

Sawbones 275: The First Pharmacist

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Clint: 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]

[applause]

Justin: Hello, everybody, and welcome to Sawbones, a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your cohost, Justin McElroy.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

[audience cheers]

Justin: Yes. Yes. We all know. We have something more important to discuss. My brother, not three minutes ago...

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: Let me take you back.

Sydnee: We were right there. We saw the whole thing from right there.

Justin: Wait. We saw the whole thing. Let me back up. Today, my family went to The Ruby Slipper Cafe.

[audience cheers]

Justin: I did not. I went and took my daughter, my baby, back for a nap. Because I'm a hero. I ate a lamp-heated sandwich that I bought at a store. That's not important. I come downstairs and I ask— we're going to the aquarium. I don't want to. But we have to, because we go to the aquarium every time. Because we have—

Sydnee: We go anywhere. Not 'cause it's not great. He was just [whispers] kind of tired.

Justin: We go to the aquarium every time, because we have so many children and they delight in the fish. And I'm there, and I think, "I don't want to do this, but I will." And who is missing? My bearded brother. I ask, "Where is he?" And friends, I am here to tell you that despite what he just said, he was upstairs, taking a nap alone in a bed for two hours! So...

[audience boos]

Justin: If you don't listen to Shmanners, he said at the end— or they haven't published that one, he said at the end of Shmanners that he— it's not important. Anyway... I'm just... He lied to you, and I'm so sorry to begin our evening that way, but my brother lied to you.

Sydnee: We're just really jealous, 'cause we haven't slept like that.

Justin: Since...

Sydnee: Uh...

Justin: 2014...

Sydnee: '13?

Justin: '13? Something like that.

Sydnee: '13? Something like that.

Justin: Anyway. That's not why we're here, folks. We're here to talk about—

Sydnee: [laughs] It's not just to dunk on Travis.

Justin: Not just to dunk on Travis, although you know what? I could do 27 minutes of material dunking on Travis.

[audience cheers]

Justin: But no. We have something better to talk about it. Sydnee, what is it?

Sydnee: No. Because we uh— we have gotten to go a lot of fun places since we've been here, and I had a specific destination in mind when I found out we were coming to New Orleans. There was a certain place that I really wanted to go, and that was the Pharmacy Museum.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: I was really excited to get to see it in person. I'd checked it out online and I'd heard about it, some of our listeners had emailed me, saying, "You'd love this place. You should check it out." And so I got to go, and I wanna talk about it.

Justin: That sounded like a story that had a twist, but there was no twist.

Sydnee: No, we just went. We went to it.

Justin: We just— we went to it. And now we're gonna talk about it.

Sydnee: The really cool thing, the history behind the pharmacy museum, is that New Orleans is home to the first licensed pharmacist in The United States of America. The very first one to actually, like, be licensed to be a pharmacist and do what he was doing is from right here.

Which is really cool, because before that, much like being a physician, being a pharmacist in the US in the early 1800s, 1700s, was just like, you just said you were.

Justin: "Hey, I've got some pills that I don't need!"

Sydnee: "I made these! Do you want them?"

Justin: "I made these! I've got pills. Do you want 'em, for money?"

Sydnee: You may have certainly studied. Certainly, there was a wide variety of training backgrounds. There were some that actually studied and learned about different medicines of the day. Some of those were actual medicines; many were not.

Justin: Some were cocaine.

Sydnee: Well, a lot were cocaine. Like, half. Uh, and you probably did some apprenticeship, but it was really easy, and—

Justin: Did you say apprenticeship?

Sydnee: Apprenticeship.

Justin: Thank you. Okay. I thought we had introduced cursing for the first time on Sawbones, and I didn't know why you got so blue. Some apprentice...

Sydnee: Dookie.

Justin: Dookie. Some apprentice dookie.

Sydnee: [laughs] Sorry, apprentice dookie...

[audience laughs, cheers]

Sydnee: It's funny. It's a funny word.

Justin: Okay.

Sydnee: You may have just been from a family of apothecaries, and you were just like, "Well, I'm part of that family business. I do this now. I make

pills and I give them to people and I tell people what they should take as medicine," because that was part of the job of a pharmacist.

In 1804, Louisiana became the first state to pass a law that said, "You know what? We should probably try to standardize this. We should regulate it, and say, like, there is something— there is a bar that you have to meet to be a pharmacist." And in the state, it was a three-hour exam that was administered by pharmacists and physicians. So you had to answer a series of questions. And if you passed it, then you could be a licensed pharmacist.

So it was actually— it's funny. That was passed in 1804. It would be a while before anybody actually took and passed the exam.

Justin: You think they had a bit where they were like, "We made this too hard"?

Sydnee: Well, I imagine for a while, nobody bothered.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: Because it was still like, if you had your store and people came to it, and you were like, "I'm unlicensed, but look at all my opium pills..."

Justin: In fact, the first person to get licensed kinda ruined it for everybody else, right? If all of us are unlicensed, then we're all pharmacists.

Sydnee: There we go. You ever thought about that? That's deep.

Justin: You ever think? Ooh, man, that is deep, isn't it?

Sydnee: Maybe we're all pharmacists.

Justin: Hmm.

Sydnee: We're not.

Justin: No.

Sydnee: We're not.

Uh, so Louis Dufilho, Jr. is who we're gonna talk about. He was born in France in 1788. He was the son of Jean Dufilho and Jeanne Marie Bonnet, and they moved the whole family to New Orleans around 1800. And he came from a family of pharmacists as well. His brother was a pharmacist and his dad was a pharmacist. But he was the first one, in 1816, after he went to the college of pharmacy back in France, he came back over and sat for the exam and in 1816, he became the first one to pass an exam and say, "I am actually a pharmacist." So as of 1816, the US had their first actual, licensed pharmacist.

Um, he started a business at first with his brother and then he eventually opened his pharmacy, which is what is now the Pharmacy Museum that you can still go visit, if you'd like to. I would highly recommend it, if you haven't been there. If you live here, and you haven't been here, what are you doing? Go there.

Justin: Yeah. It's like...

Sydnee: Go check it out.

Justin: It's like three dollars.

Sydnee: No, it was five. But...

Justin: Six? It might've been six. I don't know.

Sydnee: No, it was five.

Justin: It was less than seven. We can all agree on that.

Sydnee: It was five, and it was well worth it! And our kids were free.

Justin: You can't beat that. Why are we doing an ad?

Sydnee: I actually looked it up—

Justin: We had a Groupon going, if you wanna get there for \$4.50.

Sydnee: Well, I looked it up ahead of time 'cause we've got little kids, and I was like, "This is cool for kids, right?"

And they were basically like, "We welcome children. You're totally allowed to bring your kids. It may freak them out, so if that bothers you, don't."

And I was like, "Well, that's fine."

Justin: "Also, we have one million small glass bottles. They're not the kind of kids that break small glass things, right? Because those, we're not crazy about. So if you got the kind that don't love to smash small things—" I spend a lot of time in the patio.

Sydnee: Just like, "Don't touch anything. Anything."

So at this point in history, as I kind of eluded to, a pharmacist was more than what you think of as, like, the person who you go to and they can administer the— like, if you think of a commercial pharmacist, somebody who you would go to a pharmacy and get your medicine from, and they can kind of advise you on it, tell you some of the side effects, what to take and not to do and that kind of thing. A pharmacist at the time would also be diagnosing and maybe even treating illness in a way that we don't traditionally think of pharmacists as doing.

And so you would go to his pharmacy and tell him, like, "I got these symptoms. I don't know what's going on." And you wouldn't have necessarily been to a physician or anything.

And he would tell you, "Hey, you should take this or that." He was also making the medicines, which most of the time is not done, like, at Walmart. [laughs] They're not, like, making the pills back there, I don't— I don't think...

Justin: Don't look at me. I'm an unlicensed pharmacist.

Sydnee: And this was a really exciting time. When he opened his pharmacy, this was a really exciting time in history to be running a pharmacy. Because medicine was changing in that we had just kind of started to understand the germ theory of disease, that we pass germs from person to person and that was responsible for a lot of illness. It wasn't necessarily, like, clouds of bad air. So— [laughs]

Justin: Wasn't necessarily clouds of bad air, you say.

Sydnee: Which was still— it was still a huge battle between doctors at the moment. The miasma theory is that just that, like, disease happens because things smell bad and then you get sick.

Justin: Yes.

Sydnee: Or is it because there are germs? And so this was a really exciting time to be practicing medicine, which a pharmacist would've been doing, essentially, practicing medicine. Um, anesthesia was a new thing. New Orleans was the fastest growing city in the US at this point, so there were tons of people coming in.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: Yeah!

Justin: This was over 100 years ago, guys. Calm down.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee: And along with all these people also came yellow fever, which is not as—

[audience cheers]

Justin: What?

Sydnee: Why are you excited about that?

Justin: What's wrong with you? You act like you were watching a Mighty Ducks remake and Emilio Estevez just showed up. "It's him! Coach Bombay, he's in it! He wasn't in the press tour or anything. I can't believe it. How'd they hide this? Love that fool! Coach Bombay. Quack, quack, quack. Love that guy."

Sydnee: So yellow fever... [laughs] Which—

[audience cheers]

Justin: No! No! Stop it!

Sydnee: Fan favorite, yellow fever...

Justin: We've broken you people.

[audience cheers]

Audience member: Yes!

Sydnee: I know!

Justin: [laughs]

Sydnee: I'm not gonna say anything as good as yellow fever. Everybody have a round of applause. That's it. Just straight up. There we go.

Justin: Finally, something got a louder cheer than "Sydnee," and it's yellow fever.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: So it would cause periodic epidemics in the city, and people would get really sick and sometimes they died.

Justin: Oh, no, there's a twist.

[scattered audience cheering]

Sydnee: Are we still cheering?

Justin: All right, let's lower the rowdiness a little bit, 'cause there's somebody in here with yellow fever that's like, single tear, like, "I can't believe this."

Sydnee: There were a lot of names for yellow fever. My favorite— I was gonna mention 'em all, but I just wanted to mention my favorite, was The Saffron Scourge. One of my favorite of 'em.

But it's spread by mosquitoes and it would cause periodic epidemics, and everybody was trying to figure out what should we do about it. Um, Dufilho was interesting in that he was one of the people recommending quinine, which is good for malaria. Is not necessarily, but this was a more science-based approach than we had seen so far. Like, you have a fever. This is good for other fevers. That was closer.

Especially when you consider that a lot of the other treatments that people were trying for yellow fever at the time were, "Let's shoot some cannons off."

[scattered audience cheering]

Justin: Cool.

Sydnee: The city tried that a lot. Uh, burn barrels of tar. Um...

Justin: What was the rationale there?

Sydnee: That it would— the bad air would go away. With all the tar...

Justin: The stinky, tar air would push out the yellow fever air.

Sydnee: Which was similar to, like, the cannons thing. Also, maybe they're loud.

Justin: They should fire the cannons into the tar and get this party started.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: I liked— a lot of the treatments would depend on, like, just what doctor/pharmacist you happened to talk to. And so some of them were like, "What you need is you need bloodletting, so I'm gonna cut you and bleed you or put some leeches on you. I'm gonna give you mercury. This is gonna be terrible, but I'm gonna save your life."

And then a different doctor might say, "You need some champagne and oysters."

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: "That's all you need. It's fine."

I think the easiest was just like, "I don't know. Go lay in bed and pray a lot. Fingers crossed."

Justin: [whispering] We still try that one.

Sydnee: It's interesting, because like, they compared all these different methods. Because a lot of them, too, would depend on like, where some of the doctors immigrated from. Like, German doctors did a certain thing and French doctors did a certain thing and they compared, like, who did the best. And it was— I mean, nothing really ma— nobody was doing anything that helped. [laughs] So... everybody came out the same. Everybody's odds were pretty much equal.

So I would go with the champagne and oyster one, if it were me.

Justin: Yeah, I mean, all things being equal...

Sydnee: Were it I.

So in the day, as I mentioned, pharmacists were making their own meds. They would mix them from plants, or minerals, or even insects, whatever. They would make their pills. They would make injectable ingredients and

things you could— and then give you the hypodermic needles, stuff that you could inject. They have the— if you go to the museum, you'll see these, the big bottles that are filled with multicolored fluids and liquids and things. And they were called snow globes. Not like we think about them. Not like snow globes.

Justin: Yeah, I know. They weren't literal snow globes.

Sydnee: No. But they would, like, be used to attract people in, 'cause you'd look and go, "Wow. Look at that giant bottle, full of multicolored medicine."

Justin: "I gotta get me some of that!"

Sydnee: [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin: It's the tide pods of their day, right?

Sydnee: More or less.

Justin: "So colorful. You know what? I would love some medicine! Hey, honey, let's stop in."

Sydnee: I love that humans work that way. "That's so colorful. I gotta go in and get some medicine from that guy."

Justin: That's how barber poles work, right? "Man, that pole is colorful as heck. I gotta get some blood out of me."

Sydnee: These were reminiscent of barber poles. This was the idea.

Justin: That's awesome.

Sydnee: It was the same— actually the same principle of a barber pole. It was like, "Here's a multicolored thing in the window, to go, 'Oh, look!'"

Justin: Humans are rad.

Sydnee: "I like the colors. I'll get some medicine."

Uh, so Dufilho himself was not content to just operate his pharmacy and take care of people that way. He also joined the Howard Association, which was sort of if you think of like a precursor to what the Red Cross is. Same kind of idea. It was an association of like doctors and nurses and social workers and then just good people who got together and would go take care of people in their home and spent— he spent a lot of time volunteering his time and taking care of people.

So he was a really good guy. And he donated a lot of money back, and really like, used his position as the first licensed pharmacist in the US to go a lot of good for the community.

If you hear about the pharmacy, as I was reading about it and learning about the history, you're always gonna like— at the end, they wanna tack on, like, "And also it's haunted."

[scattered audience cheering]

Justin: You gotta think about it, though. Run the stats, folks. That's a lot of old-timey medical stuff. There's gonna be some ghosts in there. I mean... ghosts are gonna get in there.

Sydnee: I don't like to dwell on that. Because it's supposedly haunted by the guy that he sold it to, so not Dufilho or his family, 'cause he actually— the pharmacy was downstairs, and then him and his family lived in the apartment upstairs. It's actually haunted by the guy who he sold it to, who was a pharmacist and kind—

Justin: It's not actually haunt—

Sydnee: No. I'm not saying it's haunted; I'm saying this is the—

Justin: Supposedly haunted.

Sydnee: Supposedly. Allegedly haunted.

Justin: There we go. Weird twist for Sawbones. Very hard on fake medicine, very easy on ghosts.

Sydnee: I'm still just a doctor. I have absolutely no expertise in that arena. I'm not saying it's haunted.

Justin: Not saying it's not.

Sydnee: No. I'm just saying that the story goes that Dupas, who bought it from Dufilho, actually is the one who haunts the place now. And he was into some shady business. But I'm not gonna dwell on the ghosts. I wanna focus on what the museum is and some of the neat stuff, 'cause we got to go there.

Justin: Yes.

Sydnee: And if you haven't been, you really should check it out. Like I said, it's two floors and the bottom was where he actually operated and, like, sold all of the medicines and you can see all that stuff. And then the top floor, which also has a bunch of the medicines and stuff from the day, was originally where they lived.

Justin: It's very— it's, like, incredibly— I don't think I've ever seen a museum like this that is so dense with stuff. Like, literally every inch of this place is like... I kept calling Sydnee over, like, "Syd, Syd, Syd, you gotta see. They gotta... Look at this wild," you know, "breast pump or what-have-you. It's crazy. You gotta see it."

Sydnee: It was great. We brought our kids, and Charlie walked over to a picture, and went, "Is that a gummy worm?"

And I said, "No. That's a leech."

And she said, "Well, what's that?"

And I was like, "Not candy."

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: And then she was done, I think, at that point.

Justin: Yeah. And then she went out.

Sydnee: She was done. She said, "Can I go outside?"

Justin: They have a fountain in the— "Can I get outside? If it's not gummy worms, I'm actually gonna go play in that fountain." It's like...

Sydnee: "I don't know what Mommy's into, but I'm not into it."

They have a— there's a wonderful courtyard, which would've been used at the time, most likely, to grow herbs and things for the medicines that Dufilho was making inside. So that whole courtyard would've been like a garden to— and that would've been pretty typical, for a pharmacy of the era to have your own little herb garden to grow all the medicines that you were gonna sell.

Um, some of my favorite things. So first of all, there's a letter from a druggist of the era, like, announcing. It was another druggist than Dufilho, but just kind of to give you a flavor of what would've happened when a new pharmacy opened, announcing to the public, like, "I'm opening a pharmacy, and at my pharmacy I will be selling uh, drugs, chemicals, patent medicines, toilet articles, stationery, cigars, and soda water."

[audience laughs]

Justin: So everything. His name was Cedric Vesuvius Sinclair.

[pause]

Sydnee: CVS.

Justin: Thank you.

[audience cheers, laughs]

Justin: It's not a big deal.

Sydnee: That's where that joke was going.

Justin: I hope you all liked that one, 'cause it's not in the recorded version of the podcast.

Sydnee: [laughs]

Justin: That one ain't gon' make the MP3.

It probably did. If you're hearing me say that, that wasn't an error. I liked it, and I edit the show, so now it's in there.

[audience cheers]

Justin: His name was Bill Walgreens. So I'll just cut that in. That's the magic of editing, folks. His initials were CVS.

Sydnee: You can keep sayin' it, but it's not landing any better.

Justin: It's a creeper. It creeps up on you. [laughs] You're gonna be drivin' home, like, "Oh, CVS. Okay. Nice. Like the pharmacy. Nice!"

[theme music plays]

Justin: This was fun. I remember doing this. This was a fun one. This one, I like.

Hey, it's Justin McElroy. I hope you're enjoying this episode as much as I am, listening to it back. I listen to it at half speed, so I can really enjoy uh, all the great humor and education. That's just my thing, though. You don't have to do it. Three quarters speed is fine, honestly.

Uh, I wanna tell you about Stitch Fix. It's an online personal styling service that finds and delivers clothes, shoes and accessories to fit— you know what, I'm gonna— I could feed ya a bunch of crud about a bunch of lingo that you're not aware of, but let me just tell you this.

You send 'em your sizes, you send 'em your style, you send 'em your budget, and you're gonna work with a stylist that is going to come up with some outfits and looks and accessories and shoes and clothes, whatever, that fits you. And they'll mail you a big box. You try on all the stuff. You keep all the stuff you like, and the other stuff you throw back in a prepaid envelope that goes right back to them, shipping, exchanges, returns always free.

And the longer you're with them, the more they learn about the kind of stuff that you'll like. We're a big fan of Stitch Fix in this house, and I think you will be, too.

Get started now at [StitchFix.com/Sawbones](https://www.stitchfix.com/Sawbones), and you'll get an extra 25 percent off when you keep all the items in your box. That's [StitchFix.com/Sawbones](https://www.stitchfix.com/Sawbones) to get started today!

It has been a lovely few weeks at the McElroy household, in part because Sydnee has gotten some new Warby Parker glasses. It's such a lot of fun with Warby Parker to pick out the styles that uh, you think you'll like and then bring 'em home and try them all on.

The glasses all start at \$95, including prescription lenses. The lenses include anti-glare and anti-scratch coatings. The blue light filtering lenses are also available, which is great for eye strain and stuff like that.

For every pair of glasses sold, Warby Parker distributes a pair to someone in need. And if you got an iPhone X, there's even an app where you can use a brand-new virtual try-on, and lets you see how you look ahead of time.

The glasses are lovely. Sydnee got a couple new pairs that are both really cool and stylish and she loves them and comfortable and improve her vision to a— just basically the baseline of what everybody else is kind of working with. But still an improvement.

There's a free home try-on program, which I mentioned. You can order five pairs of glasses, try 'em for five days, and there's no obligation to buy. It ships free and it's got a prepaid return shipping label. It doesn't get much easier than this, folks. Go to WarbyParker.com/Sawbones to order your free home try-ons today.

And now, my friends, thank you for your patience. I am happy to bring you back to the show.

[audience cheering]

Sydnee: So what's neat is it's really cool to go there and see... "Medicine of the Day" was a mixture. 'Cause as I said, this was like a crossroads where there were people trying to push for scientific basis of medicine, like of diagnosis and treatment and what are we doing and why are we doing it, let's all do the same thing, let's not just keep giving, you know, opium because it makes our patients feel good; let's try to do science.

And at the same time, it was still a business. And people were still trying to make money and get people to come back. And so they are also selling things that don't work, but are very popular at the time. So if you go, you'll find this whole mixture of like, medicines and like I said, the big jars with different liquids in them, you'll see the opium and cocaine and marijuana and tobacco and all those things. There's a soda fountain, because it was very common. Soda at the time was used as a medicinal beverage, various sodas. So there's a soda fountain, where you can go get medicine.

But you'll also find things like voodoo charms and gris-gris kind of things, like amulets to protect you, that were also sold in that same pharmacy alongside, like, some sort of ampoule of medicine or hypodermic syringe full of medicine. So it was a really neat time.

There's also all kinds of equipment you can see, like tools of the era that would've been used, like a trephination drill.

Justin: That's awesome.

Sydnee: You know, to drill a hole in your head, which we tell you not to do.

Justin: Yeah. But if you ever want to do it, now you know where you can pick one up.

Sydnee: There is one there.

Justin: No big deal. They won't let you use it.

Sydnee: A lot of the things I had heard of before, as I was wandering through the museum, but one thing that I found that I thought was really interesting I'd never heard of, they have a collection of pills that are coated in gold or silver. And I was aware— we've talked about on the show before that both gold and silver have been used as medicine in various forms for different things through the ages, but that's not what these pills are for. This is for the aesthetic quality of coating your pills in gold or silver. So they were specifically aimed at, like, the wealthy clientele to say, like, "I know those aspirin look good, but would you like them in gold?"

So you could upcharge rich people by coating their medicine in gold or silver, and they would be more likely to take them. The thing about it is that the gold and silver— I mean, they're not doing anything. You're not digesting it. You're not breaking it down. So there's a chance that these pills are not actually being absorbed in any way. [laughs]

Justin: Great.

Sydnee: So whenever you coat it in gold or silver, I mean, let's be honest. It probably didn't work anyway, just based on the time.

Justin: Right. 'Cause it was probably dust and cocaine.

Sydnee: But even that you probably weren't absorbing, because it was coated in the gold and silver.

Justin: Oh, no.

Sydnee: I guess you would see that, though, when it came out the other end.

Justin: "Hey, is that that pill? What the heck?"

Sydnee: And it would be a very impressive bowel movement the next day.
[laughs]

Justin: A very impressive bowel movement.

[audience laughs, cheers]

Sydnee: [laughing] I hope that was on the bottle.

Justin: "When you don't want to get better, but do want a very impressive bowel movement, reach for..."

Sydnee: We've done a show before, we've talked a lot on the show about the concept of hysteria, which was this— I mean, it was a fake disease that often women were labeled with because they weren't behaving in a way that society wanted them to behave at that time in history.

But I specifically— I was interested on a section I saw about hysteria of the nose and throat, because I've never heard of it as like, hysteria of a body part. It's usually, like, that person is hysterical. So give them opium, that's usually what you do. Just give 'em opium.

Uh, but this was specifically aimed at hysteria of the nose and throat, and it was this whole description from a doctor from the 1800s, saying, "Now, sometimes," and again, it was aimed at a woman, "sometimes a woman will say she's lost her sense of smell. And I don't believe her. So I think it's hysteria of the nose. Her nose is hysterical."

And what he proposes is...

Justin: No, wait, before Sydnee finishes. If you're a dude in the room, take my advice. Remain perfectly still until this section is completed. Make no

movements or facial expressions or say anything. Remain perfectly still! All right. Sydnee, continue.

Sydnee: What he goes on to propose is that it would go away on its own, but what he would do is a fake sort of operation to make her think he did something and then it will definitely go away, 'cause you've tricked her.

Justin: That's outrageous!

[audience laughs, cheers]

Sydnee: Uh, another display that I've found was also very popular on the internet, as I was researching the museum before I actually got to see it in person, and I did get to see it in person, are Dr. Young's self-retaining rectal dilators.

[audience laughs, cheers]

Justin: I missed those.

Sydnee: They're exactly what you think they are.

Justin: [laughs] I mean, they're butt plugs?

Sydnee: I... They look like butt plugs.

Justin: They're butt plugs.

Sydnee: I mean, they're...

Justin: They're butt plugs, folks.

Sydnee: Old-timey butt plugs.

Justin: A butt plug by any other name would smell...

[pause]

Sydnee: No, no, no.

Justin: We shan't. We shan't.

Sydnee: I liked, though, that they...

Justin: "Not bad language, but challenging ideas. Sawbones."

Sydnee: [laughing] That's a good description. That's probably somewhere in our iTunes reviews.

Justin: [laughs] "I would prefer they cursed, honestly. I would rather they cursed."

Sydnee: But I liked specifically— so these rectal dilators, I looked, like, "What were these for, exactly?"

And on the display, it says, "They are for the permanent cure of piles," that would've been hemorrhoids, "constipation, nervousness, dyspepsia, sick-headache, neuralgia, rheumatism, insomnia, asthma, indigestion, eczema, all disease caused by sluggish circulation, malnutrition, defective elimination, and the use of cathartic drugs."

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: All of that can be solved...

Justin: Hey, beloveds. If you want a cure-all, try honey, huh? Maybe honey would be better than that.

Sydnee: Uh, I did— I appreciated there was a section on homeopathy. We talk a lot about homeopathic cures on Sawbones, because they don't—

Justin: You forgot to do the air quotes.

Sydnee: They don't work.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: In case you're not familiar, homeopathy is when you take something and you put it in some water, and then you take a drop of that and put it in some water, and then you take a drop of that and put it in some water, and you take a drop of that and put it in some water, and eventually...

Justin: And then you sell it at Walmart for \$8.

Sydnee: ...you have a bottle of water.

Justin: Yeah.

Sydnee: But it has other words on it. And then you sell it to people. Um, so it doesn't work, but there is this plaque kind of commemorating homeopathy in New Orleans, and the first homeopathic doctor was a Dr. Taft, who came in 1853 and made a ton of money selling homeopathic things. Treatments, cures, whatever word you wanna use. Homeopathic things. For a year, and then died. [laughs] But in that year, he made a ton of money!

Justin: And what did he die of?

Sydnee: It was during the yellow fever epidemic, so I'm...

[audience cheers loudly]

Justin: Fan favorite yellow fever!

Sydnee: Anyway, homeopathy. [laughs] My favorite part is there's this whole— there's the story of homeopathy. And then they get into that there was another doctor who started proposing dosimetric granules, which were like very tiny little amounts of plants, but he was like, "It's better than homeopathy, because there's actually plant material in this tiny granule that I'm gonna give you. It's still very small. There's no way it does anything. But it's not water, so it's better."

And he described homeopathy— this was my favorite description ever of homeopathy. "It is throwing a milligram of a substance somewhere in the Seine, at the place where the river enters Paris, and drinking a few drops of that same water where it comes out."

Justin: [laughs]

Sydnee: That's homeopathy.

Justin: Or bottling that and selling it at Walmart. Again, it's right there.

Sydnee: In addition, some other— what I like to think of as fun things, and then as I was listing my fun things from the museum that I would recommend, I thought, "I have— this— I'm strange."

Uh, there's also some great metal catheters; if you wanna see of a time when we would catheterize your bladder with a metal tube, you can see those. There's a giant leeches jar. I don't think there are leeches in it now.

Justin: There aren't; I looked.

Sydnee: But I did— you did?

Justin: I did. That's right before I left to go to the courtyard. Remember when you excused me to the patio? You told the kids to take me out to the patio?

Sydnee: There's Hadacol...

Justin: Oh, we were stoked to see Hadacol. They had a whole plaque about Coozan Dudley LeBlanc, and I was so stoked to see real Hadacol in the flesh.

Sydnee: One of our favorite patent medicines.

Justin: One of our favorite patent medicines. Everybody's got their favorite patent medicine, and ours— one of ours is Hadacol.

Sydnee: Along with Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for female weakness.

Justin: That's like our number two.

Sydnee: Uh, there—

Justin: There should be an all-girl punk band called Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for Female Weakness.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee: Uh, and then my other favorite, there was a breast pump from 1870. I just personally appreciated this, as someone who has used a breast pump many, many times in my life. This breast pump was essentially— it was— I mean, it's not painful. It was almost like a syringe pump with this very small collecting thing at the end and you would just pump. Sort of like a trombone kind of a... [laughs] To use the suction to get very small amounts of breast milk that couldn't possibly...

Justin: It was so small that I assume you had your baby there, like, "Go ahead. Drink up, pal. All right. Clean it out."

Sydnee: But if you haven't checked it out, you should really go check out the pharmacy museum. You can get information, PharmacyMuseum.org. You can get information about their times and prices and all that kind of stuff. But I would really recommend it, 'cause it was amazing to see all this stuff. It's a wonderful collection, so...

Justin: It's right here in New Orleans, so... Good job, New Orleans!

[audience cheers]

Justin: And uh, good job for having us here. We've had such a good time. You have no idea. It's been such a blast. And you all have been so fun, too. So thank you to the uh, The Orpheum Theater for having us, and thank you to Paul, and thank you to The Taxpayers for the use of our song, Medicines, as the intro and outro of our program.

Sydnee: And thank you to yellow fever for getting the biggest cheer of the night!

[audience cheers]

Justin: Anyway, that's gonna do it for us. Until next time. My name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee: I'm Sydnee McElroy.

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

[theme music plays]

[Chord]

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