

Shmanners 308: Idioms: Part 11

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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: How are you?

Teresa: Oh, you know. A little tired I guess, but I'm ready. I'm ready. I'm gonna...

Travis: A little bit of the seasonal stuffies?

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah. But, you know, nothing— nothing gets my, uh... my goat goin'...

Travis: Hm, I don't think that's it.

Teresa: Is that—

Travis: [laughs] I don't think people talk about how— "Oh, really got my goat goin'." I think "got my goat," to talk about idioms, is normally a bad thing.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Which I assume it's 'cause, like, a troll came along and stole your goat, and you're like "Aw, man." Uh, but maybe "Gets me going," or "Gets my engine going."

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Yeah. Because I also don't think anyone's ever said, "Oh, that really got my engine" in a mad way? But I like the combination. Nothing gets me fired up. How about that one?

Teresa: How about that one? That one's fine. I'll accept that. I'm still taking notes on goat, though.

Travis: Notes on goat. Goat notes.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, because it's Max Fun Drive. That's what we didn't get to— it's Max Fun Drive.

Teresa: Oh, yes. Yes.

Travis: Yes. It's Max Fun Drive week one. And many would argue that's the first week of Max Fun Drive. Um, and what is—

Teresa: What's the other argument? That it's not... the not first week? The... what?

Travis: Uh, some people would call it the penultimate week, and then the ultimate week is the second one.

Teresa: Ohhh.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: See, you could also say that the first week is the second to last week of Max Fun Drive.

Teresa: How else could you say it?

Travis: Uh, you could also say that it is the primary week. You could say it's the warm up week.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: You could say it's the starter week. Uh, you could say it's the opening act. Uh, you could say... this here's the week! Uh—

[both laugh]

Travis: I ran out. Um, so Max Fun Drive, to put it short and sweet, is the once-a-year two-week period where we Max Fun hosts come to you and ask you to consider supporting the art and artists you love by going to Maximumfun.org/join and pledging a monthly support level that is right for you.

You can start as low as \$5 a month, and then that money, 70% of it goes directly to the podcasters and podcasts that you love and support and want to continue to exist. The rest of it goes to Max Fun so that they can continue to exist and keep their lights on. But literally, keep their lights on and pay their staff and all that stuff. And, you get rewards.

Starting at just \$5, you're gonna get access to over 350 hours of bonus content that you're not gonna find anywhere.

Teresa: That's what I'm here for. The BoCo.

Travis: You love that BoCo. Uh, it's audio and video, and stuff from each show from every year we've ever done a Max Fun Drive. This year, our *Shmanners* bonus episode is all about time travel etiquette. And so if you have ever thought, "I wanna hear Travis's thoughts, not only on time travel movies, but also on the theoretical possibility of time travel and how he thinks time works, oh boy howdy!" [through laughter] Have I got a treat for you.

Maximumfun.org/join. And because it is Max Fun Drive, we thought we would kick it off with some of our favorite of the episodes, idioms!

Teresa: Rumor has it, this is idiom episode 10.

Travis: Oh-ho. Can we call it Idiom X?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: [deep voice] Idiom X. [normal voice] That's the new—

Teresa: X—Idiom X-treme.

Travis: They just announced the new *Fast and Furious* movie and it's just called *Fast X*. So... that's what got me thinking about it.

Teresa: Oh yeah?

Travis: Which to me sounds a little bit like a laxative, but that's just me.

Teresa: Like Gas-X! Oh, nooo.

Travis: Yeah, like Fast X. Having problems? Try Fast X! Okay. What's our first one, my love?

Teresa: This one is part of the collection that Alex has been keeping tabs on in her phone since 2018.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Even keel.

Travis: Okay. So, even keel means like, uh, you're going to... the hardest part of idioms is always trying to summarize an idiom without using an idiom.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: 'Cause I almost said, like, "You're gonna stay on the straight and narrow," but even keel means, like, you're gonna stay focused, you're going to be on good behavior, you're gonna keep moving— like, moving the project forward, or be responsible. Basically it's like they did a good job, right? They kept the thing on an even keel.

Teresa: It has to do with stability, right?

Travis: Yeah, there we go.

Teresa: So, calm and stable. Um, and here's the thing. A keel is a real thing. It's a thing, a boat thing. Uh, so it's the bottom supporting structure that keeps the vessel level, right? When it's afloat.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Um, so there's a—

Travis: It's like a point— if you picture, like, the— you know, there's, like, a point at the bottom of the boat, right? Where it, like, connects together in the middle at the bottom. That's the keel.

Teresa: Right. Uh, and it must be even, and not wavy, because that doesn't do its job, right? It's gotta be even.

Travis: [simultaneously] Well, yeah, okay.

Teresa: So that it keeps the boat steady.

Travis: Uh, it also is where the term keelhaul comes from, and that's a little bit of a darker pirate thing. But— so I don't need to go into it. But if you like dark pirate stuff and you're like, "I wanna see a gruesome pirate thing!" You can look up keelhaul. But don't do it if you don't [laughs] wanna see gruesome pirate stuff. I can't warn you enough.

Teresa: Oh boy. That's, uh... you know, that's not cryptic enough.

Travis: Oh, no!

Teresa: Please, please be more cryptic.

Travis: Ooh. Maybe it has to do with birds? I don't know. [laughs]

Teresa: No, stop it.

Travis: No, okay.

Teresa: The— the next one.

Travis: I have always— I've never thought about it, but I use this one a lot. "Hissy fit," right? And I—

Teresa: Are you— are you looking at the notes?

Travis: Yeah!

Teresa: You never look at the notes!

Travis: I know, but I've decided to really care on Max Fun Drive. So, hissy fit, right? I thought that this was, uh, like, maybe... I don't— I didn't think it was a McElroy thing only, but I did think it was very regional, right? Like, I— is hissy fit as universal— I don't know.

Teresa: No, I mean, I have definitely heard "hissy fit" on movies and TV.

Travis: Okay. So it's like throwing a tantrum, right?

Teresa: Yeah. Um, it's possible that it is a shortening of the phrase "hysterical," which I do not like. But it also, many etymologists think that it could also be very literal. Hissing like a cat would hiss. Um, and so maybe that's why there's— what they're doing when they are so mad and upset, in the way a cat would.

Travis: Hysterical is the very outdated term that, like, people used... I know that it's, like, they used for, like, women who were quote, unquote, "acting up." But wasn't it literally like, "I believe their uterus is moving around their body and it's making them hysterical," is that right?

Teresa: Yes. Yes.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, the ancient Greeks believed that the uterus was not, like... I mean, they didn't understand... bodies.

Travis: Anything? Okay.

Teresa: Uh, so, like, the organ of the uterus, the womb, was thought to migrate throughout the body?

Travis: Yeah. Just bounce around.

Teresa: Just kind of move around according to her whims. And so, when she was hysterical, it was out of place.

Travis: Okay. And... man, you know, listen. Not to dip into Sawbones territory, but there must have been people during that time that were like, "I don't think that's it, but I don't care." [wheezes]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Because there's no way everyone went "Mmm, yes. That's— yes. Absolutely." Okay. What's the next one?

Teresa: Is "Going whole hog," or "whole ham."

Travis: Or John Hamm. Now, this is from JG. I've never heard whole ham, but whole hog is, like, going all the way. As, like, lavish or, uh... to— I don't wanna say "to the extreme," 'cause I always think of it as, like, uh, we're going to be as— you know, we're gonna spend a bunch of money, or we're going to go to extreme measures to make this party a success, or whatever. Right? There's a certain lavish quality to it.

Teresa: I mean, I'm sure that there is. I mean, definitely, yes. There is a very lavish quality to it, but I also think it is about "to the limit," right?

Travis: Sure, yeah.

Teresa: So you are— you are doing everything as far as it possibly can be taken, right? Because if you're going whole hog, you are using quite literally every piece of the pig, right?

Travis: Ohh, okay.

Teresa: In a very butcher type term. Um, and nowadays butchers don't use every single piece, like hooves are often just tossed at this point. But they used to even use the hooves to boil for jelly and things like that.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: So, like, when you do that, you can go all the way to its limit.

Travis: Snout to tail.

Teresa: And I have also never heard "go ham," but, I mean, I think that that's just...

Travis: No, I've heard "go ham."

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I've heard "go ham" as, like, people will say, like, "They went wild." Or, like, "Did you—" I always for some reason think about it in terms of, like, sports. Where it's just like, "That player just, like, lit up, and was just, like, on it and, like, was all over the— they went— you know, they went ham on it and, like, went wild on it," kind of thing.

Teresa: Well, so does that... does that connotation mean that they— they did everything that they possibly could to the limit? Is that what that means? Or does "go ham" mean some kind of, like... chaotic quality?

Travis: See, I always thought of it in the same terms as if someone said "They went hog wild," right? Of just like— okay, here's the way— here's an example I would use that I think connotatively perfectly sums up what I think of when going ham. Is like if you see, like, in a superhero or action movie or something, right? Uh, a scene where, like, the good guy is being faced with these insurmountable number of bad guys, and it's just like, "Alright, let's turn it up."

And, like, everything they do is, like, perfectly orchestrated and choreographed and, like, they're firing on all cylinders, using every, like, tool at their disposal to, like, defeat every bad guy in front of them? And it's—

Teresa: Okay, so taking it to its absolute limit.

Travis: Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Yeah, yeah.

Travis: But I usually— my connotation usually has to do with, like, some kind of physical, uh, exertion.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Sports or, uh, you know, fighting or something like that. I don't know that I'd ever be like, "Aw man, today I'm gonna bake some bread and go ham on that bread." [laughs] Like, I think I would do that if I was being, you know, funny.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: I guess if I baked, like, 27 loaves or something. And I'd be like, "You went ham— you went ham on bread today."

Teresa: Okay. [wheezes] Sure.

Travis: "Are you okay?"

Teresa: Sure. Bacon and ham on bread today. Delicious.

Travis: Hey. Hey, you put bacon on ham today, and I'm worried about you.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: That's too much. Speaking of going ham, you could go ham with your support for Max Fun Drive. You could really just go whole hog.

Teresa: Just take it to its limit.

Travis: Yeah. So stop your hissy fit and go ham, whole hog, in your support of the podcasts you love. I don't actually think you're having a hissy fit. I'm so sorry I said that. I was just— don't worry about it.

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One, we do. We do very much care, because what I love about the Max Fun model is it's about the show, right? And it's about the listener. And we do advertisements. You've heard them on most if not all, you know, McElroy, Max Fun shows. But the focus is on the network, and the focus is on the listener, and the focus is on the show, right?

Like, Max Fun would not exist if it weren't for Max Fun supporters. And so, it really makes it a much more connected kind of organization, where we are— you know, we do the show 'cause we know you like it, you know?

And we got two kids, and stuff comes up. Kids get sick. Um, it's hard to schedule naps sometimes. It's hard to find time to record. But we know that this show matters to people, because of support you've shown us throughout past Max Fun Drives, and we have been able to do things like bring in Alex as our researcher, so that the show can be prepped and ready on time. We brought in Rachel, Rachel Jacobs, to help us edit the show and get it out there on time. All of this stuff, because of support from listeners like you.

Uh, and so every little bit helps. Every— every supporter helps. And it just— it means a lot to us and to the network. And to, uh, I don't know, Jesus.

Teresa: No—[laughs]

Travis: So go to Maximumfun.org/join. Choose the level that's right for you. So I already said \$5 a month is gonna get you access to over 350 hours of bonus content, audio and video, from all Max Fun shows from every Max Fun Drive we've ever done.

Now, at \$10 a month you're going to get access to that bonus content. You're going to get a Max Fun membership card, and you're going to get to choose a beautiful show-specific patch from every show on the network, designed by Maret Bondorew. Uh, so you can show off your favorite Max Fun show.

And I'll tell you this. Uh, I just saw this confirmed on the— I believe it's called Twitter. Uh, Max Fun was talking about at the end of the drive, if you want to buy more patches, you can! So—

Teresa: Let me describe our patch to you.

Travis: Please do!

Teresa: Um, so it is round. It is small.

Travis: Uh-huh?

Teresa: Like most of the patches. But our patch, our patch has the word *Shmanners* in it.

Travis: That's how you can tell, yes.

Teresa: Surrounded by some intricate vine design.

Travis: Oh, it's beautiful. Isn't it beautiful?

Teresa: I— it is ivy-esque. And hidden— not quite so hidden, but artfully designed and hiddenly, is a dove and a deer! For you and me, my love.

Travis: I love that very much. Now, I am worried that we're skewing a little bit into Home Shopping Network territory. "Listen, man. There's only about 20 of these left, man, so you need to call that number at the bottom of the screen."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Don't wanna run out of these!" I don't know why I went to the knife show one.

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Now, at \$20 a month you're going to get the patch of your choice, the Max Fun membership card, and the bonus content. And you'll get to choose between either a beautifully embroidered hat with the embroidered Max Fun rocket logo, or a Max Fun creativity pack that will help you get into the creative headspace and live your life to the fullest. Or at least, you know, a little more creatively.

Artist at Max Fun store, Ellen VanderMyde, illustrated a beautiful deck of 54 cards in the Max Fun inspiration deck. Each one has an activity suggestion from your favorite host or pals at Max Fun, designed to inspire you to enjoy friends, nature, food, you time, making some art, and other kinds of fun.

Uh, the kit also has a set of three post cards, a piece of non-hardening modeling clay, and a custom black wing pencil to encourage you to make your thing. There's other levels, too. Uh, but, you know, maybe one of those sounds right to you, or maybe you've been a Max Fun supporter for a while now and you're ready

to increase your membership and go up to the next level. We would appreciate that, too.

Or you could just boost your membership, add a little bit extra on there without making it all the way up to the next level. We appreciate that as well. All that means a lot to us, and to Max Fun. So, go to Maximumfun.org/join.

Okay. What's the next one, Teresa?

Teresa: Uh, pop. As in "50 bucks a pop."

Travis: Okay, this one has to be about soda. Okay, wait, hold on. So a pop is like each, right? So if you said 50 bucks a pop, it means 50 bucks each. Right? It's gotta— it's gotta be about soda, right? It's gotta be soda.

Teresa: This was submitted by Daisy B. Um, and how much it costs for an individual unit of something, right? No one really seems quite sure. It definitely existed before soda pop.

Travis: What?!

Teresa: Yes. Uh, but it was just... a shortening of the word "apiece," right? So it was— it's just a slang kind of... nuance to the word "apiece," because the P is very plosive. Apiece, a pop. You just extend the plosiveness.

Travis: Okay. I'm mad at old-timey people—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —that it's not about soda pop. I feel a burning anger in my heart? I feel like they let me down. I feel like it *is* about soda pop and they won't admit it.
[wheezes]

Teresa: No. It happened way before carbonated drinks.

Travis: Okay. Now, this one— this one is so common, and also I think such a, like, common bit in, like, cartoons and stuff. And it's "Everything but the kitchen sink." Right? And it means, like, basically everything they can think of, right? Or something like that.

Teresa: So, Paul sent this one in, Paul S. And I think that the most important part to stress is it's not just about everything you can think of. It is about pointing out the redundancy, right? Of everything, and everything else. Right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: That's the way that the idiom expresses the extent of the redundancy, by pointing out that, and everything else.

Travis: Okay. So not just everything you can think of in a logical way, but then also stuff that doesn't even make sense to solve the problem. Just, like, everything you could think of, right? But everything you could think of, and then some? Um, but I always think of this as, like, the punchline in cartoons is always like, "They threw everything but the kitchen sink!"

And then, like, the kitchen sink gets thrown at them, and that's the joke, right?

Teresa: Right. This is one of these great idioms where you can use it as everything *but* the kitchen sink, but it also is used "everything *and* the kitchen sink," but they both mean pretty much the same thing, right?

Travis: Yeah, okay.

Teresa: And so, the origin has a couple of theories, right? That the kitchen sink is connected to the pipes of the walls of your house, so it would be nearly impossible for someone perhaps robbing a home to take the actual sink, because it's connected to the house, right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So they could take everything in the room... except for the sink. So, everything but the kitchen sink.

Travis: That makes a lot of sense. That makes a lot of sense to me.

Teresa: And then I guess— I guess that is one case where the idiom "everything *and* the kitchen sink..." I mean, does it also work? Or at that point are you complimenting the robbery? [laughs]

Travis: "Oh. See, there— oh, they even took [unintelligible]. They even took the roast beast. Oh, it was incredible. Everything that they did. It was amazing." Maybe.

Teresa: So, here's another theory. That this actually comes from the Sears and Roebuck catalog.

Travis: Yes. This was a big deal.

Teresa: Um, and if you're not familiar— we should do a show on this. But if you're not familiar, it was the first advertisement of its kind that was an entire catalog of literally everything that one might need in a home of that time. Uh, it was circulating in America, in the US, in around 1888. And it— it was... it was so prolific, the catalog was so immense, that they— it was often used as toilet roll. [laughs]

Travis: Oh, wow. Okay.

Teresa: 'Cause it just kept going and going and going. Um, and so for nearly 40 years, the advertisement for the catalog was... "Everything is included, even the kitchen sink."

Because... Sears and Roebuck also sold homes. They sold full, fully-fab houses.

Travis: Huh.

Teresa: From this catalog. You could just go— I mean, it's almost like the original Amazon, right? You could just go and order the entire house. You'd pick out the model you want, and they send it all to you in pieces. [laughs quietly]

Travis: Wow. I normally come out of these with two possible theories where I'm like, "I think it's that one," but one is very much everything *but* the kitchen sink, and the other one is everything *and* the kitchen sink. Makes complete sense to me. Maybe it's— Teresa? What if it's both?

Teresa: Uhh... yes.

Travis: Okay, great.

Teresa: We will accept that. We will accept that it's both.

Travis: Now, this idiom made me think of one that I need— I'm gonna, like, give you a fill-in-the-blank, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Because I have heard so many people phrase it a different way. If you were going to say "All the people were there," you would say "It was everyone and their... " blank?

Teresa: Uh, I would say everyone and their brother.

Travis: Okay, great, thank you. I have heard everyone and their dog before, where I'm like "That doesn't make any sense." 'Cause in the con— it's supposed to be everyone and their brother, which is the ridiculous part of the statement to show how many people it was. 'Cause if everyone was there, the brother would be there too, so it's everyone and their brother.

And when I hear people say, like, "Everyone and their dog," I'm like "That means nothing!" Now I need everyone to tweet @shmannerscast and let me know which one you always said, or always heard.

Teresa: Is it because not everyone has a brother, but everyone... loves dogs? Is that it?

Travis: I mean, but not everyone skins cats either, but we still say "more than one way to skin a cat." And see, idiom is "Everyone and their brother!" Or everyone and their... I don't know, dad. Everyone and their best friend.

Teresa: I've also heard "everyone and their mother."

Travis: Okay. I'll accept that one as well.

Teresa: I mean, that makes more sense to me, because mother and brother... sound similar.

Travis: Rhyme, yeah.

Teresa: Alright. Here's another one. "Chip on your shoulder."

Travis: So, this, uh... now, when I think of this I always think of it as, like, someone who thinks they're better than someone else, but I've also heard it used a lot as, like, someone who... uh, is, like, looking for an argument, or they're maybe a little, like, you know, huffy. A little, uh, easy to annoy. Something like that.

Teresa: Um, I don't... I don't know if I have heard of it as someone who is easy to anger. I'm thinking more of someone who is ready to antagonize others.

Travis: Okay. Okay. Yeah, I think it's somewhere in there, right? But I always think of "chip on your shoulder" as, like, thinking you're better than everyone else. That's what I thought. But...

Teresa: I think that that's in there, right? Because if you're— if you're ready to kind of, like— to use another idiom, to poke the bear... [laughs quietly]

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Then, uh, I think that maybe you think that you are— you know, you're infallible.

Travis: Oh, okay. Yeah, I see that.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Hey, and listen. Take it from us. Leave bear-poking to the professionals.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Everyone thinks "I'm gonna be the one to poke the bear. I didn't need to go to seven years of bear-poking school to do it myself."

Leave it to the professionals. It's such a strong— it's, like, an important skill set to have, and you think you know how to do it, but without the right tools and the right skills it's just gonna end up being messy. So please, leave bear-poking to the professionals.

Teresa: So, like many of our idioms, there seem to be a couple of origin stories, in the same way as many comic book heroes. Um, the first one being the chip on your shoulder is a, um— a schoolyard game? I had never heard this.

Travis: Hmm. But it's like a literal thing, right?

Teresa: A literal thing where in the 19th century in the United States, if a boy wanted to start a fight, just fight, "I just wanna fight with anybody," the game would be he would put an actual wood chip from the ground on to his shoulder, and then would walk around and dare other kids to knock the chip off his shoulder, and then that would basically be, like, your duel. You're accepting the duel.

Travis: I wonder if that also is tied to "knock your block off."

Teresa: Oh, maybe!

Travis: Right? Like "Oh, yeah, I'm gonna knock your block off your shoulder. Oh."

Teresa: Write it down.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: We shall— we shall look. Um, the other one... hmm... the other one sounds a little less plausible to me. Uh, chips used to be the slang for the leftover pieces of wood left on shipping docks, and when ships were made out of wood, and docks were made out of wood, it does seem that there would be a lot left over. And one of the perks of being a dockworker was that if there was leftover wood around, you could take it. You could take it home, use it for firewood, or use it to build your own stuff or whatever, right?

Um, but in May of 1753... the management of these docks, uh, decreed that only chips that could be carried under an arm were allowed to be removed. They didn't like that all of their materials were being absconded with.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: And it stands to reason that you could stack bigger and more pieces on top of your shoulder, where there's kind of, like, infinite upward room, than you could underneath, where I guess if you're gonna hold something you really only have the length of your arm... to, uh—[laughs] to be the limit, right?

Travis: Yeah. Okay. Yeah.

Teresa: Um, and so... "chip on your shoulder" became a phrase, if you were a dockworker carrying a piece of lumber on your shoulder, it was a sign that you were instigating a fight against the management, and it may have actually been the reason— one of the reasons— that the dockworkers went on strike that year.

Travis: Interesting. Once again, maybe it's both, right? Maybe it started of, like, dockworkers doing it in the 19th century— or in the 17... 00s. And then, like, little boys emulating that kind of stuff when they— you know, in the 19th century? Maybe.

Teresa: Maybe!

Travis: Maybe! Now, this next one is "tie the knot," right? Which seems... it's, like, getting married, right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And this is from Alex's list. And I haven't looked at the origin, but it seems pretty obvious to me that it would have to be, like— it's tying lives together, right? It's making that bond, right?

Teresa: Right. Uh, but specifically this is related to marriage in the way of an old custom called handfasting.

Travis: 'Scuse me?

Teresa: Handfasting.

Travis: Oh, where your hand didn't eat for a while?

Teresa: Nah.

Travis: Nah?

Teresa: Where you're actually tying cords or ribbons around two people's hands to bind them together.

Travis: Ah, like a three-legged race.

Teresa: You— exactly! [laughs] But for hands, not legs.

Travis: [simultaneously] Except it's arms, yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, gotcha.

Teresa: You literally tie a knot around them to make them stay together.

Travis: But not, like, forever, right? Eventually you untie—

Teresa: [simultaneously] No, no— no, no. It's— it's—

Travis: It's symbolic, okay.

Teresa: It's... I mean, they literally did it, but it's symbolic, and it is a big part of Celtic culture, and also used today in pagan practices and Wicca and even, you know, some even more mainstream religious marriages are incorporating this symbolism. But that is literally what it is, tying the knot— tying a knot around your hands in the marriage ceremony came to mean "tying the knot" as marriage.

Travis: Uh, can I— wait. I'm gonna ju— can I jump to one? This is an international one, but it's one that's really close to my heart.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, and it is... let me see. Hold on. Uhh... Ryan C. Ryan C wrote about the origin of "God willing and the creek don't rise." Which is—

Teresa: Ah, yes.

Travis: Yeah, which is something me and my brothers say too. An Appalachian idiom that basically is like, um... you know, if someone says "Are you gonna go see that movie tomorrow?" And you're like, "Well, God willin' and the creek don't rise, yeah, I'll be able to." Right? It's like, if all goes well, yeah.

Teresa: Well, and this probably has to do with the fact of, like, literally being able to get there. Crossing the creek has to do with you, like, being able to step on the stones and get across the water. Whereas if it floods, the creek rises, and you wouldn't be able to cross it, 'cause it would be... a river.

Travis: There you go.

Teresa: Right? Right?

Travis: Yes. Yes. Uh, so it's— we're relatively certain that it comes from Benjamin Hawkins. Hawkins was a senator, and he primarily worked as a mediator between indigenous nations and the US government in the late 18th century.

Uh, the President reached out to him at one point and asked him to come back to Washington, and Hawkins replied that he would, "God willing and the Creek don't rise." And for a long time, people assumed that the phrase was about the Creek Tribal Nation and not the body of water, which is not the case.

Now, some historians don't believe about that confusion, but he did have a relationship with the Creek Nation, and he did capitalize the C, so that's where the confusion comes from. And it is, as you said, literally about, you know, in a time of, like, dirt roads and, you know, fording creeks and rivers and streams and stuff like that, it is literally, "I will, if I can."

Um, and so Hawkins, he's often credited as the first one who said the phrase, but he definitely isn't. The first recorded use of this phrase comes from a newspaper in 1851 that read:

"Feller-citizens — I'm not 'customed to public speaking— speakin'—" excuse me. Let me try again, in my best Appalachian.

"Feller-citizens — I'm not 'customed to public speakin' before sich highfalutin' audiences. ... Yet here I stand before you a speckled hermit, wrapt in the risen-sun counterpane of my popilarity, an' intendin', Providence permittin', and the creek don't rise, to 'go it blind!'"

And that's from *Graham's American Monthly Magazine*, June 1851.

Now, this was around the time "God willing and the creek don't rise" started making it into popular vernacular. So Alex thinks— and I agree— that Hawkins was being cheeky when he wrote this letter to the President, and he had a connection with the Creek people, and so that is why he was making a joke by capitalizing the C.

Teresa: Hmm, interesting.

Travis: And as Alex points out, it's not very funny. [laughs]

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And it's especially not funny to joke about a Tribal Nation rising up. But there were— we're not saying Hawkins was a good guy. Just a statement of fact of what happened.

Teresa: Here's one that, uh, was submitted by Bee. Did you learn this in your foray into French? Uh, the phrase "C'est pas tes oignons."

Travis: No. But it's some— it's not— let's see. It's not... uh, onions?

Teresa: Nunya onions!

Travis: Oh God, that's so good.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Is it like none your business?

Teresa: Yeah, none of your business, right?

Travis: Nunya onions!

Teresa: Tend— tend to your own onions. Mind your own business.

Travis: Hey. These aren't your onions. These are my onions. Mind your own onions, huh?

Teresa: That's right.

Travis: Oh my God, that's so good.

Teresa: This is nunya onions. That's what I like.

Travis: That's so good! Oh my God, I love that so much. That's right up there with "What do you call cheese that isn't your cheese?"

Teresa: Nacho cheese.

Travis: There you go! Yeah! Oh my God, I love that.

Teresa: I think that the reason that "nunya onions" is so good is because of the rhyme, right? "None of your business."

Travis: Yeah, that's fine.

Teresa: Okay. It's fine. I like it. But... "nunya onions" is Picasso, right? It's great.

Travis: Yeah. I got so confused by what you were— "Nunya— did Picasso say 'Nunya onions'?" is what I thought you were saying.

Teresa: [laughs] No. Just— just to, you know, try and get with the kids.

Travis: Okay. Let's run through. This is from Jessica T, who sent in a list of Australian vernacular that I love very much.

"Flat out like a lizard drinking." It means going or working hard as possible.

Teresa: Which makes sense, because a lizard— you think about— they probably, in order to drink from, like, the ground, right? They need to get really, like, low to the ground.

Travis: And they probably drink as much as they can when they find it.

Teresa: Probably.

Travis: You know?

Teresa: Probably.

Travis: "A few kangaroos/sheep lost/missing in the top paddock." I think you can probably figure that. Somebody's not all there. "A few kangaroos missing in the top paddock."

Uh, I love this one. "Dog's breakfast." Uh, like, used in a sentence it would be "It's a dog breakfast after the flood," and it means it's very messy or chaotic.

Teresa: Uh, this is really good. I like that, because, you know, you think about, like— like a puppy kind of like going all the way into the food dish. [laughs] And just, like, getting it everywhere.

Travis: Right? And it just gets everywhere. Oh. Or when our kids are feeding them and get a little overenthusiastic in the pouring.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Um, now this one— Jessica T included this one. I thought this was universal, but is another one where if you have never heard this phrase before, please tweet at us and let us know, 'cause I'm super curious. "Pull the wool over your eyes," which is, like, to trick someone, right? And it's, uh, probably comes from sheep shearing, and we can go deeper into it. But please let us know if that's said where you come from, and we'll go into that in a deeper meaning to find the origin of.

Teresa: I'd like to try. I think that it has maybe two connotations of lying, right? Because when you're a wolf in sheep's clothing, you put wool on top of yourself, right? Like, as—

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: The wolf is hiding. He's wearing a wool blanket. And then "pull the wool over your eyes," I mean, when you have woven sheep wool into a cloth, you probably can't see through it very well? 'Cause I could imagine if you were shearing, you could hold that up. Maybe you couldn't see through it? I don't know. There are so many—

Travis: [simultaneously] Oh, wait, hold on. Here—

Teresa: —possibilities.

Travis: Now, okay. According to the first thing I found on the internet...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... okay. So, wait. There's two different things I'm seeing here. One— the first explanation is that it was like pulling someone's hood down to distract them while you robbed them.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: And the other one is about judges in Europe who made— wore wigs out of wool? And it was, like, tricking them?

Teresa: Oh. There are so many, so many. This is a great one. This is one we haven't done before.

Travis: And I like this one for personal reasons, because my best friend is named Michael Bradbury, but "to do/pull a Stephen Bradbury." Stephen Bradbury was the first Australian to win a Winter Olympics gold medal for Australia, which let's think about that for a second, right? One, a *Winter* Olympics medal, from Australia. Traditionally not a very snow and ice, uh, icy place, right?

Teresa: Um, I would— I would beg to differ. I'm not saying that it's very snow and icy, but Australia has all four seasons, don't they? They're just different from our hemisphere. Anyway, never mind.

Travis: Sure. But he came from last place for an upset win, and so to "pull a Bradbury" is to win unexpectedly. I like that one.

Teresa: That has less to do with wool over your eyes, but I do appreciate that too.

Travis: Hey, everyone. Why don't you pull a Bradbury—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: —and do something cool? Go to Maximumfun.org/join, support the art and artists you love. Artists like, oh, I don't know, me and Teresa for example. Um, pick a support level that works for you. Become a supporter. Let us know. Tweet at us @shmannerscast so we can say thank you.

Uh, if you're already a supporter, you could think about upgrading or boosting your membership. Boosting is adding a couple of extra bucks to it. It won't take

you up to the next level, but it will help support our show and keep it going for a long time to come.

Um, you can also go on to whatever social media you prefer and tell everybody about Max Fun Drive, make sure they know that link. Maximumfun.org/join.
Teresa, is there anything you want to say to people about the Max Fun Drive?

Teresa: Well, I would like to say that, um... your support means a lot to us. Uh, and it's not just about monetary contributions and support. It's also the support where you share the show, uh, because if you don't feel like you can support right now in a monetary way, you can always support us year-round by sharing the show and introducing other people to it to listen to it.

Travis: Well, there you go. Um, let's see. What's our normal wrap up? Uh, you've been— no, not there yet. Thank you to Maximum Fun, our podcast home, obviously. Uh, you can check out all the other McElroy projects at mcelroy.family. Uh, thank you to Alex, our researcher, without whom we would not be able to make this show. And thank you to Rachel Jacobs, our editor, without whom we would not be able to make this show. And thank you to you, our supporters and listeners, without whom we would not be able to make this show.

Uh, let's see. What else, Teresa?

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. We thank Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art, and again our Twitter is @shmatterscast.

We thank Bruja Betty Pinup for the cover picture of our fan run Facebook group, *Shmatters Fanners*. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today.

And please, please, uh, we love your topic submissions. Do continue to submit those to shmatterscast@gmail.com. Alex reads every single one of those emails so, uh, say hello to Alex when you submit your topic or idiom.

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 *Shmatters*...

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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