

### 3 Myths about American Culture that You Learned from Hollywood

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**Lindsay:** So hey Denise. How are you doing today?

**Denise:** Good. How are you Lindsay?

**Lindsay:** I'm good. I'm so excited that you're here. Thank you for coming to talk with me today.

**Denise:** Yeah, no problem.

**Lindsay:** Awesome. So the topic today is what do you think are some of the big **stereotypes** that sort of come out of Hollywood, some of the **myths** about American culture that people learn through the movies?

**Denise:** Yeah. Um... One of the biggest things that I hear from people is that we are all really wealthy, that you can walk down the street and just find money lying in the street sometimes and um... Yeah that's not really true, especially after the financial crisis since 2008.

**Lindsay:** Right. Yeah, that really changed everything didn't it?

#### Key Vocabulary Words

1. Stereotype

2. Myth

3. "Rags to riches"

4. Idealized

5. Drive-through

6. People of color

7. Burger joint

8. To hang out

9. Point of view

10. Stumble on

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**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** I mean there was a bit of a housing boom in 2005 and 2006.

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** But then... Yeah. For sure.

**Denise:** Yeah. Things have changed a lot and I think, um, you know, I grew up in a middle class family. And you know my dad was really poor before that and it just tends to take generations...

**Lindsay:** Right.

**Denise:** ...for things to change because it's not something you can do within a year or two years.

**Lindsay:** Right. So we've seen a lot of movies. Like I remember there was one movie with Will Smith, um, do you remember what that was called that came out a few years ago. I don't remember the title. That's okay. So it talks about the **rags to riches** sort of myth.

**Denise:** Oh, it was um something about happiness.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. The Pursuit of Happyness.

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** Yes, yes, yes. I mean it's a, it's a beautiful story.

**Denise:** That's actually a true story.

**Lindsay:** It's a true story. So yeah. There are some true stories about this, but it seems like it is kind of a myth...

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** ...because it does take some time. Right?

**Denise:** I would say 95%, 99% of the people don't...

**Lindsay:** Right.

**Denise:** ...work that way or have...

**Lindsay:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Denise:** ...the opportunities to...

**Lindsay:** Yeah. And it might be like a very... very much determined based on, you know, maybe skin color sometimes and gender, like there are all sorts of things, factors that come into that that complicate things.

**Denise:** Oh yeah. Statistics have... show a lot of different disparities between, um, you know, **people of color**, and women versus white men in the United States.

**Lindsay:** Right. Right. Absolutely. So it's a big topic. So movies just kind of show that, like, happens to everyone and it's so easy. It's not necessarily true.

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**Denise:** Yeah, I think it shows kind of an **idealized** version of what US society is like...

**Lindsay:** Right.

**Denise:** ...rather than the reality of everyday living.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. Completely. Awesome. And how about this concept of 'all Americans eat hamburgers for dinner.'

**Denise:** Um, I think I eat hamburgers once or twice a year. Um, and I rarely eat... eat at a fast food restaurant because it's expensive and it's not very healthy.

**Lindsay:** Right. Right.

**Denise:** I also have, um you know, gluten intolerant...

intolerance.

**Lindsay:** Oh you do? Okay.

**Denise:** You know, so I can't eat wheat and so like, I have to be really careful about what I eat, but I prefer and even before I found out about that, I prefer not to go to like McDonald's or Burger King. I'd rather go home and have a cooked meal.

**Lindsay:** Right. Right. So you're not running through the **drive-through** every night.

**Denise:** No, not at all.

**Lindsay:** No, when I was a kid, we used to go to McDonald's like every Wednesday night. I remember my dad would take us to McDonald's because it was the 80's and we didn't know any better. Really we didn't. Um, and we did that, but now I don't remember the last time I went to McDonald's. You know.

**Denise:** When I was growing up, the only time we had McDonald's or Burger King was when we would go on vacation.

**Lindsay:** Okay.

**Denise:** My family would go camping and fishing.

**Lindsay:** Cool.

**Denise:** And like while we were driving to the lake, we would stop at a McDonald's or a Burger King...

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Denise:** And that was when we had it. And that was about it except for, you know, every once in a while while shopping with my mom or something like that.

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**Lindsay:** Yeah, so kids love it. They get their happy meal and of course like in the food you find all sorts of addictive substances you know, the salt and the sugar and... Yeah for sure.

**Denise:** It's not exactly healthy anymore. It's not what it was back in the 70's or 60's.

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Denise:** So...

**Lindsay:** So yeah, I mean, so from our **point of view** of not everyone consumes fast food every night.

**Denise:** Yeah. I'm trying to think of a movie that had that. Like the....

**Lindsay:** Ah!

**Denise:** ... a major thing.

**Lindsay:** There was the documentary, um, "Supersize me."

**Denise:** Oh yeah.

**Lindsay:** Did you see that?

**Denise:** But like... well I'm trying... I'm trying to think of a movie that like idealized it.

**Lindsay:** Oh, okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um... It just seems like it's everywhere right. I mean you see... I don't know you see...

**Denise:** It's probably just built into the movie.

**Lindsay:** Or even like "Saved by the Bell." I used to watch the show "Saved by the Bell." You just see like them **hanging out** at the **burger joint**. Sort of...

**Denise:** Yeah. Or like "Baywatch"

**Lindsay:** Yeah. Whatever those were for sure. Okay. Nice.

**Denise:** Funny.

**Lindsey:** Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And one other thing. How about um... Well what do you think?

What's an interesting...? What's another, one last sort of interesting stereotype that comes out of the movies?

**Denise:** Um, I don't know, maybe the idea that a lot of people own guns in the US.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. This is interesting.

**Denise:** Either... I suppose I associate people in Texas that way because...

**Lindsay:** Yeah, unfortunately, we have our own sort of ideas. Yeah, yeah.

**Denise:** But you know it's not... it's, it's, it's true I think in some parts of the country, but other parts of the country it's very different. Like I grew

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up in Omaha, Nebraska and you know, the State of Nebraska, a lot of people hunt and fish. So they would have hunting rifles to go and hunt animals rather than like

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Denise:** ...automatic weapon of some sort.

**Lindsay:** Right. Right.

**Denise:** Or a pistol or whatever.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. It's crazy. I think this... You're right. I think this is really like a regional thing. You know it's... or a rural versus urban thing.

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsey:** I mean I grew up in a neighborhood where... like I grew up in New Hampshire, um so it's big

hunting state of course. Right? But the people that I knew, didn't really go hunting so like going over to friends' houses, it wasn't the kind of thing where we would **stumble on** like a gun, which you hear about that happening in the news a lot. Kids like stumbling on guns right. Um, so I, I never saw that growing up.

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsey:** Um, but I know it is in some parts of the country. It does exist. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Denise:** Well and... you know, there's also some issues, like urban issues, um, and even, even rural areas, to be honest. You know it's... people



taking guns or being in gangs and things like that, but that's not, you know, an everyday experience...

**Lindsay:** Yeah.

**Denise:** For most people.

**Lindsay:** Right, right, right. And then the city of New York has become so much safer than it used to (be), you know, back in the 80's and the 70's it was like everyone had a gun right?

**Denise:** Right.

**Lindsay:** Um, so that's really changed a lot.

**Denise:** Yeah and the laws are always changing so...

**Lindsay:** Uh-huh. For sure.

**Denise:** I think, I think they're getting better about that. At least in my opinion.

**Lindsay:** Yeah. I think so. Hopefully. Yeah we're moving in that direction.

**Denise:** Yeah.

**Lindsay:** I hope. Yeah. So interesting. So a lot of sort of myths and stereotypes come out of these movies, but it's always good to kind of come with an open mind and see for yourself what you observe.

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**Denise:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Lindsay:** Definitely. Okay.

**Denise:** Because what is shown in film isn't necessarily the truth for every single person. The US is huge...

**Lindsay:** A huge country.

**Denise:** Just a lot of variety. People speak differently. Do things differently, so...

**Lindsay:** Right. Yeah. Awesome. Thank you.