

Shmanners 214: Belts and Suspenders

Published 12th June 2020

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Travis: Hey Teresa, did you hear about the lady who walked out of the play about the man who couldn't keep his pants up?

Teresa: No.

Travis: She couldn't suspender disbelief.

Teresa: [sighs] It's Shmanners.

[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello internet. I'm your husband host, [laughs] Travis McElroy.

Teresa: [laughs] 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. [laughs]

Teresa: Hello, dear.

Travis: How are you?

Teresa: That was, uh, that was interesting.

Travis: I'm really proud of that joke and ashamed at the same time.

Teresa: Mm hmm.

Travis: Yeah, because like... it's clever, but it's also, there's so many words in it.

Teresa: It's a little clunky. I think we should `a workshopped it a little more.

Travis: Let's suspender disbelief, because he couldn't keep his pants up.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Suspender.

Teresa: Suspender, mm hmm.

Travis: Its not good.

Teresa: No.

Travis: But it's also great.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Sometimes— I have often been described as my type of humor being "non-humor".

Teresa: Non-humor. Unfunny.

Travis: And that's true. That's very true. It makes me happy. And as many people have probably figured out from my incredible joke, we're talking about belts and suspenders.

Teresa: [laughs] Yes. This is the next in our accessories series.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: So, we've talked about things like gloves and fans and shoes and things like that, so today we are talking about belts and suspenders. This topic was emailed to us by our friend Virgilic... Virgilous?

Travis: Virgilous, okay.

Teresa: Virgilous.

Travis: We're you going to say Virgilicious?

Teresa: Almost. [laughs]

Travis: Because...

Teresa: That's a good name, too.

Travis: I don't mind that.

Teresa: So, thank you. Thank you, Virgilous. I almost did it again, just because you mentioned it.

Travis: Yeah. Is it because, like, you're thinking about Fergalicious?

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: Yeah. Yeah, I get that. Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So, let's talk about belts.

Travis: Let's talk about belts, baby. I'm willing to bet they're old.

Teresa: They are old.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: But they're one of these things that you kinda just wear without thinking, right? You have pants, you need to keep them up, you use a belt. Right?

Travis: Sure, yes. One has pants.

Teresa: One has pants. So, it's probably one of the oldest pieces of clothing, because when one wears pants, one must keep them up, correct?

Travis: I mean, yes. Especially... there must have been a time where the mass production of pants was not a thing, right? Pre-industrial revolution. Where you couldn't say, like, okay, here's a 30-32, or whatever, and here's a 31-32, and here's a 32-32 pant. Where it was just like, "Here is pants. Here's bigger pants, and here's bigger pants, and here's the biggest pants."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Right? Whereas, like, there were probably a class of people, the upper class, who could afford to have it tailored and built especially for them. But for most people, it was probably just like, here is pants. And you gotta make them fit you one way or the other.

Teresa: Right. And so, people went back and forth between, kind of like, the robe, like, long robes, and pants. And sometimes you wore pants underneath your robes.

Travis: And sometimes you wore a robe underneath your pants.

Teresa: Uh... that doesn't work very well.

Travis: Well, you gotta tuck it. I mean, it doesn't go directly in there, it takes some work, but you know, if you're committed to the look, you can get there.

Teresa: So, anywhere between... let's say 3300 and 1200 BCE, is where anthropologists place belts. In the loosest sense of the word, so like—

Travis: Well belts shouldn't be loose, honey, that kinda defeats the purpose. That's a long period. That's a long window.

Teresa: Well, right. I mean, because when does a string or a cord become a belt?

Travis: When it's ajar.

Teresa: What?

Travis: Like, the when is a door not a door? When it's ajar.

Teresa: No.

Travis: I need to calm down.

Teresa: [laughs] You need to chill that down. So like, if you just tie a simple length of cord or leather or string around your waist, is that string? Is that a belt? Do you need to have loops on your pants for the belt? Does it need to be just the one string that you only use to tie around your waist as the belt, or does any string become a belt when you wear it? You know, that's the whole thing, right?

Travis: I'm not an anthropologist and I am not a linguist, but I would argue that if you use a length of something to hold your pants up, it's a belt.

Teresa: But then, what if it was it used to be something else, right? You used to tie, I don't know, your arrow onto the spear shaft, and then when you need to use it for something else it becomes something else. You know what I mean?

Travis: Then it's a belt. Listen, I'm a simple man.

Teresa: So— okay.

Travis: If it holds up your pants, if you tie it around your body to hold up your pants, that's a belt. Might not be a good belt.

Teresa: What if it's only a belt while you're using it as a belt, and then you need to use it for something else. It's no longer a belt.

Travis: Well, but if I take off a belt and I use that to, like, hold my shield to my back, it's still a belt.

Teresa: Okay. But what if it was first holding your shield to your back and then it becomes a belt?

Travis: I would still call it a belt. I'm not saying I'm right. I'm not saying that I am correct. I'm saying *I* would call it a belt.

Teresa: Well, this is why that span of time is so long, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Because, if something—

Travis: It didn't have the right branding.

Teresa: [laughs] If it started out as holding your shield to your back, and then you decided, well, I've lost some weight and my pants don't fit anymore, I need to use this shield string to now hold up my pants, and then was it a shield string that holds up your pants or is it now a belt that you can also use for your shield? Like, that's the whole thing.

Travis: Listen, I completely understand the point that you're making, and you are probably right, but I'm just saying I'm a simple man. I'm a simple West Virginia man, and I'm saying if I tie something around my body to hold my pants up, that's a belt. Now, what I will say is I also imagine a lot of this, like, time frame confusion, and we've talked about these kinds of things before, but this is probably something that sprung up around the world independently.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And I doubt that someone in, like, Europe, had to go to China and see someone tie something around their waist to be like, "Great idea!" I bet this was something that, like, all over the place if you had your pants falling down, you would tie them to your body.

Teresa: Right. And then, the interesting part is, so these belts could be used for other things too, right? So, you could use it to hold your pants up, but you can also use it to put your storage pouch on, right, like a utility belt.

Travis: Or like, a knife. What is that? A sheath.

Teresa: A sheath, on your knife. You can use it purely decoratively, right? There are lots of, like, I have a lot of clothing that has belts that don't do anything. It's just sitting there for looks.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then, at some point, the belt widens enough that it becomes more like a girdle.

Travis: Ooh.

Teresa: And so, these are things that probably were most recognizable on priests of all faiths and religions. So, men and women at the turn of the new millennia, men probably wore these girdles, these large belts, and they became more like corsets for women. Right? So, this same garment is worn by all for different purposes.

Travis: Okay. Is this where the cummerbund comes from? Like, just a big, wide belt?

Teresa: Yeah. That's the one for fashion, right? Because it doesn't really do much.

Travis: It has no purpose whatsoever. Except blurring the line between pants and shirt.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's the only—it obscures the definition between pants and shirt. It's like, where does it begin? Where does it end? I don't know, there's a cummerbund.

Teresa: So, you can use it to keep your tunic in place, you can use it to stash your snacks or weapons, right? And you can also use it to make your body look a certain way—

Travis: To change the lines.

Teresa: Like, that kind of hourglass figure. Cinch it in, right? So, in the Christian faith specifically, these girdles were used to symbolize things like protection and chastity and, you know, willingness to serve God.

Travis: I mean, the chastity belt is right there, right?

Teresa: Exactly, exactly. And priests at this time would even hang scriptures off their girdles to read to them.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Read from them, excuse me. [laughs]

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Okay, so we're up to the dark ages and renaissance, and this is where women of the time had stopped wearing belts, but then rediscovered them. So, in the pictures painted at the time, belts disappear from women's fashion, and they return around the start of the renaissance.

Travis: I just don't know why you'd ever get rid of them, they're so good at defining a line. It probably has to do with, like, whether showing the waist is fashionable or not, right?

Teresa: Is in fashion, yeah.

Travis: Cause that's a thing, is like, that's what I like about a belt. With a flowy garment, I like a belt to add some definition, some line. It's a good look.

Teresa: Yeah, totally. So then, these girdles were used also at the time for the militaries, to symbolize their rank and what side they were on, obvs.

Travis: You keep saying girdles, but you don't mean a literal girdle, like we would think, like a corset, right? This is just big, strappy belt.

Teresa: I mean, which is kind of like a girdle. [laughs]

Travis: Yes. Okay. I'm just trying to picture the right thing.

Teresa: These are all arbitrary names given to a swath of fabric or whatever around the waist.

Travis: Material. Yeah, okay, got it.

Teresa: Right? So, the name differs according to the fashion and who's using it, not really...

Travis: The purpose.

Teresa: The purpose, right.

Travis: Yeah, got it, okay.

Teresa: The thing around the middle.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So, the Thirty Years' War in the 1600s is really what cemented the importance of the military girdle, and you can see these all the way up through the civil war. Right? The, kind of like, sash around the middle in military garments. And even depending upon where you were from gave the appearances of the different swaths of material.

Travis: Yes. I like how you said that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You made a lot of intense eye contact.

Teresa: I like that face that you make when I say something like that.

Travis: Well, it was very intimidating, but impressive.

Teresa: Okay. So, we arrive at the 1800s.

Travis: [imitates a car screeching to a halt]

Teresa: [laughs] And this is a time period where genderized fashion is really, really disparate, right? And we've talked about this a little bit. And so, really the only reason that women started wearing belts again at this point— it goes in and out for women, the genderized fashion eras— is because of the introduction of suspenders.

Travis: Okay, alright. Now, so... suspenders were not until the 1800s?

Teresa: Suspenders, I mean...

Travis: Like we know them?

Teresa: Like we know them, yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And I think that it had to do a lot with the way that suspenders were fashioned to pants. And the way that, I mean, basically pants were styled, too. Because the only way that a suspender really works is if it's a higher-waisted pant.

Travis: Yeah, I also imagine probably it wasn't as practical without, like, some stretchier fabric. Like, if you had a rigid fabric, right, then it was probably way more of a hassle if you were trying to do over your shoulder, like, attach it. Because you couldn't stretch it down, you know.

Teresa: Right. And in this way, they weren't really for seeing.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: You weren't really supposed to see your suspenders at this point. Really up until—

Travis: They went, like, under your jacket.

Teresa: Exactly. Until, like, the 1930s, they were considered underwear.

Travis: Yeah, you put them under your weskit.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Now, a weskit is just a waistcoat, right?

Teresa: I think so.

Travis: It's just a vest, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. But you see that now, like, in period films there's always, like, the scene of someone rushing to get ready. I think of, like, Christmas Carol, right? Where, like, he's rushing to get ready and he pulls on his pants and, like, throws the suspenders over and his shirt's untucked, and it's like, not a fashion item. It's

like, left attached to your pants and it's to hold up your pants. Not to, like, do the, "Now I just may be a country lawyer," kind of thing, right?

Teresa: [laughs] Exactly. In 18th century France is where the suspender, anthropologists feel like, suspenders officially arrived. With leftover, kind of like, ribbon material, just tied to the buttons of your pants.

Travis: Because that's the thing, when we're talking about these, we're not talking about clippy ones, right?

Teresa: Right, no, not yet.

Travis: This is like, you have buttons at the front and the back that you're, like, attaching to.

Teresa: Right, right. Interestingly, Ben Franklin was a big fan of suspenders.

Travis: Not surprised. What I know about that fool. That fool loves an invention. Loves a new thing.

Teresa: It's true.

Travis: Oh, you put any new thing in front of Ben Franklin, he's like, "Yeah, I'll take that." And you're like, "Is that practical, Ben Franklin?" And he's like, "No, I made a glass harmonica, what's up?" You're like, "Ben Franklin, why did you make a glass harmonica? You're know there's, like, wood and stuff?" And he's like, "I like the impractical!" I'm sorry, listen, I love—

Teresa: He didn't.

Travis: What?

Teresa: Did he make a glass harmonica?

Travis: Yeah, he did. Yeah, he did.

Teresa: That does sound really impractical.

Travis: This is what I'm saying.

Teresa: You'd cut yourself.

Travis: Or at the very least, like, people will see all your spit inside of it.

Teresa: Ew.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: Alright. So, let's go to the 1820s, when Albert Thurston began to manufacture the first modern-day suspenders.

Travis: Man, that is the perfect name for someone who manufactures suspenders.

Teresa: You think so?

Travis: Albert Thurston.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: It reminds me of Thurston Howell, from Gilligan's Island. He's the millionaire. Thurston. Albert Thurston, suspender magnate. Right? It works.

Teresa: [laughs] And at this point, these were the H suspender. So, it has like, I mean, it basically drew an H on your back.

Travis: Not like an X. Which we would...

Teresa: That would be later. Next comes the X-back, and then finally the modern Y-back.

Travis: Right. Yes, yes. So was the H like, there was a strap across the back?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: It wasn't just two independent straps?

Teresa: Exactly. Because you didn't want those to fall off your shoulders. So, there was a strap connecting the two across your back, about where your shoulder blades are closest together.

Travis: You know what they call these in the UK and Australia and maybe other places too?

Teresa: Braces.

Travis: Braces!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Braces, I like that. Way more succinct than suspender.

Teresa: I think that it has to do, doesn't it have to do with the whole origin of, like, brace yourself? Get ready?

Travis: Maybe. I think it may also have to do with like— because I think about this all the tie with, like, pants in the UK are underwear. And so, trousers are pants. And so, it's very like, "Well, we already have a thing called suspenders." [laughs] "So we're gonna call it braces."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: It probably is a lot weirder to be in the UK and say, like, "Yeah, I wore braces when I was younger. And it'd be like, "You did?" And you're like, "Do you mean teeth? Do you mean legs? Or do you mean on your pants?"

Teresa: Do they call braces for your teeth something different?

Travis: No, they call that mouth-fence.

Teresa: They do not.

Travis: Yeah, they say, "That was my mouth-fence."

Teresa: Mm mm.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: No.

Travis: And if you wear them on your legs, they're just called bionics. [pause] None of that's true.

Teresa: None of that's true.

Travis: Please stop looking at me like that.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Please stop looking at me like that.

Teresa: I'm trying to educate and you are—

Travis: I'm not! That's not my thing.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I'm trying to entertain.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: This is a funny thing I'm doing here.

Teresa: Alright. Issued in 1871 to Samuel Clemens. That's right, Mark Twain was the first patent for suspenders. He found the French version, which was the H strap, uncomfortable. And so, he made his own, kind of like, pattern for his own suspenders, and patented it. The metal clips you talked about, those were in 1894. So you could clip them to your pants instead of having buttons just for your suspenders on your pants.

Travis: See now, this, again, must have made this more available to, like, lower class people. Because, like, with the suspenders that clip to your pants, right, or sorry, hooked to buttons, meant you had to have somebody sew buttons into your pants.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: And so, then you could only wear them with pants that had those buttons in it.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Whereas, like, you could have clips on a suspender and wear that with any pair of pants you have, even if you make those pants yourself.

Teresa: Speaking of, pants by the 1930s started coming with belt loops.

Travis: Ah hah.

Teresa: Because, like I spoke about earlier, suspenders really only work with a higher waist pant, but in the 1930s, 20s and 30s, lower waisted pants started getting into fashion. And so, they started being manufactured with belt loops, so you could wear a belt again.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: This kind of ebb and flow is not specific to pants and suspenders. We see this ebb and flow throughout all of fashion.

Travis: All of fashion. Well, once something has been popular for long enough, like, we saw this when we talked about high heels and when we talked about... did we do one on purses?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: But you see it, like, once something has been fashionable for long enough, somebody makes the quote-unquote "bold choice" to say, "Okay, you know how they've been big for a while? What about small?" and it's like, "Whoa!" [laughs]

Teresa: Yep, yep. And then they go back. So, women's belts during the 50s could be as wide as five inches. That's a pretty wide belt. When does that become a girdle? I dunno. Like, when does it move back and forth?

Travis: Think how huge those belt loops are.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, they probably didn't do much.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And then, in the 1960s people had even more fun with belts, moving them to the hips, being purely decorative with big old belt buckles and all kinds of stuff.

Travis: I used to love a big belt buckle. And then I got just a little bit more of a tummy, and now when I sit down for a long period of time that big belt buckle cuts right into my belly.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Can't do it anymore.

Teresa: Well, you know, again. Ebb and flow.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Maybe one day you'll wear those again.

Travis: You think my tummy will ebb a little bit?

Teresa: [laughs] Or maybe flow. And it doesn't matter, because—

Travis: Yeah, it doesn't matter.

Teresa: I love you whatever shape you're in.

Travis: It only matters in the context of belt buckles. [laughs]

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: That's the only time I care about it.

Teresa: Yes. And then, so, in the 1980s, it became like, you know, more jeweled. Like studs, right? Remember those studded belts?

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Loved those. So then, I mean, you've also got suspenders being associated in the 80s with like...

Travis: Like, Gordon Gecko kinda deal.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: The executive.

Teresa: Yeah, and also Diane Keaton in Annie Hall. You know, things like that. And then, probably the next place that suspenders live in our psyche is Steve Urkel.

Travis: Oh, okay. I think you're skipping over something.

Teresa: Oh yeah?

Travis: And my timing might be off, the order might be off. But I believe in the 90s there was a surprisingly big surge of interest in swing music.

Teresa: Ah, yes.

Travis: And it was like, I just rewatched The Mask and there was a whole thing.

Teresa: Yeah, like zoot suits and stuff.

Travis: And like, swingers and all of these things, and like, there was Broadway musical review of it, and Brian Setzer Orchestra was like a thing, and the zoot suits all like... suspenders were a very big deal with that, and sometimes even are incorporated in the dancing.

Teresa: Mm hmm.

Travis: And so, like, that was another big surge of interest in suspenders.

Teresa: Also, at this point I remember was people wearing suspenders, but not using them to hold up your pants. They were kind of draped sensually.

Travis: Yeah. Very much so. Then it's pure fashion.

Teresa: Then it's pure fashion.

Travis: Because then if you try to run in them and it gets caught on your knees, ooh, just like a wallet chain. We should do a whole episode just on wallet chains. But the wallet chains get caught in your knees and then you're down, you know?

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah. Totally.

Travis: Aw, you beef it.

Teresa: Mm hmm.

Travis: Yeah. But Steve Urkel, that is what I picture. The maneuver.

Teresa: Yeah, the thumbs in and then a stretch.

Travis: Yeah. Here's the thing: Say what you will about suspenders, they are a classic comedy accessory. Because like, for example, Robin Williams, I believe it was Mork that had, like, the rainbow suspenders. Or maybe it was just Robin Williams that had rainbow suspenders. Or like, it's something where clowns will often use them to hold up big, baggy pants and use them as part of the act.

Teresa: Right, yeah. Like if they wear those pants with the hula hoop inside.

Travis: Right. And I think it's a thing that, and we'll talk more about- well, lets talk about it now. I think that there's a reason that, like, suspenders are not necessarily seen as cool.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: I think it has to do with so often because they are so dynamic, right? With the stretch and stuff. That they are so easily used a comedy prop. You see people do the, like, I referenced it as, "I may just be a country lawyer," or you pull them out and snap it back and you're like, "ow," right? They have built-in comedy potential in a way that a belt doesn't really.

Teresa: I would argue that there is a sliding scale, right? If a suspender is bright colored and very elastic, yes, you're right. But I definitely love a fitted suit with the suspenders, you know, in a nice dark color with a bowtie or a knitted tie, and like—

Travis: Listen, I'm not knocking suspenders. I think suspenders are very cool. I am saying I can see why they are so easily, like... I will say why they may be questionable in some peoples minds as to whether, like, "ooh, is suspenders cool?" Because a lot of the associations we have with them are like, Steve Urkel, clowns, that kinda thing.

Teresa: Okay, yeah.

Travis: But I, yes. I think suspenders are cool. I do not wear them because I mostly now wear t-shirts and shorts because I'm Dad.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Are you laughing because I'm currently wearing a t-shirt and shorts?

Teresa: Yes, I am.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yes I am. Okay, so if we're going to wear suspenders, here's a couple of tips and tricks.

Travis: I am very interested in this, but first, I would like to do a thank-you note for our sponsors. And I also want to say we are doing something a little different this week. The ad revenue we're gonna make from this week we're gonna donate

to an organization called Black Trans Femmes in the Arts. The mission of the BTFA Collective is to connect the community of black trans women and non-binary femmes in the arts and to build power amongst ourselves. You can follow them on Twitter @btfacollective and you can also find the link there to donate. Right now, they are raising money to bail out black trans protesters via Paypal and Cash App. And so, you can donate there. Their Cash App link is right there on their Twitter account. One more time, it is @BTFACollective.

[theme music plays]

Travis: June is Pride month, and while this year's celebrations may be a little different than usual, there are still ways we can come together to support the LGBTQ+ Community. Bombas Pride Collection socks bring more love, compassion and comfort into the world, because they give back to those experiencing homelessness in the LGBTQ+ community. Listen, I think Bombas are beautiful, they are comfortable.

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: Like, it's rare to find a sock with features. But like, whatever the weave is that they do around the center with, like, the hexagons. I love it.

Teresa: Yeah! It hugs your arches.

Travis: It's incredible. But more than that, they're not just comfortable on your feet. They're comfortable on your heart.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Did you know that the LGBTQ+ community is more at risk of experiencing homelessness? One in ten young adults in the LGBTQ+ community will experience it, according to a study by the Voices of Youth Count. For every pair of Pride socks you buy, Bombas will donate a pair to someone in need in the LGBTQ+ community through The Ally Coalition. The Bombas Pride Collection comes in six colorful styles and they are absolutely gorgeous. I love them.

I'm holding one of these Bombas socks right now, it is— so, white sock but with this, like, really cool orange and blue toe and heel. It's got that blue, like, hexagonal stripe across the middle and a really cool blue, white and red accent. It's gorgeous. It is a sock work of art. Work of sock art? Art, sock, work.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And you can go to Bombas.com/Shmanners today to shop the Pride Collection and get 20% off your first order. That's B-O-M-B-A-S .com/Shmanners.

Teresa: Shmanners is also sponsored in part this week by DoorDash. DoorDash is the app that brings you food you're craving right now, right to your door. And we love food delivery. We've got two kids, one of them is an infant still, and I—

Travis: And she won't eat anything! [laughs]

Teresa: She won't eat anything. But I just can't. I can't get it together right now to go out to a restaurant, even if I wanted to.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: So, ordering is—

Travis: Let alone shopping!

Teresa: Let alone shopping.

Travis: Sometimes at the grocery store, it's like, I don't know, is a big bag of rice anything? Is this anything?

Teresa: [laughs] And ordering is so easy. All you gotta do, use the app, choose what you wanna eat, and the food can even be safely left outside your door with the new contactless delivery drop-off setting. Amazing. When we order food through DoorDash, I like to give a nice little wave to my delivery driver so they know that I've picked it up. And they are safely in their car and I am still safely on my porch. In fact, many of our favorite local restaurants are open for delivery. And again, like you said— like I said, [laughs] you have to just use the app, and you can select your local favorite restaurants. Food will be left right at your door.

So, right now our listeners can get \$5 off their first order of \$15 or more with zero delivery fees for their first month, when you download your DoorDash app and enter the code "Shmanners". Once again, \$5 off your first order, zero delivery fees for a month. Download the DoorDash app and enter code "Shmanners". One last time. Don't forget. Code "Shmanners". \$5 off your first order with DoorDash.

[music plays]

Justin: We're the hosts of My Brother, My Brother and Me and now, nearly ten years into our podcast, the secret can be revealed. All the clues are in place and the world's greatest treasure hunt can now begin.

Griffin: Embedded in each episode of My Brother, My Brother and Me is a micro-clue that will lead you to fourteen precious gemstones all around this big, beautiful blue world of ours.

Travis: So start combing through the episodes. Uh, let's say starting at episode 101 on.

Griffin: Yeah, the early episodes are pretty problematic, so there's no clues in those episodes. [laughs]

Travis: No. No, not at all.

Griffin: The better ones, the good ones, clues ahoy.

Justin: Listen to every episode repeatedly, in sequence. Laugh if you must, but mainly get all the great clues. My Brother, My Brother and Me. It's an advice show, kind of, but a treasure hunt mainly. Anywhere you find podcasts or treasure maps, My Brother, My Brother and Me. The hunt is on!

[music ends]

Travis: Okay, we're back. Give me them suspenders tips.

Teresa: One might suggest that you connect the back of your suspenders to your pants before putting your pants on, so that you're not flailing around trying to get everything clipped. And then you can, depending on if you have your X-back or your Y-back, center them correctly.

Travis: I personally prefer an X-back.

Travis: I like the look of it better if I am sans jacket.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Especially if I am going to take my suspenders off the shoulder for a cool look, I think that works better with X-back than Y-back.

Teresa: I think you're right. I think you're right. But the tip is to put them on your pants, on the back of your pants, first. So that you can center it well and not have to, like, chicken wing yourself back there.

Travis: I also will say, once again, personal preference. I do now, if the option is available, prefer it to button in. Cause I think it's just a little more secure, and I'm a very dynamic person who moves a lot and has a lot of arm flailing in my person.

Teresa: Makes sense.

Travis: And I just don't want my suspenders to snap off, hit me in the head, and knock me unconscious.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Maybe that's just me.

Teresa: I don't want that either. I think that's everyone.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: If you are doing the clips, make sure that when you clip them in, they go straight down. Or, fashion. Do what you want.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, you may want to consider matching your suspenders to your body type. If you have large, broad shoulders, perhaps a thicker strap. For a smaller, narrower shoulder, perhaps a smaller, narrower strap.

Travis: Now, let me ask you this, because I think you might have some insight on this. Jules asked, "I have a large chest. Should I wear the suspenders over the front, creating a gap/chasm between the suspenders and my stomach, or to the sides of my chest, which is like the equivalent of a breast window?"

Teresa: [laughs] You know, I identify with this.

Travis: Mm hmm, I thought you might.

Teresa: So, here is what I suggest. I have always done it straight down the front, so that there's a gap. And maybe wear your suspenders just slightly looser,

so that the gap is not very noticeable. I have to say that because of my chestal region, I don't really wear suspenders.

Travis: Now, would you, if you were going to wear suspenders, go with a broader strap or a narrower strap?

Teresa: I would go with a broader strap.

Travis: Okay. Got it.

Teresa: Are there any other suspender questions before we get to some belt tips and tricks?

Travis: Let's see... oh, huh, I forgot this was on here. From Mole Patrol. Mall Patrol? One of those. "In Australia, and possibly the UK, we call garters suspenders."

Teresa: Okay, that makes sense.

Travis: "And suspenders braces." So, there you go. So, this— okay, first, this is from Wiley. "Is it okay to use clip-on suspenders? Tailoring all my bottoms with buttons sounds a bit much. I know at least two people who swear it's the only way to properly wear suspenders." So, like I said, I do think it's more secure. And I don't so much now, when I was a younger child, I wore a lot of suspenders.

Teresa: Your mother dressed you in a lot of suspenders. [laughs]

Travis: Yeah, I don't wanna just sound like I was the store being like, "Mm, excellent." And I did find that over time the metal clips would, like, loosen or wear out, or whatever. Or if the, like, material of the pants wasn't thick enough, it wouldn't get a good latch on there and it would come undone very easily. So I do think, like, I would not invest a lot of money in, like, a really nice pair of clip-on suspenders, because it might eventually wear out the clip or whatever. But that said, if it's not something where you're going to be wearing them all of the time... like, if you do not have a job where you are wearing a suit constantly that you would wear suspenders with, I would not go to the trouble of tailoring. I would just do clip-on suspenders.

Teresa: Also, you want to think about why you are wearing the suspenders. If your pants will not stay up without your suspenders, I would suggest the button method, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: But if the suspenders are more of a fashionable thing for you, you can wear them slightly looser and then the clips are about, you know, just attaching them, not being used to hold the pants up.

Travis: And here's what I will also say, and this, I think, goes for both belts and suspenders. The purpose of these things, right, because anybody who wears pants— and some people don't, that's fine if you don't want to, it's cool, whatever. I do. I often wear pants.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: [laughs] Sometimes I don't. I don't know what I'm saying. But like, I'll put on a pair of jeans in the morning, right? They fit great. And by the evening, they've stretched out or whatever, right, and now they're a little looser and I have to put a belt on, right? If you are putting on your pants and they're like, falling down on their own, you can put a belt on, you can put suspenders on. But let me also recommend maybe rethinking the size of pant you are buying.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Because that's the other thing, is if you have to tighten your suspenders so much that it's, like, uncomfortable or the clip is flying off if you shrug your shoulders, then maybe the problem is that your pants are just way too loose. Right? Like, the suspender and belt should be like, in case of emergency, and not like, without these I might be arrested for indecent exposure, right? We do not need to do a comedy routine with our pants is what I'm saying.

Teresa: I agree.

Travis: Now, we got a lot of this form of question, and this is like, kind of a bridge into belts.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: James asked, "How many cool points do you gain or lose when you wear suspenders and a matching belt?" Now, here's what I will say, and you might say otherwise. But if you are wearing a jacket and your suspenders are covered, I probably would still wear a belt, if I thought my waist was going to be seen. Because I think dress pants without a belt looks weird. Now, sometimes there are pants that do not have belt loops and they do not have the, like, area for a belt.

At which point, don't wear a belt, unless it's a fashion item and has nothing to do with holding your pants up. But if I was going to have my suspenders on and they were not visible, I would probably still wear a belt for the fashion of it and just not tighten it as much.

Teresa: So, here's the thing, right. You are talking about how the belt is the visible part and the suspenders would not be visible. So then, why does it matter if you're gonna match them?

Travis: I mean, that's also true.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And then I would argue that you are using a belt for a different type of pants than you are using suspenders for.

Travis: This is also true.

Teresa: Where suspenders are more for a high-waisted pant, and belts for a lower waisted pant. So, the occasion that you would need both in order to complete your look, I think, are very slim.

Travis: Yeah, I think the only occasion, because if you are going to be wearing—because if you look at a lot of zoot suits, they don't have belts, they don't have loops with them.

Teresa: Right, they don't have loops, yeah.

Travis: It is a looser pant because the whole point of as you're dancing and stuff, as you're moving, it's flowing. You have a lot of dynamic action as your moving. It will surprise no one, I think, to say I know about this cause in the 90s I was into the idea of swing.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I liked this. I still do.

Teresa: I learned a little Lindy step. A little east coast, west coast swing step.

Travis: Yeah. Well I am also a big fan of your Harry Connick Jrs, and that kind of thing. And so, but I think that, as Teresa said, it would be a very specific look

you're going for and so, if I was wearing a belt because I was worried about how the pants looked without it, I probably also wouldn't be wearing suspenders.

Teresa: Exactly. And so, what I would suggest is if you plan on wearing these all together, you would definitely want them to be complimentary. But I don't suggest that you match them specifically.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And again, it's fashion. Do what you want.

Travis: I would go for, like, some real stand-out pattern suspenders if I'm going to do that. Because at that point, they're the accessory and the belt is doing the work.

Teresa: Mm hmm. Or, you can stick to several neutrals. Neutrals always play well together. Or you can use the metal color to connect them, right? So, if you're going to have a belt that has a silver accent, you would want to use silver accents on your suspenders.

Travis: Absolutely. I would never mix, like, a silver buckle and gold clips. That would look weird.

Teresa: Yeah. Right.

Travis: Oh, and let me just throw out, in case anyone's wondering: Bow tie and suspenders? [chef's kiss] Always, always good.

Teresa: I love it.

Travis: Now, this I think will be a good transition, because I am almost positive, even without looking, that you're going to have something about this in your notes. David asks, "Does it really matter what color belt, black or brown, to wear with khakis, navy, black pants, and why?"

Teresa: Again. These are all considered neutral pieces. And it's fine to mix your neutrals. I personally love even a white belt with canvas or brown sneakers.

Travis: Yeah. See, I have always been taught that it is not about matching your belt to your pants. It is about matching your belt to your shoes.

Teresa: Not even matching. Complimenting, right? If these are all neutrals, you can wear whatever you want. And I think that navy is even considered a neutral at this point.

Travis: Er...

Teresa: Yeah. If you wear a pair of navy pants.

Travis: Mm... I would not wear a black belt with navy pants, but that's just me. That might just be me.

Teresa: I think that's just you.

Travis: I don't so much, like, but I also wouldn't wear navy socks with black pants. But that might just be me.

Teresa: Wear it and be proud.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: All of these neutrals can all mix together. I mean, I think that it's really nice to pick just one to maybe stand out, but you could also stand out if you all match.

Travis: Yeah. Okay, other tips?

Teresa: So, it's recommended by many menswear blogs especially, this is where I found this tip, but ladies too. Anybody too.

Travis: Yeah, people's wear.

Teresa: People's wear.

Travis: Or if you wanna put a belt on your dog!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: If they're into it. How would a dog wear suspenders?

Teresa: No!

Travis: Would the dog wear the suspenders—

Teresa: We're not getting into this.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: The dog pants debate. I refuse.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: It's recommended that you have two types of belts, okay? One more formal, perhaps leather, right? And then one less formal, maybe a braided belt or a canvas belt.

Travis: I have those for my shorts, if I'm going to be working. Because I don't want to sweat into a leather belt, is mainly the thing.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Hey, can I give people a little secret?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: This has become my new favorite kind of belt. Listen, I love a belt with the, you know, belt holes and stuff. But there is a kind of belt that I have become a big fan of, and it's kind of, it makes a ratchety sound as they go and it has little indents in the back, right, and a belt buckle that as you pull through it's kinda like a zip tie, right? So, if you are in between belt holes, which I often am, this will let you tighten to a very specific length.

Teresa: Love it.

Travis: Instead of, like, having to punch a new hole in your belt or something like that.

Teresa: That's great.

Travis: It's great. I would like to do one more question.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: This is from Steve. "Is there a correct direction for a belt to go around?"

Teresa: Whatever direction is easier for you. There is no correct direction. Whichever way you like better.

Travis: Which way do I go? I think I go left and around. Because I'm right-handed, so I'm feeding with my right hand. The only thing I would say is check the belt buckle, because sometimes the buckle will have, like, a manufacturers stamp on it or words on it, and you want those the right direction up.

Teresa: Yes, so if you have a belt buckle with words, you don't want to be able to see it and read it while you're looking down, you want people who are walking towards you to read it.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: I would also suggest that a skinnier belt is for a more formal occasion, whereas a wider belt may be for a more casual.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And if you are putting on a belt, the recommendation is that the belt not be longer than two times around your waist. Because there's a lot of extra business that would just get in the way, right?

Travis: I would also say not shorter than when you go through the buckle that it does not at least go through the next belt loop.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Because you don't want it sticking out weird, right?

Teresa: Yeah, you want it to tuck in nicely. Again, some of the blogs I looked at recommend two inches longer than your waist size.

Travis: Sure. Sure. Alright, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much for listening. One more time, I wanna encourage everyone to go check out Black Trans Femmes in the Arts @btfacollective on Twitter. You can find the link to donate to their Cash App there. Also, still encourage everybody to do research into what's going on in regards to police brutality and state-sanctioned violence against protesters and specifically black folks here in America. And go check out all the other amazing shows on MaximumFun.org. You can email us at Shmann—nope. You can email us at shmannerscast@gmail.com.

Teresa: There it is. Tweet at us @ShmannersCast.

Travis: Correct.

Teresa: Which is where we get all of our listener-submitted questions. But if you have a topic, use that email, please. I wanna thank Alex, our research assistant, for her help, as always, with our show. I wanna thank Brent "Brental Floss" Black for the theme music. Let's see, what else? Kayla M Wasil for the Twitter thumbnail art and Bruja Betty Pin Up Photography for the Facebook group picture. Fan-run Facebook group, Shmanners Fanners, you can join that on Facebook.

Travis: And I think 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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