

**Matt Bowles:** My guest today is Romie Robertson. She is an educator and travel content creator who believes that experiencing the world should be accessible for everyone, not just the privileged few. She is the founder of Roaming with Romie, a platform that focuses on budget travel with a social, historical, and cultural context, and she always aims to center the local people in her travel content. Romie is also the director of programming for [Black Travel Summit](#). Born and raised in Atlanta, she has a Master of Education from Harvard, and she has now traveled to nearly 50 countries.

Romie, welcome to the show.

**Romie Robertson:** Thank you so much, Matt. That was such an excellent introduction. So, thank you.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you deserve an excellent introduction, and I am super excited to have you on the podcast. But let's just start off by setting the scene and talking about where we are recording from today.

We are not in person, but we have agreed to make this a wine night. So, let's also talk about what we are drinking. I am actually in the blue Ridge Mountains of Asheville, North Carolina, and I have just opened a red blend from the Maduro region of France. So, I am going to be drinking through that this evening.

But where are you, Romie, and what are you drinking?

**Romie Robertson:** I am at home today in Atlanta, and I am drinking a Shiraz from Chateau Meichtry, which is a family-owned vineyard and winery in Ellijay, Georgia, up in North Georgia. I just returned from a brand trip there and stayed at this winery and tried this wine and fell in love with it. So, I am pouring myself a glass of that now.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, let's start off with that and talk about Atlanta. Can you contextualize, maybe especially for our international listeners who are not very familiar with Atlanta, can you contextualize the cultural significance of Atlanta as a Black cultural hub in the United States in particular? And share a little bit about your experience growing up in Atlanta and what that was like coming up through the eyes of a kid and then coming of age as a young woman in the ATL?

**Romie Robertson:** Yeah, absolutely. So, I lived in the same house until I went to college. So, I had a deeply rooted experience in my childhood and adolescence in South Atlanta. And I love to think about how all roads lead to Atlanta because historically, Atlanta became the city it was. Because it was a railroad terminus. So literally all of those roads, the railroads, led to Atlanta.

And, you know, this was in the 1800s, pre-civil war. So, it was a big kind of industrial center for a lot of the various railroad companies that were shipping all of these goods across the country. And Atlanta was that terminus hub. And in a lot of ways. I like to think of that as a metaphor for all the other things that Atlanta represents. So, it is a metaphor for southern hospitality, but it's also a hub of Black history, and Black culture, and I'm really proud to be from Atlanta and to be able to have a deep sense of connection and sense of place to a city that was so significant in African American history, which is American history.

**Matt Bowles:** So, for people that would like to visit Atlanta and experience some of that, what would you put folks onto?

**Romie Robertson:** I am a history and culture buff, so there are some amazing places in Atlanta to get into that history. The first place I would recommend is the Atlanta History Center. And I only started going a

couple of years ago. And from my very first visit, I was pleasantly surprised because I thought that the Atlanta History Center was going to convey a very particular history from a very particular vantage point.

I'm thinking, Southern States when it comes to textbooks, right, and textbook publishers and how it's connected with state education departments and how they are very narrow in the historical perspectives and the narratives that they share. So, I thought the museum was going to be that perspective. I was pleasantly surprised to see that there was a range of perspectives that were included in the museum, and I found it to be quite equitable in that way.

So, I would recommend the Atlanta History Center to get that context, kind of see where you are, and all the amazing things Atlanta has done from the civil rights movement all the way to the 1996 Olympics. I also recommend the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, which is located in downtown Atlanta. The lower floor focuses all on the civil rights movement with a particular focus on Atlanta's role. And then the upper floor talks about human rights in general. So, it provides a really cool and insightful global context of all kinds of human rights issues and human rights advocacy around the world.

So, I particularly love that museum. I think everyone should check it out as well. And then, of course, Atlanta would not be Atlanta if it wasn't the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. So, if you are in Atlanta, you can go to the Martin Luther King Center, which is a campus of a few different locations. So, one location is a museum that focuses on Dr. King and his legacy and his work.

Another location on that campus is the actual resting place of Doctor King and his wife. And that is a very poignant and really touching place to visit. And then right next door to that is Ebenezer Baptist Church. So, his childhood church, the church where his father was pastor, you're able to do tours in there and then around the corner, you can actually see his childhood home, and they have restored it and essentially kept it exactly how it was when he was growing up.

So right now, I believe it is closed for renovations at the time of this recording. But if you do go to Atlanta, just do a quick search on the Martin Luther King Center website, and it'll let you know if the home is open and how you can get a tour scheduled.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also have to ask you about the music scene in Atlanta. For folks who do not know about Atlanta, can you share a little bit about the significance of Atlanta?

And I'll give you this context, too, Romie. I was a hip-hop DJ in the nineties. And in the early nineties, it was very New York City centric. All of the best stuff was coming out of New York, Nas and Biggie and Wu Tang, and all of the stuff was coming out of New York. And obviously there was West Coast stuff, a little bit of stuff coming out of Texas, Geto boys and that kind of stuff.

But then all of a sudden, mid-nineties, Outkast

**Romie Robertson:** Dungeon family!

**Matt Bowles:** And then everything since. But can you, for folks that are not familiar with a little bit of that history, and then what emerged, cause you grew up in that entire scene, can you share a little bit about the music scene in Atlanta?

**Romie Robertson:** Music is so central to so many different cultures. And in the African American tradition, hip-hop is so important, in particular with generations from like the seventies and onwards. So, Atlanta, I think, has taken hip-hop over by storm since the two thousand.

And like you said, I think the mid-1990s, with the emergence of Dungeon Family, Outcast to the early 2000, with like, the Ying Yang Twins and the Crunk subgenre, until now, like, ever since then, Atlanta has been on a roll. So, with the emergence of the Trap subgenre, like, we got Gucci Mane, we got Future, we got so many people, the Migos that were pioneers of that sound to kind of present-day rappers, 21 Savage, Latto, so much great hip-hop has come out of Atlanta.

And the likes of Outkast have paved the way for all of those amazing artists. So that is one thing that I'm so proud about, because some of the most popular and successful hip-hop artists are from Atlanta. And those of us who are Atlanta natives, because there are a lot of transplants in Atlanta now. I would even argue that Atlanta is now a transplant-majority city. But for Atlanta natives, we have a very deep pride in our music. So, if you were a DJ in the nineties, did you ever come down to Atlanta for Freaknik, be honest.

**Matt Bowles:** Ha! No, I did not. Although I just recently watched the Freaknik documentary. Have you seen that yet?

**Romie Robertson:** I did. I saw it a couple months ago. I think that is also in line with what you mentioned about that boom with Outkast and Dungeon Family, because Atlanta was also host of Freaknik. So, you had all these students coming from colleges and universities around the country to Atlanta. So that was another loci of music and culture. And Atlanta, again, was just such a significant setting for that.

**Matt Bowles:** Absolutely. Yeah. The history of Atlanta is really important. So, I definitely encourage people to come down, learn the history, check it out, spend some time there.

So, can you talk about how all that impacted you? And also, as you were coming up, can you share a little bit about how your interest in world travel started to develop and what your early experiences traveling outside the U.S. were?

**Romie Robertson:** I think that travel is an immense privilege. So, I want to preface this entire conversation with that. And I think a lot of people in travel space, well, I would say both within and outside of the travel space do understand that. So, part of my privilege with travel comes from my mother, and she was a huge impetus in getting me outside of the United States and affording me the opportunities to get bit by the travel bug and to experience what leaving home feels like.

And the reason that happened is because I have a brother and sister in Germany, and they were born and raised there. My mom had a previous marriage, and when that marriage ended, that marriage was in Germany, my brother and sister stayed behind, and my mother moved to the United States with her new husband, who was my father. And because of those familial ties, I went to Germany every year since I was six months old.

So, my mom has this funny story, and she would always reference how difficult it was for me to pose for passport photos because I was six months old, and I wouldn't open my eyes when they needed my eyes to be open. And I actually have somewhere deep in my archive, a photo of my old passport. And I made the weirdest face. I basically made the duck face before it was popular as the duck face, and it just looked so ridiculous, like this little infant in this passport photo.

And I've been leaving the country ever since. So, I think during my early formative years, experiencing new sites, hearing a different language, and being immersed in a place of unfamiliarity was really early conditioning for my comfort in being able to travel as I became older. I think a big reason why people don't travel is because they're scared of travel, because they're scared of the unknown. They're scared of unfamiliarity. I was conditioned not to be scared of that because that was always my environment. So, I had nothing with which to compare because I was always in a space of unfamiliarity by traveling back to Germany so frequently.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to ask you about the trip that you took to mainland China at age 14. Can you explain the context for that trip, why you went, and the context in which you went, and then what that experience was like for you?

**Romie Robertson:** Yeah. So, I have, and very few people know this unless you were a classmate of mine growing up, but I have a background in performance arts. I did a lot of musical theater, a lot of formal dance training, and some music and vocal training. And as such, I was part of a youth Atlanta musical theater troupe specifically for African American youth.

And that was a very impactful and formative experience that I think contributed a lot, not just to the trajectory of my life, but to my personality, and the way I connect with others. It's amazing what art can do, especially for young people. Anyways, so that was the context. So, a few different fine arts promoters, and musical theater promoters, invited our troupe to come to China and give a tour of our productions. And that was truly an amazing experience and was a huge opportunity for all of these young kids from Atlanta.

So, we performed in Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Ningbo. That was my first time in Asia. It would not be my last. I love going to Asia, and I was in the middle of 8th grade, prior to then, I only really just went to Germany and back home. So that was a really significant trip and experiencing a much different culture. And to this day, I love going to China. It's definitely one of my favorite destinations.

**Matt Bowles:** What was your impression at the time, when you think back to 14-year-old Romie, what was it like to experience Chinese culture at the time and then leaving that trip and coming back? What kind of impact do you think it had on you?

**Romie Robertson:** I think that it further solidified my understanding of how different we are, but it also facilitated my understanding of how similar we are. And one thing that travel continues to prove to me is that we're all more alike than we are different. And the difference is really exciting. I think all of us in the travel space, the thing that really threads us all together is this sense of thrill and adventure that we get from being in the unknown and for traveling.

So, I certainly got that. And at the same time, being able to experience things that were still familiar to me was another big takeaway that I understood. Even at that age. I just remember the food was good. We went in the winter, so we actually were in China during the Western New Year. I remember we went to the hotel rooftop, and they shot off fireworks, which is really cool, somewhere in Hangzhou or maybe Ningbo, and they still commemorated the western calendar of New Year's.

So, it was chilly. But I just remember how just cool it was to be with my friends and walk through Chinese markets and see, like, the duck carcasses and cow carcasses and things I didn't see back in grocery stores, at home, and to hear Mandarin, but also to connect with the audience when we were performing and to

see how despite a language barrier, even a cultural barrier, the art still brought us together. And that was a very touching experience for me.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to ask you a little bit about your college experience moving to New York City and going to NYU. And I want to also get a sense of your political activist trajectory and your social consciousness that features very prominently in your work today. I know back in college; you were the co-founder of the NYU Feminists of Color Collective. You were also an LGBTQ student center peer educator. Can you share a little bit about some of those experiences in college?

**Romie Robertson:** Absolutely. NYU was a season of really elevated consciousness for me, and I think it's the case for a lot of people because it's one of the first times that teenagers, right. You're 17, 18, 19 years old, and you grow up in your home environment, which is very influential on your personality, your paradigm attitudes across a range of subjects. And then leaving home and family and parents behind and going somewhere new and being thrust into this new environment is a really good blank page for our own voices and attitudes to start to emerge when they're not drowned out by the voices of our family or our home communities.

So, NYU was that opportunity for me, though I will say. My senior year of high school was when I got really active on Tumblr. And Tumblr was actually the window of social justice for me. So that's when I was learning about different systems of oppression, how they manifest personally, institutionally, culturally. And I just remember getting on Tumblr on my phone and on my computer and just seeing all of these posts and having my mind blown, like, oh, my God, I feel consciousness awakening in my brain.

And then once I got to NYU and both my parents were in Atlanta, I didn't know anyone in New York, so I got there, and a huge sense of independence came after that, and I was able to really explore things I was passionate about without anyone else's opinion. And I had NYU as an institution to back me up because, as we know, many different colleges and universities have their own culture, and generally, NYU is pretty progressive.

And I'm doing air quotes because, I mean, which major institution is truly progressive in the sense, but compared to other institutions, NYU did posit itself as forward-thinking, as a global university because they had satellite campuses all over the world as one that is more social justice oriented. So, it was a great stage for me to explore those interests. So as soon as I got there, freshman year of college, I got involved with the Black student union. That was my first social justice involvement once I got to NYU.

And then my sophomore year, I got involved with the student LGBTQ center, and which, by the way, I am not LGBTQ, but I wanted to really challenge myself as an ally, which is why I got involved as a peer educator for the center, because I think it was important, of course, for me to continue to center the voices of those that are LGBTQ, but to really be the best ally as I could for those in that community. So that's where that involvement came from. And by senior year, my roommate and I co-founded the Feminists of Color Collective, and we partnered with, like, the NYU Feminist Society and other organizations on campus.

And then a great thing about NYU is that it's an open campus in Greenwich Village, New York City, is your campus. And that is one thing that really attracted me to NYU. So, getting involved in organizing that wasn't even affiliated with NYU was really attractive to me, and it's something I tried to do. I interned for the mayor's office. Bill de Blasio was the New York City mayor at the time, and being able to work with his community affairs team and try to again expand my impact in that way was a really cool experience.

So, all of that was at the undergraduate level. Though I will say I'm not as involved in, like, grassroots organizing as I did in that season of life, and I do believe we go through many seasons and chapters of life. Though I'm not as involved in grassroots organizing, a big commitment that I have to justice still manifests itself in my content. It manifests itself in the work I do and in the different roles I have. And I just try to let justice orient me and be as justice-centered as I can be.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you ended up doing a master's degree in education at Harvard. Can you talk a little bit about why you chose to go into education, why you are so passionate about that and what your experience was like at Harvard?

**Romie Robertson:** Yeah. So, my undergraduate degree is also in Education. I attended the NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Studies. So, I made my own concentration, as we call it. It's basically the major is technically, on paper, an individualized major, but the concentration was social justice education and policy. So, most of my coursework, both on campus and different internships and practicums I did off of campus, connected to social justice education.

And education came at the forefront of my life early on in my undergraduate career. So, first semester, freshman year, everyone had to take a seminar, and I was enrolled in the College of Arts and Sciences. At this time, I thought I wanted to do broadcast journalism. So that was my intended major. And we all had to take these freshmen first semester seminars, and they were just all just random topics.

And I picked Urban Education. I remember the title was like, Gotham Cities Colon, some type of title about equity and education. And I was like, cool, let me sign up for that. Never thought I would be in education. Never thought I would be a teacher. None of those. Those things. I remember it was once a week, like two-and-a-half-hour seminar, and walking back to my dorm from Soho because that's where the classroom was after the very first session. And I still remember walking that evening. It was around sunset; it was an evening class. And just feeling chills course through my body because I was so moved by the readings and the discussions and everything that I experienced in that first seminar.

And it was literally after that session that I was like, actually, this is what I want to do. I was reporting a little bit for the NYU student newspaper, trying to get some experience with that. Wasn't really interested or excited by it. Once I had that experience under my belt, and then combined with the excitement and the chills and the free song that I experienced in that education seminar, it was really clear to me that this is actually what my passion is. This is what gets me out of bed. This is what moves me.

So, I stayed in education, urban education, and social justice education throughout the course of my undergrad. Before I went to Harvard, I actually was a teacher. I was a formal high school English teacher in Miami, Florida. That connection is actually how I got involved [Black Travel Summit](#). And after teaching for a few years in Miami, I went ahead and decided to be more policy oriented.

Teaching in Miami again was a very necessary chapter in my life. But I realized that that wasn't exactly the type of role and impact that I wanted long term. And I wanted to get more into policy work. And then that's when I decided, let's go get this master's in education policy and management. And then that's where Harvard came in. And I had a great experience. It was only a one academic year, nine-month master's degree program, so I was not there for long.

But I, to this day, have made amazing friends and have really connected with incredible people. In the realm of education, though, it is not a perfect institution, and none of them are. It was a cool experience,

and it's something that, interestingly, has opened a lot of doors for me. I wouldn't say interestingly, unsurprisingly, it has opened a lot of doors for me, which I think is really indicative of how deep nepotism goes and prestige and kind of social capital that institutions like Harvard carry.

**Matt Bowles:** One of your blog posts that I read that I thought was really important was titled, 'My Thoughts on Harvard and its Legacy of Slavery'. Can you share a little bit about that history for people that are not at all familiar with it and then what your reflections on it are today?

**Romie Robertson:** Absolutely. I wrote that blog post after our commencement ceremony, and I was inspired to write that by an address that actually one of my classmates, he was a graduate from the graduate school of education. He's a Black man, and he gave an address all about hidden figures in Harvard's history. And he named them. And these figures were enslaved Black folk that were owned by trustees of Harvard and spent their entire lives on campus toiling for Harvard to become the type of institution that it is today.

And prior to that address, I actually did not know about these people, which is, again, unsurprising, because that's why we call them hidden figures or hidden history. So since then, Harvard, actually, they do have a statue now commemorating these individuals and their contributions to the institution. And I was just thinking about the complex reality of being a Black woman graduating from Harvard, having a Harvard degree, and what that means at an institution.

And this is an age-old debate, the PWI versus HBCU debate, which also has layers of classism and elitism that people forget about because they kind of look at it through the lens of race. But there's so much when it comes to higher education that involves race, gender, elitism, classism, right. Your economic status, and your access to social capital with those that are dominant and have power.

All of those things are in this kind of big hodgepodge of the state and legacy of American higher education institutions. So, I was really inspired to write that blog post with all of those things in mind. And my reflection now is similar to how it was then. It's complicated. And I think what's important is for all of us to at least hold ourselves accountable to learn and educate ourselves, because we can't depend on people to educate us. That's one thing that I have learned.

We have to go out and seek the knowledge and seek the narratives and perspectives and then form our own opinion of it. So, I recognize the myriad of ways that I am privileged and how Harvard brought me even more privileged, and how that degree opens up a lot of avenues and pathways for me that I wouldn't have if I didn't have that degree. And what it means for an institution that didn't allow women or Black people to attend, and how women and Black folk and all kinds of student populations are still treated at Harvard and how that doesn't always go away, how it's just kind of reborn and repackaged as each generation exists.

One thing that I think is interesting in American higher education culture is that people think that a lot of racism exists in Southern institutions, but there are loads of racism that exists in northern institutions, in New England or institutions out west that people forget about. And I think one thing that textbook American history forgets to mention is that enslaved people were in bondage everywhere in the 13 colonies, right? Not just in the south.

And the fact that so many of the trustees of these Ivy League institutions were slave owners goes to show that the legacy and the presence of slavery was far wider reaching than we were taught, right? It's not just under the Mason-Dixon line. So that's another thing that I think about quite a bit, is by putting people in

bondage, other groups of people were able to, I mean, exponentially further and advance their lives monetarily, economically, socially, and how it, in a lot of ways, we may never be able to really catch up. So, I just think that's important to state.

A school like Harvard has a lot more in common with a school like University of Alabama than people think.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I also want to ask you about the present-day contemporary activism that's going on and has been going on at Harvard, particularly during the genocide against the Palestinians.

And if you can speak as well to that, because here we also have a situation where Harvard, like many other universities, has financial connections and investments in companies that are involved with or profiting from the genocide of the Palestinians. And I just want to salute the students at Harvard for all the amazing organizing work that they've been doing.

But can you share a little bit about that context and maybe even take a step back and share a little bit about your consciousness and awareness raising about the Palestinian struggle and how you came to consciousness on that issue?

**Romie Robertson:** So, NYU is part of a national network of domestic exchange programs, and with NYU specifically, they were in partnership with a number of HBCUs and Hispanic serving institutions. So, one of the schools that was a partner to NYU was Spelman College right here in Atlanta, Georgia. Good Old Spelman College.

And I learned about the domestic exchange program early on in my first year at NYU. And I knew that this was something I was interested in doing because I wanted to know what attending an HBCU felt like, especially one that is as historical as Spelman College. So, I actually attended Spelman College for two semesters. In my undergraduate experience, spring semester of sophomore year and spring semester of junior year, I went back for a second experience because, like, okay, I want a little bit more.

So, it was in the second semester where I attended Spelman as an exchange student, where I took a class by Dr. Beverly Tatum, huge academic in the Black feminism space. And she's also pro Palestine. And that course was specifically a Black feminism course through the Department of Gender and Women's studies at Spelman. And in that course, we were assigned a lot of Angela Davis texts. And you have probably read this book yourself, Matt. We were assigned '*Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*.' I also read quite a bit of other Angela Davis texts, like '*Are Prisons Obsolete?*'. I was really inspired by all the exposure that we got to Angela Davis text in that course. And then the professor also showed us a video, a documentary, actually, by Angela Davis, of the work that she does in Palestine.

So, I think a lot of people, for those that may not be aware, Angela Davis, I think, historically, is situated in her work with the Black Panther party and in the sixties and seventies the Black liberation movement. But presently, and I would even say for the past maybe two decades or so, she is highly engaged in the prison abolition movement as well as the Palestinian liberation movement. So, she was actually how I came to consciousness for Palestine.

So, I have to give a huge shout out to Angela Davis. Thank you for putting us on, because I had no idea, watching that documentary and that feminism course, I had no idea that it was apartheid. Like, I did not know that people couldn't leave unless they showed ideas and papers through checkpoints. And I said,



what in the world? I was like, this is 2011, 2012, and it was in that course where I was like, oh, my God, there is literally apartheid going on in Palestine and in these ancestral lands that Israel has now colonized. And I'm just like, wow. So ever since then, and that was about ten years ago, ever since then, I have been very supportive of the Palestinian people, of the Palestinian liberation movement. And every day I wake up and I just wish for a free Palestine. So that is the answer to the second part of your question.

Going back to Harvard's engagement, or rather the student engagement with Palestinian liberation, again, shout out to those kids. A lot of them are risking a lot because they know that if they don't speak up or do anything, the guilt of that complacency will eat them alive. So, despite possibly losing job opportunities, and not being able to walk across the stage at commencement, I'm just so proud of all of the organizing that has happened in universities across the country and across the world. And that's actually one thing that I'm really excited by the young generation, by Gen Z, and I've taught them. And honestly, the kids are all right. The kids are all right because I think generally, I mean, there have always been radical people and conservative people in every generation, but just the visibility of the radicalization of Gen Z voices, I think, is absolutely creating a shift in American culture, and I'm so excited to see it.

**Matt Bowles:** I appreciate your politics so much, Romie. I actually got to meet Angela Davis in person, which was really amazing. I've been doing Palestine solidarity work for 25 years now, probably. And so, I was living in DC. I know you spent a bunch of time in DC, and I know your husband has a connection to Howard.

I actually lived about six blocks north of Howard on Georgia and Gresham Place for a number of years. And while I was in DC, I was doing a lot of Palestine work. This was back in sort of the early two thousand. I left around zero six. But while I was there, Angela Davis had just gotten back from leading a women of color delegation to Palestine, and she was in DC speaking at an event, which is a really amazing event. It was organized at one of the DC area universities as a collaborative event, primarily by the Black student organizations in terms of how the Black students could be in better solidarity with Palestine.

And so, most of the speakers on the panel were Black activists, and Angela Davis was one of them. So, I was like, I'm for sure going to that because I as well had read a lot of her work, and she had really impacted me as well. And so, I got to go up afterward and meet her. And it was amazing. I mean, I kind of, like, forgot whatever I wanted to say to her. And I was just kind of like, can I give you a hug. She's like, yes. I was like, your work has been so meaningful to me. And so, it was really special. I mean, she's a really extraordinary person.

But I agree. I think that's a really great gateway into understanding the Palestinian struggle, particularly in the way that she contextualizes it in the history of her solidarity work. So, we'll definitely link up 'Freedom Is a Constant Struggle' in [the show notes](#) for anybody who wants to check out that book and go read it, I think it's a really good place to start. Romie, I also want to ask you a little bit more about your work teaching in Miami.

Can you talk a little bit about the students that you were teaching and also talk about your role as a sponsor and competition coach for the poetry club and that experience?

**Romie Robertson:** Of course, so many chapters. I taught Miami Northwestern Senior High School, it is quite an infamous high school, both for its athletic legacy. It is a big football school, and there are a lot of major colleges and professional football players. Music-wise, like Trina, Busta Rhymes went to Miami

Northwestern, and actually one of my favorite films; Moonlight, one of the reasons it's my favorite is because the main character went to Northwestern. It's depicted in the film Pork and Beans.

So, the public housing project that's right next to Miami Northwestern is depicted there. A lot of students that I'm still in touch with, who I love are from that community. So, all of those spaces are really, really important to me. And teaching was the hardest thing I have done so far. But man, I love those kids down. We've had so many moments in class with just kids opening up happy tears, sad tears, just a lot of intimate moments in my classes, which I'm extremely grateful for and happy to see that it touches those kids.

So, one of the things that I did was sponsor the poetry and spoken word club at Miami Northwestern. And again, that ties back to my performance art background. I did quite a bit of writing. There was a period of time when I was really into spoken words. As a writer, I'm a huge consumer of spoken words. I love going to open mics. I still go to a ton of poetry slams and open mics to this day, though I have not written a poem in probably six years. It's been a while, but during that season, I was really excited by the prospect of getting a group of kids together and just kind of facilitating their own creativity.

And it really was a student-centered club. A lot of the upperclassmen were already involved with previous sponsors doing spoken word and participating in South Florida and Florida-wide youth poetry slams. So louder than a bomb. LTAB is a pretty significant Florida youth spoken word competition, and our team competes in that every year. And those kids are great. They're all in college now. They make me feel very old. They are grown, but a lot of them are still writing and are still performing.

And honestly, I was just there to supervise and encourage. I didn't have to do a ton of coaching. They came in with the talent and the creativity, and I was just there to let them know that they were safe. Right. They were safe in that classroom, and they were able to make mistakes, and they were able to share whatever they needed off of their chest. And I think the space that I helped to facilitate, really, you know, without the safe space, they wouldn't have a place for the writing. So, the writing was certainly not mine, but the least I could do was make them feel that they had someone in their corner and that this was their community. And that certainly showed with the kids that were a part of that club.

**Matt Bowles:** So amazing. Well, I want to talk to you now, Romie, a little bit about your travel journey and some of your specific travel experiences, and experiences going through your content. I think the place that I want to start is actually domestically. You've done a lot of great domestic, US based travel content about different places in the United States. And I think the one that I have to start off asking you about is the one that I'm sitting in right now, which is Asheville, North Carolina.

You did a fantastic blog post and YouTube video about Black history and culture in Asheville. You went to Benne on Eagle and some of my spots, and I loved to see it. But can you share a little bit about that for folks that have never been to Asheville or certainly are not familiar with the Black history and culture in Asheville, what your experience was like, and what you find?

**Romie Robertson:** I will start off by saying there is Black history everywhere. That is what I'm learning with a lot of my domestic travels, and domestic travel has been a big theme for me this year.

I was really intentional about wanting to see more of the United States in 2024, and I'm really glad I am. And I have partnered with a number of tourism boards across the US who are also very supportive of bringing forth that Black history.

Two months ago, I went to Rhode Island, and they put a lot of Black-centered experiences in the itinerary, which I thought was so thoughtful. Black people in Rhode Island? What? Oh, yes, absolutely. So that was a similar experience with Asheville I think prior to visiting, because when I went in, February was the first time that I went to Asheville. And I just thought of it as the liberal hipster version of, like, Pigeon Forge. I was like, oh, it's the liberal hipster version of the Smoky mountains, which it is. That is not inaccurate.

But at the same time, I think I perceived it as a white space. So, when I visited, I realized how ethnic or racially diverse it truly is. And I was really interested in exploring Black Appalachia in Asheville. And so that was my partnership with the Asheville Tourism Board, was exploring, learning, and centering on the past history and the current narratives of Black Asheville and Black Appalachia, which I think is often drowned out by white Appalachia. So that was the visit.

And I think that going back to my passion for travel with a historical and cultural context, I mean, as a Black person, specifically an African American, I'm, of course, kind of naturally gravitate to African American histories when I travel to places. So that's kind of where you would really find me. Like, in the museums, in the exhibitions, doing the walking tours that talk about the Black history of places. And Asheville is filled with it.

So, for those that have been to Asheville before and will revisit, or for those that have never been to Asheville, I highly recommend doing the Hood Huggers tour. It is a small grassroots organization led by Black Ashvillians who are not just giving walking tours to visitors or even residents, but that are also doing a ton of important advocacy and grassroots work to preserve the history, to preserve a lot of the historical sites and structures, and also to advocate for the general wellness of Asheville's Black communities. So, I highly recommend you do that walking tour. Donate to the organization, support how you can. Benne on Eagle is so good. Have you been already?

**Matt Bowles:** Yeah, of course.

**Romie Robertson:** Oh, my God, it's so good. I'm still thinking about those girls. I think they have had the best grits I've ever had.

**Matt Bowles:** And the cornbread. Do not sleep on cornbread.

**Romie Robertson:** Cornbread is really good.

**Matt Bowles:** Best in town, for sure.

**Romie Robertson:** I'm still thinking about that mushroom toast that I ordered that was topped with a shredded pecorino with the side of the grits. It was so good. And the home fry is absolutely delicious.

So, a similar experience in Rhode Island. I was in providence of Newport house, and as part of that brand trip, we went to one of the old Gilded Age mansions, went to Rose Cliff, and I'm just like, okay, like, super white, super capitalist. Like, this is Newport. This is what the Gilded Age is. But there's also a hidden history of a lot of really bourgeoisie, aristocratic Black folks in all of those spaces. So, we went to an exhibition of the bourgeoisie Black Rhode Island residents and those who lived in Newport and were able to learn about their communities, how they created these spaces with one another, and how they embraced leisure.

And it's interesting because, again, at the same time, okay, I'm great to see that they are creating an entire exhibition for hidden Black history. It's a super-bourgeoisie, hyper-capitalistic Black community. So, and again, I'm holding both of those things together. I appreciate the presence and the preservation of that Black history, and I can still critique it for the hyper-capitalist existence that it has, while at the same time also acknowledging that by aspiring to capitalism and being complacent with the dominant culture in the United States, which is a hyper capitalistic culture, in a lot of ways, that is a form of survival.

So when you are a part of a disenfranchised group, and it's a struggle, no matter what, because of how you look like, I understand why they would want to struggle, but in a mansion or how they would want to emulate a lot of the white cultural norms as a way to assimilate into a society or into a country that was still very hostile and still is hostile to Black folk.

So that's kind of something I think about a lot. And that also goes back to a place like Harvard. Right? The Bougie Blacks. That also goes back to my experience at NYU and being in spaces that economically and socially are extremely privileged, while also dealing with the reality of being a Black woman, while also experiencing the reality of the different privileges I have as a Black woman, based on how I look and my education, the way I sound. So, this goes back to what I said about this huge hodgepodge or just this huge kind of pot of all of these different realities that layer in a lot of very convoluted ways.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I want to also talk to you about some of your international travels. I want to ask you about Jamaica. I know it has a very special place in your heart and that you have been to it many times. And the other reason I want to ask you about it, Romie, is because I have not yet been to Jamaica.

**Romie Robertson:** How dare you? I'm kidding.

**Matt Bowles:** I know. Listen. But it's not for lack of trying. I will tell you this. In 2019, I spent three months in West Africa. I went to Nigeria, went to Ghana, went to Senegal, and I was like, this is unbelievable. I've never seen nightlife like this. This is just completely off the chain. And I thought to myself after this trip, here in the world of any place on the planet might potentially have nightlife like West Africa on that level?

And literally, the place that I thought of that I'd never been was Kingston. I was like, I feel like Kingston could potentially be on that level. And so, I booked a trip to Kingston. I booked an Airbnb for a month. I'm sure Jamaica has many beautiful beaches. I've been to a lot of beautiful beaches. I wanted to go to Jamaica, to go to Kingston. I wanted to go to the Bob Marley Museum.

I want to learn the history of Marcus Garvey. I want to learn the history of Kingston. And I wanted to see these dance hall street parties and everything else that I've been hearing about. I literally, Romie booked Airbnb, paid for it in advance for April of 2020. Obviously, we know what happened in March 2020, had to cancel that trip. And I have still not yet been to Jamaica, but I have read your blog post about it. You spend time not just in the beach locations, but also in Kingston. And I know you have a very special connection with it in terms of getting married in Jamaica and all of these things.

Can you share a little bit for me and other folks that have not been to Jamaica, what is it like there, and what would you put people onto about Jamaica?

**Romie Robertson:** All right, first thing is that my husband is Jamaican, so I'm basically Jamaican. But no, of course, I would never assert myself as a Jamaican. I honor their lived experience, which is different and similar to an African American experience, but not the same.

So as someone who is now connected to Jamaican people, Jamaican culture, and Jamaican history, I continue to elevate that lived experience, and that's kind of the relationship I have with Jamaica and Jamaican culture. It's amazing. Matt, you have to make it a priority. I'm pretty sure the rest of your 2024 is booked up but make it a priority in 2025 to go to Jamaica.

I think something that really surprised me about Jamaica during my first few visits, and this is actually kind of embarrassing to share, but American media and American messaging have made Jamaica way more underdeveloped than it actually is. I'm sure I will continue to realize this the more countries and the more places I get the privilege of visiting. And that was kind of the biggest shock for me, is that I'm in Jamaica and I'm just like, wait a minute, there's a lot of development, there's a lot of infrastructure, there's a lot going on and a lot to do on this island. So that was my biggest shock.

In 2023, I pretty much want every other month. I've been to Jamaica maybe ten times now, and each time I spend quite a considerable amount of time in Kingston, where my mother-in-law lives, and we stay with her. And I really immerse myself with the locals by going to restaurants, going to parties. Jamaicans love to party. The whole thing about the parties and the street parties and the dances, yeah, that is not a myth. That is very real life. Depending on the party you go to, they jump from speakers. That's still something that's done, which I hope you get to experience. It is quiet, the revelry is quite an experience.

And I think what also draws me a ton to Jamaican culture is the history. A lot of great African diasporic history there. Really rich history when it comes to revolts, right? A revolutionary spirit that's really consistent in Jamaican history, and I love that. Or even more modern history, like kind of the fifties through the nineties in Jamaica, where they were dealing with a lot of political issues, human rights issues. The activism of Bob Marley and his peers during that period of time is also a really rich history that I think draws a lot of parallels to the civil rights that African Americans were fighting for in the 20th century and other parallels to civil rights movements across the world.

The food is amazing, of course, though I am a vegetarian, so I have never had curry goat before and probably won't ever have curry goat, and I don't think I've ever had oxtail. I might have had jerk chicken as a teen because I stopped eating meat when I was 18, so I might have had it here and there as a teen, but ever since I haven't been engaged with Jamaica as an adult, unfortunately, I've never had any of their famous meat dishes. But that's okay because there are still awesome vegetarian dishes in Jamaican cuisine. A lot of delicious local fruit and local juices.

The natural landscape is stunning. I think that's another thing that surprised me a lot. My first couple visits to Jamaica was actually how beautiful this island was and how awestruck I was, seeing all of the mountains and all the valleys and all the rivers and all the beaches, and it is visibly just a stunning island, which it's interesting because my husband takes that for granted since he was born and raised there. And that's something that we kind of touched on quite a bit.

The people, I think, culturally, have a very distinct national culture, which is one that I love because it's very brave, it's very proud, I would say it's an attitude that inspires me a lot. And I think that folks should go to Jamaica. You should absolutely leave the beach. I think a big myth is that if you leave the resort, you're going to get shot at. That is not true. Jamaica is not more dangerous than the United States with any place on earth. Use your best judgment. Be careful. In that case you're not any less safe in Kingston than you would be in Atlanta, New York or Dallas, if I'm being honest.

So, I think that visitors should definitely go to the beaches because they're lovely but go to Kingston. I think there's a lot in Kingston. Great museums, good art, a wonderful restaurant, great dining scene. Party in Kingston, and then on top of Kingston and the beach, I think visiting and exploring some of the more rural communities in Jamaica is also a really great experience to see how the folks in the countryside live and how connected they are with their communities.

So, for history buffs like me, there are quite a bit of maroon towns in Jamaica that you can tour and visit, and all those maroon towns are in rural areas. So, while you visit those maroon towns, you can still see how people in the countryside live.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you and I also both have a deep and profound love for the continent of Asia, and I know that your travels in Japan have been really impactful for you. Can you share a little bit about your experience in Japan and why you love Japan?

**Romie Robertson:** Every destination, every country has great things about it and things that are not so great. So, there is no perfect destination. But for my personality, Japan is as close to a perfect nation as it can get. But that's only really because I'm type A. And I think a lot of the nationalistic culture or that national identity really resonates with how I like to exist in spaces, how I like to exist with one another.

The type of systems and infrastructure and opportunities that existed when it came to civilization really align with my taste. So that's why I like Japan so much. I mean, that is what an efficient country is. And I love efficiency as a type A person. Love efficiency, love cleanliness, love systems, love good infrastructure, love good public transit, love not having to be car-dependent and still being able to get anywhere across those major five islands without a car, I think is incredible.

I mean, of course, the kind of poor thing about Japan is how culturally and ethnically insular it is. I mean, I feel the same way about China and South Korea. I don't think Japan is unique in that sense, but it is my favorite destination. And another thing that makes Japan such a great destination is that there's so much to see and do. It is such a rich destination when it comes to experiences. So, Japan is one of those countries where you have to go multiple times, and each time you will experience and see something new. So, I tend not to want to revisit a lot of destinations, but for a place like Japan, I cannot wait until the next trip.

**Matt Bowles:** Romie, I also want to ask you about your reflections now, having traveled to almost 50 countries on the concept of passport privilege. And I've also heard you talk about the complexity of the intersectional dynamics that you've observed around the varied manifestations of anti-Blackness for different Black travelers around the world. Can you share a little bit about your reflections on that?

**Romie Robertson:** The older I get and the more I travel and the more I engage with travelers and those that don't travel as often, there is a recurring thought that I ruminate on, and it's about what Black experiences look like depending on what passport you have, what your voice sounds like, what language or languages you can speak, and then how people perceive you with all of those different intersections.

So, something that I talk about quite a bit is how different my experience is as an African American living in the United States than as an African American traveling outside of the United States. There's way more privilege with being an African American outside of the United States, and it shows how all of these identities are very fluid when it comes to the impact they have on your life and how people perceive you. I think race and the stratification of race is literally a part of the fabric of the United States.

I think that because of that, race plays a very salient role in our experiences on US soil. And then when you leave US soil, sometimes other identities or lived experiences come to the forefront. So, obviously, depending on where you are, money is a big one, right? If you're not traveling to some other nation that has a very strong economy, being American, you're associated with being wealthy or just having access to a lot of money and going to passport privilege.

I think that being married to a non-American, what was truly the impetus for me understanding passport privilege, having to literally live through all of the different barriers that have to be crossed in order to secure a visa, to then have the right to cross a border, is something that a lot of Americans have no idea even exists because we have visa-free access for pretty much most places. And I think the older I get, and the more I travel, the more and more privileged I realize I am.

**Matt Bowles:** You and I are both fans of James Baldwin as a writer and a thinker. And one of the things that Baldwin talked a lot about was his international travels and the impact for him of being able to get out of Harlem and out of the United States, and then from outside the United States, looking back in at the United States in terms of developing some of his perspective and reflections on the racial dynamics in the United States from the vantage point of being outside of it.

And I'm wondering for you how international travel and spending all of this time out outside the United States looking in, has impacted your view and understanding of the racial dynamics in the United States.

**Romie Robertson:** Yes. Shout out to James Baldwin, what a genius. *Another Country* is one of my favorite books, one of my favorite books of all time, and I think is an excellent novel for anyone who has not read it. Add it to your book list. Really insightful stuff for this topic, right? Being Black, being American, leaving the United States, and kind of how he used his characters to explore his own journey through identity and belonging to space and community through that novel.

And this is why for those who have the opportunity to travel, it's so important to travel because it's not until you are against a different backdrop that you realize who you really are and what you're connected to. And I think international travel has been a big part of solidifying my experience and identity as an American. And I think coming to terms with what that means for me is a big narrative that I'm experiencing with my travel and will probably continue to experience for a long time.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I want to ask you about your brand Roaming with Romie. Can you talk a little bit about the content that you are creating and what makes it unique and where you are going with this brand and this platform?

**Romie Robertson:** Yeah, so I am mostly active on [Instagram](#). I do repurpose quite a bit of videos on [TikTok](#) and YouTube shorts. I do post longer form video content on [YouTube](#), though I do not post as frequently as I do with short form content on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#). But there's some great things out on YouTube in my longer form content for folks that kind of want to buckle up for a longer ride.

I used to be more active with writing on my travel blog, though I have kind of put that on the shelf to have more capacity to post YouTube vlogs, though from time to time, especially working with brand partners, I'll put out a piece similar to how I did with the Asheville travel blog. That's what I do. I love just sharing everything related to travel. And my content's kind of a mix of things. Most of the time it's just showcasing my experience on my travels. So, it's like itineraries, places to eat throughout. I always try to center history. I try to center they lived experiences of the locals and their community.

So, I try to insert that in most of my content, in my stories and my reels, in my photos. I talk quite a bit about budget travel, so I share quite a bit about affordability, itineraries, things to do, the history of destinations, and then showcasing, right. Providing a platform for some of the hidden figures of those destinations. So, finding the Black communities and a lot of the destinations I go to is pretty much a big kind of recurring theme of mine. Or finding the communities of groups of people that may not be as visible. So maybe other ethnic groups in places like China or places like India, I try to elevate.

So that is what Roaming with Romie is. This year I've started partnering with a lot of tourism boards, which has been very nice because they've been great partners in helping me find those communities and connecting me with a lot of these grassroots organizations. And I hope to continue that.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, you and I are going to hang out in person, Romie in Fort Lauderdale at the Black Travel Center Summit 2024 for people that have never heard of the [Black Travel Summit](#), can you tell folks what the Black Travel Summit is all about, what your role is with the summit and how you got involved?

**Romie Robertson:** Yeah. So [Black Travel Summit](#) is an awesome organization that brings together folks from all over the Black travel industry. And that's not to say that you have to self-identify as a Black person to get involved with Black travel Summit. What it means is that we again center the experiences of Black people in the travel industry. And that is a global perspective. Though we are based in the United States, we have a really big network of people from outside of the United States, which is something that I really like about our organization.

So, I am the director of programming for [Black Travel Summit](#). So, a big part of my role is developing all of the events for our yearly summit, which this year will be in Fort Lauderdale October 10 through 13th. And we have them every year. So be on the lookout for those that are not able to make it this year in Fort Lauderdale. Make sure you subscribe to our newsletter on our website; [Blacktravelsummit.com](#). Make sure you follow us on [Instagram](#) at *blacktravelsummit*.

Because this year we'll be announcing where we'll be having the summit in 2025 and what those are tentative dates are. So, stay connected with [Black Travel Summit](#). We talked a lot about tour and tourism development. We talked a lot about travel trends and how it affects Black travelers, Black travel professionals, Black travel advisors, Black folks in aviation, and Black folks in travel writing and photography. Content creation is a big theme throughout a lot of our programming. So, there's something at [Black Travel Summit](#) for everyone.

And if you are someone involved in the travel space, again, whether you identify as Black or not, it's a great way to get more familiar with the happenings in the Black travel space and to connect and network with people across the world that are involved in various things. And I think that's one thing I really like, again, about [Black Travel Summit](#) versus some of the other organizations, is that we lean to a lot of different roles in industries where some other Black travel spaces are more designed or appeal more to professionals or those in corporate or content creators or things like that, or travel advisors. But we have all of those folks in the mix.

So, I'm so excited to see you in Fort Lauderdale, Matt.

**Matt Bowles:** Yes, well, for people who would like to join us and hang out with us in person, can you share a little bit more about what they can expect specifically from this year's summit? And also, who is it for? Who should show up?



**Romie Robertson:** Everyone can show up and should show up. So, we have our schedule on our website, [Blacktravelsummit.com](http://Blacktravelsummit.com), and we have a multi-day summit. We actually extended the length of the summit this year. Previously it was Friday through Sunday. Now we are having a Thursday through Sunday summit due to popular demand, and we are kicking off with a give back session. Thursday morning, we have a Black travel film festival, which is organized by the, of our partners, Black Travel Alliance. They're awesome. Check them out. Anyone is familiar with them. They do a lot of great advocacies for Black creators.

On Friday, we have a future of Black tourism leadership conclave, and that is in partnership with another one of our organizational partners, the Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance. So that is separate. That's not included in the summit pass, but that is a part of our programming. And then we have our walking tours, our opening reception Saturday, we have all of our speaker series, so panel discussions, our key notes, a networking luncheon, and then breakout workshops.

And then on Saturday night, we have our awards gala, which is so much fun. Last year was everybody just looked their absolute best at the gala, had great food and drink. And we give awards to those that were nominated by their peers in their respective industries.

And then on Sunday, we have a pitch competition that is new that we are doing. We have our expo, so we'll have a ton of vendors come in and set up their booths. We do that every year and that's always a ton of fun. Our closing reception and a yacht brunch. The yacht brunch is separate, and so is the walking tour. So those are separate programming events, but they sell out. So, for anyone who is listening to this, if this piques your interest, head over to [Blacktravelsummit.com](http://Blacktravelsummit.com). You're able to register for your pass, which will grant you access to most of the programming. And then you could add on some of those other tickets, such as the Yacht brunch and the walking tour.

**Matt Bowles:** And for Maverick show listeners, you are able to get a special 10% discount. So, when you go to buy your ticket, just enter the promo code MAVERICK and you'll get 10% off your ticket. So, we are going to link up the link on where to get the tickets as well as the promo code so you can get your special discount just for being a Maverick Show listener.

Romie, let me ask you one more question, and then we'll wrap this up and move into the lightning round. When you think back about all of the travel that you have now done, almost 50 countries, what impact do you think that all of that travel has had on you as a person, and why are you so passionate about continuing to travel?

**Romie Robertson:** I'm so passionate about continuing to travel because I think that travel helps us be more tolerant. And then not only does it help us be more tolerant, but it also helps us embrace each other more. It helps us move away from egocentric ways of being. And I think it pushes us towards greater understanding, which leads to community.

And I think that in a lot of ways, by traveling and putting ourselves outside of our comfort zone, we do a service to others. So that's a big impetus for why I keep traveling, why I want to continue to travel, and why I try to make travel more accessible because I see a lot of the long-term, lasting positive outcomes that travel can have. Again, when done responsibly, I think it is something that really benefits everyone.

**Matt Bowles:** Well, I think that is the perfect place to end the main portion of this interview. And at this point, Romie, are you ready to move in to the lightning round?

**Romie Robertson:** I am ready.

**Matt Bowles:** Let's do it.

All right. What is one book that you would recommend other people should definitely read?

**Romie Robertson:** [Life of Pi by Yann Martel](#).

**Matt Bowles:** All right. Who is one person currently alive today that you've never met that you'd most love to have dinner with? Just you and that person for an evening of dinner and conversation?

**Romie Robertson:** Michelle Obama.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, I know you write a lot about budget travel. Can you share one travel affordability hack?

**Romie Robertson:** Repositioning. So, book a separate flight to a major city. If you do not live in a major city, such as New York, LA or San Francisco, and then book a separate flight out of those cities to whatever international destination going to, it's going to be cheaper than flying out of your secondary city.

**Matt Bowles:** Romie, knowing everything that you know now, now, 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 Romie?

**Romie Robertson:** Stop taking everything personally. People do not hate you.

**Matt Bowles:** All right. Of all the places that you've been, what are three of your favorite destinations you would most recommend? Other people should definitely check out.

**Romie Robertson:** Japan, Hawaii, responsibly. Have to throw that in there. And Jamaica.

**Matt Bowles:** All right, Romie, what are your top three bucket list destinations? These are places you have not yet been highest on your list you'd most love to see.

**Romie Robertson:** I always have a rotating top three. So, this is the current one, South Africa. The number one bucket list destination for me right now. Oh, my goodness, Peru and Egypt.

**Matt Bowles:** Amazing. I have been to all three of those. So, when you're ready to plan those trips. Romie hit me up. I got you. All right, Romie, we have now come to the most important question of this interview. I am about to ask you to name your top five hip-hop Emcees of all time. But before you name your five, can you share a little bit about what hip-hop music means to you and why you love hip-hop?

**Romie Robertson:** Hip-hop music to me means resistance, it means expression, it means liberation, it means community, it means style and swag, it means fun. And hip-hop embodies all of those things to me.

My top favorite Emcees, so, this is such a contentious question. So, I understand why you ask people this.

**Matt Bowles:** So just to clarify the premise of this question, these are your personal favorite emcees. You're not making an argument for who was the most influential or commercially successful or objectively 'the best'. This is for Romie Robertson, who are your personal Top Five Hip-Hop Emcees of all time?

**Romie Robertson:** Important clarification. Thank you. Kendrick Lamar, number one, he's my favorite emcee. J. Cole. He's tied with Lupe Fiasco. So, they both kind of straddle the two and the three for me. So, I

have a very clear and identifiable top three. I'm a little indecisive with the four and a five. I really think Doja Cat is extremely talented. I think she's a great emcee when it comes to hip-hop, though. I know she's a contentious figure for, I think, reasons outside of her music. So, I'll throw her in the top five, why not? Nicki Minaj, I think she has been very monumental in hip-hop. So, shout out to the women. So those would be my five.

**Matt Bowles:** I think those are great picks, Romie. And with that, I want you to let folks know how they can find you, follow you on social media, learn more about [Black Travel Summit](#), and learn more about Roaming with Romie.

How do you want people to come into your world?

**Romie Robertson:** Please follow me at Roaming with Romie, that is my handle everywhere. So, I am on [Instagram](#). That's where I'm most active. Come join me over there. Shoot me a DM. I respond to every single message and every comment. Literally every single one. So don't be shy. I'm also at *Roaming with Romie* on [TikTok](#) and [Lemon8](#). I've been enjoying that platform, so come say hi to me over at [Lemon8](#). My [YouTube](#) is *Roaming with Romie*. Or you could just search *Roaming with Romie* in a search bar and hopefully my channel pops up. Where else can you find me? I'm on [LinkedIn](#), though my LinkedIn actually doesn't have anything to do with travel. But if you're interested in education, I use LinkedIn a lot for my role in my education on profit. You can connect with me *Romie Robertson* on [LinkedIn](#). Would love to chat about education policy and systems with you there. And of course, make sure again you're following the [Black Travel Summit](#). I will be there every year, so if you want to come hang out in person, you will find me at the [Black Travel Summit](#).

**Matt Bowles:** Yes, come through and hang out with me and Romie and a whole bunch of other Maverick Show guests that are going to roll up this year. You have a special discount code. Just enter **MAVERICK** when you buy your ticket for 10% off. We are going to link up everything in [the show notes](#) that we have discussed, including all of the places where you can find and follow Romie and check out her work as well as links to everything she's recommended and all of the things that we have discussed in this interview. It's going to be a one place, just go to [themaverickshow.com](#). Go to the show notes for this episode there you will find it all.

Romie, I think you are amazing. This was such a special and wonderful conversation. Thank you for being on the show.

**Romie Robertson:** Thank you for inviting me and thank you for holding the space. I had such a fun time chatting with you and drinking both of our red wines. And I can't wait to see you in October.

**Matt Bowles:** Yes, we will see each other in October. Hopefully, a bunch of Maverick Show listeners will show up as well. We'll have a great squad to hang out with. All right. Good night, everybody.