanche*. As the description becomes increasingly graphic, the recipient's affiliation starts to decay, now targeting only one of the actors, the nonpresent other, and producing a 'not me' assessment, "God she's uninhibited." (See lines 27–34. Although the transcript is rendered in standard orthography, there is one point at which I have stayed with the sounds and not attempted to select a word: "And she was on one end I was over the other end with ur legs up." It is simply not available to me whether the word is 'our', or 'her'.)

With regard to affiliation/disaffiliation, a detailed comparison of the points in the two fragments at which laughter occurs (and which, in Fragment 2a is followed by disaffiliation, in Fragment 2b by affiliation) yields some interesting features. Specifically, the laughter itself in Fragment 2a tends to disaffiliate, while that in Fragment 2b tends to affiliate. These tendencies can be seen in the placement and contour of the laughter.

In Fragment 2a, placement and contour provide that the laughter is directed not to the nude swimming, but to the more general and innocuous business of carrying on until all hours of the night, that is, to the mention of "u(h)ntil about *two o'clock*," where 'two o'clock in the morning' is the prototypical token of having had a wonderful time.

In detail: The laughter does not start up in the vicinity of "in the nude," but well after it, just as the announcement of the time is being projected.

2a. [Detail]

6 L: Oh:::::: Go:d we 'hhihhh uh hu ↑ We swam in the n:ude 'hh
7 Sunday night u(h)ntil abo:ut
8 E: [ehh]

Further, the laughter is shown to have been not, for example, a delayed response to "in the nude," just so happening to occur across, and thereby disattending, the less exotic announcement of the time, but indeed targeting that announcement. Note that there is a fine-grained display of 'anticipating' that announcement; a rather soft, closed-positioned "ehh heh heh," followed by 'recognizing'; opening to a "huh" at a 'recognition point' for "*two o'clock*," and 'appreciating', escalating to "ha:h ha:" at completion of the time-delivery.

2a. [Detail]

7 L: Sunday night u(h)ntil abo:ut } two o'clock.
8 E: [ehh h e h } heh huh h a:h ha:]

In Fragment 2b, we find an almost identical procedure of anticipation, recognition, and appreciation. Whereas in Fragment 2a it is deployed to disattend "in

the nude'' and target ''until about two o'clock,'' in 2b it is deployed to target the risqué materials, ''and it just feels like you're taking a dou:CHE.'' Here, as the what-it-feels-like is projected, we get the anticipatory ''eh uh uh.''

2b. [Detail]

19 L: / and it just feels like you're / ^[ta]king a _{[eh] uh uh}

20 E:

At a recognition point for ''a dou/ /:CHE,'' we get an escalation to ''ah,'' and at completion, a next escalation to ''*ahh ahh*.''

2b. [Detail]

19 L: / feels like you're / ^[ta]king a _{[eh] uh uh} dou:CHE. _{[uh] a h} *ahh ahh*

20 E:

In each instance, then, the laughter can be seen to be beautifully fitted to – indeed part and parcel of – an ongoing response by the recipient; in Fragment 2a, a disaffiliative response through and through, and in Fragment 2b, an affiliative response through and through.

Now, the glossing in case 2 is rather different from that of Case 1, the latter turning out to be at best ambiguous, at worst a misrepresentation, the former turning out to have been a precursory announcement. What they have in common is that, upon their occurrence, they stand as adequate; it is in subsequent talk that their 'inadequacy' emerges. In Case 1, the inadequacy emerges via the recipient's inquisition, and in Case 2, it emerges via the recipient's providing an environment for, and the teller's producing, further materials (description of an activity which is not a standard, taken-for-granted component of nude swimming, and is thus not adequately referred to by a mention of nude swimming).

With the two fragments that make up Case 3, we return to the sort of gloss considered in Case 1, that is, a statement (in this case, two distinct but connected statements) which upon its occurrence stands as perfectly adequate, descriptive, factual, and so forth, but in subsequent talk, turns out to have been something of an inaccuracy or misrepresentation.

And whereas in Cases 1 and 2 the unpackaging of the gloss occurs in the course of a single conversation, in Case 3 there are two conversations with two different recipients. In the first conversation, the gloss is preserved. In the second, as in Case 2, the recipient provides a salutary environment, and, in a fashion similar to Case 2, it may be *just* and *only* when a particular environment is established that the teller proceeds to unpackage the gloss.

CROSSCONVERSATION ABSENCE/PRESENCE OF AN ENVIRONMENT FOR UNPACKAGING

Akin to Case 1, Case 3 consists of a convergence of a possible trouble with a possible misdeed. But the situation here is rather more complicated. A little boy, finding himself alone at home, has phoned some of his mother's friends, asking

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where she is. In later conversations with the mother, the friends inquire into the incident.

Both the boy and the mother stand in the problematic position of someone with a trouble and someone who has done a misdeed. The boy has his "insecurity" as a possible trouble, but a consequence of it, his calling around the neighborhood and perhaps being a nuisance, stands as a possible misdeed. The mother has the boy's "insecurity" and its consequences as a possible trouble, and her apparent insensitivity to it as a possible misdeed.

In Fragment 3a, the focus is almost exclusively on the misdeed aspect, both of the mother and the boy, the mother defending against the possibility of inattention to the boy's problem, and in turn, setting up the boy as causing problems for her.

3a. [Rah:I:1-3:Standard Orthography]

- 1 V: Where did you get to last ni-ight,
(1.0)
- 2
- 3 J: Last- I dit- (0.2) I didn't go any ↑ where
(0.4)
- 4
- 5 V: Well Thomas rang to see if you where ↑ here,
(0.7)
- 6
- 7 J: 'hh °Ohh:::° hh Well it Was it ↑ last night. (.) ↑ Yes it
wThat's right it was last ni- 'hhh No I'd taken No:man::
eh::m 'tlk to the uh (.) Sport Center in Saltbern. 'hhh =
hOhh: : : : =
- 8
- 9
- 10 V: =He'd forgotten
- 11 V: [And I left a no:te. No I left a ↓ note for Thomas
saying em'hhh eh- I le-eh (.) because I know he's a little
devil you know, 'hh So I bahh! I left a note to sa:y that
(.) I'd be ↑ back. soo:n, 'hh and I put the ti:me on it. I
said I've just taken Norman to the: (0.3) Center.
(.)
- 12 J:
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18 V: Yes.
- 19 J: The Sport Center.
- 20 V: °Ahhh:::°
(.)
- 21
- 22 J: And,
(0.7)
- 23
- 24 J: Well uh (.) °What ti:me was it,° 'h I left you at about
twenty to fi:ve.
(0.4)
- 25
- 26
- 27 V: I don't know what time it was J,essie
[°Ye:s°]=
- 28 J:
- 29 V: =[] I can't remember really,
I left here at twenty to five and there was nobody i:n.
Now I thought he would have come with me you se_e, 'hhh =
[Ye:s,
=Ye:s,
And Norm and I picked Norman up at te:n to:,
(1.0)
- 30 J: And then it tu- Well I had to go sfairly slo:w to Saltbern
with the roads being ba:d,
It- Yes it would be: Ye : s
'hhh And th_en I got
- 31
- 32
- 33
- 34
- 35
- 36
- 37
- 38
- 39

- 40 back and I (.) stopped in town just to buy some butter,
 41 (0.3)
 42 J: 'Cause I- I was out of butter,
 43 V: [Y : a : h ,
 44 J: 'hh And I came home. We:ll he was in tears: 'hh So:: that
 45 was it.
 46 V: Oh:::
 47 J: I don't know ↓ why:. I don't know what had upset him I'm
 48 sure=
 49 V: =Oh: dear.=
 50 J: =But I hadn't been gone that long I was back=
 51 V: [N o : : : :
 52 V: =No ,
 53 J =[] ↑ here before six,

The inquisitional character of the interaction is set at its beginning with the friend's accusatory inquiry, "Where did you get to last night?" (see line 1). And across the mother's talk we find that defensive detailing which is so recurrent in inquisitional materials, becoming particularly intense at lines 39–42, where "I stopped in town" is explained to have been momentary and prosaic, "just to buy some butter," which is itself explained as necessary, "'Cause I was out of butter."

The gloss in question occurs at lines 44–48, "And I came home. We:ll he was in tears: .hh So:: that was it . . . I don't know ↓ why:. I don't know what had upset him I'm sure." And as far as this conversation is concerned, that is the description of the event. That is what happened. She comes home and this little boy is inexplicably in tears. Had we not access to another conversation, then as far as we could be concerned, that is what happened.

But we do have access to this other conversation, with another recipient. And the talk proceeds in quite a different fashion and has a very different outcome.

For one, whereas Fragment 3a (and virtually the conversation) starts off with the accusatory "Where did you get to last night?" in Fragment 3b, we find an instance of what Pomerantz (1980) talks of as "an indirect form of soliciting information." Well into the conversation, this coparticipant produces, "Eh::: when was it was it Thur:sdai..h eh: Thomas rung to see if you were he:re" (lines 1–2). And in contrast to Fragment 3a, this recipient here shows an interest in and concern for the boy's distress (see, e.g., lines 40–44 and 64–65).

3b. [Rah:II:8-12:Standard Orthography]

- 1 I: Eh::: when was it was it Thur:sdai..h eh: Thomas rung to see
 2 if you were he:re.
 3 J: 'tch'h Oh I think he rang e:verybody hones tly'h ↑ da'h
 4 I: [euhhh] ↑ ha-ha-ha
 5 (.)
 6 J: ↑ You'd think that I'd (.) Do ↑ you know I left a note for him.
 7 .
 34 J: and I put a I put the ti:me on it?
 35 I: Yeh- eh:::heh- ↑ heh-h eh he
 36 J: And I said I've just taken Norman to

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- 37 Saltbe_m, I won't be very lo_{ng}.
38 I: eeYeh, 'h I said to him are ↑ you al_{ri}:ght Thomas now I-eeYou=
39 (.)
40 J: =haven't ↑ done something you kno:w, 'h'h'cause I sai_d I'll=
41 I: =pop round if you've hu:rt yourse(h)e(h) I f_or some 'hh
42 J: ring. He didn't get in til gone ↓ five him self_{aa}:
43 I: Oh I've]=
44 J: =[] AND ↑ I was ↑ in before si_x: I said I bet Jessie's gone to
45 I: ↓ no idea what t i m e. I said I bet Jessie's gone to
46 do a bit of shopping she's just called with Auntie Vera I
47 said to him you know, 'h
48 J: Oh well he rang Vera :yhh ↑ HHAHH hhah=
49 I: eh_{hh}:...!
50 J: =hh,ah h h a : ha 'hh 'h Ey he's a 'hh
51 I: ha-ha-ha-ha-ha'hhehh ↑ I()
52 (.)
53 J: ↑ Ye:s. (.) But he's a funny ki:d. 'hh=
54 I: =Ye::e_h
55 J: He-He was so upset k- He w- You know he'd been crying
56 when I got back but I was back befo_{re} six.h'hh=
57 I: H a : d h e :.
58 I: =[] H a d he really.]
59 J: I mean all I di:d, was (.) pick No_rman up
60 I: Well I s_{aid} to him
61 now you let me know eh Thomas are you al_l ↑ ri:ght, you(h)know,=
62 J: Mm:
63 I: =[] 'hh'Cause I thought 'h well has he done something and- he
64 he's fri:ghtened to ↑ sa:y you know,
65 J: The o_{nly} thing I_l: could think of=
66 J: =when I came in I could s_{ee} he'd been ↓ °crying°=
67 I: Yes.°
68 J: °He said he hadn't.°
69 (0.2)
70 I: °Ye:s:°
71 J: But- ee-ee °two police ca:rs had° stopped outsi:de.=
72 I: =eeYe::s?
73 J: 'h And that whether he thou:ght that I had an
74 ac_{ci}dent, or something I don't kno:w.=
75 I: I_l: kno:w
76 I: n ↓ No::: : : : :
77 J: =[] but 'h you know he's a funny little in_{se}cure l_little boy:=
78 I: eeY e : h
79 J: =isn't he:
80 I: Beh-uh B_{ut} the po_{int} is Jessie don't fo_rget no:w. 'h
81 (0.3)
82 I: Eh:m (.) he was so: close to°Aaron°wa:sn't ↓ he. =
83 I: =He wa:s v e r ↓ y : : :
84 J: Well this is it you see ::, Ye:s.°
85 I: and no w_he's ↑ go:ne.=
86 I: =And he thinks ↑ you're gonna go as well you s_{ee}:
87 J: Well I think
88 this is it

Let me just point out one rather striking feature of the two conversations. Although these two recipients respond very differently to talk about the boy's distress, they respond almost identically to one bit of defensive detailing. In each conversation, the mother attempts to get some corroboration for the time frame of her absence. In 3a, she asks, "What time was it, I left you at about twenty to five" (lines 24–25). In 3b, she asks, "What time did he ring. He didn't get in til gone five himself" (lines 45–46). And in each conversation, the recipient declines to participate in this reconstruction – in 3a with "I don't know what time it was Jessie I can't remember really" (lines 27 & 29), and in 3b with "Oh I've no idea what time" (lines 47 & 49).

While it might not be surprising that neither coparticipant is tracking this woman's life in such a way as to have such details immediately to hand, there are circumstances in which such a request would generate an effort at recalling, figuring out, and so forth.

It is at least possible that the prompt and absolute rejections here have to do with an unwillingness to be implicated in this problematic situation, and, for example, are an avoidance of providing the mother with such resources as, "Well Vera says . . ." and "Ida says . . ." and the potential sequelae of such involvement.

But in terms of the boy's distress, there is a marked difference between the two recipients; that of 3a being utterly unforthcoming, that of 3b exhibiting concern.

And the initial gloss component, which appears in 3a as an exasperating confrontation, "And I came home. Well he was in tears" (line 44), now shows up in a somewhat milder form, "You know he'd been crying when I got back" (lines 59–60).

I am wondering if this version is not only milder, but, in terms of unpackaging a gloss, somewhat 'looser'. I find the description just a bit difficult to fathom. Is it to be understood as 'He was crying when I got back' or as 'He'd been crying before I got back' or what?

I have a similar problem with an utterance in the following fragment.

3c. [NB:IV:11:R:3:Standard Orthography]

- 1 G: And Bud got do wn.
 2 E: [hhhh YE:S=
 3 E: → =HE was HE:RE: uafter I: came ho:me, I: uh went to Lottie's
 4 for a fih-little while and then he'd gone up to get some
 5 PAI:NT. So he ca] :me o:n in an:d uh
 6 G: [l s e e
 7 (.)
 8 E: 'p: hhh
 9 G: [Well that's fi:ne.

Like "he'd been crying when I got back," "He was here after I came home" has a certain elusive, Moebius Strip quality. I gather from the subsequent explanation that the circumstances are a bit complicated, something like: She got

home and went out again. While she was out, he got home and went out. She rearrived and then he rearrived.

In any event, the circumstances are a bit complicated. And I am wondering if just that sort of situation might be conveyed in the initial description bit, "He was here after I came home." Likewise, "he'd been crying when I got back" might, by design, convey that the circumstances being described are 'a bit complicated'; that there is 'something more to be told' about them. If something like this is so, then the gloss of 3b may not only be 'milder' than that of 3a, but in a state of imminent unpackageability.

And the responses to the two description bits differ radically. In 3a, the recipient produces an "Oh," which does not immediately follow the exasperated "Well he was in tears," but follows the summary statement, "So that was it," and an "Oh dear" which follows the announcement of the tears being inexplicable, "I don't know why. I don't know what had upset him I'm sure," an utterance which conveys the boy's problematicness as much, if not more than, the boy's distress (see lines 44–49). The responses here are noncommittal, permitting the teller to proceed however she chooses. And she chooses to return to the building of her defense (lines 50–53).

In 3b, the mother also chooses to return to the building of her defense, but in this case the recipient, who has followed reference to the boy's distress with a 'news-receipt/topicalizer', "Had he," pursues it across the mother's defensive accounting, with "Had he *really*," and, still in competition with those materials, produces a report of her own attention to the boy's distress, "Well I said to him now you let me know Thomas, are you alright?" to which the mother realigns as a recipient (lines 59–66).

The recipient's reported attention to the boy's distress is followed by a report of the diagnosis she had generated at the time, "'Cause I thought well has he done something and he he's frightened to say" (lines 67–68). And it is at just that point, and akin to Case 2 with great alacrity, that the teller proceeds to unpack the gloss (see lines 67–70). I will address the placement of the unpackaging shortly. First, let me turn to the unpackaging itself.

It turns out that the boy was specifically not "in tears" and that his behavior was not altogether inexplicable. Rather, we have the mother examining the boy, concluding that he'd been crying although he denies it, and generating a diagnosis (incorporating the observable aftermath of tears and the presence on the scene of two police cars) that the boy had thought she had "had an accident" (lines 69–78).

A detail: A component of this unpackaging may itself be a gloss designed to accredit the mother's diagnosis, that is, her formulation of the two police cars as having been "stopped outside." 'Outside' has a similar ambiguity to the "So I lay down" of Case 1 and may be used here in a similar way. That is, its use may imply something that had not actually occurred – in this case, that the police cars

were properly locatable by reference to this household, in contrast to, for example, a bit further down the street, which perhaps would be more accurately formulated as 'in front of the Lamberts' house', where, then, one might be reasonably led to wonder what was going on at the Lamberts'. But whereas "So I lay down" is unpackaged in the conversation, "outside" remains unexamined and intact. And thus, at least with the analytic resources I use, I have no way of showing that this descriptor is, indeed, being deployed in the manner I am proposing.

In any event, we find a very different set of environments in Fragment 3a and 3b. In the former, the gloss remains intact, while in the latter it is unpackaged. The mother delivers her diagnosis, that "he thought that I had an accident."

Now, "had an accident" may well be a euphemism for 'was killed'. As it happens, the boy's father had died some eighteen months prior to this conversation. And as the talk proceeds, the recipient provides a powerful affiliation, concurring with the diagnosis and maintaining the euphemism: "he was so close to Aaron wasn't he . . . And now he's gone. And he thinks you're gonna go as well" (lines 86–90).

So, we have a very different set of environments between the two conversations and very different versions of the boy's distress and what was made of it. In 3a, "I don't know why"; in 3b, that still suffering the death of his father, he thought his mother was dead, too.

Turning now to the placement of the unpackaging, we can notice that there is an earlier place where a similar environment is set up. The recipient reports, "I said to him are you alright Thomas now I- You haven't done something, you know, 'cause I said I'll pop round if you've hurt yourself" (lines 40–44). But there is a specifiable and perhaps significant difference between the two. The earlier one is a report of what the recipient *said* to the boy. The subsequent one ends with a report of what she *thought*.

And it is with that great alacrity that the teller's as-yet-untold materials are thereupon produced, now, akin to Case 2, observably occasioned by her coparticipant's diagnosis, produced as a reciprocal next rather than a volunteer initial.

3b. [Detail]

- 64 I: Well I s:said to him now you let me know eh Thomas are you
 65 al ↑ right, you(h)know, =
 66 J: = [Mm:
 67 I: = [hh 'Cause I thou:ght h well has he done something and- he
 68 he's fri:ghtened to ↑ sa:y you k n o w,
 69 J: [The o:nly thing I]: could think of

That is, it may be just then and only then that an appropriate environment has been established.

A question is, why would the teller want/need/await *just* that environment into which to introduce her diagnosis? An answer might be worked out along the following lines. What the recipient seems to have made of the boy's distress, that

he might have hurt himself, or "done something," is perfectly conventional, working with the routine mishaps or mischiefs a little boy might get into, rattling around alone in the house. What the teller has made of it, that the boy might have thought she'd been killed, is somewhat bizarre, catastrophic.

And some of our other work indicates that the reporting of such thoughts is highly constrained. So, for example, Sacks (1985:419) proposes that it is an occupational task of this society's members to be "engaged in finding out only how it is that what is going on is usual." And one aspect of that task can involve people in "achieving the 'nothing happened' sense of really catastrophic events," where "a classically dramatic instance is, almost universally, the initial report of the assassination of President Kennedy was of having heard backfires."

In that regard, Sacks generated a collection of quotes from books and newspapers, which is now and then added to by myself and my colleagues. For example:

- 3b1 [*The witnesses*: Testimony of Secret Service agent driving the car in which John F. Kennedy was riding when he was assassinated]

Well, when we were going down Elm Street, I heard a noise that I thought was a backfire of one of the motorcycle policemen . . . And then I heard it again. And I glanced over my shoulder and I saw Governor Connally like he was starting to fall. Then I realized there was something wrong.

- 3b2 [*Los Angeles Times*, February 22, 1969: Inquest into the assassination of Robert Kennedy; testimony of a bystander who was shot]

"I felt someone kick me," said Stroll, adding that he didn't know at first that he had been shot. "Then I noticed – because I had on blue pants – that one of my legs was red."

- 3b3 [*Los Angeles Times*, April 8, 1970]

Mrs. Martha Harmon will never forget the sound of her children's voices screaming in the night. "At first it sounded like they were just fussing," she recalled with a shudder Tuesday. "But then I heard the oldest one yell fire. That woke me."

- 3b4 [*Oxford Times*, March 19, 1982: "UFO Reports Stream In"]

Mysterious purple lights were seen moving across the sky last Friday evening to the amazement of witnesses.

Mr. Derek Mansell, of Crown Road, Wheatley, said he saw a large red light steadily moving across the sky above his home. The light suddenly shot upwards and disappeared.

"I thought it was an aircraft at first," said Mr. Mansell who is UFO research officer for Contact International UK, "but an aircraft could never have shot up so quickly."

The point is this: Even for events which did, undeniably, turn out to be catastrophic, the reporting of having, at that moment, perceived them as catastrophic, is constrained. People massively report, and the media massively preserve and transmit, an innocuous 'first thought', from which they were forced by mounting evidence of the bizarre/catastrophic.

It appears, however, that the teller in Case 3 is burdened with a catastrophic first (and only) thought. This may have to do with the way in which the materials were assembled, that is, that what might serve as 'mounting evidence' was available before the event (i.e., first she saw the police cars, then encountered the boy with his aftermath of tears, *et voilà!*).

While she may be constrained from simply announcing it, wheresoever to whomsoever, the local sequential and interactional contexts can have sufficiently weakened that constraint, permitting it to be introduced as a reciprocal second, interactionally elicited, rather than self-generated report. And, at least in sequential terms, across speakers, a standard series has been produced; an innocuous first thought followed by mounting evidence for, and the introduction of, a catastrophic thought.

A final detail: Even though she may feel able to introduce this report, she may be exhibiting an orientation to its problematic, constrained character in the way she produces it. Specifically, there are occasions when people do just go ahead and state a catastrophic first thought, without benefit of a prior-reported innocuous first thought. Recurrently, however, when they do so, they mark it as problematic. For example:

3b5 [The witnesses: Yarborough testimony, pg. 3]

As the motorcade went down the side of Elm Street toward the railroad underpass, a rifle shot was heard by me: a loud blast, close by. I have handled firearms for fifty years, and I thought immediately that it was a rifle shot.

3b6 [*The witnesses*: Connally testimony, pg. 14]

We had just made the turn, well, when I heard what I thought was a shot. I heard this noise which I immediately took to be a rifle shot . . . I immediately- the only thought that crossed my mind was that this is an assassination attempt.

In 3.b.5., not only does the witness Yarborough exhibit his credentials ("I have handled firearms for fifty years"), but he marks the spontaneous, unbidden appearance of the thought with "and I thought *immediately* that it was a rifle shot" (emphasis mine).

In 3.b.6., Governor Connally does not have such credentials to offer, but he does produce the other component, the marking of the spontaneous, unbidden character of the thought, "I heard this noise which I *immediately* took to be a

rifle shot . . . I *immediately- the only thought that crossed my mind* was that this is an assassination attempt" (emphasis mine).

These markings might convey a sense of the speaker's own noninvolvement in the thought – this thought which otherwise exhibits (to adapt a phrase of Menninger's) a certain 'disloyalty' to the ordinary.

And a very similar sort of marking occurs in Fragment 3b, "The *only thing I* could think of . . ." One gets a sense that, try as she might, she could find no alternatives. This was all there was, aside, of course, from "I don't know."

Indeed it is possible that the version she produces in the inauspicious environment of the first conversation, "I don't know why. I don't know what had upset him I'm sure" (i.e., a claim of 'zero alternatives'), may be the appropriate and recurrently used substitute for some actual perception which is constrained, that is, which is too problematic to mention.

I will now turn to a case which I take to be a complicated version of this phenomenon of introducing problematic materials just (and perhaps only) when an auspicious environment is achieved, that is, just (and perhaps only) when a recipient has shown some special availability to such talk.

A MISAPPREHENSION OF AN INAUSPICIOUS ENVIRONMENT AS AUSPICIOUS

Most roughly, I believe that what is going on here is that a teller takes it that an auspicious environment has been established, when in fact it has not, when in fact the environment is thoroughly inauspicious.

The two fragments which make up Case 4 are taken from the same conversation as Case 2. This time it is the other sister, Emma, who makes repeated attempts to introduce something. In contrast to the delights of Lottie's holiday, Emma has been undergoing a series of troubles, including a flare-up of an affliction shared, in its virulent form, by Lottie's newlywed friend and, to a lesser extent, by Lottie herself. Lottie's friend has discovered a remedy which she is recommending to her fellow sufferers (to Lottie in person and to Emma via Lottie, i.e., "She said for you to use this . . . and see if it might help").

4a. [NB:IV:10:R:36-38:Standard Orthography]

- 1 E: I m: ISSED YOU: but I've been "ri-u (.) I've REALLY had a
2 very ni:ce time Sunday was kind of a lo:ng da:y but uh
3 'hmhh,hh 'huhh
4 L: Ye:a:h,
5 E: I: 'M used to everything no:w and (0.6) °I 'm° brayh hh
6 L: [°Ye:ah,°]
(0.2)
7 E: I dMy toenails are falling off I don't "know-°
8 L: 't O h: } wait a
9 minute. That's I'm glad you me:ntioned that: =
10 L: =You know I:sabel ha:d her: nai:l taken o:ff like you had

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11 your (.) toenail taken q:ff and it just ↓ abou:t killed her=
 12 E: {Ye:ah}
 13 L: =you know {she near ly die:d a thousand times=
 14 E: {Ye:ah,
 15 L: =and I was telling her a ↓ bou:t you:.
 16 E: Ye, ah,
 17 L: {hhhhhhhh So anywa:y((0.2) i-she go:t this: (.)
 18 *v:Vi:dafoa:m and I: bou:ght some down there and I (.) put
 19 some on my nails last night and I put on: some toni:ght hh
 20 And she said that was the only thing that healed them.
 21 (.)
 22 E: VI:dafoam.
 36 L: It's V:-I:-Q:, f-o-r-m:. Ointment.
 37 (0.6)
 38 E: v-Viaform did SHE HAVE the BA:D BIG THICK THING like
 39 m,y TOE NAILS?
 40 L: {OH::: } GO::d ye::s. And ho:w.
 45 E: She always did have those hhhh No but this gog:s with the
 46 toenail bit I think some of this (.) goes with the toenail.
 47 Well, my toenails are getting ba:d Lottie those two big=
 48 L: mhh
 49 E: =toenai:ls but ah, h 'hhh {I: t sa }ys (.) uh: soothi:ng (0.2)
 50 L: anabye::: (0.6) o something and fun:geye dayuh preparation
 51 for the treatment of in:flamed condition of the skin such as
 52 eczema hhhh a:thletics foot and other fungus hhh infection.
 53 Your physician ma:y hhh (.) p-prescri:be VI:dafoam for: . . .

In Case 3 it could be noticed that the way each of the two recipients introduces the matter of the little boy's distressed phone calls turns out to serve as a very good index of their subsequent treatment of that matter. The same holds in this case. That Emma's precursory announcement of her woes, "My toenails are falling off," is met with "I'm glad you mentioned that" (lines 7–9) turns out to be a good index to what follows.

Earlier, I mentioned that the phenomenon of 'unpackaging a gloss' was noticed during an examination of the various convergences of troubles-tellings and other businesses, such as arrangements-making and interrogation. Another of those convergences is that of a troubles-telling with a 'service encounter'.

And one of the problematic features of that convergence is that a hearer of a trouble exhibits an 'essential disinterest' in the troubles bearer (i.e., the person), the 'essential interest' lodging in issues of problem and remedy (see Jefferson & Lee [1981a]).

And in Case 4, it can be noticed throughout that Lottie is orienting to a 'service encounter', exhibiting its 'essential disinterest' in the troubles bearer (in this case Emma and her sufferings), its 'essential interest' in problem and remedy. I take it that it is this set of utterly opposed orientations which generates the misapprehension and its consequences.

In Fragment 4a, we can briefly note that Emma's next attempt to talk about her

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troubles is met by a reading-out of the information on the remedy's label (lines 50–54). And that focusing on the remedy ends this first series of attempts to generate a troubles-telling (data not shown). The next attempt occurs some ten minutes later.

4b. [NB:IV:10:R:51-54:Standard Orthography]

- 1 E: 'huhh Uh getting ba:ck to this Vi:afɔ:r: foam, Lottie is
2 her NAIL A:LRIGHT no:w?
8 L: It's beautiful 'hh BUT IT would (.) iYOU KNO:W IT WOULD
9 JUS:T HURT
24 L: so: she got tha:t and uh and it's: n:ever bo:thered her.
25 (0.2)
26 E: 'h'ha:h'hhhhh 'Oh:::°gah- hh
27 L: 't'hhhh A'nd GE:T it } IN the TU:BE EMMA.
28 E: Al:ri:ght dea r, }
29 L: } Get the tube=
30 L: =and no:w toni:ght I: I took a too:thpick and I 'hh and I
31 put the th-ih s tuff down in my uh- in my nai:ls=
32 E: } M m 'h m,
33 L: =yo,u k n o w
34 E: } Isn't this FUNNY YOU AND I: WOULD HAVE IT.h
35 (0.4)
36 E: This is ri dicul ous.
37 L: } E:VERYBODY'S GOT ih 'hh=
38 L: =Isn't tha:t funny we were in a p-uh: :
39 E: } Oh: God it's terrible
40 Lottie m:y toenails 'hehh they're just look so sick those
41 big t:oenails it just u-makes me: sick. You know they're
42 just (.) u-dea:d. (.) Everything's dead I d- I sat ou:t (.)
43 today and I said my Go:d am I just (.) DY:ING it's: (.) like
44 I'm ossified.
45 L: NO I- We were in: some pla:ce I don't know if it was Abel's=
46 E: } ((sniff))
47 L: =or somepla:ce (0.4) I guess it was Abel's. a:nd somebody
48 was ta:lking about it a:nd I: bet there were 'hhh TE:N
49 PEOPLE arou:nd the:re, and they a:ll started to say well
50 they had the sa:me thing? and I kno:w like Doctor Barton
51 says it's from the damn 'p detergent.

Here, Emma takes the occasion of Lottie's personalized directions for use (i.e., her description of her own use of the remedy) to do a powerful affiliation, "Isn't this funny you and I would have it" (lines 30–34). It can be recalled that it is not merely "you and I" who have it, but a 'we' which includes the nonpresent third party and discoverer of the remedy, who, further, more relevantly shares the trouble with Emma. That is, Emma is doing some special one-on-one aligning here.

Indeed it is my impression that this 'specifying' reference, "you and I," is uncommon usage, the vastly more prevalent one being 'we'. But in this case, 'we' would include Lottie's friend. "You and I" may then be pressed into service to partition out the third party, where this more intimate pairing can set up a more auspicious environment for a troubles-telling.

When response is not immediately forthcoming (lines 34–35), Emma goes on to produce an item, “This is ridiculous” (line 36), which tends to be used in a rather special way. Recurrently it is used where a speaker is being stoical about something which is a lot worse than ‘ridiculous’.

When Lottie finally does respond, there is an event which might well be characterized as Emma simply interrupting with a ‘volunteer’ unpackaging, but which I think can be argued to be a matter of Emma’s (1) mishearing an utterance in progress as providing the auspicious environment she had been working towards, and (2) starting up at an appropriate place in that utterance. I will develop these two possibilities in turn.

I take it that a crucial relationship holds between Emma’s “Isn’t this funny you and I would have it. (0.4) This is ridiculous” and Lottie’s “Isn’t that funny we were in a p-uh://” (lines 34–38). To argue for that relationship, I must introduce some supporting materials. These were collected and considered in the course of the study of troubles-telling, as instances of a particular point in a ‘troubles-telling sequence’ at which a special level of intimacy between teller and recipient is reached. In each case, a troubles teller is doing some more or less straight reporting, in the course of which a recipient does a more or less affiliative response.

4b1. [HG:2:Standard Orthography]

- 1 N: But he just like o:pened up, (0.6) a lo:t you know of (0.4)
 2 the p:mples I ha:ve?=
 3 H: → “Eoh::,
 4 N: It (just) hu:rt so bad Helen I was cry:::ing.

4b2. [JG:1:19:1:GT:Standard Orthography]

- 1 M: And uh I w-h-h-en I lie down or when I get up it feels like
 2 the m::flesh is pulling off of my bones.
 3 S: → How awful.
 4 M Oh I have listen I was in such excruciating pain yesterday
 5 and the day before that I really I just didn’t know what to
 6 do I just pulled my hair.

4b3. [Fr:HB:11:6:Standard Orthography] ((Last night, J and her husband arrived home to find that their house had burned to the ground. She is now telling a girlfriend about it.))

- 1 J: we just wouldn’t have been here.hh You know,
 2 P: ‘t! O h : : : : : : : : b a : b y,
 3 J: [There’s no way it was] It was jus’t, We’re just lucky I
 4 guess:.
 5 P: ‘hhhh Okay wait a minute=
 6 J: So,
 7 P: → =I don’t know if you’re cryi-ing but I hhh(h)a hhhm uh hm;
 8 J: (hhhhh hum)=
 9 P: =’hhh
 10 J: [h I was guh- I- Middle of the night la-ast night I
 11 wantehdhhto hhc(h)all(h)y(h)ou ‘mhhh!

4b4. [NB:IV:14:2:Standard Orthography]

- 1 E: and I have to have ointment I put on four times a day and
 2 I’m under:: violet ray for a few seconds, and I got a
 3 shot in the butt of vitamin:, (0.2) A:: ski:n.

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- 4 (0.5)
5 L: → Je::sus.
6 E: Lo:ttie honest to Go:d you know, I just broke out terribly
7 a:uh- hhwhen I le-ft ho:me. An:d, I just- just my le:gs
8 were just covered
- 4b5. [NB:IV:4:R:2-3:Standard Orthography]
1 E: SO HE PACKED HIS CLO:THES AND HE WENT and he says he won't
2 even be down for Thanksgiving. So I think I'll ca:ll Sandra
3 and cancel the who:le thing. °hmhh°
4 (2.2)
5 E: Isn't this ri:diculous and uh-and BILL AND GLADYS WAITING
6 OUT THERE TO GO TO DINNER AND I: had to go tell them Isn't
7 he ri:diculous?
8 (1.0)
9 L: → He's cra:zy.
10 (0.4)
11 E: Oh: Go:d dammit. I said it's too bad the boat didn't sink
12 yesterday and tha:t m-guh thah- I shouldn't have said
13 tha:t. But (0.4) k'hhhh Lottie I: can't do anything ri:ght
14 honest to Go:d I ca:n't. Here I worked ha:rd va::cuumin:g . . .

The affiliative responses can range from the mild and slightly repelled "Eoh::" of 4b1 to the announcement of intense empathy in 4b3, "I don't know if you're crying but I am."

And in each case, immediately thereafter, the troubles teller shifts from 'reporting' mode to 'expressive' mode, now exhibiting his or her feelings and/or doing relational intensifying/intimacy. For example, in 4b1, "Eoh::" is followed by "It (just) hurt so bad Helen I was crying"; and in 4b3, "I don't know if you're crying but I am" is followed by "Middle of the night last night I wanted to call you." And this configuration can be found in conversations between the two sisters, as in 4b4, where Lottie's "Je::sus" is followed by Emma's "Lo:ttie honest to Go:d . . .," and so on.

So, a first resource for dealing with Fragment 4b is this recurrent configuration wherein a recipient's affiliation provides for a teller's shifting into the 'expressive' mode.

A secondary resource is this 'stoical' formulation, "ridiculous." It can be noted that in 4b5 the affiliation "He's crazy," which is followed by a shift into 'expressive' mode, "Oh God dammit" and its sequelae, is itself preceded, and solicited, by the 'stoical' formulation "Isn't he ridiculous?" And in the general context of repeated precursory announcements, and the immediately local context of the partitioning/intimatizing work of "you and I," it is likely that when Emma produces "This is ridiculous," she is not being 'stoical', but is soliciting affiliation, and is primed to shift into expressive mode upon its occurrence.

And there are features of Lottie's next utterance which make it available for treatment as just such an affiliation. Simply enough, "Isn't that funny we . . ." is very similar to Emma's "Isn't this funny you and I . . ." However, at least one of the differences is crucial: the "we," which as it turns out, is not referring

to the local ‘you and I’ pair, but to the pair consisting of Lottie and her friend. This near-repetition with its crucial difference is anything but a mandate for an unpackaging by Emma. Rather, it is a start on a problem-focused anecdote by Lottie (see lines 45ff vis-à-vis line 38).

Now, the similarity may indeed be deployed to exhibit affiliation, but not the ‘personal’ affiliation which will provide an appropriate environment for an unpackaging. Rather, it may be exhibiting a ‘topical’ affiliation which will provide that this rather tangential story has been appropriately introduced, occasioned by Emma’s talk.

But Emma, primed for a particular sort of affiliation, can be catching those features of Lottie’s utterance which recommend it as the affiliation she has been working toward. And she launches her unpackaging with the alacrity noted for those in Fragments 2b and 3b.

In Fragments 2b and 3b, the unpackagings are launched in the vicinity of possible utterance completion, technically, in ‘terminal overlap’ with the last sound of a possibly last word.

2b. [Detail]

15 E: I always have ↓ liked to swim in the ‘nu:de. ↓ °
16 L: [M E]: TOO

3b. [Detail]

67 I: ‘Cause I though:t ‘h well has he done something and- he
68 he’s fri:ghtened to ↑ sa:y you k n o w,
69 J: [The o:nly thing I]: could think of=

In Fragment 4b, the launch is far more precipitous, occurring in midutterance. However, the precise point at which it occurs is a recurrent and systematic locus of precompletion onset: just as an utterance in progress begins to falter.

4b. [Detail]

38 L: Isn’t tha:t funny we were in a p-uh:;
39 E: [Oh: God it’s terrible

While I take it that ‘terminal overlap’ is intuitively obvious as a locus of speaker transition (see Fragments 1a, lines 13–14, 3a, 31–32; 3b, 36–37; 3c, 4–6; 4b, 28–29; 4b9, 10–11; 4b16, 8–9; 5a, 14–15 & 20–22), it is not likely that the use of the point at which an utterance in progress begins to falter, as in 4b above, is immediately available as something recurrent/systematic. I will not here attempt to argue the systematicity of the phenomenon, which I am calling ‘hitch onset’; but to provide at least a sense of its recurrence, I will show several more instances, focusing on its occurrence by reference to the pause-filler ‘uh’, as in 4b above.

4b6. [SBL:2:2:3:R:4:Standard Orthography]

1 C: ↑ Well I think Frank liked him,
2 A: ‘hhh’hh’hh Oh ↑ I think he did too ↓ [A n d I]=
3 C: [Ah hah.]=
4 A: =I think they get along rea I WELL; an:d uh
5 C: [Ah hah.]

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- 6 A: → t'hhhh I: think that uh:
 7 C: → I: could have asked (.) uh: Pat
 but I was afraid she was gonna bring that ↓ kid.
- 4b7. [Her:III:1:14:3:Standard Orthography]
 1 H: I would uh k- (0.4) be a little reluctant to let it go:
 2 uhm uh without some sort of correction: because 'hh
 3 J: Mm.
 4 H: only in fact uh this this particular: s-u-statement about
 5 uh 'hh high powered overseas councilors.
 6 J: Mm.
 7 J: M-hm=
 8 H: → =Do you know uh:m u h w u h -
 9 J: → t But do ↑ you know who did say it?
- 4b8. [SPC:X:3:9:Standard Orthography]
 1 M: Now I think he was just appalled at the turn that things
 2 have taken you know.
 3 K: → Oh yes::: Sometimes uh:
 4 M: → Cause this little guy will stand
 5 in the railroad tre-uh track . . .
- 4b9. [NB:IV:10:R:14-15:Standard Orthography]
 1 L: and so he told me exactly how to go: , 'hhh hh
 2 E: M m hm:,
 3 (.)
 4 L: Uh:: (.) Let's see hit the Riverside Freeway and then when
 5 you see the River:side (.) Freeway when it says Indio and
 6 San Diego turn off the:re,
 7 E: Mm: hm
 8 E: You're all ↑ freeway all the WA::Y,
 9 (.)
 10 L: t And then you go through the CA:N ↓ you know ↓:w.
 11 E: Yea h:
 12 (.)
 13 L: → And the:n uh: ()
 14 E: → I ↑ hate that °canyon,°
- 4b10. [NB:IV:2:R:2-3:Standard Orthography]
 1 E: This is called Mexee Pep it's good hot sauce. I don't
 2 know whether: b-uh: the
 3 G: → Uh what's it called?
- 4b11. [NB:IV:4:R:15-16:Standard Orthography]
 1 L: I: wouldn't call Sandra and uh that's gonna spoil her
 2 whole uh Thanksgiving.
 3 E: but 'hha 'hh 'hh
 4 E: YEAH BUT HOW IS °SHE GONNA GET hHO:ME. Uh::: e-she-eh *u:::
 5 → I: 'll have to let her know because: uh: 'huhh
 6 L: → Well can't she just
 7 come down for Thanksgiving and then go back with uh:: Do:n?
 8 E: hh
- 4b12. [NB:IV:15:2:Standard Orthography]
 1 B: → But it was a:ll crappy and uh bulged up and:
 2 A: → Ye:a:h. Ye:ah. Ye:ah.
- 4b13. [MDE:60-1:5:4-5:Standard Orthography]
 1 S: → I've got to get the publicity out I've got to: uh
 2 I: → () Ye::ah.

4b14. [CDHQ:II:252:R:3:Standard Orthography]

- 1 J: They're real lucky,
 2 (.)
 3 O: They sure are,
 4 J: 'Cause we got about as much damage as they did and uh: we
 5 caught the tail end ↓ of it. ↓
 6 (.)
 7 O: iYeah? Mm hm? mBut uh: u-oh oh the: there's other pa:rts of
 8 → Morgan City that is: u:h
 9 J: → I'll ↓ bet,

4b15. [SBL:3:2:R:2:Standard Orthography]

- 1 C: and ↑ Geri spoke up and said she couldn:t ↑ play on
 2 F r i : day
 3 S: [That's ri:ght,=
 4 S: → =That's right because of u:h: m
 5 C: → the ba:ll ↓ ga*: : me:::
 6 S: the ballga:me,

That is, a midutterance falter or 'hitch' constitutes a specifiable place at which next speakers recurrently start up: A 'transition-relevant place'. And, as with the other transition-relevant places, we find two distinctive activity formats: Next speakers (1) use the occasion to introduce business of their own, as in 4b6–4b11, or (2) respond to the immediately prior talk, exhibiting its 'as is' adequacy with acknowledgment/agreement, as in 4b12–4b14, or, as in 4b15, themselves producing the projected next component.

Fragment 4b may constitute a version of the latter format. Specifically, it may be characterized as a recipient exhibiting the 'as is' adequacy of an affiliation-in-progress, not waiting for, or requiring, it to be worked out in its particulars. The following fragment may be similarly characterizable.

4b16. [JG:II(a):1:5-6:Standard Orthography]

- 1 C: 'hhhh Alright now I was in a cold sweat, I couldn't get my
 2 brea:th.
 3 J: °Oh, h ()°
 4 C: 'hhh Alright first of all you do:n't do this when
 5 you've got too much boo:ze.
 6 (0.3)
 7 C: You get the co:ld sweats when you come ou:t. of having been
 8 pa:ssed out from too much boo:ze.
 9 J: Yeah.
 10 J: → But not before you go: d- () ()
 11 C: → 'hhhh [↑ NO: NEver.

In Fragment 4b, then, we may be seeing a specifiable activity-format: an uptake, exhibiting the 'as is' adequacy of a faltering affiliation in progress. Where, however, that particular instance of the format is misconceived (that is, the faltering utterance, although it looks very much like an affiliation in progress, it is not.

And the misplaced unpackaging of Fragment 4b receives radically different treatment from those of Fragments 2b and 3b. Instead of recipient affiliation, we find a most standard device in the management of overlap: The recipient drops

out at the onset of the overlapping utterance, waits for a point of possible completion, and thereupon recycles her own aborted utterance.

4b. [Detail]

- 38 L: → Isn't that funny we were in a p-uh:;
 39 E: ^{Oh}
 40 Lottie m:y toenails 'hehh they're just look so sick those
 41 big t:oenails it just u-makes me: sick. You know they're
 42 just (.) u-dea:d. (.) Everything's dead I d- I sat ou:t (.)
 43 today and I said my Go:d am I just (.) DY:ING it's: (.) like
 44 I'm ossified.
 45 L: → NO I- We were in: some pla:ce I don't know if it was Abel's=
 46 E: ^{((sniff))}
 47 L: =or somepla:ce (0.4) I guess it was Abel's. a:nd somebody
 48 was ta:lking about it a:nd I: bet there were 'hhh TE:N
 49 PEOPLE arou:nd the:re, and they a:ll started to say well
 50 they had the sa:me thing? and I kno:w like Doctor Barton
 51 says it's from the damn 'p detergent.

That is, instead of affiliation, the unpackaged materials are subjected to sequential deletion (replaced, as it were, by talk in which the recipient exhibits once again an 'essential disinterest' in the troubles bearer and an 'essential interest' in the trouble itself – here, in its scope and source).

In this consideration of case 4, I have developed some machineries which provide for a reasonable account of an interaction-bit which might otherwise recommend itself as constituting an utterly arbitrary 'interruption' for the purposes of introducing altogether inapposite materials. I take it that it can be seen in terms of talk which is perfectly routine in both its placement (i.e., starting up upon a midutterance hitch) and its content (i.e., an unpackaging which is interactionally/sequentially warranted by what looks very much like but turns out not to be a standard elicitor of just such materials). The pivotal event can thus be accounted for as an 'error'.

Now, the base phenomenon I have been tracking is that of a recipient's part in the delivery of problematic materials. Such materials can be explicitly sought after by a recipient, as in Case 1. Recurrently, however, such materials are unsought, perhaps unsuspected, as in Cases 2 and 3, and perhaps unwanted, as well, as in Case 4. That is, recurrently a crucial part of the work is left to a possibly unwitting, possibly unwilling recipient.

And we are intuitively familiar with the phenomenon of 'stories untold', but may have only vague notions of how such things come about. The foregoing considerations have possibly located and partially explicated one source of that phenomenon: when the materials are problematic, and a recipient does not happen to – or delines to – do such talk as will provide an appropriate environment for their introduction. The potential unpackaging simply does not get – or is denied – an opportunity to occur. I will close this report with a very brief consideration of a pair of fragments, Case 5, in which we might at least catch a glimpse of this possibility.

A POSSIBLE CLOSING DOWN OF AN INCIPIENT UNPACKAGING

These two fragments are extracted from a very long telephone call in which two friends are reviewing the afternoon's bridge game. In the course of their talk there are two vague references to some problematic circumstance, one at approximately twenty-three minutes into the conversation – "because I've had *so* much on my mind" (Fragment 5a, lines 13–19) the other some seventeen minutes thereafter – "it did take my mind off it a little bit" (Fragment 5b, lines 12–19).

Akin to Cases 2 and 4, there are these repeated glosslike references. But in contrast to the radically differing activities of the recipient in Case 2, and what I take to be a (mis)perceived shift by the recipient in Case 4, first denying and then providing an auspicious environment in each case, here we find the recipient producing the same activity in each fragment: a strong topic shift. In 5a, there is "Well I know everybody had a good time today (lines 20–21) and in 5b, "Well I should have known about Ellen's bidding" (lines 20–21).

5a. [SBL:2:2:3:R:33-34:Standard Orthography]

- 1 M: and it's good for us to establish rules. If we're gonna
2 play together.
3 (1.2)
4 M: For us to establish rules for (.) fo-or just us playing.
5 C: Ye:ah.
6 M: You know I don't mean making up our own.
7 C: Mm hm,
8 M: 'hh But establishing rules so we can understand each
9 other better. hhh We weren't understand- I wasn't
10 understanding anybody today.
11 C: Ah: hah=
12 M: =Course I was bidding poorly. 'hh 'hh And uh (0.2) I
13 → couldn't remember and I know it's: just because I've had
14 so much on my mind,
15 C: Ye:ah,
16 M: 't hhhh And uh (.) 'p'h I ha:ve for the last two or
17 three months. You know if I can get things settled
18 Claire then I can start to think abhout wh(h)at (h)I'm
19 d(h)o(h)ing. hhhh 'hh
20 C: → [t h We::ll: I uh: I know everybody had a
21 good time today.
22 M: Oh: I enjoyed my self terrifically.
23 C: And uh'so I think
24 that we'll calm down next time . . .

5b. [SBL:2:2:3:R:58-59:Standard Orthography]

- 1 C: MAYBE we ought to play across the room frhhomp eahhch=
2 M: hhhhhh
3 C: = [uhh heh
4 M: [hhhhhhh
5 .
6 . ((they laugh))
7 M: Oh: it was fun wasn't it.
8 C: hhhh 'hh 'hh Ye:a:h
9 M: mghhm
10 C: [hhhh 'hh I: just enjoy every one of those eh- aa- aa-
11 M: [Yes? I do]=
12 M: =and I was so glad to get out. Because even if I played

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- 13 → goofy I: felt sorry for my partners it did take my mind
 14 °off it a little bit,°
 15 C: hh eeYa:h,
 16 (.)
 17 M: A:nd uh: I know as soon as it (.) gets settled and I could
 18 (0.2) settle down and think well: (0.2) shoot. You know
 19 here we ↑ go:.
 20 C: → Yeh:p hh Well ↑ I should have known about (.) e-ev-Ellen's
 21 bidding the way she bid over there when we were playing
 22 over there just the four q f us yq u know h hhhhhh hh
 23 M: Ye:ah. Ah hah,
 24 C: A:ND uh:m (0.4) and each TI:-eh ↑ boy did I hesitate, but
 25 I thought now 'hhhh (.) she knows uh-uh the: (0.2) Go:ren
 26 ru:le that, (.) when you say two it's a cut o:ff? and she-
 27 M: Yah
 28 C: a:nd uh so: uhm 'hmhhh t'hhhhh I mean Elva. (0.3) I, thou:ght
 29 M: Yes.
 30 C: 'hhh So I kih- I can't un: I ↑ sti:ll can't under sta-
 31 M: ↑ SHE does
 32 funny:: ↓ lots of ti:mes. 'h (.) And ↑ she'll go into a n: ↑ o
 33 ↓ trump at the screwiest time ↓

A possibility is that these strong topic shifts are not arbitrary, but that, with them, the recipient is working to quash an incipient unpackaging. Further, these strong moves may be Nth in a series of moves in which the recipient has given the speaker 'first rights' to close down the matter but the speaker has at best only partially complied, and therefore, the recipient has herself moved to close down the matter by providing for a shift of topic.

The candidate series of moves begins in each fragment with the recipient producing an acknowledgment token in response to what could be just a passing remark about the problem (lines 13–15 in both fragments). Undoubtedly, acknowledgment tokens constitute perfectly appropriate responses. But they can also be problematic. For example, a shift in token-type recurrently is produced by a recipient just prior to shifting topic (see Jefferson & Lee [1981b] and Jefferson [1984]).

And, for example, in Fragment 5a, we find a long series in which the speaker is elaborating, explaining, revising a point about the virtue of "establishing rules," while the recipient is providing acknowledgment-and-no-more. At some point, the speaker voluntarily relinquishes pursuit of her point (lines 1–12). It is possible that the acknowledgment-and-no-more is informative to the speaker; her eventual abandonment of her point is responsive to her recipient's activities.

Similarly, it is possible that her shifts from problem-presentational to problem-resolutional talk (i.e., to references to 'getting things settled' (lines 17–19 in both fragments)) are responsive to the recipient's acknowledgment-and-no-more.

However, those resolutional references do not altogether close down the matter. There is room, for example, for inquiries into her progress toward 'getting settled', a potentially rich topical lode. And it is at this point in each fragment, in her next turn at talk, that the recipient produces those strong topic shifts.

And whether or not the speaker would have proceeded, given an auspicious environment, to unpackage those matters glossed by “so much on my mind,” we find her now taking up the new matters: in 5a with “Oh I enjoyed myself terrifically” (lines 20–22), in 5b with acknowledgment tokens (lines 23, 27, & 29) and thereafter with more substantial topical talk (lines 31–33). That is, whether or not there was more to be said by reference to “so much on my mind,” the recipient exhibits, and the speaker concurs, that whatever had been said was ‘enough said’.

CONCLUSION

With apologies to those who conceive of ‘glosses’ in a rigorous and technical way, I have used this term to locate a rather broadly conceived phenomenon: roughly, a formulation which, on its occurrence, is quite adequate, but which turns out to have been incomplete, ambiguous, even misleading. Given my interest in the sequential/interactional workings of conversation, I have focused not on the features of glosses, but on features of interaction. I have attempted to explicate, not such an issue as ‘just what’ is a gloss, but ‘just how’ such an object can come to be unpackaged, its constituent details exposed and/or its ambiguity clarified and/or its inaccuracy corrected.

One finding of this inquiry is that whether or not a gloss is unpackaged can depend upon what a coparticipant does. And that recurrently appears to be a matter of setting up an auspicious environment for delivery of the as-yet-untold materials.

One payoff of this inquiry is the following. Starting off with clear cases, a rather strong sense of ‘unpackaging a gloss’ as a sequential/interactional phenomenon can be developed. In this study, such cases were those in which a formulation that occurs at one point is thereafter made available as a gloss by virtue of a subsequent unpackaging in response to a coparticipant’s activities. The unpackaging could occur within a short span of talk (as in Case 1) or later in the same conversation (Case 2) or in another conversation with another coparticipant (Case 3). In all three cases, various features of the recipients’ talk could be explicated in terms of providing for a gloss’s unpackaging.

The phenomenon and its features could then serve as a resource by which to examine other, more obscure materials, such as the proposed ‘misapprehension’ of a recipient’s activities by a speaker (Case 4), in which we do not get a clear instance of a recipient’s providing an auspicious environment. Or, one can consider the proposed ‘quashing’ of an incipient unpackaging (Case 5), in which we get neither an auspicious environment nor an unpackaging.

Neither of these two cases, on uninformed inspection, recommends itself as produced by reference to such a phenomenon. Indeed, on uninformed inspection, the focal events in Cases 4 and 5 might recommend themselves as thoroughly disorderly. However, an analysis informed by the phenomenon and its sequen-

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tial/interactional features yields the possibility of definite orderliness, the otherwise apparently disjointed, arbitrary events of Cases 4 and 5 emerging as coherent components of negotiations vis-à-vis the unpackaging of a gloss.

NOTES

* The phenomenon identified and analyzed here has relevance to ethnographic fieldwork and also to the study of discourse in institutional settings (counseling, doctor-patient, lawyer-client, teacher-student, employer-employee, etc.). The common point would be the importance of (in)auspicious environments, and of discovery of the verbal detail that constitutes them or gives evidence of them. (DH)

1. That speakers may specifically produce "defensively designed" stories is proposed and discussed by Sacks in one of his unpublished lectures (Lecture 6, Fall 1971, pp. 2-11).

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APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TRANSCRIPT SYMBOLS

- [A single left bracket indicates the point of overlap onset.
-] A single right bracket indicates the point at which an utterance or utterance-part terminates vis-a-vis another.
- = Equal signs, one at the end of one line and one at the beginning of a next, indicate no 'gap' between the two lines.
- [] A combined left/right bracket indicates simultaneous onset of the bracketed utterances. It is also used as a substitute for Equal Signs to indicate no 'gap' between two utterances. This relationship may be shown as:

E: Yah, =

L: =Tuh hell with im.

or as:

E: Yah,
L: []Tuh hell with im.

(0.0) *Numbers in parentheses* indicate elapsed time in silence by tenths of seconds. For example, (1.3) is one and three-tenths seconds.

(.) *A dot in parentheses* indicates a tiny 'gap' within or between utterances. It is probably no more than one-tenth of a second.

— *Underscoring* indicates some form of stress, via pitch and/or amplitude. A short underscore indicates lighter stress than does a long underscore.

:: *Colons* indicate prolongation of the immediately prior sound. The length of the colon row indicates length of the prolongation.

::+ *Combinations of stress and prolongation markers* indicate intonation contours. If the underscore occurs on a letter before a colon, it 'punches up' the letter; i.e., indicates an 'up → down' contour. If the underscore occurs on a colon after a letter, it 'punches up' the colon; i.e., indicates a 'down → up' contour. In the following utterance there are two pitch-shifts, the first, in "venee:r," an 'up → down' shift, the second, in "thou:gh," a 'down → up'.

J: it's only venee:r thou:gh,

↑ ↓ *Arrows* indicate shifts into higher or lower pitch than would be indicated by just the combined stress/prolongation markers.

.,?? *Punctuation markers* are used to indicate intonation. The combined question mark/comma [?] indicates a stronger rise than a comma but weaker than a question mark. These markers massively occur at appropriate syntactical points, but occasionally there are such displays as:

C: Oh I'd say he's about what.five three enna ha:If?arentchu Robert,

And occasionally, at a point where a punctuation marker would be appropriate, there isn't one. The absence of an 'utterance-final' punctuation marker indicates some sort of 'indeterminate' contour.

WORD *Upper case* indicates especially loud sounds relative to the surrounding talk.

° *The degree sign* is used as a 'softener'. Utterances or utterance parts bracketed by degree signs are relatively quieter than the surrounding talk.

A subscribed degree sign indicates unvoiced production. A subscribed degree sign in parentheses [(b)] indicates an 'incipient' sound. For example:

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E: you couln'ev'n putcher hand ou:ts:I:DE the CAR ih
jiz:(b)bu:rn.

And in the speaker-designation column, an empty parentheses plus degree sign [()°] indicates that an unidentified speaker sounds like a female.

word A *subscribed dot* is frequently used as a '*hardener*'. In this capacity it can indicate, e.g., an especially dentalized 't'. Usually when it occurs under a 'd' it indicates that the 'd' sounds more like a 't'. And, for example, under a possibly ambiguous 'g', it indicates a hard 'g'. Under a possibly ambiguous 'th', it indicates a hard 'th'.

Another sense in which it works as a '*hardener*' is to indicate that a sound which is implied in the spelling of a word but is not usually pronounced, is indeed pronounced. For example, in "different" and "evening", which are usually pronounced as "diff'rent" and "eev'ning."

The *subscribed dot* is also frequently used as a '*shortener*'; for example, in 'the', which is pronounceable as "thee" or "thuh," if "thə uh:" is shown, then it is being pronounced "thuh."

And it can indicate a trilled 'r'.

< A *pre-positioned left carat* indicates a *hurried start*; in effect, an utterance trying to start a bit sooner than it actually did. A common locus of this phenomenon is 'self repair'. For example:

C: Monday nights we play, (0.3) <I mean we go to ceramics,
J: y'see it's different f'me:.(eh f'(.)) th othuh boy:s

A *post-positioned left carat* indicates a *sudden stop*.

— A *dash* indicates a cut-off.

> < *Right/left carats* bracketing an utterance or utterance-part indicate speeding up.

'hhh A *dot-prefixed row of h's* indicates an inbreath. Without the dot the h's indicate an outbreath.

wohhrd A *row of h's within a word* indicates breathiness.

(h) A *parenthesized 'h'* indicates plosiveness. This can be associated with laughter, crying, breathlessness, etc.

/ The *forte symbol* is, for the time being, used to indicate a certain quality of voice which conveys 'suppressed laughter'. I have not yet settled on a symbol for this phenomenon.

* An *asterisk* indicates a 'creaky voice'.

wghord A '*gh*' stuck into a word indicates gutturalness.

hr An '*h*' preceding an '*r*' softens the 'r'. This device is used frequently in my transcripts of British talk. Thus, e.g., 'part' is shown as "pahrt," 'court' as "cohrt," etc.

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- () *Empty parentheses* indicate the transcriber's inability to hear what was said. The length of the parenthesized space indicates the length of the untranscribed talk. In the speaker-designation column, the empty parentheses indicate inability to identify a speaker.
- (word) *Parenthesized words* are especially dubious hearings or speaker identifications.
- (Ø) A *null sign* indicates that there may or may not be talk occurring in the designated space.
- (()) *Doubled parentheses* contain transcribers' descriptions rather than, or in addition to, transcriptions.