

Shmanners 178: Watches

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Travis: Pardon me, do you have the time?

Teresa: For you? Of course.

Travis: It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: ... for ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: Doing okay. Recovering from our... the Florida business.

Travis: Nice to be back in the saddle, yes.

Teresa: We do apologize. Um, we were unable to record last week because of the hurricane. [laughs]

Travis: Yes. Our plan had been that we were going to do the live show in Orlando last Sunday evening, and then we would use our Shmanners live show for that to put out last week. And then uh, the venue decided to

reschedule the live show, and we weren't able to record it. We didn't have any recording equipment with us at that point, so we just weren't able to do it.

But here we are!

Teresa: Here we are! Welcome back.

Travis: We're back now. We've made time...

Teresa: Ahh!

Travis: To record. Listen, that intro, we went super simple. But there are so many songs and references to time we could've made. Thought about pulling out some Hootie and the Blowfish. Uh, is it Chicago that does Does Anyone Really Know What Time It Is?

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: Yes. 25 or 6 to 4 I think is also them, which I think is another song about time. There's lots of them. Time. Everybody's so focused on it. That Einstein guy was pretty, uh, obsessed about it.

Teresa: I mean, he understood its relativity.

Travis: Listen. It's all relative, y'know what I mean? Tiiime. Um, just side note – listen, this is a weird side note. But if anybody is interested in weird things about time and time travel and stuff, highly recommend a weird book by Alan Lightman called Einstein's Dreams.

Teresa: Oh yeah, that's one of your bathroom books.

Travis: Yeah. It's just like a series of different scenarios in which it's basically like, what if time moved differently in this world, or time behaved differently? And it's really, really cool. It's a thinker, man. It'll give ya lots to think about. Real fun. I love time travel. And if you think about it, Teresa... we're traveling in time right now. Forward.

Teresa: Are we?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: We're always traveling forward, it seems.

Travis: Yes. Right? We're always moving forward at one minute to one minute speed. But hey, that's still travel, am I right? So, are we talking about time travel? We should do a whole episode about the etiquette of time travel.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Maybe that'll be a bonus episode.

Teresa: I'll leave that to you.

Travis: Okay. No, we're talking about watches.

Teresa: Yes. We have discussed several other, um, let's say accessories.

Travis: Yes, that's true. We've done handkerchiefs, we've done wedding rings, uhh...

Teresa: Hats. Gloves.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: See, the thing is, though... none of those – I suppose maybe hats and gloves to begin with—

Travis: There is a practical nature, yes.

Teresa: Have been so utilitarian as the watch. But really only for certain people at certain times. And I'll go through that for you.

Travis: Yes. But I mean, if you think about it, the watch is one of, uh, I would say... is for—without being able to think of another example, the only example I can think of of a thing that has been an accessory for as long as it's existed. Right? I don't know that there was a time where it's like, no, people...

Like, for example, when I think about other accessories that we might talk about in the future, right? The locket. Do people still routinely use lockets? The cameo. Right? Like these kinds of things that for—the walking stick. These kinds of things that, for a while, no one was—right? Like, that's just what you did.

But a watch seems like a thing that, even now, we've seen it go through so many different iterations, right?

Teresa: Well, we can't talk about the watch without talking about clocks in general.

Travis: Okay, so let's do it.

Teresa: And the idea of measuring time. Um, so, not only have watches, but clocks I said in general have always been kind of a symbol of wealth and influence. And even about the philosophy of keeping time.

Travis: Right. And right now, we're probably just talking about mechanical clocks and stuff, but man, you can go back to like, water clocks, and sun dials, and candles used to tell time.

Teresa: Exactly. According to archaeologists, the first people to even think about measuring time were probably the Babylonians and the Egyptians, as early as five thousand years ago.

Travis: And that's just what we've recorded, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: That's just examples we have. There was probably definitely like a like, cave man, right? Who was like, "The sun is moving. It's dark now." Right? So like, time has passed. Maybe he didn't say it that way, but like... He probably wasn't like, "Ooh, I gotta get inside, my shows are starting!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But was probably like, "Hm, something has changed."

Teresa: So, like you said, these early timekeeping devices were probably set on natural cycles like the solar day, the lunar month, and the solar year. And the reason, not only to catch your shows... [laughs] But also...

Travis: Well, especially now, you can get it on streaming. You don't— people just don't really do event television anymore.

Teresa: Probably cycles of planting and harvesting.

Travis: Yes, that makes complete sense. Because you didn't work in the dark, because like, you need to know how much time was left, and you need to know like, "Oh, it's gonna get cold, so we gotta get done in time for this. Oh, the food will be ready then, so we can harvest it then." That makes complete sense.

Teresa: Exactly. Um, but, measuring time, especially solar-ly, has varied across the planet. Because as you live at different latitudes...

Travis: Mm-hmm. You can't just go by that, right?

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Up north, it's bright all the time, like nine months out of the year. It's just sun sun sun.

Teresa: So people near the equator measured probably more by the lunar cycle, because that's what they could observe changing more. And the

calendar that we use today is probably a mish-mash of Babylonian, Egyptian, Jewish, and Roman calendars.

Travis: Yes, that totally tracks. Just look at the names of our months.

Teresa: Yes, exactly. Um, but...

Travis: And the names of our days. It's Thor's Day. No, I guess that's Norse, isn't it? Eh, it's fine. It's a mish-mash of everything.

Teresa: [laughing] It's a mish-mash. Um, but the idea of dividing a day into time was probably accomplished by the Egyptians and what they called temporal hours.

Travis: Wow. What a cool phrase.

Teresa: [laughs] They divided the intervals of darkness and daylight into a dozen equal parts. This we understand.

Travis: That sounds—yes.

Teresa: Summer hours were longer, winter hours were shorter, and the only days where they were equal were during the spring and autumn equinoxes. This is something that still survives, obviously. Um, and like a lot of the really great stuff that the Egyptians did, the Greeks and the Romans were like, "Sweet. We're gonna take that."

Travis: We're gonna steal it, and we'll put our own names on it and pretend like we came up with it.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, and we're gonna spread it as our own idea throughout our conquest in Europe. Great.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, like you mentioned though, once the Roman Empire expanded far enough north, people who lived in cloudy and even like the frozen parts

of Europe were like, "How do we tell what time it is if we can never see the sun? It's hidden behind the clouds and stuff."

Um, so, this is when—I wouldn't say when this problem was solved. I would say, uh, much later.

Travis: This is when people began working on solving this problem.

Teresa: [laughs] This is—I mean, the candle clocks and the water clocks and all this stuff was, uh, y'know, was worked on between these two times of the Roman Empire expansion and 1283.

Travis: By the way, though... if you ever want to like, be, like, blown away, I think the ingenuity that people had to track time before mechanical clocks existed is brilliant. Y'know, basically like, measuring down a candle and saying, y'know, this chunk of candle is this long, and this chunk is this long. Or like, we poke a small hole in this jar, and by the time it drains, this much time has passed.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It's absolutely brilliant.

Teresa: I mean, same thing with um... what are the ones with the sand?

Travis: Hour glass? Yes.

Teresa: Hour glass.

Travis: Yep.

Teresa: You just have to remember to turn it over.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Oh man.

Travis: Which it's hard to forget that if you're like, playing a really tense board game. Y'know what I mean? Which now, maybe in this day and age, there's only two times I've seen an hour glass in my life, regularly in my life. And one is uh, playing board games. And two, for some reason, somebody gave us one for our wedding. I can't remember why exactly. It was beautiful, though.

Teresa: It was beautiful, and there was an accompanying kind of beautiful note about the time that we'll spend together. I don't know.

Travis: Sands through the hour glass and the days of our lives...

Teresa: [laughs] But in 1283, the first weight-driven mechanical clock was installed at a monastery nunnery called Dunstable Priory in Bedfordshire, England.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: After that, like a lot of things that people that the church kept for themselves, the church at that time kept clocks for themselves. [laughs]

Travis: Yep. Mm-hmm. Yes.

Teresa: So they, uh, would build... um, build churches with clocks, they were—

Travis: And that's why you would have the bells, right? 'Cause it's like, "We'll tell you what time it is. Just listen for the bells. They'll tell you the hour and stuff."

Teresa: Exactly. And not only was this a way of placating the masses, but it also was a way of um, dividing up the hours of prayer. Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So you would... you knew at three bells, you had to get down and pray, I guess.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Um, and they also were the only people around who had money.

Travis: Well, yeah.

Teresa: So they probably were the only people who could employ craftsmen and mechanics and people to build and maintain the clocks.

Travis: Upkeep. Well, 'cause that's the thing – at that point, these clocks we talk about, like...

Teresa: Weight-driven mechanical.

Travis: Yeah, you needed people to wind them and reset them and keep them going. 'Cause it wasn't like, yeah, you just turn it on and it stays accurate. Like, you had to like, keep basically resetting it and fixing it and... yeah. They're very complicated pieces.

Teresa: Right. Um, and even then, like, as far as hours go, a lot of people in this time period didn't even really need to know the hour.

Travis: Right. You went to work when you woke up, and you worked, and then you finished work, and you went home.

Teresa: And then the sun went down. Yeah. So, um, even some of these early clocks in churches only tell like, sun up, sun down, and like...

Travis: Do you ever think about that? Like, think of all the times you've gotten hungry for lunch at like ten AM, and you're like, "Eh, I gotta—I just had breakfast like two hours ago." But imagine you're like a cobbler in like the 1600s, like, "I guess it's lunch time?"

Teresa: [laughs] I don't know. Um, not only that, but the way that people designed clocks from, y'know, region to region differed, because everybody seemed to count those 12 hours differently. Like, Italian hours started at sunset. Babylonian hours started at sunrise. Germany started at midnight. And finally, the French, who were pretty much like the head of the church at the time, were like, "We're all gonna start at midnight." So they finally made that—

Travis: I don't know that it's because I've always lived that way. But it feels like that makes the most sense, right? I don't know.

Teresa: I mean... our 24 hour clock...

Travis: Yeah?

Teresa: We start at midnight.

Travis: But then again, would it make more sense if it was like, hour zero, right, is sun—but then again, sun up changes.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yeaah. Maybe that's why we don't do it. 'Cause it varies. I don't know.

Teresa: I don't know. Okay. So... we say 'I don't know.' [laughing]

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: But like, sometimes, people just decide. They just say, "This is what we do."

Travis: Yep. The thing about man, every so often, I think about the fact that alphabetical order is completely made up, and it could've been in any order. And like, so much of our lives now is like, devoted to alphabetical order, a thing that's completely made up. Those letters could've gone anywhere!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It does help that at least in English, they rhyme in the song. That helps.

Teresa: [laughs] In *that* song.

Travis: What?

Teresa: I mean, maybe there's other songs where they don't rhyme.

Travis: Oh no. Please, please don't confuse me anymore. I'm trying to teach Bebe to read, and it's hard enough. [laughing]

Teresa: So let's move up to the 15th century, okay? And this is finally when clocks started to move into like, domestic use.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And your wealth was measured by if you could own a small house clock, because of the ability to move it. Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And then, 16th century, clocks got pendulums. And this is important. Because these clocks weren't just fashion – they were made into furniture. So they became super trendy, they became super—

Travis: This is like a grandfather clock, right?

Teresa: Exactly. Well, I mean, that's one of the kind of clocks that were made not at the time. But these cases became ornate and beautiful, and like—

Travis: Oh yeah. Some of my favorite on the Antiques Roadshow.

Teresa: That's right!

Travis: Ooh, and they did the faces where they would have sometimes—not animation, but like, art that, as the hours moved, it would turn from day to night on the clock face and that kind of thing.

Teresa: Right, yeah. And so, this is when like, the clock as trend really exploded. And by the 1800s, there were so many like, skilled craftsmen, and watch makers, and factory producible watches that they became available enough for the growing middle class.

Travis: Do you know what I miss? When I was a kid, I was always really fascinated by the idea of like, grandfather clocks and like, big, y'know, pendulum clocks. I think the reason is, like, they created ambient noise is really what it comes down to. The tick-tock that we think of in the clocks created ambient noise.

But now as I'm saying it out loud, I'm betting that there are people who grew up with them, like, it was haunting and very upsetting.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] I did not care for it. I found that it was just a reminder of the passage of time, and us marching ever onward. Um, but yeah, I was—I always liked the idea of it as a part of like, the noise of a house, y'know?

Teresa: Sure. Yeah, we had one in my house growing up.

Travis: We didn't.

Teresa: I think... does it still work? I don't know. But I can picture where it was on the wall in the living room.

Travis: But that's not really a grandfather clock. That's just a clock with a pendulum.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: I wanted something I could potentially hide in.

Teresa: Ohh, I see!

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: I see. Well, no, we didn't have one of those.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so, one of the reasons that particularly the middle class needed watches, because around this time of the industrialization—

Travis: Can I guess? Can I guess?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: There were factories, and you had to get to work on time.

Teresa: Yes. And...

Travis: Buses?

Teresa: Railroads.

Travis: Okay. I was close.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: Public transportation is what I should've said.

Teresa: Sure. Sure, sure, sure. But people were working in these places, they were visiting these places, they were using that, so they needed to

keep time effectively, unlike, y'know, like centuries earlier where it was like, four bells is enough, I guess.

Travis: Right. Or if you worked in a farm, you went to work until you stopped working.

Teresa: Right. Um, and it's really interesting to look at pawn records from this time, because um, from the 19th century in the US, like, 40 to 50% of everything pawned were pocket watches.

Travis: Huh. Okay. Yeah, y'know what? That makes sense in a lot of ways. This probably was a slightly big ticket item, right? Of like, wouldn't break your bank to buy it, but it wasn't something you just flippantly bought, right? So you probably invested some money in it. But then, if you hit hard times, it was probably also one of the more expendable things that you could pawn for a brief amount of—like, you wouldn't want to pawn, y'know, fill in the blank, because you needed that every day. But you could maybe get by just asking people on the street what time it was for a couple days.

Teresa: [laughs] And um, like I said, I specified pocket watches because up until this point, there was really only pocket watches that were used as time keeping pieces. Wrist watches definitely existed. They were often referred to as wristlets, because they were relegated to women's fashion, basically.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: A lot of them didn't even like...

Travis: Work?

Teresa: Work. [laughs]

Travis: Oh! Okay.

Teresa: Exactly. Um, so if you were a working woman, you would still wear a pocket watch. You would wear it kind of on your waist out and about, or sometimes in a pin, or sometimes, you would like, just have it kind of

chained from pocket to pocket. But men were considered like, you're supposed to make a big to do out of getting your pocket watch out of your pocket.

Travis: Oh, yes. We've seen movies. Yes.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. So the chain would go from front pocket to the chain hanging out of their, uh, either vest pocket, or their suit pocket. And you would often hold a little—there'd be like a little tassel, and a watch winding key, and y'know.

Travis: Oh wow. It was a to do.

Teresa: You make a big show. You make a big show out of it. Um, okay. I want to expand just a little bit on the whole women wearing inoperable watches for just a second.

Travis: Okay, please. Please.

Teresa: I know we need to get to some questions, but this is quick. Um, so, the first modern, in the sense of the word, watch was designed for the queen of Naples in 1810. And it was a thin, oval repeater watch, mounted on a wristlet of hair and gold thread.

Travis: Hair?

Teresa: Yeaah.

Travis: Like human hair?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So like, not like... utilitarian at all.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Uh, very delicate, very showy, basically jewelry.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, so like, as watches became more available in the end of the 19th century, working women started wearing men's watches. [laughs]

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Because... because they worked. These little wristlet things were beautiful, but they—

Travis: It was like a tiny handbag, right? It's really cute, but you can't keep anything in it.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. Um, and so, by 1912, the wrist watch became quote "the fashion of the hour."

Travis: Oh. I get it.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Get it? 'Cause it's of the hour. And it's... a wat—okay.

Teresa: Eh. Um, and like a lot of good things that women do, men said, "That's a great idea. Gonna take it." [laughs]

Travis: Mmm.

Teresa: So in July of 1916, the New York Times released an article about this strange European fashion trend, where people were starting to attach small clocks to bracelets. I'm giving you...

Travis: No, yeah.

Teresa: Just the rolliest eyes.

Travis: I'm worried you're gonna hurt yourself.

Teresa: And... [laughs] The quote from the article I have, which is amazing, says, "Until recently, the bracelet watch was looked upon by Americans as more or less of a joke. Vaudeville artists and moving picture actors have utilized it as a fun maker, as a silly... butt... fad." Can we say... can we say the bad name for butt on this?

Travis: It's the A-S-S word.

Teresa: Yeah, that one. Um, and... I couldn't believe it. I was like, so like, this thing that's a necessity was just considered like, flippant women's wear. Anyway...

Travis: That's silly.

Teresa: I'm getting worked up.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Here is when it changes for realsies.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: During war.

Travis: Okay. That makes complete sense!

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Because then you wouldn't want a chain hanging down, right? You need to like—we're talking about ease of use. You're wearing your watch,

right, and that's gonna get caught on stuff. You know what time it is, so you can make plans, military-wise and otherwise. It's more utilitarian.

Teresa: Right. Um, during a war in South Africa, between 1899 and 1902, I believe, called the Bayer War?

Travis: I don't know it.

Teresa: Um—

Travis: I—but to be fair, I don't know anything about history at all.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: I don't know why you looked at me, the person on this show who is just like, here. You're supposed to know things.

Teresa: [laughs] Thanks, honey. Thanks. Um, so, it was a desert war. Um, and the time keeping was a necessity at the time, and so much so that these watches were being... were being fitted with like, unbreakable glass, and radium, and things like that to make them more and more usable in the field. But still, there was this hold out of um, wrist watches are for women.

So what people were actually doing is fashioning their own wrist watches, where they'd take the pocket watch and kind of like, tie it around their wrist.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That will change after World War I, because like... manufacturers were like, "We can make this better and sell it to you."

Travis: Yeah, and sell it. Yeah.

Teresa: "I know you already have a pocket watch, but do you have a wrist watch that we've just made? It's brand new. Ooooh!" So... by the end of World War I, one of taglines were, "Make a man more soldier-like, more marital, more masculine."

Travis: Ewwwehhh.

Teresa: Yeah, I know, I know. I mean, it was about marketing these watches toward war heroes, and aviators, and y'know...

Travis: And dudes who didn't go to war to be like, "Don't you want to feel like you did?"

Teresa: Certainly. Um, so then like, it still had the connotation of the wristlets, but we're moving out of that. We've got these watches. And finally, um, it came up to places like Cartier, Tiffany, Rolex, to find—

Travis: Fossil.

Teresa: [laughs] Not Fossil. To kind of roll out the... I mean, roll out the barrel, the gamut, of all these beautiful and yet, y'know, workable—

Travis: Functional, yeah.

Teresa: Usable watches. And of course, the marketing goes women's and men's and unisex and all this kind of stuff. But I mean, basically wear any watch you like. I don't care.

Travis: Wear one that's comfortable and fits.

Teresa: That's right. Um, now, here's the thing...

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Watches went out of fashion for a while.

Travis: [gasps] Really?

Teresa: Because of...

Travis: Phones?

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, phones became kind of the new pocket watch in a way. I mean, you—

Travis: Oh my goodness, you're right.

Teresa: Yeah. You could constantly check the time on your phone, even if it wasn't a smart phone to begin with, right? Still had usually a clock on it. Y'know, you pull it out of your pocket in the same way, and it's something that's now attached to our hands in a strange, dystopian fashion. [laughs]

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Um, but they replaced it, and then came the smart watch. Right? So we moved rather quickly back away from wrist watches to a pocket watch, quote unquote, back to wrist watches. Because we put the smart phone in a tiny face that you can wear on your wrist, instead of keep in your pocket.

Travis: I would also probably think, as I've so many times said, I am not a sociologists or a, I guess, behavior—I don't know. Anthropologist? Sure.

Teresa: You're none of those things.

Travis: I'm nothing. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I would bet that there was a time where we basically kind of burned out on checking your phone, right? Because checking your phone for the time often leads to like, other distractions, and oh, I got a notification, or like, it looks like you're looking at your phone.

And as we will discuss, one of the things about wrist watch over basically any other time piece is, you can do it covertly. You can do it discreetly. Check the time without like, having to pull out a pocket watch and make a big show of like, how long have I been here? How long is it—or taking your phone out like when you're on a date and being like, “Uh, am I boring you?” That kind of thing.

Teresa: Also, wrist watches have kind of declined because we are surrounded by time keeping.

Travis: Yes, this is true.

Teresa: Like they're on uh... it's on our cable box. It's on our computer screens. It's on some—

Travis: Alexas can tell you.

Teresa: Yeah. That kind of stuff. We have clocks on our ovens, we have clocks on the wall in the kitchen, like... they're just everywhere. And so, it doesn't—really just look around, and you'll probably find a time keeping device.

Travis: Okay, so we're gonna answer your questions. But first, how about a thank you note for our sponsors?

Teresa: Let's do it.

[theme music plays]

Teresa: Shmanners is sponsored in part this week by Native Deodorant. Native touts fewer, simpler ingredients that are thoughtfully sourced from around the world, and put together in the USA. Um, so, they come in lots of different scents. One of my favorite at the moment is actually cucumber and mint.

Travis: [gasps] What? What?!

Teresa: And I know, it—

Travis: But you don't like cucumbers! What?!

Teresa: I know. I know. But I do like the subtlety of the scent.

Travis: Oh boy. Oh, this is... folks...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: My world... oh, it's been set on its ear. I don't even know what to think!

Teresa: I was using the lavender and vanilla, but in my pregnancy, it became a little overwhelming.

Travis: This is so funny, because now when people are like, "When you were pregnant with the second baby, did you have any cravings?" And I can say, "Pfft! She craved for cucumber deodorant!" And then I'll leave the room.

Teresa: [laughing] I'm not eating it! I'm just—it's a smell.

Travis: Well I know—yeah, you're right, it does make it sound like you were eating it. [laughs]

Teresa: It does make it sound like it. Uh, but it's very delicate, which I like. And, if you like it, you can save two dollars a stick and have Native conveniently delivered to your door, either every one, two, three, or even four months.

Now, I do want to say that it is important that we make the distinction that Native is not an antiperspirant.

Travis: It is a deodorant.

Teresa: It is a deodorant. And that works well for me, because my lifestyle does not require that I sweat very often, and I'm not, in general, like, even before that, very like, a sweaty person.

Travis: No. I will say, though, 'cause we just got back from a week rolling around Disney World in the heat... it did great.

Teresa: Did great. We felt fresh, most of the time. I mean, after Disney, you have to reapply... [laughs]

Travis: After a while, we're all mentally, physically, spiritually... it's a lot.

Teresa: Yes. But, we brought the Native deodorant, we used the Native deodorant, it worked for us. And if it works for you, you can see if it works for you, and you can get 20% off your first purchase by visiting NativeDeodorant.com and using the promo code 'Shmanners' during check out.

Travis: One more time. That's 20% off your first purchase. Go to NativeDeodorant.com and use the promo code 'Shmanners' at check out.

[music plays]

Speaker 1: I can't hear myself, but I'm assuming...

Speaker 2: These are real podcast listeners, not actors.

Speaker 3: Hey, thanks for coming. Here's a list of descriptors. What would you choose to describe the perfect podcast?

Speaker 1: I mean, vulgarity.

Speaker 4: Dumb. Definitely dumb.

Speaker 5: And like... uh, right here. This one. Meritless.

Speaker 3: What if I told you there was a podcast that did have all of that?

Speaker 2: No.

Speaker 3: Jordan, Jesse, Go! And it's free.

Speaker 4: Jordan, Jesse, Go?

Speaker 1: Jordan, Jesse, Go?

[applause]

Speaker 5: Jordan, Jesse, Go!

Speaker 2: Jordan, Jesse, Go! A real podcast.

[wolf howl]

April: Hello there, ghouls and gals. It is I, April Wolfe. I'm here to take you through the twisty, scary, heart pounding world of genre cinema on the exhilarating program known as... Switchblade Sisters!

The concept is simple – I invite a female filmmaker on each week, and we discuss their favorite genre film. Listen in closely to hear past guests like the Babadook director, Jennifer Kent; Winter's Bone director, Debra Granik; and so many others, every Thursday, on MaximumFun.org! Tune in if you dare!
[spooky laughter]

[thunder clap]

April: It's actually a very thought-provoking show that deeply explores the craft and philosophy behind the filmmaking process, while also examining film through the lens of the female gaze. So like... you should listen. Switchblade Sisters!

Travis: Okay. Our first question... I think I start every question section by saying 'okay,' but it's alright. Listen, we all have our catch phrases. And one

of mine I guess is 'okay.' Uh, this comes from Dimaw. "How to not look like a jerk taking out a pocket watch to check the time?"

Now, listen. I'll say this, 'cause Teresa is too nice. Unless it is a fancy dress occasion... and here I'm speaking in terms of like, dressed up, not like in the uh, British sense of like a costume party. But unless you're like, all dressed up fancy, the reason you wear a pocket watch is to show off a little bit, right? Like, it's okay. But you can't say it's more practical or easier. It's not.

Teresa: I think that there are ways, though, to make it discreet. And so, first of all, it's about, um... it's about timing.

Travis: Ahh!

Teresa: Ahh! And repeatability. If you take the watch out of your pocket, like, every two minutes to check the time, that is drawing attention to yourself, and you look like a jerk.

Travis: That makes it sound like you're—it makes it look like you're planning a train heist.

Teresa: Exactly. [laughs] Um, so y'know, be, uh... what do I want to say here?

Travis: Okay, here's what I would say. I am a person who has made lots of bold choices about my style and fashion and overall appearance, right? What you are trying to find is the difference between a choice and an affectation, right?

Teresa: Sure, yeah.

Travis: So I think that if you're doing it, and you're not making a show out of it, right? And by which, the word I would stress there is 'making.' You're not making a show out of it, you're just doing it. Right? People might think you're a jerk or whatever, but people can think whatever they want to. If you are making the choice that this is how you want to tell time, then make sure you're doing it for you, and it's because it's a thing you want to do, and let other people think whatever they want.

Teresa: About physical recommendations, I would suggest that if you're going to uh, have a pocket watch, keep it in your pants pocket that is easiest to locate, and with your dominant hand, so that it's quick, and it's

efficient, and it is discreet, like I said. Um, instead of, y'know how I talked about the chains and the across the chest, and the flourish that's needed, and—

Travis: That works if you're going for the fancy look. Listen, don't get me wrong.

Teresa: If you're going for the fancy look...

Travis: I've done that look. That was, uh, like, engraved pocket watches was my uh, y'know, bridal party gift to my groomsmen. Yes, it's fine. Listen. There are—

Teresa: It can be done.

Travis: There are occasions where that flourish is what you want. Listen, I'm a man who just bought myself a walking stick.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Don't worry about it. It's not important. But sometimes, the flourish can be done.

Teresa: Also, um, if you have a pocket watch that has a cover on it, um, make sure that you can do it with one hand, where you can push the little button that releases the cover to see, so that you're not making, like you said, making a show of it. And probably people won't notice.

Travis: No. Nobody notices what anyone else does. It's fine.

Teresa: [laughs] We're all thinking about ourselves.

Travis: This is from—oh, and I'm sorry if I mispronounce this. Caracucci Boy? Sure. "Is there a way to check the time without seeming bored?"

Teresa: Again, I think it's about how many times you do the action, right? Because if you're checking with frequency, you will seem bored.

Travis: Right. That is a problem I have that I try really hard not to, but like, I like... there is something about my brain that needs to know what time it is all the time, even if only two minutes has passed. And so, it's a thing that I actively work on, like, not checking my phone over and over again,

not looking at my watch over and over again. 'Cause it's not about, I don't want to be here, or I don't want to be with this person. It is really just like, "What time is it now? But what about now?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 'Cause I'll always be eight years old.

Teresa: Also, you may need to keep track of the time for an appointment that you need to keep, and I would suggest setting a discreet alarm for that. Maybe just a vibrate only or something. If it's a smart watch, or um, y'know, you can set alarms that are like a gentle beep on some of these sport watches and things like that. So that then, you won't have to worry about what time it is and check it, y'know, you won't have to check it often.

Travis: I will also say, though, that I think this is something... I think it's perfectly understandable and relatable to be worried about, does checking the time make me seem like I'm bored? But I think that, like I said, it's relatable, right? I think when you look at your watch, as long as Teresa said, you're not doing it over and over and over and over again, right? I think most people would be like, "He was looking at the time. They were looking at the time. She was checking the time." I don't think anybody would be like, "Oh. I think they looked for the first time because—"

I think a lot of the times, this is one of those things where in trying to hide it or cover it up, that makes it seem like we're sneakily checking the time, and that makes it seem like we're bored.

Teresa: There's a difference I think between being like, sneaky about it, and like you said, not making a show out of it.

Travis: Being casual about it. Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. Just being casual. I'm just checkin' the time. Whatever. And I would say, um, that if on your smart phone is where you keep the time, then I would really recommend an alarm, or some kind of chime. Because there are so many other, like, fun things you can do on your phone.

Travis: It's so easy to get like, sucked in.

Teresa: Exactly, and then you will look like you're bored.

Travis: Yes. Y'know what I did when Teresa and I were dating, I would uh, sometimes just hand her my phone. Just say, "Please, I can't be trusted."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This is from A Big Silly. "Does it really matter which wrist you put it on, or is it like a major faux pas for example to be right handed and wear a watch on your right wrist?" Now, I don't know if everyone was told this, but when I started wearing a watch when I was a young person, I was told like, "Well, if you're right handed, you wear it on your left wrist."

Teresa: And the reason for that is tradition. Traditionally, clocks are made so that the winding hands are available to someone who is right handed.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: Winding the hands and pushing the buttons and whatever, so you're wearing it on your left wrist, you use your right hand—

Travis: So you can reach with your right hand.

Teresa: And you can turn the knobs or whatever it is. Um, but nowadays, watches are designed in so many different ways. You can certainly find watches that have the knobs on the other side, or y'know, like, it doesn't matter. [laughs]

Travis: I will say that even now, though, I think I still would choose to wear my watch on my left wrist, because I wear it a little looser. And because I'm right handed, I would want it, y'know, as I shook hands or like, I don't know, ate or whatever, wrote, to have it moving around on my wrist. I would find that annoying.

Teresa: Certainly. But y'know, you do you. At this point, there are so many different watches, and watches that are more accessory than utilitarian, and there are so many different ways. Like, for a while, I feel like when we were growing up, stacking watches was a thing.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And y'know, so just... y'know, do what you like.

Travis: There was also a thing... I remember some like, plastic super cool like, Ninja Turtles watches that had a cover like one might have on a pocket watch.

Teresa: Ohh, like a turtle shell!

Travis: But it was like a turtle shell that would open up! And then it just had the tiniest digital display on it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, this is from Brooks. "In general, is an analog or a digital watch more acceptable?" Then Brooks goes on to specifically say, "What about in professional settings?"

Teresa: Okay. So, I want to backtrack this question just a little bit, and talk about casual, sporty, and um, and fancy watches. Okay. So, one of the things that is talked about over and over again for watch etiquette is about what we talked about like availability of the time, and moving your actual arm to look at it.

So, I would consider, um, a casual watch to be one of those more like chunkier, noisier watches. Y'know, like the one that you have, um... that is like, silver with the like, big chain link type deal, and it clicks and like, does all that kind of stuff. Those in general are a little more casual, because they are um, y'know, visible. They're highly visible. Whereas, in a fancy occasion, a dressy occasion, you would usually opt for maybe a leather strap.

Travis: Well, it depends on the look I'm going for, right? Because yes, if I'm going for an understated more traditional look, yes. If I'm going for a flashier, y'know, like, wearing more accessories and stuff, I might go with the flashier one.

Teresa: But of course, like I said about like, traditionally, is how I'm speaking.

Travis: Oh, yes. Yes. Oh, you're not speaking specifically about me.

Teresa: No, not specifically you.

Travis: Okay, you were looking at me and saying 'you', and I thought you were asking me. [laughing]

Teresa: No, you—

Travis: What I, Travis—

Teresa: No, 'you' as the global you.

Travis: The royal you. Okay. Got it.

Teresa: The global, plural 'you.'

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: One should type deal. Traditionally, that's a smaller band, a thinner band. It's less obtrusive. Something like that. And then, a sports watch would be something that you would use for a very specific occasion. Uh, swimming, hiking—

Travis: I have—so, I have the Apple Watch, and uh, y'know, if I know I'm gonna be like, walking around and sweating a bunch or whatever, I have like one of those kind of more rubbery like, sports bands that I can wear around and not worry about soaking with sweat, or like, it jangling around a bunch or whatever.

Teresa: Exactly. So, back to the idea of digital or analog. I think again, it's less about the time keeping, like, apparatus, and more about the way the watch looks.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: I think that they make some very beautiful digital watches, and I think that there are some like, funky analog watches.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So it's more about what the watch looks like with your outfit than the time keeping device.

Travis: Now, how do you feel about calculator watches? A thing that my father, Clint McElroy, owned at least two of when I was growing up.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And this is—for young people, listen. This is a watch that had a calculator built into it. Not like the way you do on your phone—I guess the way you do in your phone, only the—

Teresa: Yeah, but it was actual buttons.

Travis: It was just a calculator all the time on your wrist.

Teresa: [laughs] I suppose if you have need for that much calculation assistance, it could be useful.

Travis: He didn't! He was a radio DJ! He had no reason for it!

Teresa: [laughing]

Travis: It's not like someone who's like, "Quick, is there a DJ in here who can help me with my taxes?!" Like, that wasn't coming up.

Teresa: It's fashion, baby.

Travis: Can I just say something right now? I would wear a calcu—

Teresa: I know you would.

Travis: It's a very specific—not all the time. To very specific occasions.

Teresa: Again, it's fashion. You would wear it for a very specific occasion where you wanted to look like a... super... nerd. [laughs]

Travis: Okay. You're talking about my father, madam!

Teresa: Yes, he's a super nerd.

Travis: Yes, he really is.

Teresa: And he would agree.

Travis: Yes, he would. So, two more questions. This one from Spencer. "What's the protocol on wearing a watch on the inside of your wrist or the outside of your wrist? Is it a preference or is there a rule?"

Teresa: There's no rule. It's definitely a preference, but it has to do about what you are doing. Remember how I talked about in war times, a lot of watches were worn on the inside of the wrist, just because it wasn't a reflective surface that they could see. I mean, if you're hiding out in a trench, you don't want any kind of like, reflection or light or anything like that.

Also, in a combat zone, you might wear it on the inside of your wrist to protect it more. Just from scratches, and—

Travis: Also, that's true I think in life.

Teresa: In life.

Travis: All the time.

Teresa: Exactly. So translating that to normal life, if you have something, y'know, that's very dear to you, go ahead and wear it on the inside to protect it.

Travis: It's also—

Teresa: Or, if you want to wear it on the inside. Wear it. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah. It's also something like, um... I do that sometimes, I will turn my watch inward, uh, to be more discreet.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: So I can look at my—without, y'know, bringing my watch up to my face and like, looking at it that way. I can kind of raise my hand and just look at the inside of my wrist, right?

Teresa: It is more readily available. It's true.

Travis: Yes. But I also, I don't do it, because I find it wildly uncomfortable. Right? 'Cause then it's right there when I reach in, when I'm bending my wrist, poking me in the wrist. Ahh.

Teresa: See, that's the thing, right?

Travis: Uh, one last one, and this is from Izzy. "Smart watch etiquette."

Teresa: Well, smart watch etiquette is the same really as smart watch—as smart phone etiquette. I mean, basically, as you turn your wrist, the smart watch appears with the watch face, right? But anything else that you're going to do requires you touching the buttons and looking at it, and sometimes getting pretty close. Um, so, use it as a watch when in company, and then when you need to, use it as your smart phone.

Travis: I will say that the kind of tipping point for me, for getting the smart watch, was when Bebe was born, and I knew I would be in circumstances where I couldn't always check my phone. But, especially when she was like, a little teeny tiny baby, I was so worried all the time about her very existence that the idea of like, not checking my phone and not seeing if it was like, from you or a message or whatever was like, giving me heart palpitations.

So that made sense to me, especially like if we were going out and having a babysitter or whatever. I want to be able, but I don't want to be staring at my phone.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Uh, I will say, pretty important piece of smart watch etiquette is, if you're going to something like the theater or movie theater or anything like that, setting it to theater mode so that when you like, move your hand to get some popcorn or move your hand to get a drink or whatever, your watch face isn't lighting up and getting in people's faces.

Teresa: Right. And also, I would encourage you to be very judicious about what notifications appear on your smart watch. Um, because like you said, if it's a night where you're, y'know, worried about hearing from a babysitter, by all means, keep your text messages as a notification.

But at that point, you don't need to know about Twitter. You don't need to know about Reddit. You don't need to know about your email. Like, that kind of stuff can—you can turn the notifications off. And then you don't have to worry about constantly looking down and saying, "Oh, well, that's just my fantasy football league," and then swipe it away.

Travis: Yes. Okay, so that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for joining us. This was a fun episode. I'm so glad to be back.

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: I'm sorry we missed a week, but I hope you really liked it. I hope you like this episode as much as I did.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, so let's see. What are some quick, important announcements that you need to know? Um... we're going on tour soon. Well... yeah, we are. We'll probably do some Shmanners there. Uh, in Washington DC and Pittsburgh. So if you have ideas for like, Shmanners topics in either of those cities, please let us know. Please send those—

Teresa: Send those into ShmannersCast@gmail.com.

Travis: Um, oh! And I should also say, this episode was part of a jewelry suggestion, and now we're making it kind of a series. And I'm going to credit it here in a second while Teresa tells you all the other—oh, go check out MaximumFun.org and all the other amazing shows!

Teresa: That's right. Uh, go check those out. Also, remember to check out our fan run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for that beautiful cover art. Um, and it's a great place to go if you are looking to give or get excellent advice from other fans.

Um, like today, we always take listener submitted questions. Well, I won't say always. Most of the time. [laughs] We take listener submitted questions, and we get all of those from Twitter. And our Twitter handle is @ShmannersCast. And thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for that beautiful thumbnail art. Also, thank you to Brent "Brental Floss" Black for our theme music, which is super catchy, and is available as a ring tone where those are found.

Also, one more thank you to our research assistant Alex. She takes all of my jumbled ideas and makes them make sense. So, thank you so much, Alex.

Travis: Yeah. Thank you, Chloe. Chloe suggested doing a jewelry topic, which we will break down into several different topics, 'cause it's a big one.

Teresa: It's a big'un.

Travis: But gave me the idea to do watches, which turned out to be a great episode, so thank you so much, Chloe! And that's gonna do it for us. So join us again next week.

Teresa: No RSVP required.

Travis: You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa: Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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