

Sawbones Ep 23: Mr. Reich's Sexbox

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Justin:

Hey folks, uh, Justin McElroy here. Listen, just wanna warn you ahead of time, while, uh, this week's show will still be free of profanity as you've come to, uh, uh, expect from us, we do get into some, uh, uh, adult topics. So, uh, if you're listening with the kids, you might wanna make sure that they're comfortable with that, I guess.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

I don't know what your relationship is like with your kids.

Sydnee:

I'd have that whole birds and the bees talk with them before listening to this episode if I were you.

Justin:

Just do go ahead and knock that out, thanks.

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 song Medicines by The Taxpayers plays]

Justin:

Hello everybody, and welcome to *Sawbones* A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine. I am your co-host, Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

It's the holiday season [inaudible 00:01:47]. It's the holiday season.

Sydnee:

Holiday season.

Justin:

It's a Hickory dick-

Sydnee:

Hickory-

Justin:

...and hickory dock.

Sydnee:

Hickory dock. Dick dock.

Justin:

Don't forget to hang up your smock, Syd.

Sydnee:

Hang up your socks.

Justin:

Hang up your socks, Syd.

Sydnee:

Hang up your stocks.

Justin:

Hang up your stocks.

Sydnee:

Don't get caught in the stocks.

Justin:

Uh, Sydnee, it's-

Sydnee:

I don't know this song clearly.

Justin:

It's the holiday season. Um, I, of course started my shopping as, as is my, as my `ush uh, in, in October, but I'm still needing a few more things to fill out your stocking.

Sydnee:

Ah, well, honey, actually, I was really hoping for a sex box this year.

Justin:

Oh, yeah. Well, I mean, I already have the new Xbox. Uh, but I mean, I guess I can get a second one.

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

I never thought you were that into games.

Sydnee:

No, no, not, not an Xbox, a sex box.

Justin:

A s- a sex box?

Sydnee:

I was really hoping to like-

Justin:

Is that on Amazon or... ?

Sydnee:

...to capture like my, my orgasmic potency.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

You know, my orgone energy. Um, I don't really feel like I've got a good handle on it. So, um, I, I really need a sex box or an orgone accumulator, sorry.

Justin:

Don't-

Sydnee:

Of course, that's probably the name you know them by.

Justin:

Uh, don't beat yourself up. Time has proven that I don't have that great of a handle on your orgastic energy either, so we're at least in the same boat on, on that front.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Marriage humor.

Justin:

Marriage humor. Sydney, what's a sex box? Like what, what do you even saying?

Sydnee:

Well, to understand what a sex box is, I think, I think we're gonna have to-

Justin:

I mean, I understand what a sex box is.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

I don't want the- I don't want people out there thinking, I don't know about some cool sex thing, because it sounds like a cool sort of like sex thing.

Sydnee:

Right.

Justin:

So, I just want you to tell the people at home what it is, 'cause I know already.

Sydnee:

Right. You instantly thought it was an Xbox, like a video game machine.

Justin:

That's just a little cool guy humor that we use to throw off of the plebes.

Sydnee:

That's what you call it, right? A video game machine?

Justin:

A video game contraption, actually, is what I prefer.

Sydnee:

Oh okay.

Justin:

Okay. Syd, sex box.

Sydnee:

Okay. If I'm going to explain what a sex box is, I'm probably gonna have to, to treat you to a little biography.

Justin:

I'm ready.

Sydnee:

This is, this will be your oral biography for the day.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Uh, I'm going to tell you about a guy named Wilhelm Reich.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So clearly, you know all about him already, so I'll just skip to the-

Justin:

No, I don't. I'm not that much of a cool guy. I will admit I don't know about Wilhelm Reich. He sounds German though

Sydnee:

Austrian, but close. Right?

Justin:

I can handle that. I can live with Austrian.

Sydnee:

So, he was an Austrian born in 1897. Uh, to be fair, he was raised to speak only German, so there's that. Okay. And, um-

Justin:

So, I was right.

Sydnee:

This guy's gonna grow up to be a psychiatrist, and I'm going to tell you a lot of weird stuff about that. Um, but it's important to know that early on, we're gonna go, and we're gonna go in or chronological order here. Early on, um, he had an interest in sex. This is something-

Justin:

How, how early we talking?

Sydnee:

Uh, like he started visiting brothels when he was 15.

Justin:

Cool. That's a cool kid.

Sydnee:

Yeah. He, um, he masturbated daily. He liked to watch animals have sex. And he was, uh, upper class and so he had sex with all of his servants as well.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, he actually also-

Justin:

Where did he find animals having sex? That's not, so I, I would like-

Sydnee:

The woods?

Justin:

Okay. I have to think that if you and anyone in their day-to-day life. I'm not gonna say anyone. 90% of people, their day-to-day life come across animals having sex, they are not going to immediately, like, avert their gaze. I think they will at least take a moment just to be like, "Well that's crazy. Those animals are having sex."

Sydnee:

Well, I, I'm assuming he, like, actively sought out animals that were having sex.

Justin:

Hey, you got any lot, you got any, uh, good tips on where I can find some animals having sex? I'm a stranger in town. I'm 15.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Maybe, maybe in Austria, that happens all over the place.

Justin:

Where can a kid go to watch two beavers do it?

Sydnee:

Animals having sex all over.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, he actually, um, when he was a kid, also, would watch his mother have sex with his tutor. His mother was having an affair with his tutor, and he would sneak up and watch that.

Justin:

That's just sloppy affairing.

Sydnee:

Yeah. That he... That was actually the subject of the first case report he would ever write later on as a physician about a case of breaching the incest taboo when he was watching his mom have sex.

Justin:

Gross. Gross start. Uh, Wilhelm, I hope it gets better. We should also, uh, thank, uh, Ross and Ellen for, um-

Sydnee:

Yeah. Thank you, Ross and Ellen, that you are the... You inspired this episode and our, our research into the very strange and kind of gross, Wilhelm Reich.

Justin:

If you wanna, uh, suggest topic you can email at sawbones@maximumfund.org. Sorry, Sydnee go right ahead.

Sydnee:

So he... So the, as we go into his medical career, it starts out pretty benign. He served in the Army, and then he started studying medicine. And you know, that's probably what a doctor should start out doing. Uh-

Justin:

It's a v- very good place to start.

Sydnee:

It's, it's, it's yeah, it's a great, great entry into the, into the medical world. Um, you know, all doctors have to choose their specialty and it's not uncommon for them to find a mentor of such that, that, you know, or such that would, um, help guide them, uh, in, in what specialty they would choose. And he met Freud, Sigmund Freud in 1919. And they became close friends and that inspired him to go into, you know, psychoanalysis and psychiatry. Freud actually even let him start seeing patients for psychoanalysis even before he had finished medical school.

Justin:

So he must have been pretty on point, I mean, if he could get basically an internship with Freud.

Sydnee:

Well, I mean, he was on point in the sense that Freud really liked him.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So which, I mean, let's, let's be fair.

Justin:

I don't know how good of a judge of character Freud was.

Sydnee:

He's a little bit of a weirdo too.

Justin:

It's kind of weird.

Sydnee:

No offense, some great ideas. Little, little weird.

Justin:

Especially, back then. Right?

Sydnee:

Little weird.

Justin:

Did everyone think he was a weirdo?

Sydnee:

Uh, no. At the time, I mean, he was pretty well respected, I think.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And so, him endorsing Wilhelm Reich gave him a lot of credibility. Um, when he finished, uh, s- school, he joined the Vienna Psychoanalytics Association. And he actually, um, rented a house down the street from Freud and would just see patients out of that house.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And that's when things-

Justin:

This is getting a little single white female for my taste.

Sydnee:

Well, this is-

Justin:

Freud, funny running into you. Gosh, we keep. Yeah, I know. Well, you wait for me at mailbox area. What do you want?

Sydnee:

Is that your favorite bakery? That's my favorite bakery!

Justin:

It's my... It's the only one in town, Wilhelm. This is weird. You're weirding me out and I'm Freud so that's saying something.

Sydnee:

[inaudible 00:08:20] Vienna. I bet there were a lot of bakeries.

Justin:

Sydnee, what have we talked about interrupting the flow?

Sydnee:

Sorry, Justin. So this is... Okay. This is when things started to go a little awry. Because unlike a- as far as I know, this is not true of Sigmund Freud. Uh, Wilhelm Reich started having sex with his patients.

Justin:

Not like a great therapeutic relationship.

Sydnee:

No, absolutely not recommended. Um, it's actually one of the few things that I definitely have to teach in my medical school curriculum.

Justin:

To like don't.

Sydnee:

I am, I am required to teach my medical students not to have sex with their patients. I have to explicitly say that.

Justin:

I bet that's a short lesson though. I mean, just don't do that.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I pretty much just in the middle of another lecture, say, Oh, and by the way, don't have sex with your patients. Now you've been told.

Justin:

Moving on.

Sydnee:

Moving on to the less obvious topics.

Justin:

I would love to meet the guy, the, the one, because you know that policy has to be, uh, instituted, because some guy at some point was like, "What?"

Sydnee:

They didn't tell me not to.

Justin:

Nobody told me not to!

Sydnee:

That's, that's why all these policies are instituted.

Justin:

Yeah. Right.

Sydnee:

Um, so he, he was continuing to see patients. He was having sex with some of his patients. Um, he made the mistake or I don't know maybe it was the, the lucky. Maybe not a mistake, whatever. The serendipitous action of, uh, seeing a patient named Annie Pink, who he had an affair with and then was forced to marry by her father. So interestingly enough, she became a psychoanalyst as well, and they had two kids, both of whom became doctors. This should have turned his life around. Don't you think?

Justin:

You would think that that seems like, Okay, enough of being weird.

Sydnee:

But see the thing is, he wasn't satisfied with just practicing his little family of psychoanalysts on in the Freud, you know, tradition. He wanted to kind of, you know, strike out on his own with his own theories. So he developed the concept of what's called character armor.

Justin:

Character armor? Okay, like armor class like in Dungeons and Dragons. You have a plus three to your goblin defense. Character armor.

Sydnee:

I don't know what any of that means.

Justin:

Okay. That's great, great.

Sydnee:

Your character armor-

Justin:

You're really respecting the flow, and I, I gotta get that out [laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughing] Oh you want me to pretend to like you're-

Justin:

Just pretend to like Dungeons and Dragons for once.

Sydnee:

Your dice games? I don't know.

Justin:

Dice Game. We're not shooting craps-

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

...with, with Slim Ricky down in the, the alley.

Sydnee:

You're right. It's much cooler. You're hanging out with Dungeon Master Joe down in the basement.

Justin:

Um, that's a stereotype. You can play Dungeons and Dragons anywhere [crosstalk 00:10:48].

Sydnee:

[laughing] I mean, it could be the attic.

Justin:

It has to be below ground. That could be a den.

Sydnee:

Your parents' living room.

Justin:

Our rumpus room. [laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, no character armor. So basically, it was the idea that if you looked at, uh, the expressions and the mannerisms of a person, and kind of the way they hold their physical body, the way their posture, their gait, that, um, you could read into their, like, uh, neuroses and their defense mechanisms and that kind of thing.

Justin:

So you're talking about literally the, the way they carry themselves.

Sydnee:

Yes. Like, their armor is their physical self and it displays their character.

Justin:

That's not that far off, right? I mean, like, there's some truth to that for some extreme cases. Right?

Sydnee:

Well, definitely, you know, someone who is anxious appears that way.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

But I think the interesting thing about it is that instead of necessarily addressing the, the problem, the anxiety, or what would have, what have you, that, um, you could diagnose the problem by looking at them and then you could fix it by, um, fixing the physical, uh, mannerisms. So like, massage them really hard.

Justin:

Just loosen up.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Like, your jaw seems really stiff. I'm going to push on it until it hurts really bad.

Justin:

And then it'll be cured.

Sydnee:

And that was the kind of stuff he would do. Like, I'm just gonna push on that spot on your back for a long time, like, really hard, like, with my fist. It sounds like a massage, but it wasn't.

Justin:

No. It sounded much... He tried to convince me, but it wasn't a massage.

Sydnee:

And he liked this idea of the character, and he actually did a lot of, of, you know, um, theorizing and philosophizing about the character and how well the role of plays in different neuroses. Um, but then he, he got into a different. You know, I mentioned that in, in the beginning, he had this, this really early interest in, in sex, and so he began to incorporate that into his kind of theories about psychiatry and, and psychoanalysis. Um, he started opening sex clinics all around Vienna, because he thought that if people could have better sex and have more orgasms, they'd probably be happier.

Justin:

Oh okay.

Sydnee:

Sure.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Sure.

Justin:

I think?

Sydnee:

Um, he had a whole group with him of physicians and, and a lawyer for some reason that you could call at any hour of the day and ask questions about sex. They would give you contraception which was very, you know, uh, controversial at the time. Um, they would also give you a lot of Marxist political advice.

Justin:

Okay. You kind of slid that one in there, Wilhelm, but, I guess.

Sydnee:

Well, he actually, he formed the...

Justin:

Is that why if you wanna get dinner at the soup kitchen, you have to learn about Jesus? Same, same principle?

Sydnee:

Exactly. If, if you want to get some condoms-

Justin:

Let me just.

Sydnee:

...you have to learn about Karl Marx.

Justin:

Karl Marx.

Sydnee:

Uh, he started the, the-

Justin:

I have a sex clinic where you had to learn about Richard Marx, all his bits in the 80s. You had to be able to recite, don't mean nothing, but, like, verbatim call from memory, all the verses, and then I would teach you about having sex.

Sydnee:

Because once you're able to do that, you've mastered the art of seduction.

Justin:

Yeah, that's that. There you go. You've... That's the trick is like at the end, you've repeated all the Richard Marx tunes, and you're like, "That's it. That's everything you needed to know."

Sydnee:

That's all.

Justin:

"You've gradu—"

Sydnee:

The student has become the master.

Justin:

"Ah, you graduated I was Richard Marx the whole time. Please, buy some literature on your way out. Things have been a little tight."

Sydnee:

So a lot of what he did, he started this German Society of Proletarian Sexual Politics, um, where you could answer like sex poll questions. That, that was kind of the idea and, and it was all about sexual freedom in conjunction with these political beliefs. Uh, he had like a mobile clinic, where he would go around and, and he had a whole group where he would talk to... He would talk to teens and, and the male patients while women all got fitted for contraceptive devices, and then there would be another doc who would specialize in talking to children. Um, he had a lot of progressive views about that sex before marriage was okay. Yeah.

Justin:

Yeah. Okay.

Sydnee:

You know, okay. Um, he believed that sex at a younger age was okay.

Justin:

Getting dicier??

Sydnee:

And I will say that he was overwhelmed with patients using these tactics.

Justin:

Ah. Yeah, all of them teens. Hey, listen, we heard that, uh, you're cool.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I mean, like super cool.

Justin:

We heard you're cool.

Sydnee:

Um, he, uh, he began to morph this into the theory of what I mentioned earlier orga- orgastic potency. So that the way to, to be psych-psychiatrically healthy, is to lose yourself in just a really great orgasm. Because in that moment, you'll release all of your negative emotions and all of your muscle tension and you'll be fine. And you can cure all neuroses.

Justin:

Uh, that seem... Oh, wait. Hold on. Did you take cure all neuroses?

Sydnee:

Yes, cure all neuroses. That's right.

Justin:

Cure all neuroses. So it's a cure-all.

Sydnee:

He, um, he began to be known. He wrote a book about this and he was known as the founder of a genital utopia.

Justin:

Men are from Mars. Women are from Venus [laughs].

Sydnee:

He's also known as the prophet of the better orgasm-

Justin:

That was actually college nickname-

Sydnee:

...which is kind of cool [laughs].

Justin:

...which is great.

Sydnee:

Um, what I think is great is, this is... He sent this book to Freud, because, you know, they were buddies. And this is when Freud started going, you know, "Maybe, maybe I misjudged this guy."

Justin:

This guy's maybe a little.

Sydnee:

Because he kind of wrote him back and said, "Okay, this is weird. You don't really, you don't really believe this, right?"

Justin:

He's like, "No, I totally do."

Sydnee:

He totally did. And-

Justin:

I totally do.

Sydnee:

And that started. That, that would, that would count the beginning of the end of his relationship with Freud, and this is where he really starts kind of, um, branching out on his own. Uh, he starts talking about, um, character armor more and, and saying that it actually can, it can cause problems, like, it can cause disease. So he, he said that after he fell out with Freud, that the reason that Freud later got cancer of the jaw was because he had a really

strict Jewish upbringing and he repressed his sexual desires, and that if [laughs] if he hadn't done that he would never have gotten cancer.

Justin:

That's an awkward phone call, huh. Yeah. So here I hear that, uh, he solved my cancer, huh? 'Cause of I'm a Jewish person? Really?

Sydnee:

Really.

Justin:

That's the best you got?

Sydnee:

That's okay.

Justin:

It's where you come from?

Sydnee:

Um, which was even, even, uh, more interesting, he was actually a Jewish person himself. So-

Justin:

Just apparently cooler one.

Sydnee:

Well, his parents refused to raise him as such, so I guess-

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

... he thought that was-

Justin:

Yeah, cancer chill. That's why I'm not gonna get jaw cancer.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, he continued to-

Justin:

But.

Sydnee:

Now, at this point, he, he took his ideas about having sex before marriage and started promoting adolescent sex as a way to, um, start the process of like, indie neuroses and psychiatric health even earlier.

Justin:

You can't see it, but I'm tapping out. That's me just tapping out.

Sydnee:

Yeah. He was and he was kicked out of the, uh, Vienna Psychiatric Association for this. He actually was kicked out of the Communist Party for this.

Justin:

Wow. Too much for them.

Sydnee:

Um, and, and eventually, you know, we're going into the same time period when Hitler came to power. So, uh, he actually had to flee the country, anyway. He moved to Denmark after several different moves where nobody wanted him. Um, he moved to Denmark and they let him live there, but they told him before he even applied that he could not join their Communist Party.

Justin:

Yeah, we've heard. We, listen we get the newsletter. Okay?

Sydnee:

Um, he did at this point. He was continuing, I should say, through all this time period to practice psychoanalysis and therapy, wherever he went. Even though, uh, largely, his theories were being denounced, he would, um, he would still see patients. And he started to develop, uh, a therapy where he, you know, and some of this is actually okay. He would sit across from his patients as opposed to the old, you know, a patient laying on the couch staring at the ceiling kind of thing.

Justin:

And then he would have sex with them, which is where-

Sydnee:

Well, then... Exactly. Then he would ask them to undress.

Justin:

Nah. Okay, I see.

Sydnee:

And he would touch them while they were naked in order to release their, their various character armor things.

Justin:

Is this just a plot of *Don Juan DeMarco*?

Sydnee:

[laughs] He also, um, would press really hard, like I mentioned to, you know, relieve these tensions, but he thought it would... He thought if you pressed hard on certain parts of the body, you could invoke an orgasm reflex.

Justin:

I mean, I guess that's like, true of some very specific areas [laughs].

Sydnee:

But he would do this on like your face. I'm gonna push. I'm gonna take the heel of my hand and press as hard as I possibly can on your face until you have an orgasm reflex.

Justin:

Uh, a secret known only to the most popular dentists.

Sydnee:

[laughing] At this point, he, um, he went to a meeting of the International Psychoanalytic Association, which he was not really welcome at, but he insisted that he was still going to go. And that the reason he wasn't welcome is because-

Justin:

I think he just say, that's how the boom box over his head. [laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughing] Basically, everybody-

Justin:

[singing] In your eyes, I press to give you an orgasm.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Basically, there was... It had already been decided, uh, prior to this meeting, that he was going to be kicked out, that they were gonna, they were gonna once and for all. It's like an international society just denounce this weirdo and not let him back in. So-

Justin:

[laughing] Is everybody on earth here?

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Crazy fellow amongst the pets.

Sydnee:

That he is a weirdo, and he's pushing on naked people's faces.

Justin:

Totally.

Sydnee:

Um, so he came and he camped out there and, uh, and wandered around the conference the whole weekend or however long it went on with a giant knife in his belt.

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, he was kicked out and, and not let back in. And, and at that point, there was no, you know, there were always a few kind of weirdos who were following his theories, but for the most part, everybody kind of abandoned that. Um, he, he moved at that point. He, he went and, uh, gave a lecture in Norway and liked it so much that he stayed there. Um, he started experimenting with some new therapies with patients. He, uh, he studied biology and thought that maybe, um, what it really was this instead of this kind of orgasmic energy that there was this, um, that that fluid fills up different parts of the body and that there's like a bio electric discharge.

Again, I think he's talking about orgasm, and then the fluid goes away. And so, in order to, to test this he had a bunch of patients hooked up to, um, oscilloscopes.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I know that word. What, what's that?

Sydnee:

Some kind of like, it, it measures like electrical, bio electrical activity.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And, um, they would like touch each other and masturbate and stuff in front of him and then he would watch the oscilloscopes to see the energy that was released.

Justin:

That's weird.

Sydnee:

Um, basically, he was shunned all over for this kind of stuff. And so he moved to the one place where he still had some fans.

Justin:

Which was?

Sydnee:

You guessed it.

Justin:

United States of America.

Sydnee:

The good old U.S. of A.

Justin:

Oh yeah. I take all comers. Bring me your, bring me your poor. When you're hungry, bring me your weirdos.

Sydnee:

Bring me your sex weirdos.

Justin:

Bring me sex weirdos.

Sydnee:

Um, he... This is, this is where the sex boxes come in, um, because if you're gonna move to the U.S., you got to have a gimmick. If you're gonna, if you're gonna sell-

Justin:

You got to hook.

Sydnee:

If you're gonna sell to Americans, we need something snappy.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

You know, forget this.

Justin:

Something peppy, something-

Sydnee:

Forget this character armor. Forget this vegetative current orgasmic potency. We, that's... We've heard it all before.

Justin:

We need a brand.

Sydnee:

So what he what he started to describe was the idea that there is a cosmic energy, it, that we're going beyond the orgasmic potency. There's a cosmic energy inside all things.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Okay? And like a life force.

Justin:

This is getting a little Matthew McConaughey for me, but I'm trying to hang in there.

Sydnee:

He called it orgone energy.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Because I mean, he just can't get over it.

Justin:

He can't get his mind off if it.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, he's like a 12-year-old boy. Uh, and he, uh, he thought that... He actually developed a special telescope that you could use to see it if you wanted to see this energy. It's called an organoscope, of course.

Justin:

Well, I mean, no, he didn't [laughing]. I mean, no Sydney. He did very much did not do that. He made a thing that like, I don't know, had like purple paint on the lens, like, "Can you see it? it's incredible."

Sydnee:

[laughs] "It's orgone energy!"

Justin:

"It's orgone energy."

"It looks like a penis."

"Yes!"

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

"What would you expect?"

Sydnee:

"Have you heard my theories? Don't you know what I'm all about?"

Justin:

I wear crotchless pants.

Sydnee:

[laughs] So it was this, uh, kind of blue or blue gray, uh, coloring to things basically-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

...is what it would look like.

Justin:

That's actually what the tardis is flying through.

Sydnee:

[laughs] That's, that's why the tardis is blue.

Justin:

That's right.

Sydnee:

Um, and you can see it in the color of the sky. That's an example of the presence of, uh, the orgone energy. Uh, the Northern lights he believed were discharges of orgone energy. St. Elmo's fire [laughs].

Justin:

Boogie fever.

Sydnee:

[laughs] As well as I guess sometimes sexually excited frogs get a bluish tint.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So, that is orgone energy. This is the... I mean, this is news to me.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Maybe he made that up too.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Maybe when he looked at sexually excited frogs, he thought they looked blue.

Justin:

Maybe he would only look at sexually excited frogs.

Sydnee:

Maybe the better question is, how do you know when a frog is sexually excited?

Justin:

When he show him a picture of Miss Piggy.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Okay, that was good.

Justin:

Thanks.

Sydnee:

[laughs] That was good. I'll give you that. Um, so he, uh, he had this theory about this, um, orgone energy, but you can't prove it 'cause you can't, like, see it.

Justin:

[laughing] 'Cause it's fake.

Sydnee:

Oh, yeah 'cause it's fake. But, but he wanted to be able to prove that it was out there. So he built, um, a sex box is what they came to be known in, in the media, but it was basically like a Faraday cage. And then he put and, but he called it an orgone accumulator. So they were like big plywood boxes like human sized plywood boxes. Um, they just had a chair and sometimes a little window inside. And they were aligned with, like, rock or sheet iron or something, like, a bunch of layers of that because the more layers of whatever on the walls, the more concentrated the orgone energy you could catch was. So you would just take off all your clothes and then sit in these boxes.

Justin:

Maybe, this dude just had like, a rapidly evolving fetish spectrum. Like, he just every week he would wake up and something new like, Okay. Well, apparently now I can't finish unless people are in cages. That's my new thing. And they're looking for, are in cages and looking for space energy. That's the [inaudible 00:24:59] like a fetish.

Sydnee:

The, that's what the window was for, so he can just peer through it.

Justin:

I think so.

"How things come along in there?"

Sydnee:

"You feeling the energy? Feeling good."

Justin:

"It's not a ca- it's not a camera, honey. That's another organoscope."

Sydnee:

"Don't move though. Don't move."

Justin:

"Don't move though. It's a, a Daguerreotype, so it's gonna take a little while."

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, he believed that in addition to concentrating orgone energy, that these, um, orgone accumulators could cure cancer.

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

So he started off by giving cancer to mice and then sticking the mice inside.

Justin:

At least their deaths meant something, you know, they didn't die in vain.

Sydnee:

The thing is, to be fair, I don't think he was actually giving cancer to the mice, because he had found some sort of particle that he believed was the cancer particle, but it wasn't. It was probably just a staph infection. So I think he was actually shooting, shooting mice full of staph. The bacteria-

Justin:

He got so excited when he could cure it. Like, Look, look what I did.

Sydnee:

Yeah, and so I'm guessing some of them got better. And so he said he cured cancer, when really they just overcame a staph infection [laughs]. Um, he... I think it's great. So we've already said that he, he got too weird for Freud. Um, he actually during this time.

Justin:

Too weird for Freud's the name of our first album by the way.

Sydnee:

During this time period, he, um, he made friends with Einstein. And he met, he met Einstein and he talked about some of his theories. And Einstein wasn't super thrilled about him, um, but he did, he did think he was an interesting guy. Um, and he did think he had kind of been treated unfairly for some of his just, uh, kind of progressive sexual ideas. Not so much sex with, among kids, but contraception and such.

Justin:

Oh, this is the problem, right? I mean, like you and I are goofing on this guy. And I think with, with absolutely fair grounds to. But like it, it's hard

because anybody that is... Our, our norms about sex are so concrete and they're so sort of ingrained in us that I think anybody trying to push forward in understanding of it, it can be unfairly maligned sometimes. And I think that that also could create sort of a... That knowledge could create a shield for somebody where, you know, anything that they wanna try, they're being persecuted for it, because it's taboo rather than, No, it's just, it's just the weirdest.

Sydnee:

Yeah. No, I, I mean, I think you're right, because I think, you know, having a mobile sex clinic where you went around to people who normally wouldn't have access to physicians very easily and giving them information about sex and giving them contraception and talking to them about that is a, is a really novel idea for the 19— And we're talking like the 1920s 1930s. Um, but then, he obviously took it to a weird place.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, so because he was buddies with Einstein, uh, and nobody believed him about his sex boxes, he sent one to Einstein and said, you know, check this. You're a scientist. Check out this sex box.

Justin:

Check it. Check out this sex.

Sydnee:

And then tell everybody that it works. And to his credit, Einstein really did try to find some sort of energy differential, you know, within and outside of the box above and below the box. I mean, he really did-

Justin:

So, okay.

Sydnee:

...try to evaluate it to see if it had any merit.

Justin:

Okay, everybody, if you have gotten nothing out from *Sawbones*, right now, I want you to go to Twitter or Facebook and say, Today, I learned on

Sawbones that our greatest scientific mind spent an afternoon looking for cosmic sex energy.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Because what? And then put a link to our show. What? What? Albert Einstein could have done anything that day, could have done anything. But, he decided to look for cosmic sex energy in a box.

Sydnee:

Do you know how many mysteries of the universe are unsolved because of the day he wasted examining the sex box [laughing]?

Justin:

[laughing] He could have cracked anything. He could have cracked how to instantly warm your car when you go outside during the winter. He could have cracked anything, but spent the rest of his afternoon looking for cosmic sex energy.

Sydnee:

And this is why time travel doesn't exist.

Justin:

Exactly. One more day and he would have had it. Oh my God. Albert Einstein, I'm disappointed in you [laughs].

Sydnee:

Um, basically he thought it was kind of silly and he, he wrote him back. He wrote Wilhelm Reich back and said, You know, I, this... I don't think this works. I'm sorry, man. You know, good try. Um-

Justin:

Nice try.

Sydnee:

Reich wrote him back like a 32-page letter, you know, basically saying you're an idiot and I'm right and you need to reevaluate it. And Einstein kind of said, You know, I don't think we should be buddies anymore.

Justin:

18 pages were dirty pictures that he drew, though.

Sydnee:

[laughs] He, so just like every other country he went to at this point, he, he started being discredited in the press. Everybody was joking about this weird orgasm doctor with the sex boxes. Um, he got fired from the university where he was teaching.

Justin:

He's like The Incredible Hulk. Imagine the sad music at the end—

Sydnee:

Everywhere he goes.

Justin:

Moving on to the next country where they don't know about weird sex energy.

Sydnee:

And he, he at this point, he was running this Organomic Infant Research Center, where basically, um, he was studying children to see kind of the beginnings of their neuroses and where the beginnings of psychiatric illness come from. And a lot of the studying involved having a naked kid stand in front of a panel of 30 researchers.

Justin:

Who could've seen that coming?

Sydnee:

So, obviously people weren't, weren't big fans of that, um, and that kind of ended his career. He continued to go on to, um, you know, make up weird theories. He, the inverse of orgone energy was deadly orgone radiation or DOR. Um, he discovered, I guess, that discovered and vented, created.

Justin:

He's sounding suspiciously like a 1960s Marvel comic at this point.

Sydnee:

[laughs] He, he found it in the atmosphere. Um, he said the, it was poisoning us all, and the only way you could combat it was with a cloud buster.

Justin:

Was getting naked in front of people and touching them, let me guess.

Sydnee:

[laughs] No, he invented a machine.

Justin:

"Public erections! It's the only cure!"

Sydnee:

He will have sex with all your patients. That's the only way we can cure it.

Justin:

"Quick!"

Sydnee:

Um, no, he invented a machine called a cloud buster-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

...which, uh, you should really-

Justin:

It was just a bunch of repurposed sex boxes with antennas on top. "I can't sell these things [laughs]!"

Sydnee:

[laughs] "I gotta find a new way."

Justin:

[laughing] [inaudible 00:31:21].

Sydnee:

Cloud buster 2000.

Justin:

Cloud, cloud buster 2000 [laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughs] Mail from Ronco.

Justin:

Get it for the kids. Christmas is just around the corner.

Sydnee:

For \$19.99.

Justin:

Guaranteed to almost definitely have never been used to harness the imaginary cosmic sex energy by Albert Einstein.

Sydnee:

[laughs] So the cloud buster, um, you should really look up a picture of this online, uh, because it shows a picture of like him operating one. It's a bunch of like metal tubes that are all kind of lined up. It looks like a, like a, like a gun, like some kind of missile launcher. Only they're a bunch of metal tubes all strapped to each other and wires wrapped around it, and it kind of goes down into water. And I don't know if it actually shoots water or if it just uses the water energy to shoot something. And you, he would shoot it at the clouds. And then he said when he had dissipated all the deadly orgone radiation, um, rain would happen. And so, he actually was paid by some farmers, uh, some blueberry farmers. I didn't know there were blueberry farmers.

Justin:

He'll probably read the newspapers real close.

Sydnee:

Uh, to co- to come make it rain at their farm, because their crops were dying, um, and he did go.

Justin:

Have sex with them.

Sydnee:

[laughs] He went. He had sex with all of them. He used his cloud buster, and it actually rained that night, so-

Justin:

So what's up now Albert Einstein?

Sydnee:

So there were two farmers that believed him. Um-

Justin:

That's all you need.

Sydnee:

Basically, at this point, he actually... It's kind of interesting. He was investigated by the FBI-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

...during all this, but that was, um, they got that was a different Wilhelm Reich they were looking for.

Justin:

Ah.

Sydnee:

So it was just a coincidence. He was also a weirdo. Um, but then the, the, a lot of psychiatrists and the, the FDA started an investigation of him, because he was peddling these fake products-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

...to people you know, charging the money. And, um, they basically confiscated all of his stuff and destroyed it, and made him dismantle all of his sex boxes and made it illegal for him to sell them or traffic any of this stuff, or any of the material about it. They actually burned his books and stuff.

Justin:

Yikes. What were they hiding?

Sydnee:

[laughs] Exactly. And at that point, he really, he really kind of lost it. He began like chasing UFOs. Um, he continued to sell all of his orgone stuff

even though he had been forbidden to, and he actually ended up, um, in jail because of it, which is where this, uh, this sad story ends. Um, he died of a heart attack in jail.

Justin:

Oh man, while having sex with people.

Sydnee:

[laughing] We, we can only imagine. Um, so, uh, nowadays we know that [laughs] a lot of these theories are not true.

Justin:

Right. Made up, you could say.

Sydnee:

Made up. It's... I am certain that he did something for the, you know, for the contraception movement. We could maybe give him credit for that.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

But not much else. Um, it's funny that we can look back a lot of people talked about, you know, Freud and Einstein and a lot of famous psychiatrists and physicians at the time when they met him, thought he was a genius who was going to change the world. And then in retrospect, looked back and said, you know, he probably was severely mentally ill.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

So-

Justin:

So.

Sydnee:

So there you go. It's a fine line, I guess.

Justin:

Yeah. Apparently. So that's a strange tale of, uh, Wilhelm Reich. Thank you again, to Ross and Ellen for—

Sydnee:

And, and you're gonna get me a sex box for Christmas.

Justin:

I will go to, to eBay right now. I'm sure I'll be able to, to pick one up. Uh, thank you to everybody who listened to the show this week. Uh, thank you for sharing the show. Sorry, we missed you last week. My, my little, our, our little brother Griffin got married, uh, so congratulations to him and his lovely wife, Rachel McElroy.

Sydnee:

It was so beautiful. You guys really missed out all of you.

Justin:

You missed out super cold. But other than that.

Sydnee:

Sorry.

Justin:

It was, it was lovely.

Sydnee:

The best wedding ever other than of course ours, which was actually the best wedding ever.

Justin:

The greatest, most romantic day ever happened to anybody ever. Uh, thank you to people who, uh, tweeted about the show this week. Like, John Williams, uh, Tyler Mathison, Naomi Ferran, uh, Mouse Christina and others, Anna, uh, Marquart. Ricardo J Cotto, K. Kalin, Aaron P, uh, and Hannah Craig. Uh, thank you so much for, for tweeting about us. We're @sawbones on Twitter, so, uh, you can, um, listen there, follow us there. Also, I want to mention, because it is on our Twitter feed. Uh, our theme music is provided, uh, with, with kind permission from The Taxpayers. Uh, the song's called Medicines. You can buy it on their website.

Sydnee:

And it's awesome, and you should.

Justin:

Go get it.

Sydnee:

Um, I also want to thank, uh, William Smith who sent us a super cool book called, uh, *Anomalies and Curiosities of Medicine*. Uh, it has, um, what he referred to as gross pictures, but I'm gonna have to quibble. I think they're pretty awesome.

Justin:

Since we got the book, she was literally just sitting at the table, like, flipping through it for 20 minutes.

Sydnee:

No, it's a, it's a great book. Thank you so much. I really love it. And the pictures did gross Justin out to be fair. So-

Justin:

Yeah. If you want to send us something we're P.O. Box 54 Huntington, West Virginia, 25706. Let's keep those weird pictures to a minimum.

Sydnee:

Send us gifts.

Justin:

Yeah, send us gifts.

Sydnee:

I think we get in trouble for this.

Justin:

No it's fine. It's totally legal. Uh, anyway, go review us on iTunes. Go subscribe to us there. Go, uh, pass that link around. Remember to tell people that, uh, Albert Einstein wasted an afternoon looking for weird cosmic sex energy, because you know that now. Thanks to us. And, uh, be sure to join us again next Friday for another episode of *Sawbones*. Until then, I'm Justin.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee.

Justin:

As always, don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays out]

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