

Shmanners 301: Toni Stone

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[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: There was a prolonged pause after I started recording 'cause I couldn't remember the first two words I said.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I wanted to say, "Hello, everyone."

Teresa: That's not it.

Travis: And I knew that wasn't it.

Teresa: That's wrong.

Travis: And I was like, "What do I say?" And the answer is "Hello, internet." How are you?

Teresa: I am well.

Travis: Oh, good. I have smelly hands. That's how I am.

Teresa: You do, that's true. [laughs quietly]

Travis: I sprayed some vitamins, some plant vitamins on my plants. I put my hand— the first time I sprayed I put my hand behind the leaves so it wouldn't spray all over everything else. Sprayed it, and I was like, "Aw, this smells bad." And I washed my hands [laughs] three times since then.

Teresa: Question.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Did it say to spray it on the leaves?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: It did, okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: I guess I always associate all nutrients coming from soil.

Travis: This is for leaf health, which is what I wanted.

Teresa: Okay, okay.

Travis: It's not just about a healthy plant, it's about leaf... health.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. I would assume one was indicative of the other. Maybe the plants need more from the roots to feed the leaves.

Travis: You know what happens when you assume?

Teresa: No.

Travis: No, neither do I.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: No. I— listen. I am a sucker for a gimmick, and when a thing's like, "This is good for your plants," I'm like, "Okay! I'll try anything. I love my plants." Hey.

Teresa: I don't know a lot about plants. You know what else I don't know a lot about?

Travis: Baseball.

Teresa: Baseball! [laughs]

Travis: There's a lot of things I know you don't know about. If I didn't know where you were going, that could've been really bad.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: If I was like, "Uh, math?" Right?

Teresa: I mean, enough about math to get by.

Travis: But you— that— okay, that doesn't sound like you know *a lot* about math though, does it?

Teresa: [laughs] I know more about math than I do about baseball.

Travis: There's no way that's true!

Teresa: [sighs] It is. It sadly is.

Travis: I guess that is true. Now, I'm glad you—

Teresa: I can—

Travis: Actually, can I just say? In retrospect, I'm glad you know more about math than baseball.

Teresa: [laughs] I can count the amount of baseball games I have watched, even on television, on one hand.

Travis: But you understand the concepts, right?

Teresa: They hit the ball, they run around the bases.

Travis: Now, you—

Teresa: The teams switch every time. That's what I know.

Travis: I— when we lived in LA I was part of a softball team. You came and watched those.

Teresa: Softball is— one, softball is a different game.

Travis: Barely!

Teresa: And— and two, [holding back laughter] I barely watched.

Travis: Okay. So you barely watched a barely different game. Got it. Okay.

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So, um, this is our final episode of the final week of Black History Month. But you know what? Just because February is over doesn't mean that you should stop learning about Black icons that you've never heard of.

Travis: Absolutely true. True.

Teresa: Um, so, you know, keep Black history alive all year long, in your heart.

Travis: 'Cause Black history is everyone's history.

Teresa: Indeed.

Travis: So, what? Who? Where? When? Why are we learning about?

Teresa: Well, so, um, this idea actually came from a recent Google doodle.

Travis: A Google doodle.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: A goodle.

Teresa: Toni Stone is probably the best athlete you've never heard of.

Travis: I will say, I've never heard of a lot of athletes. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: See, again.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: But you haven't heard of a lot of probably mediocre athletes as well.

Travis: Yes, just by law of large numbers, yeah.

Teresa: Indeed, indeed. But she's probably the best one you've never heard of.

Travis: So, Toni Stone.

Teresa: Uh, she was the first of three women to play professional baseball full time for the Indianapolis Clowns in what was previously the all-male Negro Leagues.

Travis: Okay. Right off the bat—

Teresa: And that's what they were called.

Travis: Can I say, it's just a balance here. Toni Stone? Incredibly cool name.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Sounds straight out of, like, comic book characters. Toni Stone, great name. Indianapolis Clowns, on the other hand. Not... intimidating in the right way, I would say.

Teresa: Well, so, um, Indianapolis Clowns are to baseball as the Harlem Globetrotters are to basketball.

Travis: Oh, interesting! Okay.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, very similar. There's a lot of, like, flashy stuff, and tricks, and fun, cool things.

Travis: Very much like an exhibition of skill more than it is...

Teresa: Indeed, indeed. Um, over the course of her career, she would be the first woman to play as a regular on an American big league professional baseball

team. She would play for the San Francisco Sea Lions, the New Orleans Creoles, the Indianapolis Crowns, and the Kansas City Monarchs.

Travis: Kansas City Monarchs is my favorite, though.

Teresa: Uh, Toni Stone was born in July 17th, 1921, and originally named Marcenia Lyle Stone. She was born in West Virginia!

Travis: [gasps] What? Get out!

Teresa: Yeah! Isn't that cool?

Travis: I said get out!

Teresa: No, I won't.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So, uh, she had two sisters and a brother, and her father was a barber and a graduate of Tuskegee.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Also, a World War I veteran.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, her mother, Willa, was a hairdresser.

Travis: Oh, a hairdresser and a barber.

Teresa: I know, right?

Travis: Okay, a good balance.

Teresa: Good balance.

Travis: Okay, I see.

Teresa: That's a real family talent right there.

Travis: What do you think they talked about? Probably lots of stuff. I don't want to boil it down. I don't want to be reductive and say they only talked about hair.

Teresa: Uh, when her family was two years—

Travis: But wouldn't it be weird if they were like, "We don't talk about hair at home."

Teresa: We don't talk about hair at home. Business!

Travis: Hair— hair talk is for the office.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: When we are at home, we don't talk about hair, or Bruno.

Teresa: Sorry. When, uh—[laughs quietly] good— good on you.

Travis: Thanks.

Teresa: Uh, when Toni was 10 years old they moved to St. Paul, Minnesota, um, where her parents opened a joint hairdressing business, right?

Travis: There you go.

Teresa: Called, uh, Boykin's Barber and Beauty Shop. Boykin was her father's name.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Um, and St. Paul was really where Toni— I mean, she was 10 at this point— played baseball constantly. She played so much with the neighborhood boys that they called her tomboy.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Not original.

Travis: Not original, no.

Teresa: But still, a nickname nonetheless. Um, her mother was not— not really into it. Uh, wanted her to, you know— try to steer her towards more, quote, "elegant" pastimes.

Travis: Sure. Sure, sure, sure.

Teresa: Uh, even bought her figure skates as a gift.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, Stone, an amazing athlete, took those skates and, uh, performed wonderfully at a city figure skating competition, then went right back to baseball.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I like that idea of like, "Okay, yep. Let me just knock this one out, and then I'll get back to the thing I like. Is this good? Yeah, did great? Okay, great."

Teresa: "Okay, done."

Travis: "Back to baseball now, Mom."

Teresa: Um, I mean, so obviously it was clear that Toni was a gifted athlete, right?

Travis: Yeah, sounds like.

Teresa: She did well at swimming, track, basketball, football, baseball... figure skating. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Fill— yeah, fill in the blank.

Teresa: Fill in the blank, she could do it. I have never been one of those people. I can absolutely—

Travis: Oh, I am.

Teresa: —not pick up a sport—

Travis: At every sport. Ohh, that's me. Sport! Musical instrument. Uh, programming. B— big, heavy weights. I can pick it all up.

Teresa: [laughs] [sighs] No.

Travis: No, this is the problem with me is, like, I mechanically understand how every sport works, right? Like, I can say, like, oh, well, [stammers]— in some ways now also strategy from— but when someone's like, "Now you do it." I'm like, "Ohhh, now, oh... "

Teresa: Oh no.

Travis: Here's where the problem comes. That implies that my brain has any control over my limbs.

Teresa: I do feel like Griffin, though, is kind of like the musical instrument side of that.

Travis: I thought you were gonna say the sports side of it!

Teresa: [through laughter] Oh no, no, no.

Travis: I was like, "Oh, honey!"

Teresa: No, no.

Travis: You couldn't be more wrong!

Teresa: No, the musical instrument side. I feel he can pretty much pick up anything and play it.

Travis: This is true.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I mean, with pra— it's not a magical ability. He learns to do it. He has the focus to learn how to do it that I don't.

Teresa: You can't just hand him an instrument and he'll go oodle-oodle-oodle-oodle-oo?

Travis: No. If he did I'd be terrified.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "[horrified] What did you do, Griffin? Who'd you sell your soul to?!"

Teresa: Um, she even tried out softball because her mother encouraged her to do softball, seeing as how that was a, quote, "lady sport" at the time.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Right? But she always went back to baseball. Um, she was clearly someone who marched to the beat of her own drummer. Uh, she wore pants at school instead of skirts, uh—

Travis: [sarcastically] Scandalous!

Teresa: I know. At the time, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Um, she loved to read. She was an avid library patron, but did not like going to school at all. Uh, she didn't think that it reflected her own reality, so she—

Travis: That's probably not the words she used when she was, like, 12 though, right? Probably wasn't like, "Mother, I would like to not go to school anymore, because I don't believe it reflects my own reality." I think if our child said that to us I'd be like, "Okay?" [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "I'm convinced! You hear what she said?!"

Teresa: I'm convinced! [laughs]

Travis: "She said it doesn't reflect her reality! Why are we sending her to school? She should get a job."

Teresa: Uh, so her parents were not thrilled about her not going to school regularly when they thought that she was supposed to be going to school regularly. Uh, so they even turned to the family priest to help them out, and the priest recognized Toni's strength as a pitcher and encouraged her to try out for the Claver Catholic Church boys' baseball team in what was Little League at the time.

Um, and it was technically a church activity! So Toni's parents allowed her to play.

Travis: Okay. Oh, she got— she got in!

Teresa: Yeah, she was the only girl on the team.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Here was the problem with this team specifically. Her coach had absolutely no interest in nurturing and cultivating Toni's natural talent and skill. If that had happened to me I probably would have just sat on the bench, right? But not Toni.

Travis: Oh yeah. It doesn't take much for me to quit things.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: I mean, I tried to quit wrestling so many times.

Teresa: So many times.

Travis: I think I've talked about it on this show, that I tried to quit and my dad was like, "McElroys don't quit!" Which I think we've all established is a lie.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I've quit so many jobs. McElroys regularly quit things. My dad— that was a line of BS, Dad, if you're listening.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Just say "I don't wanna have to deal with you at home, those two hours where you're at wrestling practice is two hours where I'm not dealing with you. We don't quit!"

Teresa: Uh, but she practiced harder and taught herself the fundamentals of proper baseball by reading rule books. Uh, even joined a girls' softball team—

Travis: Wait, she got good at sports by reading books?!

Teresa: Indeed!

Travis: Unheard of!

Teresa: [laughs] She even joined a girls' softball league at the time, so she was playing two— in two leagues at the same time for two different sports. Um, so what she ended up doing was she started showing up to watch the baseball school run by Gabby Street, who was the manager for the St. Paul Saints.

Travis: That's a good— I mean, that's a clear name. I see where they got it from.

Teresa: Oh, yeah, sure. Um, he—

Travis: It'd be weird if it was the St. Paul Pauls.

Teresa: Uh, mm-hmm.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay. Uh, Gabby Street's baseball camp. So, he managed the Saints, and that was St. Paul's Minor League team, and he was also a former Minor League player before he became the director of this local baseball school for boys.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and she would watch him constantly. She, uh—

Travis: Not constant— you mean at the camp.

Teresa: At the camp, okay.

Travis: Not like— she wouldn't follow him around, honey. "She watched him constantly. His every move!" [laughs]

Teresa: Fine. But, like, so much as, like, she was just kind of, like, standing there. 'Cause the camp was outside, right? It was a baseball diamond. So, like, just kind of standing there listening, never getting, like, a turn or whatever, 'cause she wasn't officially participating in the camp. But, like, enough so that he was like, "Go away!" And she was like, "No."

Travis: "No."

Teresa: Uh, and—

Travis: "I'm your shadow now, Gabby. I'm gonna be where you go! I'm— when you wake up, I'll be there. When you go to sleep, I'll be there. In your car? Look at the backseat! It's me."

Teresa: [laughs] A little bit. She asked a total of, like, three times to his face, and there's a story about how, um, he would chase her away, literally chase her away around the corner, and then she would come back later on that day. And come to plague him once again.

Travis: I love this.

Teresa: Um, and, you know, this was certainly annoying, but Toni eventually got onto the field. Um, and he said that— Gabby Street would recall that he had never seen anyone so naturally talented. Um, and was happy to get her on the field to have her show the boys up.

Travis: There you go, okay! Well, thanks for coming around, Gabby!

Teresa: Um, I do want to mention, though. This is all sounding very, you know, like... like a well-intentioned PG movie, right? About a young girl breaking down the curmudgeonly coach to reveal that he had a heart of gold. He did not.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Let's do a little tangent on Gabby Street. Um, she didn't know this when she joined his team, that, you know, not only was his program intentionally all boys, it was also intentionally all white.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: He belonged to the KKK.

Travis: Oh no!

Teresa: And has a well-documented history of racism throughout his entire career.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Right. Um, and—

Travis: That's bad.

Teresa: Well, and—

Travis: I'm gonna go— hey, listen.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: I'm just gonna say it.

Teresa: That's bad.

Travis: That's bad.

Teresa: And this is not a redeeming quality for him, accepting Toni, because he was very capable of noticing her natural talent, right? He recognized the hunger and love of the sport, and, you know, this isn't, like, a momentary lapse in judgment. You can—

Travis: Oh, so this is like he was— not in the context we normally use it, but, like, objectifying of, like, she's good at baseball. I— like, that's it. Right? "I can use her."

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Right. Okay.

Teresa: Exactly. Uh, you know, liking one Black person throughout your life doesn't make you not racist.

Travis: Correct, yes.

Teresa: Um, so—

Travis: Being not racist makes you not racist, yeah.

Teresa: Exactly. Exactly. Um, but, I mean, she was 15 years old and being coached by an arguable legend, which is awesome.

Travis: Yeah, she was taking— she was taking whatever opportunities she could get.

Teresa: Right. Um, so by the time she turned 16, she was regularly playing weekend games with the Twin City Colored Giants, which were a barnstorming team. Do you know what barnstorming means? 'Cause I didn't.

Travis: Not in the context of baseball.

Teresa: Well, I mean, remember how I talked about the Harlem Globetrotters?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: It's very similar to that. It means that it's, like, sports teams or even individual athletes that travel to various locations and stage exhibition matches.

Travis: Right, okay. So show-off teams. Got it.

Teresa: Exactly. And they would play in any place that they could, like barns, for example.

Travis: Got it, okay.

Teresa: I don't know how you play baseball in a barn.

Travis: Probably outside the barn. Probably not inside—

Teresa: Oh, in the field, maybe, next to the barn?

Travis: Yeah, probably used the barn as a dugout? I don't know. We're gonna find out more. But first, how about some promos for some other Max Fun shows?

[music plays]

[doorbell rings]

Speaker One: Um, hi. I'm looking for a movie.

Ify: Oh, I've got you.

Drea: Uh, there's that new foreign film with the time travel.

Alonso: There's an amazing documentary about queer history on streaming.

Ify: Have I told you about this classic where giant robots fight?

Alonso: Or there's that one that most critics hated but I thought was actually pretty good.

Drea: Oooh, I know! The one with the huge car chase, and then there's that scene where—

Ify and Alonso: The car jumps over the submarine!

Speaker One: Wow, who are you eclectic movie experts?

Ify: Well, I'm Ify Nwadiwe.

Drea: I'm Drea Clark!

Alonso: And I'm Alonso Duralde. And together, we host the movie podcast *Maximum Film*.

Drea: New episodes every week on Maximumfun.org.

Ify: And you actually just walked into our recording booth.

Speaker One: Oh, weird, sorry. I thought this was a video store.

Drea: You seem like a lady with a lot of problems.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

Jo: Well, Manolo, we have a show to promote. It's called *Dr. Gameshow*.

Manolo: It's a family friendly podcast where listeners submit games and we play them with callers from around the world.

Jo: Oh, sounds good. New episodes, uh, happen ever other Wednesday on Maximumfun.org.

Manolo: It's a, it's a fast and loose oasis of absurd innocence and naivete and—

Jo: Are you writing a poem?

Manolo: No. I'm just saying things from my memory. And, uh, it's a nice break from reality [laughs]. Is that, are we allowed to say that?

Jo: I don't know, it sounds bad.

Manolo: It comes with a 100% happiness guarantee.

Jo: It does not.

Manolo: [laughs]

Jo: Come for the games and stay for the cats.

[music and ad end]

Travis: Okay. Now what? She's 16. She was barnstorming. She's brainstorming. She's *bran*-storming?

Teresa: What?

Travis: What?

Teresa: No, really—

Travis: That's when you eat a lot of bran.

Teresa: [laughs] I mean, I'm sure it's great for energy for runnin' around those bases.

Travis: But short term. Listen. If you eat a lot of brand—

Teresa: [simultaneously] No, bran! No, that's a—

Travis: No, but I'm saying—

Teresa: That's a complex carbohydrate.

Travis: Yeah, but also a lot of fiber.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: What I'm saying is, like, it's gonna give you a short burst of energy, and then you're gonna be busy.

Teresa: [laughs] Well, at 16 she was actually even getting paid for these games, \$2 or \$3 a game, which is not a ton of money, I know, but also it's the 40's. And, you know, she's 16, and getting a few bucks to do something you love? Not bad.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Um, and this is probably the only reason why her parents let her play. Uh, because she was earning— earning a little money at the time.

Travis: Wait, how much was she getting paid?

Teresa: Two or three bucks a game.

Travis: Okay. Uh, not great. Purchasing power of about \$60 today. Not great. \$60 a game?

Teresa: For a 16 year old?

Travis: I mean, listen, even then, if it's a three hour game, \$20— it doesn't seem like enough. I mean, listen, \$20 an hour... that should be minimum wage, at least. But! You understand what I'm saying.

Teresa: I understand what you're saying.

Travis: This is a highly skilled, professional sports athlete... making \$60 a game. This is what I'm saying.

Teresa: Okay. Um, and so she dropped out of school, and in 1943 she moved to San Francisco, where her sister also lived. Um, and she went with the express, you know, dream of becoming a baseball star.

Travis: Absolutely.

Teresa: She was making— uh, making a living doing odd jobs at the time. Um, and this is when she officially changed her name to Toni Stone instead of Marcenia. Which I mentioned was her birth name. Um, and she was spending a lot of time at Jack's Tavern in the neighborhood, which was the first Black-owned nightclub in her neighborhood. Um, and she became friends with one of the owners, Alroyd or "Al" Love. And she told Al all about her love of baseball, and it was him who hooked her up with the local American Legion Baseball team.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Um, and so this is a— a national network for amateur baseball teams for teenagers. There was a problem. She was no longer a teenager [laughs quietly] when she signed up.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: She was 27.

Travis: Whoa.

Teresa: So she lied.

Travis: Oh.

Teresa: She said she was 17. She played with them for about two years, um, and... nobody seemed to mind?

Travis: Yeah, she was very good.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I feel like this happens today, right? Don't— don't some of the, like...

Travis: People lie? Yeah.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I mean, people lie still, to this day.

Teresa: But wasn't there a scandal with, like, baseball and the Olympics or something? Where people— no, am I making that up?

Travis: Babe, we started this episode talking about how little you know.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And then you're like, "There's a scandal— you know baseball? The other day, there was a scandal?"

Teresa: [laughs] True story. True story.

Travis: At some point? You mean in, like, the last 200 years? Probably! How long have the Olympics been going? I don't even know.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: You know what I know less about than baseball?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: The Olympics!

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: Why would you call me out like that in front of the audience?

Teresa: [wheezes quietly]

Travis: You don't even know what you're calling me out about! Do you know about this thing— I don't know about?

Teresa: Nope.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Anyway...

Travis: It is worth noting, just 'cause, like, we touched on this, this is a thing of, like... that we still see issue with today, which is, like, valuing sports skills and talent in people that we did not see value in them as a person.

Teresa: Mm, indeed.

Travis: You know what I mean? We're talking about, like, the 1940's, right? And so it's like, "Oh yeah, she's really good at baseball. So we'll celebrate her for that." But, I mean, we talked about this with Paul Williams, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Where it was like Paul Williams is like, "Aw, man. Yeah, we'd love to have you design this thing, but you're not allowed to eat by the side of the pool that, like, you helped design." Right? That kind of thing is what we're seeing, is this person who is amazingly talented, and people love to have her on the baseball team, but it's not like she was treated well outside of that.

Teresa: Absolutely. Um, by the spring of 1949, she had talked her way onto the roster of the San Francisco Sea Lions. This was, um, a short-lived association. Um, and it was inspired by owners of, like, Hal King and Harold Morris. And they expressly took her on because they knew that she would draw crowds. Not only did she draw crowds, but she also batted in two runs in her first time up, so.

Travis: Yeah, but once again, man, this is another thing that we see where it was like, not necessarily for her talent so much as they could say, like, "Isn't this wi— it's a woman, and she's Black! Huh? Wild! Come see!" Yeah, not great.

Teresa: Not great. Um, so—

Travis: But I'm glad she was able to use that to get opportunities, you know? But...

Teresa: To do what she wanted to do. Uh, then she, uh, interestingly, around that time for the Sea Lions she discovered that she was paid much less than her male teammates.

Travis: Yeah. [sarcastically] Oh, what? Can you imagine?

Teresa: Uh, and so left.

Travis: Good!

Teresa: I know, right? Uh, left to join the New Orleans Creoles, and played with them from 1949 to 1952.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: This is when—

Travis: Three years ain't nothing. Three seasons, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. And now, we're getting to—

Travis: If I played three seasons of Major League baseball I'd never shut up about it. You kidding me?

Teresa: I— I don't think we would be able to keep you here.

Travis: Nah, there'd be no living with me.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Everything that somebody would be like, "Hey, do you know to change a tire?"

"Do I know how to change a tire?! I played *three seasons* of Major League baseball! Do I know how to change a tire?"

"Hey, that didn't answer the question."

"I'm leaving."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. So, now, um, in 1953, sorry, she signed on to the Indianapolis Clowns to play second base. Um, and agreed for a staggering 12,000 a season, which, I mean...

Travis: In '53, you say?

Teresa: In 1953, seems like a lot.

Travis: I love figuring out inflation. Ugh, yes.

Teresa: Although...

Travis: Oh?

Teresa: Although this is the reported number, many historical figures say that that is an untruth made for publicity purposes.

Travis: Oh, that they paid her less?

Teresa: Right. But it was reported that she got paid this much.

Travis: If that was true, that would be about \$126,000 a season. It's pretty good!

Teresa: Pretty good. And this is where I said, uh, so the Clowns, similar to the Harlem Globetrotters. So it was like clown-style entertainment while actually playing ball. So, um, you know, like— like we said, like tricks and— and sometimes kind of like farcical story lines that would go along with it, but they were seriously playing ball. Um, and—

Travis: You know what that makes me think of a little bit?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Like pro wrestling!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Where there's serious skill to it, it's a serious skill set, but also... we've built in some showy moves and, uh, some characters and... that kind of thing.

Teresa: Um, and having a woman on the time attracted more spectators, as they assumed. Um, and she played 50 games in her season with the Clowns, her batting average being .243? I don't know what that means. It sounds good.

Travis: It means— okay. So if you think about it in percentage, right?

Teresa: Uh-huh.

Travis: If your batting average was 1.0, it means that every time you got up to bat you got a hit. You have 100% hit rate.

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: So if hers was 2... what, 243?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: That means roughly one quarter of the time she got up to bat she got a hit.

Teresa: Hey!

Travis: Yeah, which is pretty good.

Teresa: That's great!

Travis: Now, that also—

Teresa: I could not do that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: We've already established. [laughs]

Travis: No, babe. Hey, babe?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You... wouldn't even get close to that.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Your batting average would be like .000001, 'cause one time the ball hit your elbow.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And got to go to first. Um, but that— that— there's lots of things that don't include in your batting average. So, like, if you get walked and stuff like that, right? So you might still get on— so that's why you have— man, do I know about baseball? You have—

Teresa: I think— I mean, we've already established *I* know nothing about baseball. You probably know something.

Travis: Well, so there's a difference between, like, your— your batting average and your on-base percentage?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: 'Cause on-base percentage is just how many times you get on base.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: Right? And batting average is how many times you get a hit, and they're not always the same number, because of stuff like walks and that kind of thing.

Teresa: Cool.

Travis: You learned a little something. You won't remember it.

Teresa: It— no, we won't.

Travis: No.

Teresa: I won't. But, uh, it is fun for me when we switch roles a little bit on this show.

Travis: It's fun for me, too. It happens so rarely.

Teresa: [laughs] And she was actually heavily featured on a lot of their promotional materials.

Travis: I'm not surprised by that at all.

Teresa: Yeah. At the time, there was actually a regular baseball league for women, the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League. I am reminded of *A League of their Own*.

Travis: Yeah, no, yeah, uh-huh.

Teresa: Right? Yeah. Uh—

Travis: I wanted to leave a window there for you to bring it up.

Teresa: Ohh, okay, okay. Um, but they hid their racism, this league did, behind very strict beauty standards.

Travis: Ohh.

Teresa: Uh, because that was part of... part of the game at the time. And so they were unofficially segregated.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: They didn't come out and just say, "Only white people, white girls," but...

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: They hid it amongst their standards. Um, so Toni Stone wasn't allowed really to play with the other women in the sport, and she found a home as the first female player in the Negro Leagues, but again, not welcomed with open arms. Her teammates taunted her endlessly, saying sexist things about going home and cooking for her husband—

Travis: Sure, sure.

Teresa: —or, you know, knitting and home cooking and things like that.

Travis: And I would also imagine probably way worse stuff.

Teresa: Probably way worse.

Travis: That we don't need to talk about here, but, like, ima— we're talking about a 50's? And— yeah! Yeah!

Teresa: Yeah. Uh, Bunny Downs, who was the manager of the Clowns—

Travis: I say the 50's. It'd probably happen now!

Teresa: Probably would.

Travis: You would probably hear terrible stuff in a locker room if there was, like, one woman on a baseball team.

Teresa: Well, uh, she wasn't even allowed in her own locker room, by the way. She had to change in the umpire's locker room.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I mean... most of the time. Sometimes she wasn't even allowed in there.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Speaking of *A League of their Own*, she was asked to play in a skirt, or at least shorts, and she refused.

Travis: Yeah! Good.

Teresa: Um, and when asked about this time in her life, she would simply say, "It was hell."

Travis: Boy.

Teresa: That's the thing, right? So much of, like, Toni Stone's, like, love of sport, like her whole career seems to be just driven by this— this just, uh, being consumed by the love of it. To put up with all of this.

Travis: She would have to be, right? I mean, that's what I think about. 'Cause, like, how— once again, we don't curse on this show, but imagine I'm cursing right now— *up* it is that, like, she wasn't taken seriously by men's teams, but she was able to play for them.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And she wasn't able to play for the women's teams where she would've been taken seriously, because of racists. So you had, like, misogyny hitting her on the one side, and racism getting her on the other, and meanwhile she put up with all of it because she just wanted to play that badly. And, like, that is... it's messed up, and also incredibly inspiring.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Because, like, you have to think— and what you want to see— you mentioned, like, a feel-good, like, movie, underdog story.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: You want to see that point where it's just like, "And then everyone realized that she had the talent and they respected her." It's like, no, listen. It sounds like they were happy to use that talent to sell tickets and, like, everything.

But that didn't mean that people were like, "You know what? You're alright, Stone."

Like, it seems like people were still terrible to her off the field.

Teresa: Absolutely.

Travis: And she was used to sell tickets, and it seems like she probably knew that, but it still gave her a chance to do the thing she wanted to do.

Teresa: So, 1954 was her last season. She played for the Kansas City Monarchs and, I mean, she retired from baseball because of a lack of playing time. They just weren't playing her enough.

Travis: And if you're doing it to do the thing you love...

Teresa: And you don't get to do the thing you love—

Travis: Right.

Teresa: —why put up with it?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Right? Uh, and after that she retired to Oakland, California, um, to take care of her sick husband. So I didn't mention this before 'cause we were really on her career track. But back—

Travis: And who cares about a husband?

Teresa: Back when she was living in the Bay Area, um, she met her husband at Jack's Tavern. Um, she met Captain Aurelius Pescia Alberga, a native of Oakland and a World War I veteran as well. They were married in 1950, and he lived in San Francisco holding down the fort while she pursued her baseball career across the country. Um, and they remained married until he passed away in the 80's. He was 103 at the time of his death.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And still very much in love with Toni. Uh, she would not remarry, and she passed away November 2nd, 1996, in Alameda. She was 75, so... there was a bit of an age difference.

Travis: There is, uh, the— the repeated, oft-repeated refrain of any kind of biography of a person I have not heard of is by the end of it I'm so deeply inspired by them and humbled by them, and this is no exception, right? 'Cause, like, I think about— if I met any kind of resistance, even, like, 5% of what Toni Stone encountered in trying to do this, I'd be like, "I can find a new passion, thank you very much."

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And, like, this is so incredible to me, the resilience, the dedication, um, the focus. It's amazing. It's incredible.

Teresa: She wasn't really, like, celebrated during her time on Earth. But in 1993, she was inducted to the Women's Sports Hall of Fame as well as the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame, and a few years earlier her hometown of St. Paul— I mean where she spent most of her time, in St. Paul, I know she was born in West Virginia—

Travis: Thank you, yes.

Teresa: —uh, dedicated March 6th to be Toni Stone day.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, and the city also has a baseball field named in her honor.

Travis: Well, that's great. More celebration, though, please, everybody?

Teresa: More celebration!

Travis: Please.

Teresa: And then, like, I said, um, so the Google doodle that inspired this episode was created by San Francisco illustrator Monique Wray. Um, and, you know, she's had plays and books and podcasts written about Toni. And, you know, we hope that y'all go out and seek more information about people like her. Um,

Monique Wray, the artist behind her Google doodle, summed it up perfectly when she was asked how she felt about the launch of her work, the Toni Stone-inspired artwork.

“Appreciation,” Wray said. “For being a little girl who wants to make art for a living, and growing up and doing that in such a large way, and being commissioned to do something on such a large platform, that’s meaningful — speaking about who Toni Stone is. It feels full circle, for sure.”

Travis: Indeed. Thank you, honey. Thank you to Alex, our researcher. Thank you to Toni Stone! Dang it! Thank you to Alex, our researcher.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Without whom we would not be able to make this show. Thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we would not be able to make this show. Uh, couple of announcements.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Big announcements. Uh, if you haven't yet, go get your tickets for the 20-Rendezvous Fancy Takes Flight tour. Uh, if you don't know, every year my brothers and I come up with a year theme/nickname, and this year was 20-Rendezvous Fancy Takes Flight. We're doing some more live shows! We're doing it! We're going on tour!

Teresa: Woot woot!

Travis: Uh, so go check those out. See where we're stopping. Go to bit.ly/mcelroytours for ticket link and info, mask and proof of full vaccination or negative COVID test within 72 hours of event start is required. Um, thank you to everybody who joined us Saturday for the virtual *My Brother, My Brother, and Me*, and video on demand is still available for \$10 if you go to bit.ly/mbmbamvirtual.

Teresa: I'm so proud of you guys. I did a little screenshot of your Twitter trending. You were seven.

Travis: Thank you. Thank you, baby.

Teresa: In the United States. Great job.

Travis: Uh, also, this Sunday I am hosting a virtual live show. Here in Cincinnati, I started doing semi-regular shows called the Cincinnati Underground Society Show, or CUSS. Uh, and this Sunday, the 6th, at 9 PM Eastern Time, we're doing a virtual live show, and the benefits of ticket sales are going to Bethany House, which is an organization that helps at-risk families, or families that are experiencing homelessness, as well as going to stock Cincinnati and Newport, Kentucky free fridges with masks and COVID tests.

You can get those tickets at [cincyticket](http://cincyticket.com/cusscares), that's C-I-N-C-Y ticket, cincyticket.com/cusscares. Uh, we're gonna have six incredible guests. If you go look on my Twitter, I may have let slip who they were. Oh no, whoa, it was a complete accident, oh!

Teresa: Oh no!

Travis: But it's gonna be really, really great. It's gonna be super fun. Uh, 9 PM this Sunday. Tickets, one more time, at cincyticket.com/cusscares. Enjoy a great show. Tickets are only \$8, and it's gonna be full of amazing guests, and you're gonna love it!

Uh, my dad has written a children's book called *Goldie's Guide to Grandchilding*, and it comes out May 10th. Uh, it was slightly delayed due to supply chain issues, but it will be coming out May 10th.

Teresa: That's my birthday!

Travis: Yep! And you can preorder at linktr.ee, which is L-I-N-K-T-R-dot-E-E, linktr.ee/goldiesguide, and that's Goldie's with an I-E-S. Uh, and go check out all the new merch! We've got new merch out now, uh, including mystery pin of the month. Gonna get a pin of the month. It'll be random, from the past. What's it gonna be? Who knows! But I do know this: it benefits the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, so go check that out.

Also, the Candlenights 2021 special video on demand is available now at that store, at our merch store. You pay what you want, and all proceeds are going to Harmony House in Huntington, West Virginia. Go check all that out at mcelroymerch.com.

Teresa: Woo! Take a break, honey.

Travis: Thanks.

Teresa: We'd like to thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, @shmannerscast. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today!

Also, we are always taking submissions. You can email us, shmannerscast@gmail.com. Alex reads every single one of those emails, so submit your topic suggestions, and we love those idioms! Keep 'em coming.

Travis: 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]

[chord]

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