

Sawbones 260: Bizarro World

Published January 25, 2019

[Listen here on themcelroy.family](#)

Intro (Clint McElroy): Sawbones is a show about medical history, and nothing the hosts say should be taken as medical advice or opinion. It's for fun. Can't you just have fun for an hour and not try to diagnose your mystery boil? We think you've earned it. Just sit back, relax, and enjoy a moment of distraction from that weird growth. You're worth it.

[theme music plays]

Justin: Hello, everybody, and welcome to Sawbones: a marital tour of misguided medicine. I am your co-host... Justin McElroy, they call me around these parts.

Sydnee: And I'm Sydnee McElroy. I think they call you that because it's your name.

Justin: Yeah, in all parts they call me... Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: Although I—I don't call you that, really. I mean, I call you, like, J-man, or honey—

Justin: J-man, I—yeah, somehow I got J-man going with you and your dad.

Sydnee: Or when I'm upset, then I say, "[through gritted teeth] Justin Tyler!"

Justin: "[through gritted teeth] Grr."

Sydnee: I say that sometimes.

Justin: That's when I leave my towel on the ground.

Sydnee: Yes.

Justin: Or the bed.

Sydnee: Or on the bed, or on the crib.

Justin: Or the bed is—or the crib is almost the worst.

Sydnee: Ooh. That's the worst.

Justin: In a sense. So, we got a weird week comin' up, gang. We're gonna be at Sketchfest on Thursday evening, at the California Academy of Science, and then we're at PodCon for the weekend after that, so we're, like—we were kind of like, "Syd, how are we gonna get a show together this week?"

Sydnee: So, I was looking for some topics to research, and I always love when our listeners send us suggestions, either via emails or Facebook or tweets, and a couple people tweeted at me about an article that they thought we would... I hesitate to use the word "enjoy." You know.

Justin: Profit from!

Sydnee: You know. Enjoy. [laughs quietly]

Justin: Profit from, and in an entertainment sense.

Sydnee: Enjoy in that... yeah. Enjoy in that way. Uh, much in the manner in which we enjoy *The Room*, I would say. It's an article from *The Times* on wellness, basically. That elusive concept.

Justin: Wellness: the art of making a f—a body that is functioning fine... function just a little bit better.

Sydnee: Just better. Healthy is not enough. Wellness... I would say wellness has come to mean—I think it's different depending on who you are, and, I mean, I would say that wellness is like, "I don't know. I'm not sick, and take decent care of myself, and I'm well." That's well. "I feel pretty good."

Justin: Then some people are like, "What are you putting in your body?"

Sydnee: It's a step above, and so this article just profiles four different people with their routines, their daily wellness routines, and I would say that... I don't even know that they would call them "wellness routines" as much as they're just their daily routine, because it has... it has become deeply entrenched, clearly, into their lives.

Justin: Right.

Sydnee: Like, these ideas of the way to take best care of your complete self; mind, body, spirit, has become their way of life, which I am not criticizing. I'm not saying that's a bad thing, but the things you do in order to achieve that may or may not... be... real.

Justin: [simultaneously] Real.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: There we go.

Sydnee: Real things.

Justin: There'll be some mild to moderate dunking in this episode, but I think it's worth noting that—and this is a point Syd made to me—that these are... apparently smart people. They're successful people, as much as that's a metric of your intelligence or, you know, work ethic, whatever, and as much as success can be measured by... you know, your business... success.

Sydnee: Well, they seem to be by most, I would say, traditional measures of success, they're successful. They seem to have careers that they pursued and have achieved. They seem to have financial security. At least it sounds that way, from the things they describe in their daily life. I don't know their incomes, but it sounds that way.

And they seem happy, or at least they don't say they're not happy. I don't know, maybe they're not happy, but they seem pleased with their lives and with where they are.

Justin: [holding back laughter] With themselves.

Sydnee: Yeah. And so—[laughs quietly] that—to me, I mean, that's a fairly successful person. I think you could argue there are other things that are necessary, but I think most people would say "Well, I mean, they seem like successful people."

And so, I would say that if these people who have lots of access to information, to, um, research, to scientific knowledge, who have probably gone through some

degree of higher education—I have no idea, they may not have, I don't know. But I would guess they probably have.

If these people who have all this information at their fingertips, plus, I think from their schedules, time to access it... if they still can be taken in by some of these... false ideas, um, I think it's just clear that any of us can.

Justin: It's also interesting, too—this was not written as a piece about... fake stuff.

Sydney: No.

Justin: So I think it's a fun application of sort of the things we've been talking about, the concepts we've been talking about on the show, but in the wild. Like, can you, as somebody who has been listening to a lot of these, uh... fun theories, uh, spot—

Sydney: [under her breath] Fun theories...

Justin: —some of the problems, here. So, I think that's enough, like—I think that's enough backpedaling, Sydney.

Sydney: I just want to make it clear that my goal is not to make fun of people.

Justin: No!

Sydney: We're not mean. We try very hard not to just be openly mean. There's no—where's the fun in that? Where's the comedy there?

Justin: I will inevitably try three to four of the things that we read about in this article, because I wanna be more powerful and successful.

Sydney: [laughs quietly] But I think if you just read these without any context, it could be dangerous. It could be misleading. And so, here's some context, at least as far as I see it.

Justin: These are presented in the article with... no context!

Sydney: No.

Justin: Zero context at all.

Sydnee: No. It's "Welcome to the Wellness Revolution."

Justin: Fin.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. "Just how far do they go to achieve peak zen?"

Justin: [whispering very quietly] Oh, Syd... please don't...

Sydnee: Alex.

Justin: For the very first *line*.

Sydnee: Let's start with Alex.

Justin: [strained] Let's start with the very first—the very first two sentences of Alex's...

Sydnee: Do you wanna... do you wanna start Alex? And they're just routines listed, like, by hours of the day.

So, Alex's routine starts at 5:55. *Oof*.

Justin: "I wake up and immediately re-hydrate."

I love this.

Sydnee: That's—that's fine. I'm not saying you shouldn't—

Justin: That's a great health habit.

Sydnee: Hydration is great.

Justin: Second sentence: "Your body is the most absorbent after you sleep, so the first thing you put in it is the most important."

[clapping] Nooo!

Sydnee: That's a—it's a strange assertion, I will say.

Justin: Alex?

Sydnee: It's a strange—and this is one of those—'cause, like, I tried to make sure and look at the research on some of these different things before I just start debunking it.

Justin: About body absorbency?

Sydnee: But, like, to Google "research on peak body absorbency"... is hard. I would say that your body is not necessarily more absorbent... at any point of the day. But hydration is good. I think if he wants to hydrate, that's fantastic.

Justin: I just wanna know when I'm the most effective against spills around the home!

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Uh, so Alex starts his day by hydrating. That's great. He prefers coconut water. Coconut water, coconut milk, coconut oil, coconut products are pervasive in all four of these routines. And we've talk a little bit about this before, this concept that, like, everything from a coconut is healthier.

I looked into the research on coconut water specifically, because I wanted to see, like, is there something I'm missing? 'Cause everybody seems to be drinking coconut water. And it—so what it found... it's not bad. There's nothing wrong with coconut water. I mean, it tastes good. Have you had it? It tastes good.

Justin: Yeah, it's fine. It's not the taste—if you've never had coconut water, it's not quite the taste that you're hoping it's going to have—

Sydnee: No.

Justin: —but it's okay.

Sydnee: It's refreshing, it tastes good. It has been pitted against sports drinks. That's the idea. Like, is it better for you to re-hydrate than a sports drink? And the problem is, coconut water is actually pretty low in carbohydrates, which is one of the reasons people think it's good. I mean, that's fair, it's low in carbohydrates. It's also low in sodium, and if you're talking about re-hydrating after you've been, like, sweating a whole bunch and working out—

Justin: You need the football milk!

Sydnee: You—[laughs] a sports drink is actually probably better. Now, you can supplement your coconut water with some of the other—like, extra sodium, they did that study to, like, "We'll put more salt in it and see if it's better," and it was better at that point.

Justin: [through laughter] Mmm, salty coconut milk! Dee-licious!

Sydnee: And I'm not saying that sports drinks are amazing for you, many have a lot of sugar in them. But then when they, like, gave them to athletes they said, "Well, I mean, I feel fine either way, but the sports drink sure tastes better," was kind of their... end of that study. But I don't—I mean, it's not—it's fine. Like, if you like coconut water and you drink enough of it, you'll be hydrated. If you're sweating a whole bunch, you're probably still better off with a low sugar—

Justin: Gatorade turns your body into strong, wild garbage, so, yeah. [through laughter] There's that goin' for it.

Sydnee: [laughs] I get it, like, I don't particularly love Gatorade myself, but I just... I don't know. Anyway, there's the coconut water thing, in case you're curious. Is coconut water that great for you? I mean, it's fine. [laughs] It's fine.

Justin: Fine.

Sydnee: So we continue along Alex's day, and I think he does a lot of stuff that we could all benefit from. Well, not the taking multivitamins.

Justin: No.

Sydnee: We've already said that, right? We've done that show. You don't need a multivitamin, probably.

Justin: Don't need a multivitamin. Can we also talk about dilu—

Sydnee: Vitamin C.

Justin: —[holding back laughter] diluting the coconut water with regular water, at a ratio of two to one?

Sydnee: I don't know what that's all about. I'm not sure—

Justin: "Whoa, this coconut water is good, but it is powerful! Hoo! Hoo, too much! Too much intensity!"

Sydnee: It's not necessary, I would say. Uh, he does some meditation, and I think that's great. I think there's no problem with that. I think the idea that you want to wake up in the morning and try to, like...

Justin: Hey, I mean, you woke up—

Sydnee: ... be calm and happy.

Justin: —Alex, you're the one who woke up at 5:55. [through laughter] I think whatever you do with those minutes is between you and God! You can do whatever you want with those minutes, and I think meditation first thing in the morning is—I wish I had the...

Sydnee: Time...

Justin: Time, willpower, whatever.

Sydnee: I think there's nothing wrong with—a lot—and you'll see this in a lot of these routines. There's some good stuff in here, for sure! I mean, I bet you these are healthy people. I bet you these people are in good health, regardless of the stuff that they may do to achieve that.

He also does some yoga. That's great! Good! Wake up in the morning, meditate, do some yoga? No problem with any of this. This is all good stuff. He goes and does some intense fitness work after that. Still, no problem with any of that. Back to the coconut water again. [quietly] Okay, that's...

Justin: Okay, good, good.

Sydnee: That's fine. He does say... I just take a little bit of issue with the fact that he, um—he makes a point that he likes to hang out with the people who are part of his fitness routine, because he's not gonna hang out with people who like to drink a lot at the pub.

I have a little bit of an issue with that, simply because I am a person who would like to drink a lot at a pub.

Justin: Yeahhh, but judging what you know of Alex so far, are you the sort of person that would wanna hang out with Alex? This seems to be mutually beneficial.

Sydnee: That's fair. [through laughter] Alex and I would probably not get along very well.

Justin: Yeah, I'm not sure you and Alex would be... would hit it off.

Sydnee: [laughs] Uh, he... after all of this... I mean, really, like, healthy working out and stuff, he comes home and he takes that—that shower, and uses—and a lot of these people mention, like, "I only use non toxic, organic products," and all that stuff. Okay, that's—I mean—

Justin: [quietly] Great.

Sydnee: —whether or not your shampoo is actually toxic, I think we could all, like... we could all take issue with. I know some of the really scented ones make my allergies act up.

Justin: Hey, there you go!

Sydnee: [laughs] But, uh, after that he makes a smoothie, and the only thing I will say about this smoothie, because I don't have a problem with smoothies, smoothies are lovely, right?

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: They taste good?

Justin: Well, no, they're not—I mean, they can pack a lot of sugar.

Sydnee: They can taste good.

Justin: You can pack a lot of sugar in there.

Sydnee: You can, you can. His has coconut milk, cacao, maca, acai, non dairy yogurt with protein in it, blueberries, banana, and cashew butter; about a pint and a half altogether.

Smoothie... now, I don't have a problem with these ingredients. I think we all know that acai is not the... cure all—

Justin: Panacea.

Sydnee: —that everybody thought it was. Like, it's fine. It's just one of the foods that are probably fine for you... but that's about it.

The thing that I thought was interesting is, I added up—like, if you were to buy all these things... you have to buy all these ingredients on the front end, right, to make this smoothie. On the low end, this would cost you, like, \$65 worth of ingredients. Now, obviously that's not for one smoothie. Obviously that's going to last—but, I mean, for the packaging for some of these, that'll only last you about a week, maybe up to two weeks.

Justin: Right.

Sydnee: For six—

Justin: Pricey. I mean, they're pricey ingredients.

Sydnee: They're extremely pricey ingredients, and I would say that they're not necessary for good health, to pay that much. And by the way, when I was estimating these costs, I was using, like, the mid-range of the products. I was not using the, like, super fancy, organic, natural, like, highest end of ingredients, which Alex may be using. I don't know. I would just say this—

Justin: [stage whisper] I would bet Alex is using, yes.

Sydnee: I would bet he is. But I would say this is kind of a waste of your money.

Justin: I would also, for whatever it's worth... for me, in the limited stuff that I know about, like, diet, and I can speak just from experience on my body... blueberries, banana is a—a pretty big hit of glucose to get, like, that early in the morning. I mean, that's like—not glucose. Or—glucose, yeah.

Sydnee: Sugar.

Justin: Sugar.

Sydnee: Yeah, there's sugar in there. It's carbohydrates, yeah.

Justin: It's a pretty big hit of sugar to get first thing in the morning. I don't know. I know some people are very down with that, but I find that, like, can put me in a rough place. Nutritionally.

Sydnee: Well, I mean, he's worked out a ton, already.

Justin: Yeah, I mean, I'm not saying he's not earned it.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: I'm sure he's, like, fit, right? But if you were to say, like, "I'm gonna start with the smoothie thing, [through laughter] and not do the exercise thing," right?

Sydnee: No, okay, that I would not recommend. And I think that's what would be important, like, a little note. If you take any one of these things from this in isolation, it may actually be bad for you, or at the very least not good for you. I think altogether these people have found routines that work for them, but only taken together.

Justin: [whispering] Read the next paragraph.

Sydnee: Um... so—

Justin: [whispering] It's all extremely good.

Sydnee: Are you talking about that he works at home?

Justin: [whispering] 'Cause—

Sydnee: You work at home.

Justin: [quietly] No, Syd, that's not the good part.

Sydnee: If he—if he goes out, he'll take a bag of nuts and stop for a green juice.

Justin: I love bag o' nuts as a snack. That's pretty good. That's nutrient-dense, get a little protein in there, not gonna spike your blood sugar. I love that as a snack.

Sydnee: At some point between meetings, he'll have a shot of activated charcoal.

Justin: Al-lex!

Sydnee: That's not...

Justin: Alex!

Sydnee: That's not a thing. That's not a—I mean, it is a thing. It is a thing that exists.

Justin: They sell it at Pre now, which is, uh... it's, like, a news agent, right?

Sydnee: I believe.

Justin: The Pret, yeah. And he says, "We're so blessed in Britain." Are you, Alex? Because it seems like you just bought some dirty charcoal and took a shot of it.

Sydnee: We did a whole show on charcoal.

Justin: [whispering] It's nothing.

Sydnee: You can refer to that if you have not listened to it, but the point is that, like, unless you have ingested some sort of poison that needs to be absorbed by the charcoal, you don't really need charcoal. And that's activated charcoal, so I don't know what you're doin', Alex. I don't know what you're doin' there.

Okay. At home, he has a quartz crystal that he places next to him when editing photos, and he works by a Himalayan salt lamp to absorb the magnetic and radioactive waves that are all around you from WiFi and your computer.

[pauses]

Justin: "I think in 20 years time"—you stopped before the dank nugs, you stopped reading before the dank nugs, Sydnee. I don't understand!

Sydnee: I'm sticking to the pseudoscience. What would you like to talk about?

Justin: "I think in 20 years time there's gonna be a lot of illnesses related to those waves."

Oh really, Alex? Freelance photographer at Select Model Management? Why is it that you, a freelance photographer, think in 20 years time—what are you basing that one, Alex?! You—oh, my God. Just, like—

Sydnee: I mean, it's a guess.

Justin: "—I—I think in 20 years time there's gonna be a lot of illnesses related to WiFi."

[incredulously] Why?! Alex?! Based on what?! The fact that the internet is all around you and at your fingertips? You—why, Alex?! Why—wha—*why* do you think that?!

Sydnee: There's, uh—this is—I don't know if we've done a whole show on that topic. I think we've talked about Himalayan salt lamps, which are... I mean, I think—

Justin: [hoarsely] They're lamps!

Sydnee: —some people find them attractive, and I think that's fine. Past that, I—that's it. That's really it. But as far as these magnetic and radioactive waves and this idea—I mean, really at this point there's no evidence for this stuff. I know there are people who will anecdotally say they feel better when they're in areas—I've heard of people moving, actually, to part of West Virginia where the radio telescope is—

Justin: Kepler.

Sydnee: Because—

Justin: 'Cause they're a radio free zone.

Sydnee: Yeah, because in—it's in Pocahontas County—because they can't have, within a certain range, can't have cell phones and that kind of stuff, and so people will move there so they are not exposed to this electromagnetic radiation, because they feel better. And they have said, anecdotally, "I feel better when I'm there."

I don't—I mean, this is not evidence-based, though. None of this has evidence for it.

Justin: Here's the thing that bothers me about it. Okay, I'm gonna move off of Alex, 'cause I feel like I am starting to dunk on him, but I am—

Sydnee: Yeah, and we gotta get past Alex. We got three more people we gotta talk about.

Justin: Oh my God. Oh my God. Okay, just real quick though, like, to say, "I think there's gonna be a lot of diseases about WiFi in 20 years. Anyway, I've already fixed the problem, by..."

Sydnee: "Working next to a Himalayan salt lamp."

Justin: "Working next to a Himalayan salt lamp." That's wild to me, because that's like—I mean, I, too, hope there aren't a lot of WiFi related diseases, but I'm not trying to get in front of this, like, imaginary problem, with a yet more imaginary—and also, PS, probably expensive—solution!

Sydnee: It's a wild statement, 'cause I can say that about a lot of things. I hope there are not a lot of, like, cauliflower related diseases someday. I hope there's not a lot of Diet Dr. Pepper related diseases!

Justin: I hope—I hope vaping's as good for me as I imagine it is.

Sydnee: [through laughter] I hope that I don't someday discover that gray hoodies were dangerous for your health, 'cause I'm in trouble! [laughs]

Justin: Right. But anyway, I've taken precautions against this situation I've imagined for myself. Okay. Anyway.

Sydnee: He takes some apple cider vinegar tablets after that. We've done a whole show on that. There's no... that's not a... that's fine, but it's not a thing. I wouldn't spend the money on it.

He—I thought this was one point to make. He talks about doing, like, a vision board kind of thing, which I'm not gonna... I am a doctor. I have no expertise when it comes to philosophy or theology or spirituality or any of these other things. I did not write *The Secret*. I do not know *The Secret*. [laughs] I do not live by *The Secret*.

Uh, but he asks himself—he says, "It's important to ask yourself the question, 'Am I happy? What would I like to have?'"

And I just think—I think that kind of informs some of my problem with a lot of this, is that I think if you're not asking yourself the question after, "Am I happy?" "Are those around me whom I have influence over—are they happy?" Not just, "What would I like to have?" But, "Do I have enough, and what would others need to have?" Before "What would I like to have?"

I have some issues with this... I think if that is your—

Justin: Yes, but you're off the reservation at this point, too.

Sydnee: I know. I just think that that informs some of these decisions.

Justin: Okay.

Sydnee: Anyway, he goes on to—he does say that he tries to stay off of social media because it's the modern day heroin. I would argue that heroin is the modern day heroin.

Justin: [laughs loudly and distantly]

Sydnee: Just one a side note.

Justin: [through laughter] "Why is Alex crying? [using his hands as a megaphone] 'Cause he just got dunked on!"

Sydnee: I'm just saying, if... move to West Virginia. Heroin is the modern day heroin. Uh—

Justin: I don't disagree, though, PS. Don't disagree in theory that—

Sydnee: Social media can be bad for you.

Justin: —that social—yeah, yeah.

Sydnee: In large amounts, yes. I don't think all social media is bad—

Justin: [simultaneously] We should all delete our social media accounts—

Sydnee: No, I don't—

Justin: —and we'll all be a lot happier.

Sydnee: I don't think that's necessary, but I think it—yes, in moderation. He eats vegetarian most of the time, that's fine. He does more yoga, that's fine. No problems with a lot of this. He does—

Justin: [holding back laughter] Wait, hold on. I do want to stop at 7 o' clock real quick. "My orange nighttime light activates on my phone to allow my body to start shutting down." That's good. A lot of blue light can mess up your Circadian rhythms.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Justin: Then he says, "If my wife is away, I might go to another F-45," which is his super intense exercise class.

Sydnee: Fitness class, yeah.

Justin: "If my wife is away, I might go to another exercise class." This person—he doesn't live in a different country from me. He lives in a different dimension. We're not—if you were to break it down to DNA, I would share more with a carrot than I do with Alex.

Sydnee: So when I—

Justin: "Ooh, wife's away! [gruff voice, through laughter] Time to go to fitness class!"

Sydnee: I—if I was away, Justin would just watch The Curse of Oak Island.

Justin: I would just start at the beginning and see what the Leginas—

Sydnee: Marathon.

Justin: Like, pick up details I missed the first time, and eat pizza!

Sydnee: Uh, so, he does make a point that he eats vegetarian because his wife is a vegetarian, but he does crave meat. Sometimes when he's alone he does eat some meat, and it's because of his blood type, that—because of his blood type, he needs more meat than other people do. This is not a—

Justin: This is irresponsible. Like, this is irresponsible.

Sydnee: This is—I mean, I don't know how to debunk it other than, "That's just not it."

Justin: It's nothing.

Sydnee: Your craving for meat is not related to your blood type.

Justin: Your craving to meat is related to meat.

Sydnee: Eat meat or don't, it's fine.

Justin: It's good.

Sydnee: [laughs quietly] Uh, and then he talks about—again, he has, like, a square of dark chocolate and sometimes some red wine. That's all fine. He does talk about how they got married at the second most magnetic place in the world... which makes me question why he didn't get married at the most magnetic place in the world, if that's what you're goin' for.

Justin: Yeah, Alex! Why'd you cheap out?

Sydnee: But, uh—but I'll leave it at that.

Justin: Okay.

Sydnee: This is a very expensive and time consuming routine, and we will see this as a theme.

Justin: Great. Great. Excellent.

Sydnee: You do not—Justin? You do not have the time or the money to support any of these routines.

Justin: [through laughter] Fair enough!

Sydnee: I am telling you, as your wife who knows.

Justin: I don't have the money, but that is a problem we can rectify.

Sydnee: That's right! Let's head to the billing department.

Justin: Let's go!

[theme music plays]

Justin: Our first sponsor this week is... Squarespace. If you want to build a home for your ideas...

Sydnee: I do!

Justin: Well, would you make it out of glass and plaster, to keep those ideas caged and contained where no one can see them and be inspired by them?

[pauses]

Sydnee: Well, no, Justin, because ideas aren't physical objects? So I—

Justin: Exactly. You wanna put them into a—a space where everyone can enjoy them: the internet. So, if you wanna upload your ideas to the internet, uh, copy all of them to a floppy disk, and then send that floppy disk to Squarespace.

Sydnee: No. no.

Justin: No.

Sydnee: No, that's wrong.

Justin: They're—well, they will help you turn your idea into a website, but it's gonna be a little bit more sort of like just typing and mouse stuff. Like regular web design type—

Sydnee: 'Regleeur' internet stuff. [laughs]

Justin: Regular internet stuff with beautiful, customizable templates, created by world class designers. Everything's optimized for mobile right out of the box. Now, see, they said that, and I don't know what box they're talking about. We're getting a lot of mixed metaphors in terms of the physical world and the digital.

Sydnee: The conceptual box.

Justin: There is free and secure hosting, and they got a new way to buy domains, or you can choose from over 200 extensions.

So, head to [Squarespace.com/sawbones](https://www.squarespace.com/sawbones) for a free trial, and when you're ready to launch, use the offer code "sawbones" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or a domain.

That, again, [Squarespace.com/sawbones](https://www.squarespace.com/sawbones) for a free trial. When you're ready to launch, use the code "sawbones" to save 10% off your first purchase of a website or a domain.

We are also sponsored this week by PolicyGenius. Of the many boring things that adults have to do... it is a long list.

Sydnee: Yes.

Justin: A long, arduous list. A lot of visits to boring places. A lot of carpet stores.

Sydnee: A lot of lines.

Justin: A lot of lines.

Sydnee: Lot of being on hold.

Justin: One of those most boring things is getting life insurance. Ugh! It's the pits. But PolicyGenius makes it a little bit easier. It can be confusing, and PolicyGenius is gonna streamline things for ya. It is an easy way to get life insurance in minutes. You can compare quotes from top insurers, and find a price you can afford. And whether you're shopping for disability insurance to protect your income, homeowner's insurance, auto insurance? They can help with all that stuff, and get you covered fast!

If you've been intimidated or frustrated by insurance in the past, congratulations: you're a sane human being.

Sydnee: You're in the same club as us!

Justin: All adult humans. But, try starting a search at PolicyGenius.com. Compare quotes in minutes, and apply. You can do the whole thing on your phone, right now! PolicyGenius: the easy way to compare and buy life insurance.

[music plays]

Allie: Hi, I'm Allie Goertz.

Julia: And I'm Julia Prescott, and we're the hosts of...

Together: Everything's Coming Up Simpsons!

Julia: Every episode we cover a different episode of The Simpsons that is a favorite of our special guest.

Allie: We've had guests that are show runners and writers and voice actors, like Nancy Cartwright.

Nancy Cartwright: [Bart voice] I got a D minus! I passed!

Allie: And we've also had people that are on the Max Fun network already.

Julia: We've had Weird Al Yankovich on the show.

Weird Al Yankovich: I was just struck by how sharp the writing is. I mean, that's no surprise, 'cause it's The Simpsons, but I mean like, you can't say that

about a lot of TV shows, particularly ones that at that point had been on the air for 14 years.

Allie: Find us on Maximumfun.org, iTunes, or wherever you get your podcasts.

Julia: All right, smell ya later!

[music plays]

Sydnee: Alright, Justin. So, let's talk about Tim.

Justin: Yes.

Sydnee: Alright. Now, we're moving on to Tim, who I should note is founder of the Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy Center, so—

Justin: So Tim is...

Sydnee: So, it is in Tim's best interest to believe in some of the stuff we're gonna take issue with, I would say. I like that his 7:45 wake up time—by the way, that's reasonable. That's fine.

Justin: God, I would do [whispers] anything.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: [stage whispering] I would do anything!

Sydnee: He gets, on average, 7 hours and 41 minutes sleep.

Justin: [quietly] Perfect. Good.

Sydnee: He's figure out this as a perfect amount of sleep for him.

Justin: Good, yes.

Sydnee: I know the perfect amount of sleep for me is generally more than I get. That's all I know. [laughs]

Justin: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Says the person that gets to sleep til 8:00, while I get up with Charlie at 6:45 every morning.

Sydnee: I still wake up with the baby at night.

Justin: Uh-huh. Yeah. Right.

Sydnee: Anyway. So, he gets up, he takes a shot of some probiotics—

Justin: Sure, yeah.

Sydnee: He's got a supplement from plankton that helps him stay hydrated, and some water. Um... probiotics, I have—I have good evidence that says that in some cases, probiotics are helpful. I don't know if they're necessarily helpful for Tim, but I'm not gonna take issue with the probiotics. I think the plankton enzyme is probably not necessary. The water's good!

Justin: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: He takes his shower, and then checks his urine PH.

Justin: Now, Alex didn't take a shower. [wheezes] Do you wanna talk about it, Alex?

Sydnee: He did.

Justin: Did he? Okay, he didn't skip his shower, okay.

Sydnee: He did later. He had to do his workout first.

So, he takes his shower and he does his urine PH, and the urine PH... at first I though, "You just—every morning? You just check—what?"

And then later what it sounds like is this guy's doin' a ketosis thing. This guy's on a ketotic...

Justin: Yeah, keto.

Sydnee: A keto diet. So, I mean, I guess it makes sense if you're trying to stay in ketosis and you're checking your urine PH to see, so—

Justin: [quietly] ketosis, yeah.

Sydnee: Yeah. I mean, we've already done a whole—I am not revisiting the keto diet. Angry emails galore, but, um, it makes sense why he's doing it.

Here's the problem: at 8:20—

Justin: [groans]

Sydnee: —he turns on his Human Charger. That's a brand name. Human Charger.

Justin: [whispering untelligably]

Sydnee: And, as he says, "It is a device that looks like an iPod with an earpiece that shines light into my ear to give my energy."

Justin: [whispering] Yes, yes.

[loudly] Whoa, look, Syd! I'm—I'm—I—I'm levitating! This is the greatest day of my life!

[yells] This guy plugs himself like a robooot! Sydnee?!

[normal volume] You know what? You know what?

Sydnee: Uh-huh?

Justin: People may mock me for my hesitance to exercise and eat well. But folks, this is the end of the path. This is what that path leads you down.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: You get on that path, you have one salad, then it's four salads, and then you're pluggin' yourself in... like a cyborg.

Sydnee: So, his Human Charger—

Justin: [squawks]

Sydnee: —this is all it really is. It's just—

Justin: [hitting table and laughing]

Sydnee: —you're shining a light into your ear.

Justin: [cry-laughing]

Sydnee: The idea that this was built upon is that we can absorb—that it's important for us to absorb light. It helps with our Circadian rhythms.

Justin: Yes.

Sydnee: Yes. Yes. This is true.

Justin: Yes.

Sydnee: Generally, we accept that we know if there's light. We take in that light through our... eyes.

[pauses]

Sydnee: That i—the—that is where that light... goes.

Justin: Or through our skin.

Sydnee: Yeah, but like, eyes are the big thing.

Justin: Eyes are huge for light, yeah. They love it.

Sydnee: Yeah. So, the research that was done behind this was to try and see if you could, like, shine a light on your head and directly stimulate your brain, like, through the cranium.

Justin: [whispering] Yes.

Sydnee: Um, and then that evolved into, like, "What if we just tried to shine it through the eardrums? Would that work?"

And I would say that the evidence for this is... weak. Um, there were—there are some studies published by the company—well, not... I don't even know if you'd call 'em—anyway, there was some sort of research done by the company who made it, and they found that there was a difference, although they didn't really have a control group. It was just people exposed to different levels of light, so everybody was getting, like, light in their ears—

Justin: Mm-hmm?

Sydnee: —and then asking them, did they feel better? And they all were like, "I feel so much better! I have so much more energy!"

I—I have issues with the study design. There were other studies done by independent groups who said, "There is no difference here. This is not a thing. This is—you are not absorbing the light through your... ears."

Justin: [whispering] It's absolutely nothing, folks.

Sydnee: It's been adopted by a lot of people who travel for jet lag. There's no evidence for that, either, and these can cost up to, like, 300 bucks.

Justin: Huh! Imagine my surprise! I'd figured they'd be free, 'cause they're so good.

Sydnee: So...

Justin: [blows a raspberry]

Sydnee: So that's a... I would say—

Justin: I'm sure your insurance covers it.

Sydnee: I would not advise buying this product.

He goes on—he used a phrase—he talked about his morning coffee, and he says that he uses low mycotoxin coffee.

Justin: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: I had to look into this, 'cause—

Justin: What is that?

Sydnee: —this is the first I've heard of mycotoxins. These are toxins produced by molds, which are a real thing. Like, there really are mycotoxins. That is a thing that exists, but, like, wh—wha—whoa? What?

So, anything that grows could have mycotoxins in it, because it grew somewhere, and there are molds out there that grow, too, and so any of your foods could have mycotoxins. They're actually checked. There are acceptable levels that we find in a lot of different foods and drinks that we consume. So, yeah, your coffee may well have some mycotoxins in it, but there is no evidence that they are in any way harmful to you, because we know acceptable levels.

Justin: Okay.

Sydnee: So you are—it's kind of like that idea that, like, there are toxins out there that you're being exposed to that you need to purge. Yeah, there are toxins all over the place. We're all being exposed to them. Every creature on Earth is, constantly, and we are also toxic creatures, producing substances that we're exposing other animals to.

But we can all tolerate some level of that, so generally speaking, your coffee is probably fine. I wouldn't worry about this. But it is—you will find this. Like, this concept of low mycotoxin coffee. I wouldn't worry about it.

So, Tim goes on with his day, and one ritual he has that Justin, I think you're in full support of, is his fist bumping ritual.

Justin: Mm-hmm!

Sydnee: He's gotta fist bump the concierge. He's fist bumped him every morning for four years, and it's his way of making him feel valued.

[pauses]

Justin: I love it. I mean, I love it. I think that you... that's good. I wish that we could maybe differentiate between superstitious habits and health routines—
[wheeze-laughs]

Sydnee: See, that's my problem with it, 'cause then when he gets to his office at 10:00 AM, he fist bumps every member of the team, 15 in total.

Justin: And then—and then by then it's time for lunch! [wheeze-laughs] And, uh, he goes home and sleeps in a hyperbaric chamber.

Sydnee: This is sort of like the Oz—like, that song from the people of Oz.

Justin: ... What?

Sydnee: [singing] We get up at twelve and start to work at one!"

Justin: [simultaneously] To work at one!

Together: [singing] Take an hour for lunch and then at two we're done.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: Fist bump fun. I—

Sydnee: He usually gets an Uber or he walks, but he tries to limit Ubers, because they are generally electric cars, and so those are bad, because they're emitting electromagnetic fields.

Justin: Aw, man!

Sydnee: This is my—the first argument I've seen against electric cars.

Justin: Yeah. Finally, we can put 'em on blast.

Sydnee: Take on electric cars.

Justin: I do love the idea that this guy's like, "I do everything I can to optimize my health... but I'm not walkin' to work. Oh, man. No way! I'm exhau—[wheezes] there's no possible way I'm doin' that!"

Sydnee: "Too much!"

Justin: "Too much! I'll wear a ring that syncs my sleep rhythms with my milk intake, but [grumbles] I'm not gonna walk! Ugh!"

Sydnee: He goes on to discuss his diet, and I'm not gonna belabor that because, as I've already said, it's a keto diet. We did a whole episode on that. You either buy it or you don't. [laughs quietly] Um, what I will skip to is that at 7:30, after work is over, after he's eaten and gone to the gym and all that, he goes to the clinic he founded, where they have hyperbaric oxygen chambers that he can lie in, and he says that he lies in it for an hour while pure oxygen is pumped into it... and he might meditate, which is fine, but there is no evidence that the average human who isn't suffering from, like, the bends, needs hyperbaric oxygen. There's no evidence for that.

If we—by the way, if you breathe in pure oxygen you die. That's just a whole other thing, but, um—

Justin: Says here he—"I often take a nootropic drug called... Aniracetam?"

Sydnee: Yeah, I looked into this. So, this has been studied for, like, specifically for dementia, mainly in animals. There aren't a lot of—a lot of it is anecdotal. Outside of that, there aren't a lot of compelling studies. It's not FDA approved, so we don't have it in the US. I looked—it's available in other countries.

Justin: I love—you know what I love about these people, Sydnee? And this is not just me dunking on one person in particular, but a group of people, uh, and an industry that profits off of their naiveté.

Sydnee: Mm-hmm.

Justin: I looove the argument of, "I won't take an Uber. It's got electromagnetic waves in it. Anyway, give me those unlicensed brain pills!"

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: [laughs] "Pass the untested brain medicine!"

Sydnee: I think it's—I think it's like a Limitless pill, except that's not a real thing. [laughs]

Justin: "Give me the Limitless pill, but I won't ride in a car, 'cause of the waves!"

Sydnee: It may have some action for patients for dementia, I don't—it doesn't look like we have any studies to say that for sure yet, but it's in investigation, so maybe it'll do something. I don't know that I would... I certainly would not recommend it to anybody right now, based on current evidence.

He sometimes, after his hyperbaric oxygen chamber, on Saturday's he'll follow that up with, um... an IV drip of magnesium and amino acids. I would never going somewhere other than, like, a doctor's office or hospital or some sort of medical facility to receive IV treatments of anything.

Justin: Mm-hmm!

Sydnee: That seems highly questionable. And also, you don't just need magnesium through an IV just 'cause. That could be very dangerous. You need a certain amount of magnesium in your body. Certainly too low is bad, but too high is bad, too. So I would never, ever, ever recommend having this done. That seems very dangerous to me.

So after that he heads back to his flat and he reads. That's great. He also makes note that he watches half of an episode of TV, 'cause too much TV is a waste of your life.

[through laughter] I would say that watching half of an episode of TV is kind of a waste, 'cause like—

Justin: That is a waste.

Sydnee: —then you don't know what happened. Anyway, he also has a Himalayan rock salt lamp. Everybody does.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: Everybody is terrified of EMFs and has Himalayan salt lamps.

Justin: I do want to circle back around on his, uh... he has super high energy at work. "I drink a liter of water a day, either San Pellegrino, as it contains a good level of minerals, or Love Hemp Water which I buy from Planet Organic. It contains CBD hemp droplets, which help my inflammatory system." They don't.

"I haven't drunk tap water for two years. At home, I have a Berkeley water filter, [through laughter] which is the best one."

Sydnee: I think—

Justin: [quietly] Hasn't drunk tap water for two years. What an amazing accomplishment.

Sydnee: There is an underlying theme that you can easily pick up on. I don't think it needs to be highlighted, but, um... I think the belief that you can't drink tap water and, like, endorsing that to the public is a sign of privilege.

Justin: Mm-hmm!

Sydnee: So...

Justin: Mm-hmm!

Sydnee: Tap water is fine in most places. Not everywhere, but most places.

Justin: Mm-hmm.

Sydnee: Our last two, I just want to make a few quick points about. I will not go through—they actually—the last two routines I didn't find quite as wild as the first two.

Dasha gets up at 5:00 AM. I—

Justin: Dasha's already gone terribly awry!

Sydnee: Yes. Uh, she likes to go outside and take off her shoes and stare at the sun and do yoga, which, again, I don't have any problems with it, except she also believes that being barefoot helps her receive electrons from the Earth.

Justin: Oh, no!

Sydnee: That's not, um...

Justin: [high pitched] What? No!

Sydnee: No. That's not a science—

Justin: Incorrect!

Sydnee: —thing. That's not... I don't know. She also says that—I don't like the way this is worded. "I then either go for a dip in the Serpentine, or go home and have a cold shower. It's horrible, but the benefits for fat burning, mental clarity, stress, energy, and immunity are irrefutable."

I would say they are refutable. There have been some studies on, "Does a cold shower actually do anything?" And it's more like anecdotal, and—there are some limited, like, actual research, like, "Does a cold shower help with stuff?"

And I mean, I think it makes people feel more energized, 'cause, like, it's cold.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: But there is—and they showed, like, some effect on brown fat stores with cold showers, but as far as, like, people who take cold showers and then actually documented weight loss and some of these other things, it's just not. And it's certainly not immunity. It's just not.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: The science isn't there. She—moving on, she is also afraid of EMFs—

Justin: No, you can't move on. You can't move on. You can't move on.

Sydnee: What—

Justin: No. You can't move on. I won't allow it. You have to say that she sun stares—

Sydnee: Oh, yeah, she sun stares.

Justin: —because the UV rays aren't harmful to her retinas the first hour after sunrise—

Sydnee: Please—

Justin: "—and it resets my Circadian rhythms and helps me fall asleep later in the day!" Dasha?!

Sydnee: Please don't stare at the sun.

Justin: Dasha, don't stare at the sun! This was 101, easy stuff!

Sydnee: Please don't stare at the sun.

Justin: Nobody!

Sydnee: Um, a lot of the rest of her day is just, like, she eats healthy. I mean, I think that's—

Justin: Good!

Sydnee: You know, that's fine. It's a lot about, like—

Justin: But you stared at the sun, Dasha!

Sydnee: —going to yoga and doing things she enjoys, like live music. I mean, I think there's a lot about this routine I have no criticism for, but there's some issues in the morning. There's some supplements that are probably unnecessary and probably expensive.

And then our last one, similarly, Madeline—she wakes up at 7:00 and she does scrape her tongue with a copper tongue scraper to get rid of toxins.

Justin: Great, good.

Sydnee: Which is not a thing. And then at 8:45 she does some body brushing. We've talked about dry brushing on the show before.

Justin: Have we?

Sydnee: Yeah.

Justin: They did this in, um, Tully, right?

Sydnee: Mm-hmm. There's no evidence for dry brushing, but if you like the way it feels, it probably exfoliates you.

Justin: Sure, yeah, very nice.

Sydnee: That's all—that's all fine. Um, back with the Himalayan salt again. That's part of her breakfast at 10:00 AM. The only other thing I wanted to note is I—a lot of the things she references throughout her daily routine—which, a lot of it is just, like, again, trying to eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water and, you know, laying on a bed of nails at night for acupuncture.

Justin: Oh, sure! Yeah.

Sydnee: Like we all do.

Justin: [quietly] Like we all do.

Sydnee: The only thing I would say is that a lot of—she says a lot of what she learned is from the VIVA, or VIVAMAYR Clinic, which I had to look into to figure out, like, what—what is she talking about? Which is like this—I wouldn't say very expensive, but fairly expensive, like, wellness spa treatment center place.

Justin: It's pretty expensive for a... nothing... fake—

Sydnee: Well, yes.

Justin: —if it were, say, a nothing pointless fake thing, it would be very pricey, I think.

Sydnee: See, it's like a wellness thing where you can go and they'll... [sighs] I mean, I think, like—things like healthy eating are part of it. I do believe they follow the alkaline diet as part of their thing. [laughs quietly] And, like, alkaline water and that kind of stuff.

They do a lot of, like, yoga and massage and things like that, but I think it also veers into, like, supplements and some of this stuff—just—I mean, if you wanna go meditate, I'm sure it's lo—the buildings look lovely. I went to the website. It looks very pretty, but they sell a ton of different, like, medicines—not medicines, supplements and... I'd say that there's, like, stuff that makes you feel good, and then they lead you to thinking it's doing good when maybe it's not, but it sounds

like that a lot of her routine came from there, 'cause otherwise she just—sometimes she's like, "Sometimes I just eat Mexican food or have some pasta." So, I mean, you know. There's a balance.

Justin: Great.

Sydnee: I'd say the takeaway from this article is that, um... everybody can get tricked by this stuff. We can all be taken in. Some of it sounds really convincing. Some of the pseudoscience sounds like science, even though it's not.

Justin: Some of the parts, though, maybe like—if I were just to pick a few at random, staring at the sun is, like, almost kind of bad—that one seems like she shouldn't even have thought that that one is good. It almost seems to me—it doesn't seem to—she should've known better than that one! But the other ones, yeah, for sure. It does prove the point that anybody can be tricked by this stuff, [quietly] except for the sun staring.

Sydnee: I just would hate for people who, like, are actually suffering from health problems or feel unwell or are looking for help with things like anxiety or depression, where they've tried some stuff from traditional medicine and it hasn't helped, would get taken in by some of the things they recommend that are very expensive, and have no evidence behind them, because the pair it.

They pair, like, "Exercise, do some yoga, meditate, take some time for yourself, eat a healthy balanced diet and drink water," good advice. They pair that with a lot of really bad advice!

Justin: Yeah. That's what—and that's where it falls apart for me, is that—and, like, shame on The Times, and a lot of places do the same thing, but it's like, they're presented as, like, "These people are doing whatever it takes to get to the peak of health."

And it's like, well... not... really, 'cause it does seem like a lot of it is nonsense, and maybe even dangerous, because they're looking for benefit—like, they're looking for that extra 5% that just, like, isn't there. I mean, just not there. You know? Like, it's just, like, it's not there.

Sydnee: It's like the myth that you only use 10% of your brain.

Justin: Yes! Right, yes!

Sydnee: It's like that. Like, everybody's trying to use the other 90%. Well, you're using it. It's all there. It's—I mean, it's simpler than you think it is for a lot of people, and for the people who it's not simpler, who actually need medical help, who actually are, you know, dealing with chronic illness that isn't easily treatable, we don't have a treatment that works for it yet, we don't have a cure for it yet, this stuff, I think, it very dangerous. 'Cause it makes it sound like, "Well, look. These people are—they look great, they're healthy, they're successful, their lives are all together—"

Justin: Yeah, that's the frustrating thing about this one, folks. These people are all very, very attractive. [laughs]

Sydnee: [through laughter] They are. And I don't think it's fair to publish an article like this just to make fun of these people, either, 'cause you could read it that way. You know—how many people just read this and were like, "Ughhh..."

Justin: Well, us, for starters.

Sydnee: Well, yeah. But like, that's not fair either. Just... let's just let people live these lives, and encourage everybody else not to. [laughs]

Justin: Except... yeah, I'll—yeah.

Sydnee: I know. It's hard, it's hard. You don't—because—

Justin: Aw, man. We try not to be, like... it's hard because I think we try to overall not be terribly cynical and judgy on this show, but when you see these things being held up as sort of the pinnacles of health, that is—that is frustrating, because it's like you almost have to push back on it. It hits that point. Like, you almost have to say, like, "Actually, you're doing a real thing. You're wasting time and money."

Sydnee: I sympathize. I mean, I, too, find mortality intolerable, so I understand the search for... you know, immortality. I understand it, but I also would only wanna do things that were real and didn't waste money, and I certainly wouldn't wanna encourage other people to waste their time, money, energy, or put theirselves at risk by doing things that are fake.

Justin: Yeah. So, that is our episode for this week. You should find this piece and read it. Just, like, set aside some time to really just, like, dig in, because honestly, we are, like, skipping over lots of stuff. It is, like, buck wild start to finish.

Sydnee: It's the anti-Sawbones.

Justin: It is the anti-Sawbones. Yes, Sydnee, that's true.

Sydnee: Maybe it was forced into the universe because we make this podcast.
[laughs]

Justin: I don't like to think about destiny that way—

Sydnee: It sprouted. [laughs]

Justin: —but I feel like it's probably accurate.

Sydnee: Because of us.

Justin: That is gonna do it for us, folks. Thank you so much for listening to our program. We are going to be back with you next week, but until then, thank you to The Taxpayers for the use of their song Medicines as the intro and outro of our program. Thanks to the Max Fun Network for having us as part of their extended podcasting family, and thanks to you for listening! We will be back again with you next week, but until then, my name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin: And, always, don't drill a hole in your head!

[theme music plays]

Maximumfun.org.
Comedy and Culture.
Artist Owned.
Listener Supported.