

Shmanners 474: Idioms Part 18

Published September 26th, 2025

[Listen here on Maximum Fun](#)

[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 well!

Travis: You look beautiful.

Teresa: Aw, thank you!

Travis: Ever since you got your pretty haircut, I'm enjoying it immensely. I think you look great.

Teresa: I did, I got bangs.

Travis: Bangs! They're new.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: And everybody's gonna love 'em!

Teresa: Or fringe?

Travis: [with rolled R's] Fringe?

Teresa: Perhaps you prefer "fringe"?

Travis: I do like that show. I love that show.

Teresa: No, it—

Travis: It was weird, and— [crosstalk]

Teresa: No, it's just a...

Travis: The third season is strange, but—

Teresa: ... a British name for bangs. [chuckles] You know, I have heard that they're called bangs 'cause they bang into your eyes. It's just a bang-bang. [chuckles]

Travis: Okay!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Can I tell you? Never thought about it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Fringe," I guess, makes *more* sense.

Teresa: 'Cause it fringes your face?

Travis: Yeah! They should be called frames. Curtains.

Teresa: [laughs] There's a type of bangs called curtain bangs!

Travis: [gasps] I'm a genius! Okay, but that's not what we're talking about this week.

Teresa: No, that's not—

Travis: We could *maybe* do a whole episode on bangs, but...

Teresa: Although that is— Is that an idiom? If they're called bangs because they bang into your eye...

Travis: No, I think that's just a nickname. If it's not a *saying*, I think it's just a nickname, right?

Teresa: We'll have to dig deeper on this subject.

Travis: Okay. But we're talking about idioms.

Teresa: We *are* talking about idioms.

Travis: Part 18!

Teresa: [through laughter] Oh, boy!

Travis: I know.

Teresa: Listen, there really are so many.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: What a wonderful part of language.

Travis: What a wonderful world this could be.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: [through laughter] Okay!

Travis: So what's our first one?

Teresa: Okay. So the first one was submitted by Avery. And the saying is "full-blown."

Travis: So this is like if you— I was about to say "go all out," but that's another one.

Teresa: Oh!

Travis: Yeah. When you do something to the utmost, to the fullest. Like, you might have a small get-together with friends where it's just a couple people, or a *full-blown party* with a DJ, and food everywhere, and decorations.

Teresa: Yes. I would amend that to say it is normally done in the passive voice. One does not *do* something full-blown; it occurs full-blown.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Does that make sense?

Travis: It *is* full-blown.

Teresa: It *is* full-blown.

Travis: Or *a* full-blown— Almost like a description?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: "It was a full-blown fight," not "I'm going to fight you full-blown."

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Exactly. Meaning “Something in its most extreme or serious form.”

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: So the first time the saying pops up is in the 1640s.

Travis: Wow! That’s a lot older than I would have guessed.

Teresa: Yeah, really?

Travis: So it’s probably in Shakespeare somewhere.

Teresa: I mean, probably.

Travis: I don’t know when that dude was active, but I know it was the 1600s.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: I know that that’s a wi— That’s 100 years, right? If somebody was like, “Travis, he was around in the 1900s...”

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Technically true!

Teresa: Technically, yes? It’s true. Okay, and it is quite literal, actually! “Blown” doesn’t refer, though, to blowing air like wind, or blowing into a straw, okay?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: That’s different. In Old English, “get blown” was a phrase that meant “to bloom,” or “that *has* blossomed.”

Travis: Ah! See, I would have guessed something to do with an explosion.

Teresa: Mm!

Travis: Like—

Teresa: Well, I mean—

Travis: It's blown up. That's full-blown. Right? There's nothing left.

Teresa: If you've ever seen a flower in high-def high speed, right?

Travis: I've seen a flower.

Teresa: No. High *speed* photography, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Where they show you the kind of power that a blooming flower can have, when it comes to its full conclusion.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Right?

Travis: Then it's full-blown.

Teresa: I mean, that makes sense to me. Meaning if something was full-blown, it was in full bloom – like I said, referring to a flower. The phrase didn't develop fully until the 1650s, and as time went on, "full-blown" also became a reference for cheeks, and sales, and bladders.

Travis: Okay, yeah! Probably not like, bladders— Like air bladders, probably, more.

Teresa: Well, more like bladders as in balloons.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Not like— And this story may be apocryphal. I've never been able to find— But Tex Avery— I've heard the story that the cartoonist Tex Avery, who did a lot of early *Looney Tunes* stuff, and if you've seen the wolf where his tongue rolls out, and his eyes pop out...

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: That's Tex Avery. Hated taking breaks from work, so he positioned his drawing desk, like, straight shot down the hall to the bathroom. And he would wait 'til the last second, and run there. And then, one day, his bladder exploded. And I don't know if that's true— And then he was in the hospital for a while. I don't know if that story is fully true, but I like it as a reminder of when you have to go potty, stop...

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: ... and go right away.

Teresa: Yeah. We'll have to talk to Sydnee, and see if that is something that can be accomplished? It feels like quite an elastic organ that would probably leak before it would explode.

Travis: I don't know.

Teresa: I don't know.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Somebody ask *Sawbones*. Let's see, the next one is, "The call is coming from inside the house," submitted by Matt B.

Travis: Okay. So this is a fun one, because I've *heard* it used as a way of saying, like, "I think that the person making the statement might be the one responsible for it," right? Or that, "I think you are being hypocritical."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Almost as another idiom, “The pot calling the kettle black,” right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That it’s like, “Mm. That thing you’re worried about? I think that that call might be coming from inside the house,” right? Of if someone was like, “I think that there’s just so many bad influences on children these days,” says someone who’s not a very good parent. You might say, “Mm. I think that call might be coming from inside the house.”

Teresa: Certainly.

Travis: And I *know* that this *must* be originated from suspense thrillers and horror movies. Because there’s the, as far as I know, old— What’s it— Not— “Creepypasta” is all that’s stuck in my head.

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: Urban legend of the babysitter with the kids, and there’s a scary call coming in. And it’s like, “Hey. Have you checked on the children?” And it’s really spooky. And then she calls 911, and they trace the call. And they’re like, “You need to get out of there! The call is coming from inside the house!”

Teresa: Mm, yes! It is very much like that. The trope dates back to 1974, which as far as idioms go, is fairly modern, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: And it was brought to life in the classic horror film *Black Christmas*, which I had never heard of. [laughs]

Travis: I don’t think I have, either. So maybe “classic” is in the, like, calling a big guy “Tiny” kind of way?

Teresa: I don’t know.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: I'm not into horror, but people who are, I bet they know. Which is about a sorority house that's been getting *mysterious* and *uncomfortable* phone calls from a faceless man that none of the students can identify. And so the sorority sisters begin to disappear.

In the climax of the movie, the call has been traced. And it's revealed that the predator has not only been disappearing their friends, but also that he's been making all of the upsetting phone calls from *inside the house*!

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: I— Listen. That might be the first, like, "We can find it in, more or less, writing."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: But I wouldn't be surprised that the urban legend predates that.

Teresa: It's possible.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Okay. So the next one, submitted by Wayne B., is "Cute as a button." How would you describe what that means to someone?

Teresa: Well, I mean, it means "absolutely adorable."

Travis: Yes. And usually, in a— You would be like, "Ooh!"

Teresa: In a minuscule sense.

Travis: "Cute as a button," right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: You wouldn't be like, "That giant panda bear is cute as a button."

Teresa: Well, you might, because that's hyperbole. But...

Travis: Then you might say, "That teacup pig, cute as a button," right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Why?

Teresa: Why? Well—

Travis: 'Cause buttons are cute? And little?

Teresa: I mean, they can be. But here's the thing, okay? The word "button" itself comes into English from French around 1350. And for years, "button" was slang for everything from a budding plant, to a police officer, to something that might be pluralized in your pants regarding "Got kicked," right, "in the buttons."

Travis: I guess. I don't think of 'em as that, but okay.

Teresa: No, not anymore. But around—

Travis: No, not even then! If somebody said that, I'd be like— I guess if you had a button fly...

Teresa: Oh, maybe.

Travis: ... that maybe that's where that came from? "I got kicked in the buttons"? 'Cause 1350, so...

Teresa: Well, but I think it's referring—

Travis: ... there weren't zippers.

Teresa: Referring to the testes.

Travis: I know, but I could see how that got connected.

Teresa: Okay, maybe.

Travis: Because I don't think of that part of the anatomy as particularly *button-like*.

Teresa: Well, I mean, our buttons today look different from their buttons, maybe.

Travis: That's true.

Teresa: So in the late 1600s, a button became a more generalized slang for something adorable, right? And we're pretty sure this started with the writings of Archibald Lovell, who penned the phrase, "This is such a little button of a world," in 1696. And so from that point on, buttons were used in Old English to describe anything adorable, specifically relating to children a lot.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: So you might describe them having a button face, or a button mouth, or, like Santa, a button nose.

Travis: "Button nose," I've heard, which is once again, a weird way to describe— I guess there's holes in your nose. Like there would be in a button?

Teresa: No, I think it has to do with the nose being small and adorable.

Travis: So more like you would push—

Teresa: It's too literal that you're thinking.

Travis: Do you think it would be more like a button you would push? That it's just a little button on their face?

Teresa: I mean, maybe.

Travis: You know? Like one of those pop-out buttons that they used to have for gas lamps and electric? Instead of a Switch, it was just like, "Pop, pop, pop, pop"?

Teresa: You're being so literal, and I'm thinking that it is more figurative than you imagine. Because—

Travis: No, because I don't see *buttons* as particularly cute. Unless we're talking about it of like, you know, the little buttons. Just little buttons.

Teresa: They are round, and small.

Travis: I guess that's true. Listen, I just have real problems with those.

Teresa: Okay. Also, buttons were, for a long time, the way that you could—

Travis: But you have to include, this is Alex's theory.

Teresa: Yes. This is Alex's theory, but it makes sense to me. And it is true that, in the days without dyes or printed fabrics, you could decorate clothing with buttons. Along with lace, and other things. Right?

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: But you could decorate your buttons, because they were often made of wood, or bone. Right? And you could paint on them! And I think that that makes a lot of sense.

Travis: Sure.

Teresa: Here's the next one. "Raising Cain," submitted by Allie P.

Travis: So this is causing trouble, right? But if someone went on a real rampage, right— Like, they didn't just— If you said, "This child spoke out in class," they get

in trouble. Versus, "They got up from their desk, and they just start flipping tables, really raising Cain." Right?

Teresa: Yes. It refers to *loud* mischief, right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Not of the small variety.

Travis: And I have always assumed, because this is C-A-I-N, that it has to do with Cain from the Bible.

Teresa: Yes. That is correct. Although it is often misinterpreted as C-A-N-E, which one might assume to mean using the rod, or the cane, to discipline a child.

Travis: Yes. But it's C—

Teresa: Perhaps for behaving poorly? I'm not sure. But it is not.

Travis: They might get that because of the chicken restaurant, Raising Cane's. Where they *do* spell it C-A-N-E.

Teresa: That's true!

Travis: But that's not...

Teresa: That's not it.

Travis: ... how the phrase goes.

Teresa: Okay. So it is a direct reference to the story in which Abel and Cain, right, we've got... Cain murders his brother.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And so that means—

Travis: You guys know it, right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: You all know it! You know? Cain and Abel?

Teresa: I mean, not *everybody* knows— But—

Travis: But it was in *Lucifer*!

Teresa: Well—

Travis: They talked about it in the show *Lucifer*.

Teresa: In the show.

Travis: Why wouldn't— I think *Supernatural*, too!

Teresa: Anyway...

Travis: Those are, like, the two biggest cultural influences of our time.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Don't give me that look.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You know who you married.

Teresa: Therefore...

Travis: You know who I am.

Teresa: If you are *raising Cain*, that meant you were ushering along the development of mischief and chaos.

Travis: Yes. And, if you were able-bodied, then you're— [laughs]

Teresa: [giggles]

Travis: No, that's different.

Teresa: No, no.

Travis: Okay. Hey, everybody, we'll be back with more idioms. But first, a word from another Max Fun show!

[theme music plays]

Alexis: Hi! I'm Alexis. I am one of the cohosts of *Comfort Creatures*, and I'm here with River Jiu, who has been a member since 2019. Thank you so much for being a listener, and a supporter of our show.

River: Yeah. I can't believe it's been that long.

Alexis: Yeah! [laughs] Right? As the Max Fun Member of the Month, can I ask what sort of made you decide to be a member?

River: I used to work at a library. So I just used to listen to podcasts while I reshelfed all the books. It really helped with doing [through laughter] everything at work.

Alexis: [laughs] Yes.

River: So I just wanted to give back to what's been helping me.

Alexis: Yeah!

River: It feels good to be a part of that.

Alexis: As the Member of the Month, you will be getting a 25-dollar gift card to the Maximum Fun Store, a Member of the Month bumper sticker, and you also, if you're ever in Los Angeles, you can get a parking spot at the Maximum Fun HQ, just for you.

River: Yay! I'm actually going to LA in September.

Alexis: [gasps] Ooh!

River: So I'll get to use the parking space!

Alexis: Yes! Thank you so much, River, for doing this. This has been an absolute blast.

River: Yeah, of course! I've been so glad to be able to talk to you, too, and I'm so excited to be a Member of the Month.

Alexis: Yay!

Voiceover: Become a Max Fun member now at MaximumFun.org/join.

[ad changes]

Jeremy: Hey, everybody! I'm Jeremy.

Oscar: I'm Oscar.

Dimitry: I'm Dimitry.

Jeremy: And we are the *Eurovangelists*.

Oscar: We're a weekly podcast spreading the word of the Eurovision song contest, *the* most important music competition in the world.

Jeremy: Maybe you already heard Glen Weldon of NPR's *Pop Culture Happy Hour* talk up our coverage of this year's contest. But what do we talk about in the off-season?

Dimitry: The rest of Eurovision, duh! There are nearly seven decades of pop music history to cover.

Oscar: Mm-hmm! And we've got thousands of amazing songs, inspiring competitors, and so much drama to discuss. And let me tell you, the drama is juicy.

Dimitry: Plus, all the gorillas and bread-baking grandmas that make Eurovision so special.

Jeremy: Check out *Eurovangelists*, available everywhere you get podcasts, and you could be a Eurovangelist too!

Oscar: Ooh! I wanna be one.

Jeremy: You already are. It's that easy.

Oscar: Oh, okay. Cool.

[ad break ends]

Travis: Okay. So the next one, submitted by Timothy U., is "A pipe dream." And now... I will be honest.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: For a long time, and perhaps to a certain degree now, I can't hear that phrase without thinking of *Super Mario*.

Teresa: *Ohh!*

Travis: I don't know why. But as a child, my brain just connected those two. I know it's 'cause he travels through pipes and whatnot.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And what pipes—

Teresa: The sound is, “Doop, doop, doop.” Right?

Travis: Yep. “Womp, womp—” Yeah. As he goes in. And so just whenever someone says “pipe dream,” my brain’s like, “Mario.” It pictures Mario going down a pipe.

Teresa: “Doop, doop, doop.”

Travis: But I don’t think that’s it.

Teresa: No.

Travis: Do you know what Mario’s overalls are made of?

Teresa: What?

Travis: [to Mario’s Underground Theme] “Denim, denim, denim.”

Teresa: [laughs] Yeah. No, it is literal, though. But not in the case of...

Travis: Well, what does it mean? We gotta tell people what it means, first.

Teresa: ... of a plumbing pipe. It is a smoking pipe. It means a lofty and unlikely hope.

Travis: Yes. As someone might just say, “Yeah, someday I’ll be a billionaire, and I’ll buy this whole town.” And then someone’ll say, “Hey, Mac, that’s just a pipe dream.” Right?

Teresa: Yeah. This phrase became popular in the 1800s, when opium dens were all the rage.

Travis: Get out of town!

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: This is an opium thing?

Teresa: Yeah. It is.

Travis: Ah! If you— Okay. I was prepared for it to be like, “Someday, we’ll have plumbing.”

Teresa: [bursts out laughing] No...

Travis: It’s the 1800s! “Oh, the idea that we would be able to afford plumbing? That’s a pipe dream.”

Teresa: [laughs] And I can understand it. I mean... after finding out what this is from, it seems to me that it’s more of just a *dream* dream. Like, “pipe dream” seems a little redundant at this point. But anyway...

Travis: Well, but if it’s from *opium*...

Teresa: So—

Travis: ... those are pretty zany dreams.

Teresa: If you fall asleep while smoking opium, your dreams can be extremely vivid, or wacky, or even terrifying, right? And there are a *million* side effects from opioid use. So this is just one of the many, and probably one of the most innocuous? There are lots of other symptoms.

Travis: So this is in the same category of sayings like when, how you see in movies and TV shows all the time, when someone goes, “Are you *high*?” Right?

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: This is the same thing, of like, “Are you having a pipe dream?” [laughs]

Teresa: Yeah. Kind of. So another rather intense version of this is, there is also a

side effect that regular opium use can result in hallucinations, right? Things that really even aren't there at all. And so the idea that you are having one of these hallucinations just, I guess, lends more absurdity to the dream that you're having. About—

Travis: Or also, you've gotten so into this imaginary scenario that you're talking about it like it's real.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And it's not just like, "I'd like to star in a movie someday." But like, "*When* I'm a movie star, this is gonna change," and everything, right? And you start treating reality like— I think "pipe dream" goes beyond just, "I'd like to be rich!" To you're *planning* it.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And acting like it's not only inevitable, but might as well be already happening. And it's like, "You've gotten lost in this fantasy, and talking to me like it's really gonna happen. It's never going to."
"Pipe dream" seems like such a theatrical...

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Like, every time I talk about it, I'm picturing a Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, "Willy Loman, it's just a pipe dream!"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "It's never gonna happen!" kind of thing.

Teresa: Here's another one, submitted by Sarah E. "Strange bedfellows."

Travis: So this means people working together, or fr— or whatever that's like, "Why would those two be together? That makes no sense. They are strange bedfellows."

Teresa: Yes. Unlikely companions or allies.

Travis: Yes. Yeah.

Teresa: Right. And um—

Travis: Like, if you ever saw Superman and Lex Luther teaming up to fight another thing...

Teresa: Yes!

Travis: ... you'd be like, "Whoa! Strange bedfellows."

Teresa: But that's part of it, right? Because they need to be united on pretty much a single issue that overcomes the other issues, right?

Travis: They gotta be in bed together.

Teresa: No. I mean—

Travis: Well, but I mean metaphorically.

Teresa: Metaphorically. [laughs]

Travis: Well, obviously— Obviously, I'm talking metaphorically. I'm not writing a fanfiction of Superman...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... and Lex Luthor getting to the end, and finding, "Oh, there's only one room, and there's only one bed in it. What are we gonna do?" Obviously, I don't mean it for *real*, baby. I don't think Superman and Lex Luthor have to cuddle in bed to talk about how they're gonna stop doomsday.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Come on!

Teresa: But maybe—

Travis: Give me *some* cre— Maybe they do.

Teresa: Maybe they do.

Travis: In my book...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Maybe they do!

Teresa: Okay. This one, we can thank our old friend, Bill.

Travis: I knew it. Bill Shakespeare, for those of you guys—

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: We're on a first-name basis with him.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You guys might not know him.

Teresa: So sometime between 1610 and 1611, William Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest*, where he used that phrase, "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows."

Travis: Isn't there— Is this the part— There is a part where there's characters that have been getting drunk, and they wake up, and Caliban's there with them.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: And he's gotten drunk, too. And they're like, "What is this weirdo?" Is that where— I think that's where...

Teresa: I'm not exactly certain where there it's located.

Travis: I think that's what they're talking about. Like, "Woah! Misery makes for strange bedfellows. Why am I with this strange fish man guy?"

Teresa: Maybe. Again, another playwright, Neil Simon, also made this idea popular with *The Odd Couple*, which is a story of two unlikely roommates. Right?

Travis: I think that, in and of itself, has become kind of an idiom. Of people talking about, "Oh, they're a real odd couple." Right?

Teresa: Yep. Absolutely.

Travis: And that's— Yeah, on its surface, "odd" and "couple" are words that clearly tell you what's going on. But it's also usually specifically "oil" and "water," another idiom that's used to be like, "These two things don't mix," right? But in an odd couple, or strange bedfellows, it's like, "They don't mix, but they are mixing. Why is that? How weird."

Teresa: Right. Um—

Travis: Although, I would— I would say that "odd fellow," or— "Odd fellows." "Odd couple" and "strange bedfellows," there is a—

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You like "odd fellows"? That I combined the—

Teresa: [through laughter] I do.

Travis: That's the third one. It's just like...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "Oh, those guys together are real weird. And I don't mean like a weird pairing. I mean, they act weird when they're together."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But I think that there is a slight usage difference.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Where I would say “strange bedfellows” is like, these are people who don’t normally work together, or spend time together. Or it’s like, “Mm, it’s suspicious that they would be working together,” kind of deal. Right? Of like...

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: If they were— You know. But I think “odd couple” is like, more of “These are two people that, on paper, should not work together, but do.”

Teresa: I can see that.

Travis: That’s kind of how *The Odd Couple* works out, of they end up being good for each other, even though they annoy the crap out of each other.

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: That kind of thing.

Teresa: Yeah. Here’s another one. “All over creation,” submitted by Angie M.

Travis: I didn’t know this was an idiom. [chuckles] I thought this was just a thing people say. I guess that’s what an idiom is.

Teresa: That’s what an idiom is. [laughs]

Travis: “All over creation” is like, if you could— Instead of saying, “I looked everywhere,” you say, “I looked all over creation.”

Teresa: Right, yes, exactly. Everywhere you can think of, and this is from the Bible, again.

Travis: Of course.

Teresa: And so “creation” in this particular instance refers to the world made by God. Therefore, saying, “I looked *all over* creation,” meaning to mean “I looked all over the world.”

Travis: We might have talked about this one before, but do you know the like... “Everyone and their ‘blank’ were there” idiom?

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: What do you say— Or what would you say in that blank?

Teresa: “Everyone and their brother.”

Travis: Okay. I once got into an argument with someone where I said it was like “Everyone and their mother,” or “Everyone and their brother.”

And someone was like, “It’s everyone and their dog.”

And I’m like, “That doesn’t make any sense!”

Teresa: Huh.

Travis: Because it’s supposed to be everyone *and* their brother, right? So it’s like, “Wouldn’t the brother be included in everyone?” And it’s like, “That’s how many people were there!”

Teresa: Yeah, the redundancy is the point.

Travis: Okay. Thank you.

Teresa: Yes. I agree.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. This is often found in the American South and Appalachia, by the way.

Travis: Yes. That makes sense, as to why I know it.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: The next one, too, is—

Teresa: Go ahead. You can do that one.

Travis: Yeah. Submitted by Allie P. “Stuck in my craw.” And I think of it as when it’s like, “You know, I haven’t been able to stop thinking about this thing,” or “This thing really bothered me.” In that way of like, “You know, I had that conversation with Tom, and something he said really stuck in my craw.”

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Right? Of just... “I haven’t been able to get it out of my head.”

Teresa: And it’s annoying, right? It’s— There’s—

Travis: Yeah. It’s a frustrating thing.

Teresa: There’s something, some negative connotation about “Stuck in my craw” that is different from “Stuck in my head,” right?

Travis: Right.

Teresa: Or something like that. And it comes from birds.

Travis: Sure. I always thought that, but I was like... based on nothing. Except I think “craw” is like “crow.”

Teresa: Oh. No— Well, okay.

Travis: So I was like, “That’s what it makes me think of, so— But I don’t know why.”

Teresa: So according to the Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins, Robert Hendrickson explains that the craw is part of the bird’s body where the food is predigested.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Okay. So it's kind of like the stomach before the stomach. And historical hunters know—

Travis: Oh, so that's how they like, baby bird...

Teresa: Yeah!

Travis: Mom's baby bird food, they predigest it and spit it. Okay!

Teresa: Yeah! Notice that birds would swallow bits of stone, or pebbles that would get stuck in the craw. And that would help you grind up the food.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Right? Before digesting it further. However, if they ate a pebble that was too big, the rock would *literally* get stuck in their craw, and they'd be unable to continue the digestive process.

Travis: Which would be a problem.

Teresa: Yes, indeed. And so, the phrase was used to mean something really annoying, right? I mean, I think possibly... It seems to be stronger than that.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Because wouldn't a bird die?

Travis: But I think the usage of it is like, not just annoying, but "I can't let it go. It's really bothering me."

Teresa: "Perhaps to my own detriment"?

Travis: Yeah, yeah. "Stuck in my craw," to me, is like... "This was a while ago," or "They said it to me earlier, and I just *can't* let go of it. It's really bothering me,

and if we don't address it, if I don't talk about it, it's gonna drive me bananas, or whatever." Right?

Teresa: Mm-hmm.

Travis: Of it's not just like, "That thing my friend does is annoying." But "My friend said this, and it has been annoying me ever since." Right?

Teresa: Right.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Let's do one more.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Here's one. Lucian submitted, "To go pear-shaped."

Travis: Okay. So "to go pear-shaped" is, like, everything has gone wrong. Right? Of "This whole plan has gone pear-shaped," right, of "Every step of the plan has not worked." Or "This whole thing is ruined now, because it's unsaveable."

Teresa: Yes. And this is actually from the Royal Airforce!

Travis: Oh! See, I would've guessed "ship."

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: 'Cause I assumed "pear-shape" is like— "Pear-shape," I always pictured it like a boat that flips upside-down, and now looks pear-shaped. I'm saying it out loud, and it doesn't make *complete* sense to me, why I've thought that.

Teresa: Mm, yeah. But really has to do— It has to do with flight path, right? So in the 1940s, in England, if your plane deviated from its intended course, the resulting path of the aircraft literally flew in a pear shape instead of the precise path it was meant to. Therefore, going pear-shaped came to be an RAF slang term for something going wrong!

Travis: Oh. Like if someone might say, "It's gone off the rails"?

Teresa: Sure.

Travis: Which is another idiom related to trains, obviously. Of "It's derailed. Everything has gone off track."

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: This is another thing of, "You've gone off track, it's gone pear-shaped."

Teresa: I can imagine that going pear-shaped in an airplane has some disastrous consequences, as well.

Travis: Well, especially during times before we had GPS tracking and stuff, where you might be flying over the ocean and only have so many points of reference.

Teresa: Mm.

Travis: And you're like, "Hey. I drifted right, and I have no idea where I am now. I'm looking down, I can see water."

Teresa: "And water."

Travis: "So does that give you any clues as to where I am?"

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: "There's a whale. Is that...? Do you have a whale on your map somewhere?"

Teresa: "Is that anything?"

Travis: "I'll ask the whale where I am."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Hey, everybody, thank you so much for joining us on another wonderful idioms episode. We literally could not do these episodes without you.

Teresa: Exactly.

Travis: Because you submit them in. And we also could not do them without our researcher, Alex, who it's so much done to do these idiom episodes with Alex. And we couldn't do it without our editor, Rachel. Thank you, Rachel. And like I said, we don't want to do the episodes without you. We could, but it would be 30 minutes of silence.

Teresa: It would feel empty.

Travis: Yeah. We also wanna say that our *Bake Off* watch-along podcast, *Bake On*, where we watch *Great British Bake Off* and – get this – talk about it...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... is back for another season. You can find it where podcasts are found by searching for *Bake On*. 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. Also, 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.

As always – and like you mentioned – we are constantly taking submissions for idioms, and suggestions for topics, and questions about etiquette. Send all of those to shmannerstcast@gmail.com, and say hi to Alex, because she reads every single 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]

[acoustic sting]

Maximum Fun.
A worker-owned network...
Of artists-owned shows...
Supported directly by you.