

Matt Bowles: My guest today is Martinique Lewis. She is an independent entrepreneur, world traveler, and an award-winning diversity in travel consultant. She's the president of the [Black Travel Alliance](#) and a board member of Conde Nast and the National Outdoor Leadership School. She is also the author of the [ABC Travel Green Book](#), the number one resource connecting travelers to the African diaspora globally. She was named one of the 30 Most Influential People in Travel by *Travel Pulse* and *Travel + Leisure*. And she has been featured in Forbes, CNN, Essence, Travel Noir, and the list goes on.

Marty, welcome to the show.

Martinique Lewis: Thank you so much for having me. I'm going to make sure I match your energy because it's infectious. So, thank you for bringing me all of that good energy.

Matt Bowles: Well, you deserve to have good energy brought to you because you're doing amazing things in this world. And I am so excited to have you on The Maverick Show. Let's just kick this off, though, by talking about where we are recording this from today. Unfortunately, we are not in person. I Am actually in Charlotte, North Carolina, today, on the east coast of the U.S. and where are you?

Martinique Lewis: I am in London, England. Across the pond.

Matt Bowles: London. I love that. And I know that also has a pretty significant place in your overall travel journey. So maybe we should just start a little bit with London. And it's also come up on my radar just with respect to African Diaspora stuff. And an incredible way over the last couple years, because I spent about probably three months in West Africa in 2019 in Nigeria and Ghana and west coast of Africa, and in the clubs there, which are among the best in the world, right? I'm like, I'm shazaming all of these Afro beats, and I'm looking up all of these artists, right?

Martinique Lewis: And they're in London.

Matt Bowles: And a bunch of them are in London, right? The African immigrants that have come over to London are now producing these Afro beats in London. And these are like the top bangers in the club, on par with the stuff that's coming out of Nigeria itself. And then they're coming back over there, and they're just, like, blowing up the clubs in Nigeria. So, my next trip to London, like, that's definitely my priority focus. And so, I would love for you to share a little bit, though, about London, about the African diaspora communities there, your experience, and also just what London means to you and has meant to you in your travel journey.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah, it's funny because somebody asked me this question not too long ago, maybe two weeks ago, and I was like, oh. And they're like, why do you love London so much? And I was like, well, where do I start? London was the first country I went to where I was by myself, where my mom wasn't with me or my grandparents wasn't with me. Even though my mom took me to London, she left me in London because I was going to school there. So, I always say, you know, as a person who studied abroad, I was very fortunate to go to a country where they spoke the same language. But it was my first real introduction to a metropolitan city, or what people call metropolitan city. Now granted, yes, I'm from San Francisco, but like you said, being in London, there's people from everywhere.

There's this huge Indian community, There's a huge Trinidadian community. There's a huge Jamaican, Ghanaian, a Cameroonian, Nigerian. Like, there's just so many different people that you find in London. But not only that, when you start to see friends' groups in London, they're mixed like that. And that was

something I had never seen before, like diversity at its truest form you can find in London. If you go in East London, you know, you'll find a Somalian, a Nigerian, a Ghanaian, a Guyanese, you know, somebody from St. Lucia, somebody from the UAE. Like, they're all friends, they're all hanging out and they're all great friends and they've been great friends since, you know, what they call primary school or our elementary school. And just having that dynamic for me was next level. And so, I studied here. I went to the London College of Fashion. It was the first time that I knew that I was extraordinary. I was able to come in and just kind of take my teachers and the program by storm. But it's something that I didn't know I could do until I got there. And then fast forward. I met friends in London, so they're the reason that I started to come out in London. But the experience that I had as a student was different from me when I was with these friends.

And basically, what happened was they're showing me the real London, how they grew up, right? I was right in central London, Piccadilly Circus, you know, the London high street. And I was just seeing that type of stuff, but I wasn't in London. And so, once I started meeting up with these friends and was in in London, it was a whole different part of London now that I'm falling in love with. And this is how people grow up and this is their festivals, and this is how they eat and this is how they go to church and this is how they work out. And then fast forward a few years after that, me working in the travel and tourism space, I started coming to London like once a month, right? And so now I'm meeting a bunch of different people and I'm creating a whole nother community for myself. And it just opened my eyes up to so many things. And then you had the pandemic where I didn't have to work from office, I could work from anywhere in the world. So naturally I chose London. It was where the people who I loved were. It was the people who I call some of my best friends. It's close proximity to everywhere else. If you're in London, you could get to anywhere else in quick time.

As being a native of Oakland, it takes me six hours to drive to LA. But if I'm going six hours on a plane from somewhere in London, you know, I could get somewhere so far, if I'm going two hours away from going three hours, but I'm going five hours away, I can be on so many different continents. Right. Not just different countries, different continents. And so, it was also location for me. But, yeah, London is one of the places that I come alive, that I feel the most alive, that there are people who love me and I love them, even though it's the same thing at home. But, yeah, it's just a second home to me. And there is this magical feeling that this place produces, and I just love it. And like I tell people every time I walk outside, every time I go to a different place, like, unlocking a new part of London, because London is so big. There are so many different neighborhoods, so many different cultures, so many different everything to see different museums, different exhibits, different clubs. It's just London is phenomenal, and I think I will always feel that way.

Matt Bowles: That's so dope. Well, I want to go all the way back now and talk a little bit about coming up in Oakland, because I feel like you were almost literally born into international travel. And I want to know if you can talk a little bit about the impact that travel had on you when you were coming up as a kid and how, you know, what role did it play in your life, and how do you think that impacted you?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. I always tell people there's an actual travel gene, and I'm positive I was born with it. I come from an immigrant family, Panamanians, who came to New York in the early 50s, late 40s, early 50s. And so, since we were born, there's always been travel instilled in us because of where our family was actually from and us just learning about our actual roots that weren't necessarily rooted in America, but rooted somewhere else. We're still told the story of how Africans got to different places of the world and really understanding, like, okay, yep, your family is Panamanian. Your grandmother and grandfather came from Barbados and Jamaica to come over here to help on plantain farms and to actually build the canal.

And just having that background. And on holidays, you know, we're having rice and peas, we're having Plátanos, we're having fit. It was all of these different things. So that was my first real introduction just to understanding that there are different cultures out there. My mom always made sure that her kids were travelers.

So, we were young, from young age, going to different places, whether it was domestically or internationally. My mom traveled like that when she was in her late 20s, and for people, a black person, be traveling like that in her late 20s, that was unheard of. She was going outside of the country. So, yeah, she raised us that way. And we were always on a trip somewhere. And like I said, whether it's domestic or international, we are always on a trip somewhere. And that was the real love. And then my name, obviously, being an island, you learn a little bit more about geography then, and the different things that are around there and you being like, oh, I want to go there, I want to go there. So, I've always had this extreme love affair with travel. I will say it has made me a better person. I said, London was that first real time I was 21. And it was that first real time that I come to know myself because I had to learn myself in a different country and be able to trust myself in a different country without anybody else there.

So, yeah, travel has made me without a doubt who I am, has led to everything, even down to this podcast that I'm doing. And I'm just so grateful for it. I'm positive my kids will be the same way and their kids will be the same way. And, yeah, I love everything that this world has to offer. When people say the world is your oyster, I hope people really believe it, because it is. There are so many different things to uncover, so many different things to experience. So, yeah, my love for travel has always been there. But growing up in Oakland, I mean, man, Oakland is a phenomenal city, but also filled with diversity. The bay area in general. You grew up with Nicaraguans, you grew up with Tongans, Samoans, you grew up with Filipinos, you grew up with Chinese people. It's something that you might not have gotten anywhere else, but, like, literally in elementary school, you're celebrating every single holiday. We're celebrating Rosh Hashanah, we're celebrating Mexican Independence Day, we're celebrating Chinese New Year's. And these aren't normal things that, you know, kids in North Carolina might actually celebrate, but you do in California or in the Bay Area. So, I was exposed to plenty of different cultures there, as well as different foods and different types of birthday celebrations. So, yeah, I'm grateful because Oakland did raise me and it is a reason that I'm so open minded.

Matt Bowles: Well, I want to ask you if you can expand a little bit more on what you were describing about sort of the depths that you eventually discovered about London. And I know you're really intentional when you travel to travel like a local as opposed to a tourist. And I'm wondering if you can share a little bit about what that means to you and how you go about doing that when you travel to new places.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So, for Me, I've never been a let's go see the monuments type of traveler. If we do get to see him, great. But for me, because of the type of storyteller I am, I always want to tell you the parts about a place that you have no idea about, the stuff that you can't Google, you know, the stuff that TripAdvisor is not going to tell you, the stuff that only you can experience because you've gone to this place and you literally trip and fell into it. And I've had so many of those instances. But for me, I rather immerse myself in the community, so I could really understand all of the things that this place can give. And that's why I rather travel like a local. I don't only want to go to the touristy spots. I want to go to the hole in the wall that you've been eating at since you were 7 years old, where those people know your name, they know your mama's name, they know your dad. You grew up with their kids, you know what I mean? The uncle cuts your grass, the grandmother, you know, is, is sewing your clothes, the cousin is somebody who. You

have a vendor at your wedding. Those are the type of experiences that I love to have. So that's why I just rather do it that way.

Matt Bowles: And I know that you also have a focus on learning about and connecting with the African diaspora in all of the different countries around the world, including a lot of countries that a lot of people may not even be aware of, that has significant contributions by the African diaspora in that country, in that history and all of that. And you've done, I think, an incredible job in bringing a lot of that to light in a lot of different ways. But I would love to have you just sort of share some stories or maybe some of the most memorable experiences as you've been traveling around the world in terms of connecting in diaspora in certain places.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So, I love to talk about Amsterdam because that was one of the places that helped open my eyes to the fact that black people are everywhere. And when people think of Amsterdam, sure, they think of the canals, they think about weed. They think about the red-light district, like things that you know Amsterdam about. But they don't think about the slaves that were there. They don't think about how the Dutch colonized people from Suriname, Guyana and Aruba and how their grandchildren, great grandchildren, great, great grandchild grandchildren are there now. And they're business owners, they're music artists. They have no idea that as you're walking around the red-light district. If you look up, there's black faces on the actual buildings. Because this is how a person who owns slaves, you could see their wealth through their actual slaves that they actually have built into their homes. Now, mind you, this is a place people walk up and down every day and they simply just have not looked up, right?

And so, Amsterdam for me was that introduction to there are black people everywhere. Not only that, if you look, you see the clues, right? So not only is it in their construction, you're going into their museums, you're like, who is that black boy in the picture? What he doing there, right? Or you're like, hold on, these kids are a little tan and got some curly hair. What's going on, right? What's, what's really happening? And so, I met a lady named Jennifer Tosh, and she does black Amsterdam tours or black heritage tours. And just for her to tell me the whole thing, I was like, what? Whoa. And not only that, I can remember her telling her story where she was sitting in class one day and she was like, why isn't any of this history you're talking about include black people? And they said, well, there were no black people here. And she said, excuse me, my grandfather was here. How do you think I got here? So, there's no history. How was my grandfather here? And so, she started uncovering all these things, finding death records, jail records, marriage records, birth records. And she's like, this is it. And then she started finding, right, these things.

So, if you can imagine, again, this is like unlocking a new level of a game, literally. And every time she finds different bustles or faces, it's like getting that new gym. You know how Sonic gets, you know, the coin. It's like literally getting that. And she still to this day, finding them. People are reaching out to her and say, hey, I was here and I found this one. Who are these people? So, for me to experience that, I was just like, wow. But at the same time, you know, after my tour, she took me to Reggae Rita's and I got drunk because reggae readers got some crazy ass rum punch, right? Or I'm with, you know, Amsterdam black women at an amazing brunch. Or, you know, I go to water and Broad to have another brunch or to listen to some live music, or there's a black owned hotel that, like, there was so much stuff. I fall in love with this man who is a Dutch rapper from Suriname, right? All off of him and I marching through the streets during the memory walk on July 1st and it's like I'm having all these experiences and I had no idea this was going to happen. Literally, it was an unexpected thing. So, once I knew that, that that was happening there, and I, at that

point, I consider myself this amazing traveling. I knew nothing about this community. I'm thinking, if I don't know anything about it, all these other people don't know anything about it.

And at the time, you know, I was working for no madness. And I was like, this is my opportunity to share this with other people. But that was also, you know, one of the reasons that I wrote the Green Book, because I'm like, I want you guys now, when you come, whether you're black, white, red, purple, green, blue, to also be able to experience what I was able to experience. And so, I started seeking out these types of places or anytime I knew I was going to certain countries. It's like, let me look up black community here, or let me put La Negra something here so I can see what communities are here that we don't know about because their story hasn't been told. And how can I tell the story? So, yeah, it has been the most amazing journey. Even an hour ago, my friend was telling me about this black Turkish community that I didn't know was there, and I'm like, wow, I can't wait to just go and experience that. So, yeah, there's all of these, like you said, in these places that people wouldn't necessarily think. But, yeah, they're there.

Matt Bowles: So, let's talk about the [ABC Travel Green Book](#). Can you share a little bit more about. Well, first of all, let's start way back for people that have never heard of the original Green Book. Can you just give the historical context for that and then how you were inspired to build upon that that led to your project and your book?

Martinique Lewis: Yes. So, the original Green Book is called the Negro Motorist Green Book, and it was created by Victor Hugo Green in 1936. It lasted for about 30 years. And initially, the book was created so that black people can be safe when driving up and down Route 66. Now you have to think about it, in the 30s, this is the big automobile boom. When you have places like Detroit, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, creating all of these cars. And at the time, for the first time, black people were having vehicles where they can go either up north or down south to visit their friends. Or to visit their family. And at the time, because you were black, you couldn't stop in certain areas. And so, the Negro Motors Green Book let you know where you could stop. So, it literally was put into place to save black people's lives. And not only that, it was put in a place to highlight black owned businesses along your way as well. So, you knew the places that you can go that were safe havens. And it wasn't only, you know, black owned, but also with people who weren't black, who were still welcoming black people.

So, I said, extremely, extremely important to this narrative. It's so crazy because it almost slipped right under our noses. I remember I didn't learn about the Green Book until maybe 2018. And I'm thinking, ah, how is there this whole book and nobody talks about it like Black History Month. We keep talking about the same people. How are we not talking about Victor Hugo Green? I'm like, he is up there with a Martin Luther King and with a Malcolm X, because what he was able to do, not only that, this is 1930s. You have a black postal worker who has created something with ExxonMobil, which is now Exxon Mobil, to the point where they say, yes, we're going to partner with you, a black man, to sell these books in our store for 25 cents. When that wasn't popular. How did he pull that off in the 1930s? Can you imagine the hate mail? Can you imagine people probably showing up to his house wanting to kill him because of something that he's doing? Literally, I'm like, how is he able to do this? And then we're not honoring this man. And so, then what?

In 2019, or if it was 2019, Green Book, the movie comes out. And I'm extremely disappointed because I'm like, y' all don't even talk about Victor Hugo Green. Y' all not even talking about the actual meaning of the book. You guys created a whole another story about it. And you called it the Green Book movie. So, people don't know the historical context on how it was saving my grandmother's life. My mom was born in 1953,

and she said they couldn't stop when they used to travel from California to Texas. And this is in the 50s now, 50s and 60s. So, we know that we're not that far removed from it. But anyways, I digress. So, I took this test, the same concept, right? Because I'm thinking, now it's 2020. Actually, by that time it's 2019. When I thought about the concept of it and I said, I want to do something where black people feel safe and they feel safe by knowing the black communities that there are worldwide. And I said, Okay, I want to do this, but I want to do this on every single continent except Antarctica, because we know ain't nobody there. So, my fine. On six out of seven continents, right?

And so, by that time I'm like, yeah, because I started having these experiences and I'm thinking, you know, these are the things that Google can't tell you. Like I said, these are things that TripAdvisor can't tell you. This is not something that you can type into Pinterest and say black community in Ecuador, because none of this is there. So, I'm thinking, okay, for this first one, let me get all the information I can, right? Based off of my knowledge, based off of my friend's knowledge and put it in a book. And some people thought it was a guidebook, some people thought it was a travel guide, but as I say, it's a travel resource. It's just like the original Green book where it's a yellow pages basically for you to know. But then COVID happened, right? But people still supported me like none other. Like you, right? You still supported me. And so now people are getting to a point where they can use the Green Book. But I didn't want it to be filled with places that you can find on Google because I can go and I could type in black owned New York, I could type in black owned Charlotte, I could type in black owned Nashville, black owned San Francisco, but I can't type in black owned Ecuador. I can't type in black owned Nicaragua; I can't type in black owned Pakistan. Right? So that's what the Green Book was for.

And I'm extremely proud of the things that will follow. You know, the Green book has taken me on such a journey of self-discovery and really understanding my people, really understanding diaspora, like you said, understanding how Black people got to different places, understanding their true influence on central South America, on Southeast Asia, you know, and being able also to speak to a narrative that also says we didn't only get here because of slavery, some of us were actual explorers and that's how we got here, you know, or saying some of us helped them with the military and we stayed and that's how we got here. So just being able to uncover that, but to also shed light on these black owned businesses that need our support, especially once we can travel again.

So yeah, that was my inspiration behind it. I have been trying to do it for years, but COVID slowed all of us down, you know, so I finally had time and I told myself, like, girl, you better get this done. Like, go ahead, lock yourself in focus and get it done. And so, I was able to. And it was a labor of love, but even more so, it was a labor of love because of all the love that was shown to me because of the book. And even then, there's still an app that comes out next year, which I'm really, really excited about because as you know, books, they have to be updated. And even with COVID you know, some places have shut down. There's also places that are reopening, and this is just in business in general. But the app will now allow you to see those places. It'll serve as something kind of like a mix between a TripAdvisor, like a Facebook, so you can go and create your own profile. You can connect with other locals who are in the same area.

After you go to a place, you can upload your pictures and leave your ratings. So, I'm really excited about the app. And then there's a children's book that comes out in November that I'm really excited about. And it features my niece, it's called Cheyenne, and the [ABC Travel Green Book](#). And what she'll be doing is teaching children about black communities around the world. So, I'm really excited about that because these are not the things that they teach kids in schools. Right. This is not the things that you see in the

museums. These are the things that are left out of the history books. So, it's a way to celebrate black culture now where our kids can do it. So, yeah, very excited.

Matt Bowles: That's so amazing. Well, I bought the [ABC Travel Green Book](#) on pre order before it even came out. I had the Kindle version. It's been waiting for me to start traveling again. And then I'm definitely going to use it as a resource. And I'm super stoked you're doing a kids book because I would love to get a copy of that as well and give it nieces and nephews when that is available. So that's awesome. We're going to link up all this stuff in [the show notes](#) so folks can just go to one place at [themaverickshow.com](#) and there you'll find a link where you can buy the [ABC Travel Green Book](#). Highly recommended, especially as folks start traveling around the world again.

I also want to ask you about the [Black Travel Alliance](#). I have actually interviewed a number of your amazing board members. So Maverick Show listeners know people like [Gabby Beckford](#) and [Jeff Jenkins](#) and [Monet Hambrick](#) and some of the amazing crew that you have surrounded yourself with. But you are the president, so I want you to just be able to share a little bit. And for folks, let's assume that folks haven't heard any of those episodes I just mentioned, and this is their first-time hearing about the [Black Travel Alliance](#). Can you share a little bit about the goals and the mission and what you do? And brought the [Black Travel Alliance](#) about what inspired the creation of it?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So, the [Black Travel Alliance](#) was something none of us could have ever told you we were going to create. It was literally out of a need where [Jeff Jenkins](#) and Kerwin McKenzie, actually another founding member, they created something for us during COVID to keep us all encouraged as content creators. And we would meet on Fridays and after the whole George Floyd situation and the Blackout Tuesday situation, we were talking about how upset we were with these travel brands who posted that Black Square in alliance with the Black community, say black lives matter. And we're like, how would you post this? And you ain't hired none of us. And when you do hire us, you pay us pennies or we don't get the same opportunities as any of our counterparts. Like, how dare you, basically. And not only that, who's going to pull you up about it? Because now we're holding you accountable, right? You posed this Black Square.

But now we want to see some people who look like us, right? And we're like, you know what? We should do something called the pull up for travel. Like just how. Because the makeup industry had did it, right? And it was the pull up for something else. That's how the [Black Travel Alliance](#) was found. It's like, you know what? We need other people to stand with us. We need other people to say, I'm not going to take this from you. And there was 18 of us. Yeah, we created the [Black Travel Alliance](#). At the time, it was literally supposed to be that first campaign, first and only campaign. None of us knew what it was going to grow into. But quickly it grew into something else. And, you know, we're all smart. We all have connections. And we just did that whole blitz in the beginning, right where it was, this is what the [Black Travel Alliance](#) is. This is what we stand for. You know, we stand on alliance and amplifications. And we came out with this press release, but it hit the travel industry so hard that you couldn't deny who we were.

And not only that, we came out with this marketing blitz, but then we got all of the black travel community involved. So, we hit up the heavy hitters. We did up the Black Travel organizations. And on the same day, everybody posted these things to the industry. And from there we just took off. We want to serve as a resource for Black media professionals to be able to get the same opportunities and equality in this travel space. We knew we wanted to make sure we set up the proper resources that they had to be the best that they can be in the travel space, but additionally offer resources outside of jobs, but just how to get better,

how to get a scholarship, you know, just different things that we knew people needed in order to be the best that they can be. And then that's how the [Black Travel Alliance](#) got started. And we are a year and three months old, and we've been able to do some amazing things in the community. So, some of the things that people might notice for, like I said, the pull up for travel campaign. But additionally, we created the Black Traveler study that was able to give accurate results on who the Black traveler is.

Before that, there was a study that came out every five years and the numbers weren't necessarily accurate and we had to wait five years for it. But as you know, the black travel movement grew massively within the past 10 years. So, we were able to show that, you know, we spent 109.4 billion a year on travel. And that was just African Americans. And I remember saying, but what about Black British people? Because like you just said, the African diaspora is everywhere. You know, out here you got Black British people who are from Nigeria, Ghana, from everywhere. Not only that, they have almost 30 days extra holiday time or vacation time than we have. So, we know that they're traveling. And we're like, okay, they're spending more money than we are because it's easy for them to get everywhere. You know, on this side of the world. Why don't we have numbers about them? Why don't we have numbers about black Canadians? Why don't we have numbers about black people in the Caribbean?

And so, we were able to devise this study that gave actual insights. And the thing about it is, when you give people numbers, they cannot deny it. So, if I'm showing you this is how we're spending money, you're still not putting me in that travel advertising that just telling me that you don't want money. That's just telling me that you don't want your company to grow. That's just telling me that you obviously just don't want Black people there. Because we're giving you these numbers that are outstanding, that are proving that Black people are going, and we're going in the drove loads. That we have the money to spend it. And that you should make sure that you market to everybody. So, yeah, the Black Travel study was immensely successful. We've also recently did the history of Black Travel timeline, which is something that has been dear to my heart for years.

And actually, this is a passion of mine that started with Nomadness shout out to [Evita Robinson](#), who's also been on this podcast. But she is the person who really fostered my love for the history of black travel. And she let me show that on her platform, which is no Madness Travel Tribe. And I would do this series every February where I would just teach people again about Black communities, about different things that people didn't know, about the different stuff cities that were around America that were there for Black people, about the black owned beaches, about the Black surfers, about the Black skiers. And so [Black Travel Alliance](#) now was able to do the history of Black Travel timeline that showed so many pioneers in this travel space like Victor Hugo Green, that you don't necessarily know about, that you don't necessarily hear about. And we wanted to make sure that we amplified and magnified that because we're like, this is not only anymore February, right, or October when Black History Month is around, this is all the time. This is 365 days. And even with that, I mean, it took hours upon hours upon hours of research, but we're so proud of that.

We only did our soft launch, but just know everybody know be on the lookout for it because we are coming hard with it and we are really, really excited about it. And again, this just gives you some insight on what Black people were doing. How we, like I said before, didn't only get to places because of slavery, but because we were out there exploring different parts of the earth and even then, showing how communities survive slavery, what they did after slavery and how they're thriving, us being able to say that. But also, you know, talking about black airports, talking about, oh gosh, Homer B. Roberts, who was the first African

American car salesman, who was the reason that most Black people had a car because nobody else would sell to them. He would give them money so that they can buy a car from him. So, he's just giving himself back the money, but so that he could put black people on the road. Like these types of people don't get celebrated enough. But they are instrumental in a black travel timeline.

So, yeah, [Black Travel Alliance](#) is amazing. It's not only for Black people. We invite everybody, anybody who is an ally, like Allyship is really, really big for us. Anybody who's an ally who wants to help amplify Black media professionals, who wants to hire them, we invite organizations in. We do something called wavelength twice a year. That's also like a speed dating for travel brands and then for Black travel creators or content creators or journalists so that they can hook up because retired people saying, well, we want to hire you, but we don't know where to find you. Well, this is how you find us. We are that resource within the travel industry that connects Black content creators to the travel brands. So yeah, [Black Travel Alliance](#), make sure you follow us blacktravelalliance.org and [Black Travel Alliance](#) across all social media platforms.

Matt Bowles: And the new website for the black travel history has now its own URL and we're going to link that up in [the show notes](#). Yes, I was just checking that out. If that's a soft launch, I am super impressed because you already have all the functionality where you can sort by different categories on the historical timeline and go through it. I mean, it goes all the way back to Frederick Douglass. I mean, just super important stuff. So, we're going to link that up in [the show notes](#) so folks can go and check that out.

Martinique Lewis: Yes. And just so people know, even with that, we are always taking submissions because sometimes there's something that we've missed and people are like, oh, well, did you know about this? No, we didn't know about it. So, we're glad for you to educate us about it. So please send us everything that you have so it could be included.

Matt Bowles: I love that. A little crowdsourcing. That is an excellent idea and a great way to accumulate information. That is super awesome. So, we'll have all that contact information in [the show notes](#). Let me ask you this, you now have been a diversity in travel consultant for a while. Maybe can you share a little bit about just sort of your path to that? Because you were initially really passionate about these issues, as is obviously coming through in this interview. And then how did you sort of parlay that into actually getting paid and doing this professionally? Can you share a little bit about that journey?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. For everybody out there who was like, I don't know what my purpose in life is. That was me up until about the age of 30 where I was like, okay, so like I told you, I went to London College of Fashion. All my degrees are in fashion. Fashion, merchandising, fashion design, fashion marketing, Internet marketing. But I always knew that I love travel and I was trying to really, really figure out what I wanted to do in life. And being a diversity and travel consultant is something that I had no clue that I was going to literally trip and fall into, but I did. And it was literally because I was tired of not seeing myself reflected. I knew how much I spent as a traveler, and I'm like, why every time I read, you know, in-flight magazine, there's never any stories about people who look like me? There's never anybody who looks like me. And there, if I see a Black man, he's always with a white woman, or you never show a full Black family. And I was like, this has got to change, because I know how me and my family travel, right? I know how much we spend, so why aren't you speaking to us?

And so, I remember at the time, I was working for a company called Black Travel Journey, and we were going to different conferences. And this is before I even understood what the travel industry and the travel

world really looked like for content creators. But I was going to every single travel conference, and I was sitting on the front row, and I was asking the hard questions that travel CEOs could not answer or that they just were trying to completely ignore me. And I'm like, nope, if you don't answer me today, guess what? You're going to see me at the next travel conference, and I'm still going to sit on this front row and ask this question. And as I was starting to do that, I was getting so frustrated because I'm like, why isn't anybody treating diversity and inclusion like it's something that's real? Like, everybody wants to say diversity, inclusion is so important, but I could never see it.

It's so important, but you don't have anybody of color. You don't have women; you don't have any age ranges. You don't have any different religion. You don't have LGBTQIA on your boards. You're saying it's important, but I don't see it. And I'm like, if nobody else is going to say something, guess who is? Because you all can't do nothing to me. Not only that, I'm from East Oakland, California. If you thought that I was just going to sit up here and let you just not answer my question, you are wrong. I am going to somehow, some way, make my way through the rankings so that everybody knows this is what I feel is important. So, I started to come out with the Diversity and Travel Report card. And I remember my first year, it was like, you know how they have that meme with Kermit where he's just like, like, I just going off my first year, I was like, you not doing this, you not doing that. You said this, you said that. And it still kind of took the industry by storm because for the first time, somebody was calling people out.

My second year, I realized you don't call people out that way and you call them in, but the way that you make change is by showing them what another brand is doing, correct? And have them raised to that occasion, right? And I'm like, there's a way to do this. There's a way to go about this, because you can be that skinny Black girl from Oakland who's always crying or who's always making a big fuss, but how are you making sure you make the difference? And so, the second version, which people can find on my website, marty.sandiego.com, Diversity and Travel Report Card, it was acknowledging the brands who was doing something right so that people can then go and see their strategy and model that type of behavior. And so, for me, that was much more effective. And that second one just opened the door for so many other things. So, people started to say, hey, can you come and either be a consultant or can you teach us about diversity and travel within the space?

And I was able to be able to teach brands how to connect with inclusive communities online because now I was linked up with them. So, I could tell you which blind traveler you need to reach out to so you can understand if your destination is fit for a person who can't seat or what plus size traveler you need to ask about your seats on your airline and understand why this demographic is not purchasing with you or being able to say to a hotel brand, hey, speak to this Muslim traveler. Because when they get in your hotel room, there's no arrow that points to Mecca, so they don't know which way to pray. And it was those type of things that now I'm bringing to the forefront and making sure that people really think. Because if we are in our own comfort zone, right, we're not thinking about people who don't look like us. If I'm around Black people all the time, I'm just thinking about what Black people are doing, right? If I'm around females all the time, just think about what females are doing. But if I'm around an elderly person, I can tell you what is good and not good for them as they're traveling.

So, it was me helping to open people's minds to the thought of what do people who don't look like me go through when they travel. And so, I started doing diversity and travel consulting. And then of course, after the unfortunate deaths of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, these same brands, who was ignoring my phone calls wasn't, you know, responding back to my emails, they the same ones knocking

down my doors, I'm like, oh, hello old friend. Now you want to ask for my help? I'm going to charge you double, actually triple. And yes, I will come in and do your 90-minute workshop to make sure that you guys are on track. Or yes, I will do consulting for you for six months to make sure you are who you say you are. Or yes, I will help you write your diversity and inclusion commitment or whatever. So that's how it just happened. But yeah, the journey hasn't been an easy one. And like, I tell people all the time, like, oh, you're a travel influencer. And I'm like, kind of I'm not your typical one. You're not going to come to my profile and see all these beautiful pictures. But you might, you might see some pretty pictures. But I'm like, but you're also going to see those very uncomfortable things that nobody wants to talk about.

I'm going to call those things out. I always tell them, don't come here if you don't want the truth. Don't come here if you're not willing and able to hear things from a different side. You know, if there's somebody who is going through something as a wheelchair user, that's what you're going to see on my profile. I'm going to bring that to the light, you know, and I'm like, I'm using my platform for good as much as I can. But yeah, I take it very seriously. And like I say, I have one mission that's to change the face of tourism forever. Because tourism has no face. So it shouldn't look like one person, right? It shouldn't look like an able bodied person, it shouldn't look like one religion. And so that's really important to me. So yeah, I absolutely love what I do. It's a lane that I created by myself. You can't go to school to be a diversity and travel consultant. It's just something that I do and it's by experience, it's by research, it's by getting out in the community and really talking to people and understanding what they want to see different.

Matt Bowles: So, let me ask you this now, sort of real talk. You have now been behind the scenes as well into a lot of These companies and seeing kind of what's going on and all that stuff. So, in terms of the actual power dynamics that are in play here, that are preventing these companies from doing what we all want to see them do with respect to diversity and representation and all that kind of stuff. What is sort of your assessment now that you've analyzed so many of these companies and there may be multiple answers, I suppose, for different companies? Do you see the primary problems being more along the lines of just white owned companies with white folks in charge of the social media that are just kind of lost in the oblivious clouds of normative whiteness and, you know, this kind of thing? Or do you think that there is a real financial calculus where these companies know that they have racist white customers and if they were to humanize Black folks or Muslim folks or whatever in a certain percentage of their advertising that they think that they would lose business and they're actually maintaining that in sort of a financially calculated way. Like what's sort of your assessment of the actual landscape and what the struggle is really against and the obstacles are?

Martinique Lewis: Well, that's always the first thing I ask them. You're asking me to do diversity and travel training. So, are you okay with people within your team who don't agree with what I'm saying? And if you're okay with that, what does that say about you as a company now? Are you okay with people not agreeing? And if you aren't okay with it, what are you going to do about it? Are you willing to lose customers and team members because they don't align with what you say your diversity and inclusion policy are or beliefs are? Sometimes that's very hard for them. I'm like your best salesperson doesn't agree with this. Are you going to let them go? And if you are going to let them, go, then you are ready for this training. But if you're not going to let them go, then don't waste my time. But always ask them, is that the type of customer you want? One who's going to say, oh, stop playing the, stop posting this Black person because you're, you're helping them play the victim? Is that the type of person you want representing your company as a customer?

And so, these are the type of things that you have to actually ask. You know, like I tell people, I would rather lose one angry person and gain other people who see people like them reflected. Because with the Black and Brown community, if you show us, hey, we want you because you're showing you want us, right? Not only that, you know, that there's, there's power in our spending power. So yeah, it is a question that comes up a lot because a lot of them say, okay, we're trying to figure out how to be authentic. And the thing about it is there's been nothing but white people on our social media. So now if we post a Black person, how is that going to make people feel? Some people might feel some type of way, but the thing about it is after that, are you going to post the Asian person? Are you going to post a person in a wheelchair? Are you going to keep this same energy, right? Because nobody said that just because you mess up in the past, you can't do right in the future, right?

It's like people will say what they want to say, but also understand you don't have to be like, oh well, I don't even know what a Black name is anymore. Oh, well, Leticia is enjoying. I'm like, you don't have to do any of that. Call her Sarah, because her name could be Sarah. And keep the same energy that you would keep if it was white people. Are you doing is changing a photo, keep the same caption, right? You have to be like, yeah, we went out with our folks and we went to go turn up. No, why are you changing the verbiage, right? Because now it looks inauthentic. Change the picture, Keep your same language and keep it moving. Let people be mad. Who cares? Because one thing I'm telling you is that when Black and Brown people go to your social media, which they will check first, if they see themselves reflected, they spending money with you the moment they don't see their self-sufficient, nobody thinks about me. Buy them out.

So, understand how that first photo or those three photos or you just showing diversity and inclusion as a whole can change people's perspective of who your company is now who you say you are is matching up and everything else, right? So, it's those type of questions and situations that you have to have. And it is hard financially because people are afraid to rock the boats still and people are afraid to rock the boat then. But it's like you've already seen the uproar that has caused, right? So now what are you going to do about it? What are you going to do about it? It is hard for some people, but those aren't the people you want to work with anyways. So, everybody who comes to me, yeah, they got to be serious. And I'll let them know, like, are you really ready? Because this is going to Be a journey, you know, are you really ready? If so, all right, let's do this team on three. And we do it.

Matt Bowles: So. Awesome. Well, I also want to ask you about your role on the board of Conde Nast, and if you can talk a little bit about everything we're discussing just sort of in the context of Conde Nast, maybe as a specific example and how that came about and what type of impact you're aiming to make as a board member.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. And actually, I also sit on the board for the National Outdoor Leadership School, and sitting on both of those committees where they were historically white says a lot about where they want to go. And, you know, here I am, skinny Black girl from Oakland who comes with the fire. Right. Who's like, Susan, no, this is how you thought in the past. Joe, no, this is how you thought in the past. I mean, not doing this. And that's why I'm here. Y' all brought me here because y' all know I'd be the one to be. Absolutely not. Okay. If you want to make sure that you're bringing in kids from urban areas, let's think about the ways to pull those in. A lot of them are kids, possibly from a single parent home. So now are you inviting their parents with them, whether it's their mom or their dad or their grandmother? It's like understanding who your community is, or you're saying, we want to reach this community. Understanding

how to do that. And a lot of times it's a difficult position because you're telling people stuff, they don't want to hear, but that's why they have you there.

And so, in both of those, you know, I'm giving them the perspectives of people who they have not necessarily thought about before or people who they didn't have a connection to. So, I'm that liaison. Both of those came about from other people in the industry nominating me or being able to say, hey, we have this person who we think would be perfect for it. I enjoy both of them. But really for the National Outdoor Leadership School, I really enjoy that one because there's always negative stereotypes about Black and Brown people and what they do in terms of outdoor sports. And part of this is part of travel and tourism, because Black people travel somewhere to surf, Black people travel somewhere to ski. Brown people travel somewhere, you know, fly, fish, rock climb, cycling, mountaineers again. And these are part of our history that was left out.

And so being able to speak to these communities now, because I've worked with other people in the past to be able to now give you these numbers. Say, this is how many Black people go on adventure travel vacations a year, and this is how much money you're not tapping into or in the Mexican community, right? They love bird watching. So hello, Montana tourism. They can bird watch for chew. Are you showing brown people in your marketing and communications? Are you inviting Mexican communities up there? Not only that, what are you doing with your Native American communities right there? So, I'm that voice, right? And it's allowing me to have direct impact with some of the biggest travel brands, travel organizations in the world. I said, I enjoy both of them. You know, to have something as major as Conde Nast, where you have all of these journalists and writers, and it's like, okay, well, have you ever had this perspective? Or, okay, have you talked to this person?

I had a friend, Corey Lee. Curb Free with Corey Lee might be somebody who you want to interview in the future. You know, number one, accessibility journalist and who teaches about accessibility and travel. He's a wheelchair user who, you know, sheds so much light on the things that he can and can't do because somebody has not made something for him. But what makes people think he's not into luxury travel? Or, you know, why can't his perspective go in something like Conde Nast? Because they have readers who are also in wheelchairs. You know, Sassy Wyatt, a blind traveler. Have you ever thought about her perspective? You know, are you going to put it in the magazine? So, yeah, I love being able to be a leader in that sense. And for people to say, we chose you because we care about what you have to say, that's also super, super important. And both organizations have been so, so gracious to me to let me just kind of like rock out. They're like, hey, do you want to give a presentation on this? I'm like, I absolutely do. Are you all sure you all want to hear what I have to say? Because it's going to emotion like, we ready Be ready for change. Let's do this. So, yeah, no, I'm grateful to be part of both of those. And, you know, I just look forward to the future and to see how I can continue to help both those organizations.

Matt Bowles: That's awesome. Well, I want to ask you a little bit now about the impact that travel has had on you overall. One of the things that you've talked about a number of times and is also on the History of Black Travel website is the significance and the impact of a number of these African American intellectuals, writers going abroad. People like James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, these types of folks going to Paris and going to a number of other places around the world as well. And from that vantage point of being outside the United States, then reflecting back on racism and anti-blackness in the United States from the vantage point of being outside the United States in that sort of tradition and spirit, I

would be really interested to hear for you how spending time in other countries has shaped your views on institutionalized racism and anti-blackness in the U.S.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. I mean, the U.S. is a different beast. It's a different beast. I tell people all the time, people are like, oh, what's, what's the most unsafe country? I'm like, America? What do you mean? They're like, where do you feel unsafe the most? I'm like, the place where I was born and raised. I don't get that same thing here in England. I might go to Turkey and get stairs, or I might go to parts of Asia and get stairs. But it's because they've never seen a Black person. It's not because they feel threatened by me. It's not because they think that I'm dirty. It's not that I think I. Because I'm nasty. It's not because they think I'm illiterate. So, I always say, you know, America is the cancer for us, just like it was back then. And that's why all of them wanted to get away from the outside looking in. It's sad. And you understand why there's so many Black expats now, because people are looking for. Yeah, definitely an escape. I think that it has been able to tell a lot of our stories for Frederick Douglass to come over here to England actually, and be able to thrive even more so over here than he was, and then go back and then still be treated like somebody less than. Same thing for Equiano, who was a Nigerian slave who came up to England, purchased his freedom, went back and got his family. You know, it's another name you don't actually hear, but you understand the opportunities there are abroad. And that makes a difference. And there were always opportunities abroad, not just here.

Even when doing the history of black travel timeline or just doing my own research, understanding all of the places abroad that there were for abolitionists, people who welcomed Black people to get away from America, places right here in England. Very interesting. But also, I want people to make no mistake that even though they won at the end of slavery, we were still not their equals. And that's another thing people don't realize, yeah, they want to help you get out of slavery, but they're still calling you boy or they're still thinking that you're beneath them. And that's something else to look at. And I think that's like some of the underlying stuff now, like, oh, no, I'm not racist, or oh, no, I'm not prejudiced. But you still think we're beneath you, even though you're like, yeah, no, I love Bobby Brown. It's still something that kind of follows us wherever we go. Yeah, it's always interesting to see, you know.

But the one thing that I do hate, I would like to touch on is the differences of being African versus African American abroad. African Americans get treated like royalty. Oh, Beyonce, Alicia Keys, all that. Michael Jordan, whoever, Usher. You know, if they see you, they're telling you, these people, when they see Africans, you're a prostitute, you're a drug dealer, you're a troublemaker. And that is really big. And that's something that a lot of people don't talk about, the things that actual Africans go through, no matter what. And that's a problem. I'm like, why can't they just be here? Why do they have to be all these negative things? And that happens often too. So. Yeah.

Matt Bowles: One of the other things that I want to ask you about that I was really appreciative that you focused on and highlighted in your social media in the latter Part of 2020 was the #EndSARS campaign in Nigeria.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: Because I had just been in Nigeria and like, as I mentioned, in like 2019, and I have friends in Lagos who were there and they were there for the Lekki Tollgate massacre and like the whole thing when with the #EndSARS campaign, I was really appreciative to see you covering that. I actually took your image, like, shared your post that you posted about the Black Lives Matter in Nigeria too.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: And I actually shared that at the time. And then I wrote some other of my own stuff, you know, just having been there and stuff. But I'm wondering if you can share a little bit about that. Just sort of in the global context and your commitment in solidarity in places like Nigeria for that kind of stuff.

Martinique Lewis: Absolutely. So, you cannot tell me I wasn't Nigerian in a past life. I'm just like, yeah, and I love the culture too much. I have family in Nigeria that I'm still very deeply connected to. I was just there in December also in the village, everything else. And for me, because my partner at the time he was Nigerian. You know, us being able to talk about these things and us seeing the disparities of the news, I'm like, hold on, why isn't people talking about this like they were talking about everything else? And then it was so crazy because at the time, the whole world stood up for George Floyd, right? You saw this Black Lives Matter movement on every single continent. People in Japan are screaming black lives matter. People in Amsterdam are speaking Black Lives Matter. In Colombia, you know, in Brazil, all of these places, people saying black lives matter. And then you're hearing about #EndSARS and nobody saying anything like, this doesn't make any sense to me. This doesn't make any sense to me.

So that's what compelled me to make. And of course, I'm not making it. Knowing it was going to be shared over 5,000 times. You know what I mean? Knowing that it wasn't going to have so many likes, I was like, oh, this post blew up. But I did it because it was directly affecting me and I cared about what was happening, happening there. And, you know, a lot of West African countries, the youth are the majority population, right? So, for killing them, who's going to come and now be the leaders? And for that to happen in a place like Nigeria was just so sad. And even now, there's still so many things going on, specifically in evil countries where there are murdering people left and right, which you don't hear about. So, yeah, because I was directly affected by it, you know, I'm like, yes, they do matter in Nigeria too. And don't make no mistake, these people just stood up for us. So how hard is it for us to stand in solidarity with them during this, you know, terrible, terrible time. And so, yeah, I said, I'm going to necessarily find stuff that is popular on my social media, but I'm going to talk about it whether it's popular or not, because it's something that I care about. And yeah, that was definitely the energy that I was bringing at that time.

Matt Bowles: Yeah, I really appreciated that. So let me ask you this. In light of all of the stuff that we've been talking about here today. When you think about the concept of safety for Black travelers in particular.

Martinique Lewis: Yeah.

Matt Bowles: How do you think about safety for Black travelers?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So as a Black traveler, that's why the Green Book was so important for me. Because if I was going anywhere, the first thing I'm typing in is like, black experience in this place. Either if it was YouTube or in Google, Google would bring up the YouTube. And you just want to know, like, is it safe to be black here? Because there are places where people still hate you. I tell people all the time, like, make no mistake, I still get called monkeys. All of that monkey sounds, you know, prostitute. Every like, in different places that I go where you would think it wouldn't happen. I tell people I was in Iceland, walking down the street, going to get some expensive ass pizza because Iceland pricing is ridiculous. And somebody yelled monkey out the window. And I'm so oblivious to it. It was like, took 10 seconds and I was like, oh, they were talking to me. And I was like, how dare they? I just was like, wow, okay. But this is what happens.

And you know, a lot of people got upset when I put in the Green Book because I try to talk about safety before every place that I talk about, I try to say, these are the things that I've heard about this place or experience in this place. And you don't have to go with the mindset that people are going to do this, but do proceed with caution. You know, be as aware as you would be in America, basically. And these are things that I would say in my version of the Green Book, because it's true, right? You want to know if you're safe in a place, if you get into altercation, are they going to arrest you? Are they going to arrest you just because you're black? It happens. It happens, right? And not only that, the communities where you can go to feel safe, right? And this is part of the [ABC Travel Green Book](#), the communities you can go where to feel safe if you don't feel safe. And so, these are all things that I tried to deal with in the Green Book just so people can know, like, all right, if this happens, there's this community group here or there's this Facebook group here that you can reach out to help you. Because I wanted people to understand that especially as solo females are traveling, also as a solo traveler, you understanding who's going to be on your side when you're doing that. All of that is still important to this day.

Matt Bowles: Can you talk a little bit about the concept of allyship and how folks from dominant groups, I mean, maybe white folks in general to start with, but also extended on to other dominant groups, men or whatever dominant groups there are, are how can people be better allies to Black travelers in particular, as well as other groups?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So, anybody can be an ally to anybody. That's why I'm a diversity and travel consultant, because I'm an ally to all of these niches that nobody thinks about plus size traveler, elderly traveler or senior citizen traveler, blind travelers, Muslim travelers. I'm an ally for them. I'm going to stand up for them regardless of if it's popular or not. I'm going to always do what's right. And doing right is not always popular. We know that. And that is one thing that people have to ask themselves. If I'm an ally, I have the full understanding. This is 24/7. I don't get to turn it off on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. I don't get to turn it off when somebody makes a rude comment about a Black person, even though there's not a Black person in the room. You see what I'm saying? It's making the commitment to yourself that you're going to stand up for what's right even when it's not the most popular thing to do. And for a lot of people, you know, they would say, yeah, I have family members who, you know, make really stupid jokes.

And for the longest time I just didn't used to say anything about it. But I started standing up to them and tell them, that's not cool. Or you can't say that type of stuff around me because I'm not comfortable with it. Allyship is something that's 24/7. It's what you're doing when people aren't watching. It's how you're advocating for people in, in spaces that aren't really safe, you know, or in spaces that, you know, are close and intimate where people think that they could get away from something. It is about calling them out on it and saying, you can't talk like that around me, you know, and this is for anybody, not just white people, because white people aren't terrible, Black people aren't terrible, Asian people aren't terrible. But since white people are the majority, they're the ones who have to be the ones to say, you can't do this anymore. They're the ones who have to stand up and say, there's not enough people of color on this board. They're the ones who have to stand up and say, I'm going to bring this person of color to the table so you can hear their perspective. And yeah, I said allyship is not always easy.

So, for the people who are allies who have made the choice to be an ally, I commend you because it's not easy. And we also understand Rome wasn't built in a day. So even if you, you know, stand up to people, that doesn't mean they're always going to listen to you, but you continue to press forward and you make sure that you know who you are within yourself enough to be able to stand up against things that are wrong.

Matt Bowles: Awesome advice. All right, Marty, I have one more question for you, and then we'll move into *The Lightning Round* and wrap this up.

Martinique Lewis: Okay.

Matt Bowles: At this point in your life, with all the travel that you have done, why do you continue to travel? Why are you so passionate about it? What does travel mean to you at this point in your life?

Martinique Lewis: Oh, it means storytelling. There are still so many stories we don't know, and just about everything. And for me, when it comes to who I want to be in the travel industry for when I want to be relevant. So, I want people to come to me so that they know that they're going to be challenged on the way that they're thinking about a destination or a group of people. And for me, that's what keeps me going. That's why I'm so passionate about it. Because if I can get you to not only change your mind about a destination or change your mind about a group of people, but if I can tell you their story to a point that it evokes some emotion so much to you that you do the same thing, my life's mission is there. I'm doing what I'm supposed to do. And I know there's so much more to tell. I know there's so, so, so much more to tell. And I'm just grateful for every opportunity that I'm getting to be able to tell those stories so that everybody gets to experience the world in a different way.

Matt Bowles: Amazing. Well, I'm so appreciative that you came on The Mavericks Show to share some of those stories today. And at this point, Marty, are you ready to move in to *The Lightning Round*?

Martinique Lewis: I think so.

Matt Bowles: Let's do it. All right. What is one book that has significantly influenced you over the years that you'd most recommend people check out?

Martinique Lewis: I would definitely say [Hustle Harder, Hustle Smarter by 50 Cent](#). And I know that that is something that people expect me to say, but it's funny. Quick story; the editor in chief of Travel and Leisure, she was like, what book are you in? I'm like, [Hustle Harder, Hustle Smarter by 50 Cent](#). I'm like, Girl, you need to get that. Mind you, this is like a middle-aged white book. She was like, yes. She's like, that was such a good. Like I told you, Hustle Harder 50 Cents. That's what I tell people to read. Get it on Audible if you want to just listen to it. But I'm telling y', all, it's an amazing book. Also, of course, [The Big Leap](#), that helps you. You're not, you know, not self-sabotage, but understand how much of life you are able to have at your fingertips, at your palm, as long as you believe. So, [Hustle Harder, Hustle Smarter by 50 Cent](#) and [The Big Leap](#).

Matt Bowles: If you could have dinner with any one person who's currently alive today that you have never met, who would you choose?

Martinique Lewis: [Bozoma Saint John](#), who you guys probably know now is one of the directors at Netflix. But she has been one of my favorite human beings for the past since I got in this travel journey. And part of the reason is because she was so unapologetically herself. You talked about going to West Africa in 2019, year of the return. She was one of the instrumental people who made Ghana popular. Getting ready for the year of return because she's from Ghana. And I remember in 2017 her going to Ghana and being like in two years, everybody to be here. Let me help you see why. So [Bozoma Saint John](#), 100% phenomenal female.

Matt Bowles: All right. Knowing everything that you know now in life, if you could go back in time and give one piece of advice to your 18-year-old self, what would you say to 18-year-old Marty?

Martinique Lewis: I would say it's not a sprint, it's a marathon. And to trust yourself. That's what I would say to myself.

Matt Bowles: Awesome advice. All right, of all the places you've been in the world, what are your top three favorite travel destinations you would most recommend people check out?

Martinique Lewis: So, we know London is number one, Amsterdam is number two, and Trinidad and Tobago number three. But only for Carnival. No, I'm just playing. You can go anytime. But go during Carnival. Definitely.

Matt Bowles: Nice. All right, what are your top three bucket list destinations? These are places you'd be never been highest on your list you most want to see.

Martinique Lewis: So, I don't call them bucket list destinations, but top three places I want to go that I haven't seen.

Matt Bowles: Yep.

Martinique Lewis: Mauritius, Lamu, Kenya and Seychelles. All African countries or African islands. Just because people don't show how beautiful Africa is in this sense, also they don't show luxury of Africa. And I'm like, ah, is there things you cannot afford? Y' all be seeing the Maldives and Santorini and thinking that's something. Not until you've been to these places. Baby listen, you know, like make sure you check out those places. So yeah, Mauritius, Seychelles and Lamu, Kenya.

Matt Bowles: Love that. All Right. Final question, I normally ask people their top five hip-hop emcees of all time, but you are such a global music aficionado that I'm going to expand the category to top five musical artists from any genre. Who are your favorites?

Martinique Lewis: Okay, so these are the people who you will find in mind. You see Anita Baker, she going to always be number one. Machel Montano, who is a soca artist. I listen to just tons of soca in general. I would say Burna Boy or Wizkid, but Burna Boy, I bang his. I mean I also bang Malik Berry who is Nigerian but from London. Love Malik Berry. I would say Trick Pony. This is a country artist. They're country artists that I absolutely adore. And then I would say Aubrey Graham, also known as Drake. I love me some Aubry. And you will always find him in rotation with anything that I'm like listening to. So, there you have it. Those are my top five.

Matt Bowles: We are going to link all of those up in [the show notes](#) so people can go check them out and listen to their music.

Martinique Lewis: I love it.

Matt Bowles: We are also going to link up your book and all the other stuff that we've talked about on this website. And for people that want to find you, follow you, connect with you, how should people come into your world?

Martinique Lewis: Yeah. So, my website is martysandiego.com and that's how you can just find out more about me, my journey. I got social profiles are *marty_sandiego* just like Carmen Sandiego, [LinkedIn](#), Martinique Lewis, Facebook, [MartiniqueLewis](#).

Matt Bowles: Awesome. It's all going to be in one place. Just go to themaverickshow.com, go to [the show notes](#) for this episode. There you'll find all the ways to get in touch with Marty and everything else we talked about on this episode. Marty, this was amazing. Thank you so much for coming on the show.

Martinique Lewis: Thank you so much for having me. I appreciate it.

Matt Bowles: All right, good night, everybody.

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