

## Shmanners 337: Kwanzaa

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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:** I'm alright. I'm doing okay. We are chugging along. Uh... I'm gonna make it. [laughs]

**Travis:** Yeah, I've lost all sense of time. I have no—I think this comes out... two days before Christmas, if I'm correct. But man, it's that holiday brain fog where you're like, "It's gotta be next year already, right?"

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** But it is not.

**Teresa:** One day. One day it will be.

**Travis:** It is not next year yet. But we are here—I'm so excited for this episode, because we already recorded the interview part. Spoiler alert.

**Teresa:** It's great.

**Travis:** We have special guest Mawusi Ashshakir here to talk with us about Kwanzaa. Uh, it's great. You're gonna be just totally charmed. I was totally charmed. But first...

**Teresa:** First, um, we would love to give y'all a little bit of a background. Um, you may be familiar with Kwanzaa. In case you aren't, here are some frequently asked questions, some facts and figures for everyone. Um, specifically, Kwanzaa is an African-American and Pan-African holiday, which celebrates family, community, and culture. It was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, a professor of Africana studies. Kwanzaa is a seven day cultural festival. It begins October 26th and ends on January 1st, and it joins together communitarian values and practices of both continental African and African-American culture.

And what you'll learn from our interview is, it's highly personal, but also highly communal. During the holiday, families and communities organize activities around the seven principles. And those principles – and Mawusi will do an amazing job of explaining those in the interview – but they are: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. And each one of these principles is named in Swahili, which is a language spoken not by everyone in Africa, of course, but spoken by a lot of people.

**Travis:** And as we've said, Mawusi will do an amazing job explaining all of that. But now I think it's time, we should explain who Mawusi is. So, tell us a little bit about our guest.

**Teresa:** Well, Mawusi is a culture keeper in her community, and she works diligently through many grassroots organizations to sow the seeds of ancestral wisdom for the sole purpose of seeing a flourishing future. And I think that you will just feel her excitement. It's contagious. Um, she is amazing to talk to. She lives here in Cincinnati with her husband and two of her seven children. She will talk about her connection with her family, and it's a great interview. You're gonna love it.

**Travis:** And we're gonna go to that interview... right after a word to say thank you to our sponsors.

[theme music plays]

**Travis:** This week, *Shmanners* is sponsored by Quip. You know about Quip. Listen. I know you do, if you have ever listened to this show before. But on the off chance that you do not, then I'll tell you what. Let me tell you about it like it's brand new to you.

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I love it. They have great floss. They got great mouthwash. They got great gum, and great toothbrushes, and my favorite toothpaste on the market. And you know who else loves it? Bebe. Teresa. Everybody loves it. I mean, Dot's not quite big enough yet, but close. She can't wait. She can't wait.

So, go to [getquip.com/shmanners](http://getquip.com/shmanners) right now for your first refill free. Plus, shop Quip's lowest prices of the year this holiday season. That G-E-T-Q-U-I-P.com/shmanners. Quip: the good habits company.

[music plays]

[dog barks]

**Ella:** Hi, everyone! I'm Ella McLeod.

**Alexis:** And I'm Alexis B. Preston.

**Ella:** And we host a show called *Comfort Creatures*. The show for every animal lover, be it a creature of scales, six legs, fur, feathers, or fiction. *Comfort Creatures* is a show for people who prefer their friends to have paws instead of hands.

**Alexis:** Unless they are raccoon hands. That is okay.

**Ella:** That is absolutely okay, yeah.

**Alexis:** Yes. Every Thursday, we will be talking to guests about their pets, learning about pets in history, art, and even fiction. Plus, we'll discover differences between pet ownership across the pond. It's gonna be a hoot, on Maximum Fun.

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

**Justin:** Hi, everybody! My name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:** And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:** Dr. Sydnee McElroy, you mean.

**Sydnee:** That—that is true.

**Justin:** It's important in this context, because we host a medical history podcast called *Sawbones*.

**Sydnee:** [simultaneously] *Sawbones*.

**Justin:** Oh, I thought we were gonna—we should've worked on that.

**Sydnee:** *Sawbones*.

**Justin:** *Sawbones* isn't afraid to ask the hard-hitting questions, like are vaccines as safe as reliable as they want us to believe?

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Justin:** Do I have to get a flu shot?

**Sydnee:** Yes.

**Justin:** O—okay. Is science a miracle?

**Sydnee:** No?

**Justin:** We have a lot of great history for you, and a lot of laughs, and sometimes the history is so bad that there's no laughs. But...

**Sydnee:** You'll learn something. You'll feel something.

**Justin:** And it's always *Sawbones*.

**Sydnee:** That's right.

**Justin:** [through laughter] Every week on Maximumfun.org.

[music and ad end]

**Teresa:** Thank you so much for joining us today, Mawusi. I am so excited to have you on the podcast with us to talk about Kwanzaa.

**Mawusi:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** My first question about Kwanzaa is how it relates to community and community care. Could you tell us a little about that?

**Mawusi:** Well, it's a beautiful thing about this holiday that we have created for ourselves, is that we're dealing with—in my community, the Black community, we're dealing with a lot of trauma. And we're dealing with a lot of stressors in our day-to-day lives that are literally affecting how we birth our babies, how we deal with our relationships, how we address ourselves and our self-value. And what's a beautiful thing is when we use the concept of Kwanzaa, it's this beautiful antidote in supporting us in walking our way out of systematic trauma.

I am so grateful to utilize the concept of unity, Umoja, the first day, in understanding how we're all in this together. And then Kujichagulia is self-determination. Like, to take our self-value back, and then to give ourselves

new standards for which to value ourselves based upon. That heals that whole lack of self-esteem.

Then we look at Ujima, cooperative economics, which will be where we work together to build our economic structures up, and then that heals the disenfranchisement that we're dealing with. It also strengthens our Black businesses that we have, which is a big deal, because we've honestly—we have spent a lot of time not really understanding how to take those steps in creating businesses for ourselves. And now more than ever, COVID has given us this great gift of—[laughs] of making us unemployed, so now we are all creating employment for ourselves. You know, a lot more of us are.

And then when we take a look at creativity, Kuumba, or Imani, faith, you know, it helps us to just really look back at ourselves and find ourselves again, and then to find our creativity, our color. Finding the good things about our skills, talents, and abilities, in order to replace our value.

It's just—you know, it just helps. It helps to replace the self back into that person, so that they can then now act out of a healthier disposition rather than—a healthier mindset, a healthier state of being, rather than one that is unhealthy.

**Travis:** I was curious, with these days, are there specific kind of traditional activities to go with each day, or things that you do on those days? Or is it more just like, open to what you or the community or, you know, what the particular person or family, what they want to do to kind of think about those—you know, the different days?

**Mawusi:** Well, think about the fact that they're principles.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Mawusi:** Umoja, Kujichagulia, these are principles of unity, self-determination, cooperative work and responsibility, cooperative economics, Nia, purpose, creativity, faith. These automatically give you a to-do list. Just when I say "cooperative work and responsibility," you can come up with a to-do list of things that you can do. And the objective is not to tell you what

to do, but to inspire you to do something that is helpful for yourself, or your family, or your community.

**Travis:** Yeah, I just love that all of these principles are very active. They're very, like, activated things. You know, when you talk about creativity, and cooperative economics, and collective work and responsibility, they're not just like, "Ah, think about all the things you've got to be thankful for."

**Mawusi:** Yes, mm-hmm.

**Travis:** Or, "Think about these things." It's much more, like, engaging and active concepts.

**Teresa:** So it's less of a ritual and more of a springboard, right?

**Mawusi:** More so it becomes a ritual by things the we do consistently.

**Teresa:** Okay.

**Mawusi:** So if every year when we take it out of it, yeah, then that becomes that ritual, you know, when we're doing it consistently. But the springboard is where we have to begin. It's to live in our lives with more principles, you know? Think about it. A lot of times we're just phoning it in. We're going through life all year just doing whatever the ads or social media is telling us to do.

Well, now, let's bring it in and really say, "What can we think of to do and be more creative in our life?" What can we do and think of to bring our children to sit down, and let's talk about, and let's think about our faith. What does faith actually mean? It's an investment of energy. You know? So to really sit down with your family, period. Like, "Okay." Just that, period, first of all, is a very—something that we hardly ever get to do. And if we're ever doing it, all of us have our heads in our cell phones.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Mawusi:** So how can we change that, and be in our real—be with our real selves?

**Travis:** Now, I never quite grew up past about the age of 12, so I am curious. Is there any kind of gift-giving aspect Kwanzaa? I know it's not a replacement for Christmas or Hanukkah or any holiday, but is there a gift-giving aspect to it?

**Mawusi:** Yeah, yeah. We're actually giving what is called zawadi, which are gifts. And the zawadi are—that's an engaging thing too, which I like that. The engaging thing about it is that some of our gifts are actually handmade.

**Travis:** Ooh.

**Mawusi:** That we make ourselves. As African-Americans, we come from a rich tradition of quilting, of doll making, of toy making, of handcrafting, and wooden things, and metal smiths. Actually, in my family we have metal smiths and carvers. And we also have seamstresses and sewers. So we are giving gifts that we've actually crafted ourselves. And this makes gift-giving a lot more heartfelt.

**Travis:** That's awesome.

**Mawusi:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I like that.

**Mawusi:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Teresa:** And you mentioned that there's also a celebratory dinner at the end of the seven days?

**Mawusi:** Yeah, yeah. So at the end of the seven days, everyone gets together and we all bring food together. You know, food is that foundational, base cultural aspect that we all—no matter what you do, no matter how you look at life, we love food.

**Travis:** Yeah.



**Mawusi:** So bringing food together—[laughs] yeah. And it actually is that great unifier. So, think about it. At the beginning of the seven days, we're talking about unity, and at the end, again, unity.

**Travis:** That's beautiful.

**Teresa:** Can you tell us about some specific things that you would do? I mean, for example, in a previous episode we talked about the Seder meal.

**Travis:** Traditional recitations or, like, songs, or anything.

**Teresa:** Or traditional dishes or something. Is it more about...

**Mawusi:** So, it depends on—it depends on your family.

**Teresa:** Oh, okay.

**Mawusi:** So, like, you know how there are, like, in... you have that signature macaroni, or that signature potato salad. You know, the barbecue. You know, the consummate barbecue, you know?

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Mawusi:** Everybody has those things. That barbecue sauce, you know? [laughs] Well, everyone has their own special signature dish. And so, in essence, they bring themselves in their dish. What it is that's your signature dish, you can bring it to the table. If we were in Tanzania, Tanzania, if we were in Ghana, we would bring fufu in Ghana, or Ugali in Tanzania. Whatever was that signature dish. The objective really is to bring yourself. So whatever thing that shows your identity, shows you, that's what you would bring.

**Travis:** Now, do you have a signature dish? Do you have a signature dish that you bring?

**Mawusi:** Yes! Yes, we have that cabbage and potatoes. That loving—that wonderful, healthful, and comfort food. Potatoes.

**Travis:** That sounds so good.

**Mawusi:** Yeah. Just roasted potatoes, and just—oh yeah.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** That's wonderful. I was able to find some clips of Kwanzaa celebrations here in Cincinnati. There was a really great one that I saw a clip of in 2017 at the Y. And there was—it seemed like there was a lot going on.

**Mawusi:** Yeah.

**Teresa:** It seemed like a really big celebration. What other kind of things here, specific in Cincinnati does the community do?

**Mawusi:** Let me—let me tell you about that! I was so bubbling with excitement when you brought that up.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Mawusi:** Did you know that Cincinnati's Kwanzaa has been going on for 46 years? This is our 46th year.

**Travis:** Wow.

**Teresa:** Wow!

**Mawusi:** Isn't that—that's so—that's, like, for us to, um, take a holiday that we ourselves have created, value it, and value it for 46 years. That's so beautiful! I'm, like, excited. I'm so excited to get to part of this year. For me, I have been a part of Kwanzaa, meaning either in coming to the citywide Kwanzaa or participating in the citywide Kwanzaa, for more than 25 or so years now.

**Teresa:** Wow.

**Mawusi:** Yeah, that's exciting to me. So, um, I raised my family of seven children coming to Kwanzaa every year, 'cause it's a big deal. We really look forward to it. What's so cool about the Kwanzaa is that we extend it out over seven days, and we go to different places. So when we have our citywide first day of Umoja on December 26th, and this year it'll be at the Woodlawn Community Center starting at 12 noon. However, we go all the way, every—we do every single day, and we go to different places. Different businesses in Cincinnati host us to come and do and celebrate and focus on different days.

So we have such amazing things that go on each day. For this year, just using as an example, for this year while be going to—on the last day, we're gonna go to Heads Up Trading Company, and that's on Spring Grove. I don't have the address on the tip of my tongue, but it's on Spring Grove. And what's so cool is they sell crystals and gemstones. So we're gonna go over each day, and each principle and purpose of each day, and we're gonna talk about which crystal or gemstone relates to that purpose.

**Travis:** Oh, that's great.

**Mawusi:** And that's so exciting. It's exciting to allow it to be—understand how each principle can cover even the differences, even the different things that we are doing, you know? And it is exciting.

**Travis:** One of the things that I find, you know, interesting in Kwanzaa compared to things like Christmas and Hanukkah and stuff, is Kwanzaa is fairly new, comparative to those. About, what, 56 years, I think? If I'm doing my math correctly.

**Mawusi:** Right, 1966, Maulana Karenga created the holiday.

**Travis:** And what's interesting, when we talk about Christmas, right? We'll often compare and contrast, like, 1880s, how they would've celebrated Christmas in Victorian England, and how it's evolved since then. How has Kwanzaa, just in the almost 60 years that it has been celebrated, has it evolved and changed and incorporated new things in that time?

**Mawusi:** It's going to naturally evolve, because people are always going to interpret the principles in their life, and how their lives are interpreting it. What I love about this concept is that he's got—he's got set concepts in there. We have the Mkeka mat, we have the Kwanzaa Kinara. Those things are pretty much staples in the celebration of Kwanzaa. However—and we do have our African drummers, our African culture is inculcated in there.

But just as we have literally over a thousand African nations on the continent of Africa, and then we are also one of them, we have different ways of seeing things, and we're allowed to have that room to show our individuality and to grow. I think that, yes, we're gonna have—like, let's look at Christmas, and how it was celebrated, and how Kris Kringle dressed in the 1800s, and things like that. And how we look at Hanukkah and how the dreidel is played, that game is played.

These things are main staples, you know? But Christmas trees are even changing nowadays. And remember, they became now the synthetic Christmas trees that were all white, and now I've even seen someone on Pinterest, like, hang ornaments in a way that it looked like a Christmas tree.

Things change and evolve. So what's intrinsic in the creating of Kwanzaa was the fact that we're able to create, in and of our own likeness and image.

**Travis:** Now, you mentioned—and forgive, I don't know, my lack of knowledge—is Kwanzaa also celebrated on the continent of Africa? Is it, like, a specifically African-American experience? Like, how widespread of a celebration is it?

**Mawusi:** You know what's so interesting is that it has been celebrated over the continent of Africa, but by African-Americans bringing it. In 2020, I went to live in Tanzania, and we brought the first ever Kwanzaa celebration to Tanzania, which is a Kiswahili-speaking country. And so they were fascinated with the fact that we celebrate Kwanzaa, and we were calling it Matunda Ya Kwanzaa, which means first fruits. We used concepts that they understood. So it literally built an amazing bridge between our two cultures, within African-American culture and Tanzanian culture, the culture of the people of Arusha and the culture of the people of Moshi. You know, in Tanzania, at the foot of Kilimanjaro, it was so amazing.

So we did seven days there, in seven different locations. Some of the locations we did—for cooperative economics, we did a cash mob, which we went to one of the local vendors and we bought so much. So many flowers, and fruits, and vegetable plants from her. And she was just amazed and excited, and we told her we owe it all to—Kwanzaa inspired us to do this. This is why I say that it's celebrated differently, because we are doing what we can in order to exemplify those principles.

So cooperative economics, we go and cash mob her business. And she said, "Oh my gosh, you all will help me to send my children to school. I'm able to pay school fees."

**Travis:** Oh, that's amazing.

**Mawusi:** With that. And we were all able to take home plants that we were able to—like, things that we'd never smelled and seen before, lemon thyme and things. We were able to, you know, spend the money there, and place plants in our garden that we may not have had. So that was... so heart—well, heartwarming. It was exciting.

**Travis:** Yeah, that's incredible. What is the experience like for, like, a child, like an 8 to 12-year-old through Kwanzaa? Like, what would you say—you know, we have a six-year-old and a three-year-old. And I'm just starting to, like, relearn what it's like to be a kid during Christmas, to watch them experience it and stuff. Like, what would you say is, like, what is a kid experiencing?

**Mawusi:** Their experience.

**Travis:** Yeah.

**Mawusi:** Well, what's so cool is—let's think back on, we've got that one day of Christmas. Remember how exciting that was? The wait for it to come, and then here are all the songs, and it's one day. Well, then, when we celebrate Kwanzaa it's, like, seven days. So they're excited.

You know, this is now—I'm in grandma phase, so now I'm at my second generation of children for Kwanzaa. And so we get to celebrate seven days. So they're looking forward to the first day, in which we're all unified in one place, and that's usually our house. And then we go to one of the sisters or brothers', one of my children's houses and we celebrate there.

And they may have games, or things that we all sit and do together, that we all even create together, you know? We make things, too, together. Sit and talk about the principle of it. We may even go to one another, go out together, get together and go out together to do something together, which is cool, also.

I have one son who is a musician, so we'll get together at his house and he—one year he did a whole serenade for us. Not a serenade, I mean a whole little concert for us.

**Travis:** That's beautiful.

**Mawusi:** You know, and that was just—that's—you know, it's just so... so many things that we can do. And these things keep us motivated to think creatively, and to put things into a creative perspective, even for the children. How would they like it? What would they think, you know? And this then inculcates in them the anticipation of these seven days that we give. You know, the anticipation of getting to look at these principles in different ways, forms, shapes, activities, ideas, in different ways.

That's why I say we have that freedom to choose how we express these seven days, is because we need to get our motors running, thinking creatively. We're not a higher species for nothing, because we're supposed to be thinking and evolving ourselves to think deeper, and to give ourselves greater perspectives.

**Travis:** Now, I know that there are—and man, I wish I knew this off the top of my head, but I am reading this off a screen. There's the seven symbols, the crops, the mat, the candleholder, the corn, the seven candles, the unity cup, and the gifts. Are these symbols present as, like, decoration and stuff around the house? Like, how do you decorate for Kwanzaa?

**Mawusi:** How you—I'm gonna go with, how do you decorate for Kwanzaa? Then I'm gonna talk about each one, I'm gonna talk about the symbols and what they're representative of. How do you decorate for Kwanzaa? We, um... it's sort of like, you're going place up—we place—I have coloring pages for the children. So I have them color their—we have these coloring pages of children who are doing different things, different activities that represent those days of Kwanzaa. And so for—I literally place up the day of Kwanzaa, Nia, and then we have a coloring page of children who are doing things purposefully. And I have them color those pages in, and I put them up.

I also have a red, black, and green flag that's out front of my house. Red, black, green, and gold things placed up around my house. That's how I choose to do it. But others may have different—I have even been in a home that had their Christmas tree up, Christmas concepts up, and their Kwanzaa Kinara up as well. I have been to a place in which they have had lit up their house with red, black, and green lights all around, and different things.

Um, what we do is we have that specific place set up with those emblems of Kwanzaa, with those different emblems and things related to Kwanzaa. So the Mkeka mat, the ears of corn, the Kinara, the candles; they are all items that we set up every year.

So, like I say, a thing you do consistently is a ritual, so these are ritual items. And these ritual items are focal points for us to focus in on those specific days. So with that, they become decorations, but they're so much more than decorations. They're the things that help us to remember those specific days and principles of Kwanzaa.

So, you'll also note that in the lighting of candles there's a specific way to light the candles, where the unity candle, black candle, is lit first. And then red candle of Kujichagulia is lit on Tuesday, the second day. Well, Tuesday—it would be Tuesday this year. The second day, on the second day of Kwanzaa. And then we look at Ujima. That is lit—the green candle is lit on the third day, and Ujamaa, a red candle is lit on the fourth day.

And these candles, lighting these candles are representative of our—you know, they're representative of lighting that fire within ourselves, and awakening that principle, or reigniting that principle within ourselves. So the

decoration of it is of your free choice, in how you choose to commemorate the seven days. But the immovable concepts of the Kinara are ritual items.

**Travis:** I know I've asked a lot of questions, but I'm very—

**Mawusi:** I'm okay with it. Keep going.

**Travis:** Yeah, okay. I'm also—I love just the scheduling of it. If anything else, I love schedules, and starting the 26th and ending the 31st, and so it carries you into the New Year as well.

**Mawusi:** Yeah, yeah.

**Travis:** Um, and so is that a part—

**Mawusi:** Ending on the 1st.

**Teresa:** It ends on the 1st. [laughs]

**Travis:** Is that part of the Karamu as well? That carrying over into the New Year and taking these principles with us, or with you?

**Mawusi:** Absolutely! Absolutely. You know, anything that you build up momentum for, and then take it on into the New Year, you know, that... so, like, how can we purify our intentions? Purify, like, or get—get through the issues, the gripe, the grime, or the frustration that you may have had in that previous year. Cleanse that. Release that. And move on into the New Year? Bye! Wait a minute. Let me go back and re—take a look at the unity of the year. Look at this year that so many people did come to help me, that this and that did happen. How about my funds did change—you know, change?

In addition, you can flip it and you can also say that, well, in this coming year I want to see more unity. I want to see more cooperative economics. I want to have more faith. So yeah, that really—we're really looking at setting intentions for coming into our New Years with resolve, you know? So, like, we say New Year's resolution, but coming into the New Years with more, healthier resolve.



**Teresa:** Do you have any resources or books that you might recommend to continue teaching this, that you might share with us?

**Mawusi:** Yes! Now, what's so cool is that we—Google, number one.

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Mawusi:** Ground zero resource: Google.

**Teresa:** Mm-hmm.

**Mawusi:** Google. But Google for coloring pages for children for Kwanzaa. So cool. Getting children involved in Kwanzaa is amazing. I also—next one, YouTube! Guess why? Because YouTube is a great resource for Kwanzaa videos, Kwanzaa songs. We have this running joke in my family. We have this Kwanzaa playlist that we all listen to for Kwanzaa, and it's—we just love this. [laughs]

**Travis:** [laughs]

**Mawusi:** It's got all types of videos, all types of literal videos that people have created to go along with Kwanzaa, even dramatizing Kwanzaa. Like, dramatizing the facts, frequently asked questions, and things that people always wanted to know. In addition to that, Maulana Karenga has his own website talking about his own history, and also some pertinent books that he's written on Kwanzaa. That's where I would begin. The books that he's written on Kwanzaa are really engaging, educational. His thoughts on them, and he has a whole official site on that.

I also love looking at the children's' books. I want everyone to—we're, like, losing our library. We want to go to the library, and there are very good displays set up for Kwanzaa at different libraries that have children's books and adult books on how to celebrate Kwanzaa. That's where I would start. The reason I'm leaving it open is because now—now, remember when we first started celebrating, there were no books on Kwanzaa. Now there are a

plethora of books, and we all should check them out. Websites and things like that, too.

**Teresa:** Wonderful. So, if I were to talk to the listeners, I'd say that the resources are out there, and you have to go find them.

**Mawusi:** They're not hard to find. As a matter of fact, they're gonna find you.

[all laugh]

**Mawusi:** 'Cause now—think about it. In Cincinnati, we've been celebrating it for 46 years. So there are now people who are making more and more resources, and that who are adding their names to the list of—adding their books and videos and things to the list of resources that are out there.

**Travis:** Mawusi—am I saying it right?

**Teresa:** You are.

**Mawusi:** Yeah, you're saying it right. You're doing good.

**Travis:** Okay, great. Mawusi, it's been an absolute pleasure talking to you. I also just want to say, fun, engaging. But I also love the strap on your glasses.

**Mawusi:** [laughs]

**Travis:** Your, like, glasses lanyard is wonderful.

**Mawusi:** Yeah.

**Travis:** I love that very much. I like a good accessory any day of the week, and that's fun as heck. I love it. I just wanted you to know.

**Mawusi:** I am so into accessories. You already know. So into.

[all laugh]

**Travis:** Love it. Thank you so much for talking with us.

**Teresa:** Coming from a man with red glasses on purple hair, he's—he's very into it.

**Travis:** I'm big on accessories as well. It's—it's a whole thing.

**Mawusi:** [crosstalk] But your hair is ama—I love your hair. It's cute.

**Travis:** Thank you very much. Thank you.

**Mawusi:** I was gonna say that when you were leaving the purple background. I was like, wow, that's so cool! [laughs]

**Teresa:** [laughs]

**Travis:** One of my daughters absolutely loves it. The other one has started—the three-year-old has started going, "Why did you do that?"

**Mawusi:** [laughs]

**Travis:** I'm like, "'Cause it looks good!" And she's like, "Okay." And man, nothing like the words of a three-year-old to really cut deep. They're the—oh, boy. We don't need to go into that, though. That's not what the episode's about. Thank you so much for joining us. It has been an absolute pleasure.

**Mawusi:** Absolutely. I'm grateful.

**Travis:** And that's gonna do it for us, folks. Thank you so much for joining us. Before we let you go, a couple quick announcements. If you missed the Candlenights show when it premiered on the 17th, good news. It is still available. You can go and watch the video on demand through January 2nd. You can get tickets at [bit.ly/candlenights2022](https://bit.ly/candlenights2022). Don't forget to check out [mcelroymerch.com](https://mcelroymerch.com). I know it's probably too late for the holidays for you, but still. 10% of all merch proceeds this month go to Harmony House in our hometown of Huntington, West Virginia. And, you know what? That's gonna do it. We should let you know, no new shows next week, because we're

giving our staff the last week of the year off for the holidays. But we'll be back with new shows on January 2nd. Everybody have a safe and happy holiday. Take care of yourself. Teresa, what am I forgetting?

**Teresa:** Well, we always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. 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, join that group today.

Thank you to Alex, our researcher and writer. Thank you to Rachel, our editor. And thank you to you, for your submissions to [shmatterscast@gmail.com](mailto:shmatterscast@gmail.com). We are putting together some really great episodes for y'all. We love the idiom submissions, and we love those topic suggestions. So keep 'em coming, and say hi to Alex, 'cause she reads every one.

**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]

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