

Shmanners 260: Idioms: Part 7

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Travis: Oh, hey, I didn't see you come in, there. You're—it's me and Justin, and you're listening to an episode of this podcast during Max Fun Drive, which is very exciting, 'cause it gives you a chance to support the shows and the show creators that you love, and get rewarded for it. You'll have your chance to select a support level that's right for you, starting at just five dollars. You're gonna get hundreds of hours of bonus content. It's very exciting. Right, J-Man?

Justin: Oh, that's right, baby. What are you waiting for? Go to Maximumfun.org/join, and now, on with the show.

[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. You caught me right in the middle of my sip of bubbly.

Travis: That's why I did it. We're having, uh, some admittedly... cheap sparkling wine. But—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's not the important part.

Teresa: It's wine and it's bubbly, so I'll drink it.

Travis: This is fair. There is alcohol contained within it. Um, but you know what? You might be listening saying, "But wh—wh—why?"

Well, the answer is we're celebrating three things. Three things? Three things!
One: Teresa McElroy's birthday.

Teresa: Oh, it's on Tuesday. Well, Monday.

Travis: Two—Monday. Two—

Teresa: Well, Monday. [laughs]

Travis: Mother's Day.

Teresa: Yes, which is on Sunday.

Travis: And three: it's week one of the Max Fun Drive 2021!

Teresa: Today! Well, technically it started yesterday, but here we are.

Travis: Yes. And we're very excited. Max Fun Drive is a very exciting time of year where we, uh, offer I think some of our most fun content, both in the regular feeds and in a bonus content feed for supporters, and it's your chance to support the artists and art you love by going to Maximumfun.org/join, and we'll tell you more about it as the show goes on. But, I'm also very excited, because we're gonna talk about idioms this week, and idioms are always some of my favorite episodes.

Teresa: We—I don't know if we started this as what we knew would become a recurring segment, but gosh, if it hasn't. It is just the gift that keeps on giving.

Travis: There's just so many, and they're all so, I think, interesting and fascinating and was not ready for it. Go ahead and give us that first one. Give me some truth.

Teresa: This is suggested by Brit, and the saying is, "Shake a stick at."

Travis: Now, this one I know 'cause it's like—you might say, like, "You know, there's more deals here than you could shake a stick at," you know? And if you were trying to sell something. I don't know why, I just assumed you were—like, it would take so much time to shake a stick at each of these—

Teresa: [laughs] Uh, maybe, but, uh—

Travis: You'd waste your whole day shaking your stick at these deals!

Teresa: [laughs quietly] You—

Travis: Wouldn't get anything done!

Teresa: The origin probably comes from herding. Farmers used to control their sheep by shaking their staffs to indicate where the animal should go. I imagine kind of like a shepherd's crook semaphore. Right? Right?

Travis: Yeah, I think you probably had some, like, sound things on 'em, too. You know, like a bell?

Teresa: Maybe, maybe.

Travis: Or a rattle or something.

Teresa: But when the farmers found that they had more sheep than they could control with said shaking, it was said they had more sheep than you could shake a stick at.

Travis: Okay. Oddly, that makes complete sense.

Teresa: Okay, yes. [laughs]

Travis: Now, we have another one here from Brit, again. "Swing a dead cat." Right? And this is, once again, I've heard in terms of, like, "Well, you couldn't swing a dead cat without hitting—" like, if you—I don't know why all these occur to me as, like, sales, but if it was like a used car lot, you could say, like—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —there's—"You couldn't swing a dead cat without hitting an affordable used car."

Teresa: [laughs] I remember this being in the—one of the first times I had actually heard it was in *Tom Sawyer*.

Travis: Well, you bury a dead cat at midnight or something, right?

Teresa: Right, yes, to get rid of warts. But usually it's depicted that they're carrying a cat in a bag.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And Tom's like, "[exaggerated southern accent] What's that?" And then Huck says, "[exaggerated southern accent] It's a dead cat." You know.

Travis: So, wait. That's just the first time you've ever heard the term "dead cat"? 'Cause I don't think they swing a dead cat in it!

Teresa: Well, but if you have a cat in a bag, you are swinging it. I mean, it's a—

Travis: I mean, I suppose so, just through momentum, you mean.

Teresa: Yeah. It—

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: —it swings.

Travis: You know, in, um—in—I think it's in the *Tom Sawyer* play, but they—he loses a marble and he starts to just throw another marble and say, "Marble, find your brother."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And, like, go to it. And man, there are times where I catch myself doing that when I lose something. Where I just think, like, "Sock, find your brother." And, like, throw it? I don't think it'll *really* work, but I think about it all the time. Anyways...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Why do we swing dead cats to hit things?

Teresa: Okay. Similar to "shake a stick at," but worse.

Travis: Oh boy.

Teresa: It means that there's too much of something in one place. Like, you can't swing a dead cat in Hollywood without hitting a celebrity.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? And there's a couple of potential origins. Hmm, one better than the other.

Uh, there's a widely accepted origin that the, quote, "dead cat" in question isn't actually a cat the animal, but the cat of nine tails, a whip used for disciplining sailors.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and since there are nine braided strips at the end of the cat-o-nine-tails, um, the idea is if a ship is so full you can't swing said cat-o-nine-tails without hitting a sailor that's, you know, pretty full.

Travis: Okay. So what's the other bad one?

Teresa: Hmm...

Travis: Or worse one? I don't know. Is the one of hitting—

Teresa: The worse one.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [laughs] The worse one. Perhaps in the—in the Tudor era—

Travis: And you know what? I'm just gonna go ahead and say—I'm just going ahead and say, uh, warning here for—people, I just looked ahead. And there's some animal violence here. So, violence against animals, I should say. So if you want to skip ahead, like, 45 seconds, totally get it. Maybe a minute and a half. Go ahead.

Teresa: [laughs] Supposedly in the Tudor era, the archers, to practice, might put a cat into a bag and hang it off of a tree and use it for target practice.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, understandably the cat would be squirmy inside that bag, um, because it was alive and did not like being hit.

Travis: Ah, hence swinging cat.

Teresa: Hence swinging a cat.

Travis: Okay. Both of those are not great. Let's move on!

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: This one is from Sarah H, and this is once again another reason I love doing these idiom episodes, is this did not even—I would not even have thought of this as an idiom until this, right? 'Cause it's just so prevalent in English, right? "Make ends meet." Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: For me I just think of it like, "Yeah, we make ends meet." Right? Like, that's just what you do when you're, like, budgeting and stuff.

Teresa: In order to make a loop, you make the ends meet. Is that it?

Travis: Yeah, but more of just, like, it's never occurred to me that it didn't mean what it said, right? Because, like, you think of means to an end or, like—it's like, yeah, you make ends meet. Ends of what? I don't know. I've never thought about it.

Teresa: [laughs] Um, I am not the only person to have thought that this might actually stem from "ends meat," M-E-A-T? Like, the meat ends? Like, the ends of the meat make... the meat ends? That's where I thought it was from.

Travis: Like rip tips?

Teresa: Yeah, kind of, or burnt ends or whatever.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But no, not at all, because it's M-E-E-T.

Travis: No, "make ends meet" I usually think of in terms of someone, like, struggling to make ends meet, right? Like, you're trying to pay your bills, or you're like, "Oh, you know, we've gotta scrimp and save to make ends meet."

Teresa: Yes, of course. But when I was younger, I thought of someone—

Travis: No, I understand that you thought—

Teresa: —sitting at—

Travis: I know.

Teresa: —standing at a counter, chopping up a piece of hamburger.

Travis: I was trying to bring it back to the actual thing, though.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay.

Travis: Was what I was doing.

Teresa: Um, it comes from tailoring and dressmaking.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: So it refers to the literal amount of material needed to make a piece of clothing reach around someone's body so that its two ends meet. Um, and the saying evolved as the both ends part of the idiom began to refer to the beginning and the end of the year. So, like you were saying about finances. Um, and so this is most often used to talk about being frugal and such.

Travis: Hi, everybody. Just a quick break from the action to tell you about the Maximum Fun Drive 2021! First off, let's talk about what the Max Fun Drive is and what Maximum Fun is, in case you are new and you have not been around for a previous Max Fun Drive.

Maximumfun.org is artist owned and listener supported. You hear it at the end of every episode. What's that mean?

Teresa: It feels reminiscent of a PBS pledge drive, really. Right?

Travis: Yes, except I don't think Bob Vila, like, owned *This Old House*? I don't know.

Teresa: I don't—I don't think so.

Travis: But we own *Shmanners*, right?

Teresa: We do!

Travis: We own *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*. The network does not own our shows, right? We own them, and we would not exist without listener support. And you, my friends, are the listener.

So, once a year we have the Max Fun Drive where we ask you to consider perhaps becoming a member of the Maximum Fun family.

Teresa: Max Fun friends become Max Fun family during the Max Fun Drive!

Travis: It's perfect. It's perfect, Teresa, and you are right to say it. Uh, basically how it works is you go to Maximumfun.org/join. There are a bunch of different support levels there. You find the one that you are comfortable with. We don't want anybody breaking the bank or, you know, not making ends meet.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Eh? Uh, because, you know, because they're supporting our shows. We want it to be comfortable for everybody. You pick that, and then you get rewards for it! It's that simple.

Teresa: And then, uh, a percentage, a small percentage, about 30%—20%? Something like that—

Teresa: I think it's 30.

Travis: Sure, goes to Maximum Fun to keep the lights on there, to employ all of their wonderful Max Fun employees, and the rest is split between the shows you actually listen to. When you go and become a member you'll be asked, "What shows do you listen to?" And that's where your support goes. But the real score—I think the real treat is the rewards.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And the best part is, right there, right at that five dollar a month level, I think it's the best reward.

Teresa: It really is. I mean, it's like the reward that rewards you all year long.

Travis: And just keeps rewarding you.

Teresa: Indeed. Because there are so many bonus episodes.

Travis: Yeah. So, that's it. At five dollars a month, you get access to a supporter-only bonus content lineup, with over 200 hours—way over, at this point—

Teresa: Way over.

Travis: —uh, of every show on the network. And here's the thing: from every Max Fun Drive. Right? And every Max Fun Drive moving forward!

Teresa: Right!

Travis: As long as you are a member, you will have access to that bonus content, and there's just more and more and more of it every year. This year, we did an episode all about outdated dating advice.

Teresa: Oh, man. It was a doozy.

Travis: It's pretty wild, folks.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Highly recommend. Also, uh, I would be remiss if I didn't also mention, for *The Adventure Zone*, we did an adventure where Justin ran a game designed by his six-year-old daughter, Charlie, [through laughter] and it is absolutely bonkers!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Cannot recommend it enough. For 10 dollars a month, you get access to that bonus content, and you get to choose a show-specific enamel pin.

Teresa: Ours is a lovely idiom.

Travis: It's ducks in a row!

Teresa: Our ducks are in a row.

Travis: It's ducks in a row! It's super cute! You also get a Max Fun membership card that you can, like, flash at places to get into VIP areas, I guess? I don't know. But it's pretty cool, and it's great. Use it in place of a driver's license. Don't.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Don't. Don't do that. Uh, for 20 dollars a month you get the bonus content, you get the enamel pin and the membership card, and you also get to choose between a Take A Minute tea kit—which is cute, we love tea, everyone knows—or a rocket embroidered hat with the rocket Max Fun logo.

Teresa: Ooh!

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: That's nice! I feel like they really upped their game this year.

Travis: They really did. And we also wanted to talk about that 35 dollars a month, because listen. 5 dollars a month is great. 10 dollars a month is great. 20 dollars a month is great. For 35 dollars a month, you get the rocket hat or the Take A Minute tea kit, you get to choose a pin, you get the membership card, you get the bonus content, but you also get an insulated cup with that Max Fun rocket logo, and [through gritted teeth] we love insulated cups in this house!

Teresa: We sure do. And then—and you can flash that logo to all your friends on Zoom.

Travis: Yeah you do! Yeah you do!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And there are some other levels too, but, you know, if you're already a member, maybe consider upgrading this year. Uh, if you're not a member, maybe consider becoming a member. All of those things.

Teresa: And even if you can't, we know. We know that there is a time in everyone's life when it might not be possible to do this. But you can still help us by tweeting about it, by sharing the link to our shows, sharing the link to the membership site. You know, talk about why you love it.

Travis: Just talk about why you like Max Fun, why you like *Shmanners*, all that stuff. And, you know, I also just want to say, uh, a thank you to everybody who is already a member, everybody who already listens to the show, everybody who tells a friend. We wouldn't be able to, like, have Alex help us write, because we pay her for her work, and we do that because of your support. It would be hard to find the time to make this show if it wasn't basically our job, you know? And because of you, we make the commitment to make the shows. And so we just want to also take this time to say thank you. Thank you to everybody. Now, let's get back to the show.

Okay. Now, Joshua C. asked about "let the cat out of the bag."

Teresa: A lot of cat ones. Is there—or just two so far.

Travis: Well, no, but I mean there are, I think, another troubling one is "more than one way to skin a cat." That's another one.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Uh, "cat's got your tongue."

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: I think cats just—we have a lot of ones about dogs.

Teresa: Curiosity killed the cat.

Travis: That's true. There's a lot of ones about dogs, though, too. Can't teach an old dog new tricks. You lay down with dogs [unintelligible] fleas.

Teresa: Let sleeping dogs lie.

Travis: [simultaneously] dogs lie. A lot about birds, too.

Teresa: Oh no. [laughs quietly]

Travis: I'm just saying, I don't think it's that there's a lot about cats. I think it's just that there's a lot of idioms.

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay.

Travis: Okay. So, let the cat out of the bag is like you spill a secret, right? "Oh, you let the cat out of the bag."

Teresa: Yes. Thank you, Joshua C. Perhaps this saying comes from livestock fraud.

Travis: Go on.

Teresa: Um, according to *Mental Floss*, if you'd like to look this up, merchants used to sell customers live piglets in sacks for easier transport. Now, that makes sense to me. If you want to buy a pig, you can't really, like, walk it home, right?

Travis: Well, sure.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And you would also, I guess, buy the small one.

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: Raise it up. Probably cheaper than buying a full grown one already.

Teresa: Exactly, because it would be cheaper to feed, yeah.

Travis: Okay, okay.

Teresa: Um, and perhaps if you had a sneaky salesperson, they might swap the pig for a cat when you weren't looking.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: So instead of a tiny piglet, you would get a cat, uh, that would inevitably not become a pig, if you wanted to raise a pig.

Travis: No, that's—that's true. I don't know what—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —you could try, but I don't think that there's any way to turn a cat into a pig.

Teresa: [laughs] Not at all. And this would be cheating. It would be a cheat.

Travis: I mean, it would be fraud, wouldn't it?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Yes. And you would quite literally let the cat out of the bag instead of the pig that you actually bought.

Travis: Ah, so that would reveal the secret. The cat is out of the bag. You don't think that when you heard the cat meowing they'd be like, "That's the weirdest pig sound I ever heard!"

Teresa: Uh, I don't know what—what piglets sound like, actually.

Travis: Like small pigs. So, then we have another one, from Skylar B. "The whole kit and caboodle."

Teresa: Do you remember Caboodles? [laughs]

Travis: Yes, I remember Caboodles. I'm a theater kid, Teresa! "[sarcastically] Do I remember Caboodles."

Teresa: Caboodles were just cute tackle boxes, basically.

Travis: Yeah. 100%. Very rounded, very—

Teresa: Colorful.

Travis: —very—that, like, neon—for some reason I think of LA Looks style.

Teresa: [holding back laughter] Yeah, yeah.

Travis: You know, kind of—anyways.

Teresa: Anyway.

Travis: I don't think that that's what this is about, though, right? I think other way around, that was probably named after this.

Teresa: After this, yeah, because when you have a big collection of something, or you have everything and the extras, you have the whole kit and caboodle.

Travis: Yes, but why?

Teresa: Okay. So, this was slang during the 20's, and a lot of the 20's—

Travis: The 1920's.

Teresa: Yes, the 1920's. You're right. [quietly] Oh, no.

Travis: But we're in the 20's now, right?

Teresa: [sighs heavily] The 1920's, where slang went off the rails. Oh! Another one.

Travis: Oh! Yeah, that one's pretty clear, though, isn't it?

Teresa: [laughs] And we're pretty sure it refers to a soldier's kit bag, which was like a duffle bag you'd carry everything in. Um, and so this is how the phrase "kit" began to mean a set of objects, and also "caboodle" or "boodle" is an old term that means a group or collection, usually of people, but could apply to objects as well. So, with the whole kit and the caboodle, it meant you had everything and a place to put 'em.

Travis: Okay. Okay. That's making se—I mean—

Teresa: It reminds me of everything and a bag of chips, right? Do you remember that?

Travis: I mean, sure, but I think that was more of a compliment than it was a turn of phrase. But I—

Teresa: She's all that and a bag of chips. That means that she has everything, plus a snack.

Travis: I said I knew what it meant!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Oh, it's probably for the listener, the listener—

Teresa: Right, yeah.

Travis: It's interesting to me, because caboodle—sometimes it's frustrating, a little bit, when we do an idiom and it's like, "Oh yeah! Well, that word was just made up." And you're like, "Aw, man."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But aren't all words made up? Um, this one was submitted by Emily D. "A dime a dozen." This is usually something, like, very common, like, "Oh, you—that book? It's a dime a dozen. You can find that anywhere."

Teresa: Right. Um, but when it first started in 1976, many goods such as eggs or apples were advertised as a dime a dozen on the United States, meaning that you could show off something by getting a value for your money, right? So lots of apples for a dime. But, you know, inflation. And now it means the marker of a deal being something cheap and easy to get.

Travis: Okay, so it used to be, like—

Teresa: You could get a lot of these things for one little dime!

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And now it's like, "They're everywhere. You can't walk through a room without steppin' on these things."

Travis: I wonder if that's why the dime is so small.

Teresa: Hm.

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: I bet that the dime was pretty small and people were like, "This is... money."

Travis: Sure. I need to find out why a dime is small. It really bothers me. Okay. Having a red—

Teresa: [laughs] Why is it smaller than a nickel?

Travis: This is what I'm saying. "Having a red letter day." This was from Sarah W. Having an exceptionally good or memorable day.

Teresa: This is—this is kind of cute, right?

Travis: That's good, compared to some of the cat ones, yeah.

Teresa: Compared to some of the other ones. Um, when churches would release spiritual calendars, you know, in, like, prayer books or bibles or whatever, uh, the feast days and the holy days would be marked in red ink to denote their importance.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: So if you were having a very important day, it's a red letter day.

Travis: Cool! Now, uh, Robert Mackie, who has worked with us at CUSS shows here in Cincinnati as well as being one of my mods on Twitch, asked about "got the hots." And now this one—very slangy to me. Of, like, "Oh, he's got the hots for her," you know. "They've got the hots for them." It's like, oh, they're—they're—got a crush on 'em, they're—

Teresa: Oh yeah.

Travis: —hot under the collar. Ehh?

Teresa: Ehh? Uh, and that is really exactly it, that when you are enamored with another person, you might blush or become physically warm.

Travis: Oh, so it's literally you're getting hot.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay. Robert also asked about "more fun than a barrel of monkeys," which is usually, like, "That's so—it's so much fun. It's more fun than a barrel of monkeys!" And you know what's interesting to me is, I—and I haven't looked ahead—I don't know if it's based on the toy, or if the toy is based on the saying.

Teresa: The toy came second.

Travis: Really? Okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, and, you know, in reading this copy, and thinking about it for myself, I have always thought, "A barrel full of monkeys does not sound like fun."

Travis: But doesn't it sound wild to you? It sounds wild to me.

Teresa: It does sound wild. It sounds like chaos to me.

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: And that is actually where this comes from. Um, so when zoos and circuses were becoming more and more mainstream, monkeys were a popular draw, but also a nightmare to take care of and keep around and—because, I mean, they're—they are mischievous and inquisitive by nature. Also, loud. Um, and so it was—it was a very difficult job for the circus or the zoo to keep these monkeys contained.

Travis: So you put 'em in a barrel!

Teresa: Uh, not—not just—

Travis: No. Don't put monkeys in a barrel.

Teresa: Uh, but you could put them in a cage, which was recorded as the phrase in 1840, uh, which evolved to a wagon load of monkeys. Again, we've talked about this, because a lot of circuses traveled on trains. But then it meant to describe something chaotic and terrible, which is what I am envisioning in my head when I think of a wagon full of monkeys. Um, but then later, the game "Barrel of Monkeys" was invented in the 1960's, and it meant something that was actually fun! Because kids would associate the game, and the animals, with playtime and silliness. However you use this phrase now, you could mean it literally, which is the way that is terrifying to me, or, you know, to be silly.

Travis: And I still think of it. I still think it has a connotation. Like, if I think about someone using the phrase "more fun than a barrel of monkeys," I don't think of it as, like, a really enjoyable crossword puzzle. It's like—it's, like, wacky, wild fun, you know? Going to the trampoline park is more fun than a barrel of monkeys! Right?

Teresa: Yeah. I mean, yes, chaotic and terrible. [laughs]

Travis: I think—okay. I think that not all of us have asthma that's triggered by trampolines, Teresa.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: I think that it's the kind of thing where—I don't know. I just—I still think of it as, like, wacky, wild fun. Right?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Okay. Uh, "shoot the breeze." Shoot... the breeze. Like, small talk, right?

Teresa: Right, yeah, absolutely.

Travis: I also know it as, uh, shoot the s-word. But we don't curse on this show.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Shoot the s-word.

Teresa: We don't. Um, so it has kind of a scandalous origin.

Travis: Oh, get out of the town.

Teresa: [laughs] That's another one.

Travis: Get out of the town?

Teresa: Get out of town.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Yeah. Um, in the mid-1900's in the United States, "breeze" was slang for a rumor.

Travis: Ohh!

Teresa: Right? Uh, and shooting the breeze was the way you would describe the empty chatter of repeating gossip.

Travis: See, I would've said it was shoot the breeze, like the air from your lungs, you know? Like, you're breathing, the—where you're just standing outside—maybe that was it. Like, standing outside as the breeze—and you're just talking on the porch, shooting the breeze. But nope!

Teresa: I'm certain that a lot of gossiping happened on said porches.

Travis: Oh, certainly, certainly. Now, this one I find interesting, right? Because this is another one that I don't think I would've thought of as an idiom, just 'cause it seems so commonplace, but "keep the ball rolling," right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And, like, just, kind of—you know, to keep the thing going, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Like, that's the thing. If you repeat—if you "replace ball with thing," it still makes sense.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Keep the thing going, right? Keep the ball going—

Teresa: Keep it goin'.

Travis: But I also normally think of it in terms of, like, conversation.

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But why?

Teresa: Well, um, if you are as familiar—you, listener, you—are as familiar with *Parks and Rec* as I am, you may have noticed that the origin—so-called origin of this phrase is mentioned in the episode where William Henry Harrison is featured.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: In, like, the mid-1840's, the United States—sorry, not the mid, just the 1840 [laughs] United States Presidential election, it's widely regarded as the first kind of, like, political campaign that swept across the United States.

Travis: Like a national campaign, 'cause people were campaigning before that, but this was the first, like, "We gotta slogan. We got some posters, and we're broadcasting the same message everywhere."

Teresa: Exactly. President Martin Van Buren was running against William Henry Harrison, and his running mate was John Tyler. Um, both of whom were war heroes and fought at the famed battle of Tippecanoe.

Travis: Hence "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: And so one of the things that they had was—their slogan was to keep that ball rolling, because they had the victory on the battlefield. Keep, you know, things going up and up.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That's another one. On the up and up.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: And they actually, when they had people attend rallies even then, they had ten-foot globes made of tin and leather that they actually pushed from one campaign even to the other.

Travis: Oh boy. Okay, big ol' Earth balls, right?

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Okay. And then they sing the song, "Don't you hear from every quarter, quarter, quarter, good news and true, that swift the ball is rolling on for Tippecanoe and Tyler, too."

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: Hey, it's us again, interrupting us! I know, yeah.

Teresa: Well, is—if you interrupt yourself, are you really interrupting?

Travis: Yeah, I interrupt myself all the time. Halfway through a thought and then you think of another thought, and then you forgot the thought you were gonna say? I think that counts.

[pause]

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Okay. We wanna tell you one more time about the Max Fun Drive. Why are we repeating ourselves? Why are we telling you again? Well, because—

Teresa: Because there's more info that you need.

Travis: Well—yes, that.

Teresa: To know.

Travis: That's not what I was gonna say, but yes, also that.

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: What I was gonna say is, sometimes you heard us talk and you think, "Oh, that sounds great! I wanna check that out." And then, poof! It's out of your head. It's gone. Like a butterfly in a strong breeze, it's gone.

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: Fwoompf! Right? And so we wanna just keep it fresh in your mind so you—

Teresa: Wait. Sound effect, one more time.

Travis: Fwoompf!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Where'd that butterfly go? Aw, caught in the jet engine, I guess. Um, so go, Maximumfun.org/join. Check out the different support levels. Find a level that's right for you, and maybe consider becoming a Max Fun member. Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: And then when you do, make sure you let us know!

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Tweet at us, @shmannerscast, so we can say thank you!

Teresa: Tag us, please, so that we can... retweet you. [laughs] And say thank you. [laughs]

Travis: Oh, and I also want to say, there's a thing that I feel like is new this year that we haven't done previously. Maybe we did it in the July one. But that you can boost your membership, you know?

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: Maybe you're already a member, and you're not quite ready to move up to the next membership level. That's totally fine. We get it. You know, sometimes it can be a big jump, it can be a big commitment. You can go and boost your monthly membership slightly. It doesn't qualify you for the rewards, but you do get the reward of a fuzzy feeling in your heart, knowing that you support the art and artists that you love.

Teresa: And you always get that sweet, sweet bonus content.

Travis: And believe me, it is well worth it. So, consider becoming a member. Go to Maximumfun.org/join and just know that we really appreciate you. Thank you for listening, and enjoy the rest of the episode. Now, Teresa...

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: If someone is a sitting duck...

Teresa: Mm-hmm?

Travis: Right? It means that they're an easy target.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Right?

Teresa: A sitting duck. Fish in a barrel.

Travis: "Ah, you're a sitting—get outta there, you're a sitting duck." Right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yes. Why? [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Now, I assume it might have something to do with actually, like, ducks, right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: It's 'cause you hunt ducks.

Teresa: Right, yes, yes. Because as you would surmise, even having never hunted ducks—

Travis: I've never hunted anything.

Teresa: Exactly. A duck that is—

Travis: Except a good deal. Hi, you can't swing...

Teresa: Ooh. [laughs]

Travis: ... a dead cat, or shake a stick at our good deals. Here at *Shmanners* Used Cars.

Teresa: A duck that is sitting still, perhaps on the water...

Travis: Way easier to shoot.

Teresa: Way easier to shoot than a duck that's flying around.

Travis: You gotta bob and weave, duck! Gotta bob and weave.

Teresa: Yep. That's it.

Travis: Oh, okay. Now, uh, we also have, on top of this, some wholesome, nice sayings that were sent in to us. Uh, Andrew H, sweet human, wrote in feeling bothered by something that they always heard their grandmother say. According to Andrew, his grandmother, who was born around Nashville in the 1920's, had this amazing saying that it was, quote, "It's cold as fluke."

Teresa: [laughs] What a great word.

Travis: It's cold as flugens outside. I assume. Okay, flugens, yes, outside. For whenever it was very cold. Andrew wrote us in a frenzy asking, "Is my grandmother crazy? If not, was she secretly awful?"

This is a thing, you know?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Whenever older folks use a word that I don't know, yeah, I assume.
[laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I assume it might be terrible. Uh, is it acceptable to use, Andrew asks?
And I—

Teresa: Good news, everyone!

Travis: Yeah, we have good news. Your grandmother was not secretly awful. Apparently flugen used to be a euphemism for the devil? We don't know why.

Teresa: Well, okay. 1920's, a lot of wild slang. That's just the—

Travis: Sure, just throwing stuff at the wall.

Teresa: Just—yep, seeing what sticks.

Travis: But even then, how do you use it? Like, "Oh, don't—watch out, don't sin or the flugen will come get you?"

Teresa: [laughs] Well, just as it's—it's cold as flugens outside.

Travis: The flugen runs Hell? No. I don't—

Teresa: No. I don't know.

Travis: —I don't—it feels weird. Okay. Uh, but it just means—

Teresa: But not bad.

Travis: —but if someone might say, like, "Oh, it's cold as the devil outside." Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: So keep using it. People will look at you funny, 'cause I don't know of any other human being other than both you and your grandmother, so I guess two human beings, who have ever said the word "flugen." And now me.

Uh, Emily D, who suggested "dime a dozen," emailed us back in August, and Emily teaches English as a Second Language students in Taiwan, and she had them play a game where they guessed what certain American idioms mean, and they had some really solid guesses, so here's a few.

"Let the cat out of the bag." Learn something new.

Teresa: Uh...

Travis: Which I think is far more optimistic.

Teresa: Definitely.

Travis: Than ours. You know, "Oh, let the cat into the light."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "The cat appro—now the cat can see the sun."

Teresa: I think that that's assuming a very gentle opening and a very calm cat.
[laughs]

Travis: And the cat slightly coming forward and saying, "Ahh. Now I get it." Uh, "A dime a go—a dozen." And they guessed that it was both rich and poor.

Teresa: I mean, and they were pretty on, right? Because when it started out it meant you could get a really great deal, and then when it, you know—now it means that you can't—you get so—there are so many that abound that you could give just dimes for them.

Travis: These two, I think they were more right than we are. "Hit the sack." They thought, "Use a punching bag at a gym."

Teresa: Oh.

Travis: Yes, correct.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Yeah. Hey, you know what? We should change that one.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And "Like riding a bicycle." Something hard, [laughs quietly] because they said that riding a bicycle is not easy, it's really hard, and they are not wrong.

Teresa: Learning to ride a bicycle is difficult.

Travis: Yes, why is that it? Falling off a log I get. Easy to fall off a log. All you gotta do is not balance one leg. It's like riding a bicycle? No. It's hard to ride a bicycle.

Teresa: I think—I think that that part of riding a bicycle—like riding a bike, uh, is that muscle memory kind of takes over?

Travis: Oh, that's it, is that, like, once you learn how to do it, you can do it.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That's fair, I haven't ridden a bike in probably 8 years. I bet I could do it.

Teresa: You could still do it.

Travis: I bet I could do it. But you know what's easier? Driving a car.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: For a lot of reasons. Now, Colton M. brought up a really great question that has to do with the catchphrase for the show, "Manners, *Shmanners*." He was curious about adding "shm-" in front of the something, and was worried that Alex would not have an answer, and by extension, we would not have an answer. But there's an entire Wikipedia page dedicated to this linguistic weirdness. It even has its own term. What? I didn't know this. It's called shm-... [laughs] shm-reduplica—[laughs] shm-reduplication.

Teresa: [laughs] I love how it took you, like, four tries to say that.

Travis: Well, 'cause you just added "shm-." Just make it shmeduplication!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The idea is that you take the original word, or the first syllable of the phrase, and repeat it, replacing the original beginning with "shm-," e.g., fancy shmancy, or baby shmaby. Um, I—there's a really great James Acaster bit where he talks about a guy who won every argument that way, 'cause once somebody says it, like, what are you gonna say back? Except for when it came to schmoozing, 'cause then he was just saying schmoozing schmoozing, and it sounded like he was encouraging you.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, it's usually done to denote sarcasm, derision, or skepticism. Why? Well, apparently it originates from Yiddish. Yiddish-speaking immigrants added it to the American lexicon when many were immigrating to the United States at the turn of the 20th century, and then it was picked up by Americans of all nationalities and backgrounds, and here we are, it's a melting pot!

Teresa: And that's why we use it, right? Because... manners are thought to be something, like—

Travis: Hoity toity! That's another one.

Teresa: That's another one! Unattainable, some sort of, like—it's—it's, like, only for the posh, and those in the know, right?

Travis: Yeah, I always think of it, in regards to our show, in terms of, like, someone using manners to judge somebody else?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: And us saying, "Oh, manners, shmanners."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: No, that's not it. It's not about capital M Manners.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: It's about the behavior, and it's about interaction with each other, and it's about being the best you you can be, being comfortable in situations, all those things.

Teresa: Right. So, manners are attainable.

Travis: Right. And—and about you.

Teresa: And about you!

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. So manners, *Shmanners*—

Travis: Get it?

Teresa: Uh, get it?

Travis: Oh wait, no, it's not the end of the show. [gasps] Don't hang up! [laughs quietly] Wait, "hang up?!" [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs] Which also has a double meaning. Sometimes when I say it I mean "Get those manners!" Right? And sometimes I'm saying, "Get the joke?"

Travis: "Get it?" Hey, speaking of get it—no. I wanna thank—

Teresa: [laughs loudly]

Travis: —I wanna thank you all, not just for listening, but for supporting this show. This show would not exist if it weren't for support from our listeners, support from our Max Fun members. Um, you know, we've got two kids, and it can be hard to make time to record the show, but we do, because we know that it matters to you, and you matter to us, and we don't wanna let you down. We don't want you to go looking for an episode that's not there. We might be late from time to time, or miss from time to time, because kids. But it matters—

Teresa: And life.

Travis: —and life. But it matters to us, and like I said, it's not just the monetary form of support. It's also people who, you know, tweet about the show, send in idioms, ask questions on Twitter, tell friends about it, all that stuff is support that we rely on.

Teresa: Our supporters are integral to the show.

Travis: Yes, we couldn't do it without you. And so if you would like to become a monetary supporter, or upgrade the support you already give, now is the best time to do it. Get those rewards, be part of the train, the hype train, uh, as they call it on Twitch. Uh, just go to Maximumfun.org/join, and once again, thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you. We can't thank you enough.

Teresa: And we would also like to thank Alex for researching and writing for us. We'd like to thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found, um, and we would love to thank you if you tweet @shmannerscast on twitter, we will say a little thank you. Even—even—

Travis: If you upgrade or become a member.

Teresa: Well, even if you give us a shoutout to your friends.

Travis: Yeah, that's fair, yeah.

Teresa: If you cannot, at this time, become a member, but you're ready to hype that train...

Travis: We love it.

Teresa: We love it, and we will say thank you as well for that. Um, thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for that Twitter thumbnail art. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. Lots of love in that group!

Travis: All the love.

Teresa: And we really appreciate it. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, you should join that group.

Travis: Yeah! 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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