

Sawbones 36: Medical Marijuana

Published March 25th, 2014

Listen [here on mcelroy.family](http://mcelroy.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 song Medicines by The Taxpayers plays]

Justin:

Hello, everybody. And welcome to *Sawbones*, a marital tour of misguided medicine. I am your cohost Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

Syd I'm a little, um, a little bummed right now.

Sydnee:

I'm sorry to hear that, Justin. What's up?

Justin:

Well, we got a kid on the way. That's not-

Sydnee:

You're, you're bummed about-

Justin:

... Okay.

Sydnee:

... I really don't think this is the place to bring that up.

Justin:

Can I just-

Sydnee:

On a podcast?!

Justin:

... can I just finish?

Sydnee:

You should have thought about this like five months ago!

Justin:

Can I just, can I just finish? No, um, I, I, uh, I'm a little bummed because we're... I'm not, I don't feel like we have enough material for our like your parents, we're so wild stories. Like, I don't feel like we've been particularly wild.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Well, maybe you don't.

Justin:

Okay, well, listen, pump the break. Pump the brakes there T. J. Hooker I'm-

Sydnee:

I'm just, I'm just saying.

Justin:

Okay. Listen, all I'm saying is not like-

Sydnee:

You didn't catch me until I was like a junior in college. You don't even know the half of it.

Justin:

Okay. Listen. Okay. Now, listen. Now, come on now. Come on. I, I... my worry, here's my thought, what I haven't done enough of is we, we drank plenty. What we haven't done enough of is-

Sydnee:

[laughs] Just don't, yeah, let's just throw that out there.

Justin:

I haven't done enough drugs, I feel like. And I'm worried because like now we're getting to a point where if we did it now, it'd be like so lame.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Well, yeah.

Sydnee:

It probably wouldn't be a good idea for me to do a lot of drugs right now.

Justin:

Like yeah, 'cause of the kid stuff.

Sydnee:

Because of the child growing inside me.

Justin:

The human and stuff.

Sydnee:

Yeah. It's, it's generally frowned upon.

Justin:

Yeah. Uh, but, but for me, I, I... time is running out and I feel like now with this medical marijuana thing I could kind of like, there's kind of like a back door. I don't know if that's as cool for me if like the story-

Sydnee:

But you could just go to Colorado or I guess-

Justin:

I guess but like-

Sydnee:

... [crosstalk 00:02:49] Amsterdam. I mean, they've, they've been on that, you know, train for a while.

Justin:

... If John Law is like good looking out, keep doobin'. I don't know if that's the thing cops in Colorado say.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

I guess that's still-

Sydnee:

Keep doobin'. That's what they say, what-

Justin:

Keep-

Sydnee:

... if they pull you over, they're like, "Hey, are you smoking, are you smoking pot?" "Yes, sir. Officer."

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Good. You better be [laughs].

Justin:

Keep doobin', my man.

Sydnee:

It's actually against the law. Not is that right [crosstalk 00:03:11] I think I read that right against the law not to smoke marijuana in Colorado.

Justin:

I guess before I make this commitment, I would like to know a little bit more about medical marijuana and then I can make a rational, educated decision about whether I'm going to spend the next few months doobin' it up.

Sydnee:

Right. Well, I'll go ahead and-

Justin:

As they say.

Sydnee:

... I'm gonna tell you all about it. I'll burst your bubble ahead of time and tell you that it is not legal in West Virginia, so...

Justin:

Son of a gun.

Sydnee:

... so there, there, that's gonna go out the window and I would definitely not prescribe marijuana to my husband if it was.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

'Cause that, that seems like a bad plan.

Justin:

Yeah. It's unethical. I understand you know a lot of prescribed drugs to me. That's fine.

Sydnee:

Yeah. But I'll tell you about it anyway.

Justin:

Please. I'm ready.

Sydnee:

Um, first of all, before we talk about marijuana, I wanna say thanks to Rob who-

Justin:

Thanks Rob!

Sydnee:

... who recommended this, uh, this great topic. Um, and if you, if... the thing is there's lots to read and learn and check out about medical marijuana out there.

Justin:

We are going... don't, don't make this one of those where everybody sends us messages on Twitter. Like, hey, you forgot to talk about blah, blah, blah. We know we're not gonna get to everything. Absolutely.

Sydnee:

There is so much to say. Marijuana has been used both medicinally and recreationally for thousands and thousands of years.

Justin:

There is, honestly, uh, there seems to be, uh, uh, a pretty sizable section of overlap on the Venn diagram between people that have time to write stuff on the internet and people who have time to smoke a lot of weed.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Uh, and there are lots of opinions. This is a big... this is a hot button issue. Um, and it has been for a long time interestingly. It's been controversial for quite a while. Uh, so I know I'm gonna leave some stuff out. Um, I'm trying to hit the high points and maybe offer some, some medical perspective on it.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, but as I said, the use of marijuana as medicine, it probably dates back to like 2,900 BC. So like I said, a really long time ago.

Justin:

Wow. That's, that is very long. That's one of the older treatments.

Sydnee:

So we go back to, um, uh, the Chinese emperor, uh, Fu Xi, who referenced its medical use. And he, uh, he noted also, and this is a theme that we'll see a lot in kind of the ancient use of marijuana, that it is as much for medicinal purposes as like, uh, for religious purposes.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

That it's good for the spirit and the mind and the body, all in one. So, uh, it was said to contain both yin and yang.

Justin:

That's nice.

Sydnee:

So-

Justin:

That's convenient too. You save a lot of time.

Sydnee:

... [laughs] Um, this continued, uh, in Chinese medicine, um, the investigation of, uh, marijuana and what it could do continued and um, the emperor Shen-Nung did a lot of research on it, uh, investigating its medicinal properties, which I think is probably just a euphemism.

Justin:

Yeah, for smoking weed.

Sydnee:

That's what, that's what I hope our kid is clever enough to say if we ever catch him smoking weed.

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

What are you doing?!

Justin:

"No, no, no. It's research, mom and dad."

Sydnee:

"Mom, I'm just investigating it's medicinal properties."

Justin:

"It's science. Look, look at these test tubes. That's a bong. I'm not an idiot."

Sydnee:

"[laughs] Much like the emperor Shen-Nung in 2,700 BC, I'm investigating its medicinal properties."

Justin:

You're seven years old and I'm gonna get arrested.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Where did you even get that?

Justin:

Where did you even find-

Sydnee:

Did your dad give you that?

Justin:

... Why did I give you my drugs?

Sydnee:

Um, it was also advocated for gout, uh, constipation and, um, absent-mindedness.

Justin:

[laughs] Oops.

Sydnee:

Now I'm thinking-

Justin:

Not a good job there, old timey dudes.

Sydnee:

... I'm thinking that maybe didn't work.

Justin:

No, that wouldn't [crosstalk 00:06:45]-

Sydnee:

That one, that one, I don't know so much about. Um, in 1500 BC it was added to the Chinese Pharmacopeia and then the use of it from there just expanded. They actually, uh, had a use for pretty much every part of the plant so much like the Buffalo [laughs].

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

There is a use for every part. Um, uh, just to give you some examples and there were many uses for each part. This is not the only use, but the seeds were said to be a laxative again, among many other things. You could use the oil for hair loss. Uh, you could use the juice from leaves.

Now you wouldn't wanna eat the leaves. It was said that they were poisonous, but the juice, fresh juice from leaves could, uh, be used as an antihelminthic or, uh, for worming, for de worming someone. Um, and the flowers were for menstrual disorders.

Justin:

Now when you say they were for, or you mean not like effectively, right, just-

Sydnee:

Ah, well, I mean, they were used for... who knows if they were effective. I mean, at this point we're, we're talking about, you know, thousands and thousands of years ago, people were definitely using them in droves. They wrote about it. Um, it was studied. And now, I mean, I don't have controlled trials from that era.

Justin:

And also-

Sydnee:

But that's what it was said to be helpful for.

Justin:

... None of that stuff was GMO. Maybe it was like super whoop tushy pot that we came-

Sydnee:

[laughs] It was the best stuff.

Justin:

It was like the best ever that we can't get. Now I'm sad.

Sydnee:

Is that making you sad?

Justin:

I'm a little sad. I don't even like pot-

Sydnee:

[crosstalk 00:08:05].

Justin:

... much.

Sydnee:

All that ancient, ancient Chinese herb you'll never get your hands on.

Justin:

All that ancient Chinese ganj, I'll never be able to puff it.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

[laughs] I guess that's what people say, right? Doob it up and puff it?

Sydnee:

You can tell that we've used a lot of drugs.

Justin:

Yeah. We're showing our literacy here.

Sydnee:

We're very cool. Uh, there is some evidence. I found this mentioned a couple places and I think people just like to throw it out there, 'cause it sounds like this is really legit. Uh, there is a holy anointing oil that is mentioned in Exodus in the Bible.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

You may be familiar with this having read the Bible probably. And I haven't much.

Justin:

Are you assuming 'cause I was raised Baptist that I read the Bible?

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

As I am assuming-

Justin:

Yeah. I learned, I learned many verses. I was in AWANA after all.

Sydnee:

... I'm assuming you know much more than me-

Justin:

Approved work but I'm not ashamed is what that stands for in case you're curious and no I'm not ashamed. Sydnee I've read a Bible verse or two in my day, nothing weed specific. We tend to gloss over those chapters.

Sydnee:

Right [laughs].

Justin:

I assume.

Sydnee:

And the sexy stuff, right?

Justin:

The sexy stuff.

Sydnee:

You guys didn't cover that.

Justin:

Yeah. No Song of Solomon.

Sydnee:

That's why I sat there during mass and tried to just flip through and see if there's any sexy stuff. But they just... seen the missile, they don't wanna include that. We didn't have a whole Bible there, like in church.

Justin:

I remember a, a, a youth pastor saying to me like he was doing his sermon, he's like, "Bible's got everything. You want... even want some sexy stuff, Song of Solomon's got the sexiest chapters you'll ever read." And I kept, I remember thinking like, what else are you reading that you're like, yes, this is the stuff.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

This is the best stuff that is.

Sydnee:

Is it really sexy?

Justin:

No. There's like, it's like, it's... it says stuff like your breasts are like galloping buffalo or like your ga- your breasts are like galloping zebras or something.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

It's like, it's basically like Shakira lyrics.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Like it's not, it's not like a level of sex that-

Sydnee:

Did Shakira write the Song of Solomon?

Justin:

... The Song of Shakira was the original title. Okay. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to divert you here.

Sydnee:

Wow. I'm sorry. That was a blasphemous.

Justin:

Back to the topic at hand, we got a lot to cover.

Sydnee:

... So the [laughs], the thought is that maybe this holy anointing oil that was mentioned in Exodus, uh, contained cannabis. I don't know. I'm sure that there are people who've dug up evidence for this and it's the time period. Maybe, maybe it did. I have no idea. I don't know that that would, if that's your excuse to, you know, your parents or the cops as to why you're smoking weed. I don't know that that's a great one.

Justin:

Yeah. It's holy.

Sydnee:

Um, the ancient Egyptians had a ton of uses for it, uh, glaucoma, which is something that persists today, um, enemas which is something I don't think persists today.

Justin:

I bet it does somewhere. Sydnee. It's American, and it's 2014. Somewhere it's happening.

Sydnee:

Somebody's doing a marijuana enema right now.

Justin:

A marijuanama

Sydnee:

[laughs] Good luck with that.

Justin:

Good luck.

Sydnee:

Uh, and then generalized inflammation, which I, I, that's a great use 'cause that's anywhere. And if you don't have inflammation somewhere just stub your toe, then you do.

Justin:

Ah, I need pot!

Sydnee:

Ah! Inflamed, toes inflamed. Ooh, hang nail. Um, the, uh, Indian medicine got way into marijuana. Again, the, and a lot of this was linked with, uh, the spiritual effects as well. Um, because obviously it was a mind altering substance. Uh, but it was also used for prolonging life, uh, lowering fevers, inducing sleep, maybe, curing dysentery, quickening the mind. Again with some of these-

Justin:

I just don't, I don't know about your acuity. Maybe afterwards, like by comparison.

Sydnee:

... [laughs].

Justin:

Like when you go back to normal, like, no, I do feel well, like yeah, compared to an hour ago, certainly.

Sydnee:

So maybe if you do it for like a few weeks on end, like just stay high for a while and stop.

Justin:

Yeah. You lose your calibration

Sydnee:

And all of a sudden you're like, I am a sparkling conversationalist and I didn't know.

Justin:

No, you're just not staring at your hand.

Sydnee:

[laughs] It also was said to improve judgment. Eh... I don't know.

Justin:

I don't know. I've seen some-

Sydnee:

I don't know.

Justin:

... I've seen some pretty tragic Bajas in my day that wouldn't test otherwise.

Sydnee:

[laughs] I think I'd, I think I'd believe carrying dysentery first. Um, and this just continued. The, the Greeks used it again for, I mean, this was... cannabis very much was a cure-all. Uh, anything you could name, somebody used, uh, marijuana to fix it. So ear aches, edema, any kind of inflammation.

Um, the Romans hit on something that you could use cannabis for, which actually is very honest. I don't know why it's considered useful in this regard-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... but it could kill your sex drive.

Justin:

Ah. Yeah. I don't know why you would need to do that.

Sydnee:

But I guess if you just, I don't know [crosstalk 00:12:48].

Justin:

If you're headed off to war.

Sydnee:

Maybe, maybe wives could dose their husbands if they were like worn out or something.

Justin:

Maybe. I guess, I mean, it's an option.

Sydnee:

I don't know. "My husband won't let me get any sleep. I'm gonna give him some marijuana."

Justin:

[laughs] "I know where to get some."

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

"I'm an old Roman lady, I know where to get drugs and Justin doesn't. Figure it out. I don't know."

Sydnee:

[laughs] These were-

Justin:

"I don't have Twitter. So I guess that's, that's fine [laughs]."

Sydnee:

... [laughs] These were my much cooler times, everybody had drugs back then.

Justin:

That's ridiculous.

Sydnee:

I know. If you haven't noticed Justin can't find drugs.

Justin:

[crosstalk 00:13:21].

Sydnee:

He doesn't, this is like a theme in his life. He doesn't know where to find drugs.

Justin:

People keep finding it. I watch TV, it's... they still make them-

Sydnee:

My, [laughs] my 13 year old sister Riley was telling us about a girl who showed her that she had drugs at school. She showed her like, look, this is my marijuana I keep in my Altoids tin or whatever.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And Justin was so jealous, like there's a 13 year old who has marijuana.

Justin:

Keep in mind, I'm not-

Sydnee:

And he can't get it [laughs].

Justin:

... I'm not like infatuated with the idea of doing drugs. I was not a, a heavy user of drugs in college or anything. I'm just very irritated by the fact that everybody seems to be finding them and not me.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

That's all. It was like for that, for that week when everybody was raving about Let It Go and I didn't know what anybody was talking about. Like, is that a song? I don't know what you're saying. I mean, we finally watched *Frozen* and all, it was fine, but like, I don't know. I just don't like feeling left out, I guess.

Sydnee:

Think how much better it would've been if you'd been high.

Justin:

Yeah. That's a fair point.

Sydnee:

Uh, you know who, I also had something to say about marijuana?

Justin:

Pliny?

Sydnee:

That's right.

Justin:

No, I guess.

Sydnee:

Or Pliny to those of you who are correct.

Justin:

Pliny, Sorry. Pliny, If you wanna be right about it.

Sydnee:

If you wanna be right, it's Pliny [pronounced "Plinn-ee"] If you wanna be us, it's Pliny [pronounced "Ply-nee"]. Um, uh, he recommended it for cramped joints, gout, generalized pain, which again is a theme that we will see over and over again. He also mentioned the, uh, use of hemp rope.

This is something that you'll see all through the kind of intertwined with the history of, you know, the medicinal use of cannabis is the use of the hemp plant for, you know, rope and cloth and uh, you know, sails on boats and that kind of thing.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, and there there's a whole history to be done about that, but that's not medicine, so we're not gonna talk about it. Um, the, uh, the Arabic world was the first to really hit on the fact. And, um, certainly people had mentioned this before, but to really talk about the fact that, um, it's not entirely benign.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

They talked about it as a, possibly being a poison. And I don't think in the sense that people were dying from it, but, um, that the behaviors or the kind of the effects of it were not always, uh, good.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

You wouldn't always want to end up the way that it made you, so to speak. Um, but despite that it persisted all through the middle ages, cannabis was used in a variety of forms for a variety of problems. Um, it, like I said, I mean, it was a cure-all.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And it made you feel good.

Justin:

You think that was it though? Like, I, I, I've found a theme with not all-cure alls, but a lot of them, it seems to be more like justifications, you know, like you like the way it feels. And it's hard to just accept like, hey, I just like doing this.

Sydnee:

I think that's part of it. Um, and that was certainly something that, you know, as we're gonna move forward and we see it, um, in some cases be replaced by other drugs that maybe work, work better for certain things. It was the reason that it was still, you know, kind of, um, a player in the industry was that it, it made you feel better than maybe drugs that worked better-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... depending on what the problem is. Um, but, uh, you know, the other thing is a lot of people pull up the, or would like to suggest that was it so popular because it was addictive.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Like we, you know, as we've talked about before, for things like opium, that's a hotly debated topic, I would say, uh, from what I've read and we'll talk about it a little more that isn't, that probably isn't the reason why it was so popular. It was more like what you hit on. It made you feel good.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

And if you don't have something for a problem and this thing at least makes you feel good, well, why not? So let's move to the new world.

Justin:

Let's.

Sydnee:

We're here.

Justin:

Oh, that was easy.

Sydnee:

We already live here.

Justin:

I thought we'd lose some of the crew along the way. It was... it's fairly non-eventful.

Sydnee:

No, that was, I mean, it's, it's 2014. It's much easier to get here now.

Justin:

Oh.

Sydnee:

Um-

Justin:

Thanks, Virgin Air.

Sydnee:

... [laughs] The, the, as I mentioned, the big, um, way that marijuana factored into, um, you know, early, early America was in the form of hemp for rope and cloth and the Jamestown settlers used it for a variety of reasons. Uh, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson both grew hemp.

Justin:

Nice.

Sydnee:

So if you wanna throw that out there that might get you a little further than possibly being in the Bible.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughs] This is a known fact. We can prove it. They, they both grew it.

Justin:

Also had slaves, so I mean, not like great, like they don't have like a great track record, not like a hundred percent great track record.

Sydnee:

Well, that's, I mean, that's a fair point. Um, maybe you don't wanna use them as an example.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Maybe you wanna go back to the holy anointing oil.

Justin:

Yeah. Or Pauly Shore.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

He seems to have everything together.

Sydnee:

No, that's a worse example.

Justin:

That's a much worse example.

Sydnee:

Oh, well now.

Justin:

Is Pauly Shore worse than slavers?

Sydnee:

Well... *Bio-Dome*... [laughs].

Justin:

Is Bio-Dome worse than slavery? Discuss it on the Maximum Fun forums.

Sydnee:

[laughs] And let us know.

Justin:

Tweet at us.

Sydnee:

Don't, don't tell anybody that we told you to.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

Um, it was also in this time period, it was used for depression. That was when that use became popular, um, as well as, uh, menstrual cramps, uh, Queen Victoria pop- popularized that.

Justin:

Oh.

Sydnee:

So-

Justin:

That's a cool visual.

Sydnee:

... [laughs] Queen Victoria smoking pot.

Justin:

Queen is like, ah, these cramps. [inhales] Weed.

Sydnee:

That's what you say when you exhale?

Justin:

I don't know.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

I don't know about drug culture.

Sydnee:

When you exhale, you say weed?

Justin:

I think.

Sydnee:

I don't think that's what you do.

Justin:

I'm not sure.

Sydnee:

It's been a while. Um, and then, uh, you know, throughout the early U.S., it was used a lot in, um, in patent medicines, which we've talked about before.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, they contained a lot of different things to make you feel something, because they didn't always work for whatever they were, you know, advertised to work for.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So they would contain things like alcohol or, um, opiates and or cannabis so that you would have some effect from them. Um, and, uh, cannabis was a very popular ingredient. It actually, people who realized that they were getting hooked on some of the opiate containing, um, things such as Laudanum, which we've talked about before, uh, started to use cannabis containing products to get themselves off of opium.

Sydnee:

Uh, you could use it for some of the withdrawal symptoms. It wouldn't completely make it go away, but it would help.

Justin:

Syd, I wanna hear so much more about the history of, uh, marijuana and its medical uses here in the good old U.S. of A, uh, and throughout the world, of course. But, uh, first I, I wanna talk real quick. Um, this is our second and final, uh, episode of the Maximum Fun Drive. Um, if you don't know, we are part of a podcast network, it's called Maximum Fun.

Justin:

It's got other shows like, uh, *Judge John Hodgman*, uh, *My Brother, My Brother and Me*, and *Stop Podcasting Yourself* and *Bullseye* and *Jordan Jesse Go*, and *Lady to Lady*, and *Oh No, Ross and Carrie!* and a lot of other great podcasts. And the way we keep it on the air, isn't through sponsors and it isn't through advertising. It's through you, the listeners at home supporting our network.

Uh, not unlike a PBS, for example, or other similar network that is listener supported. Uh, and every year we come to you hat in hand and say, hey, if you've been enjoying the entertainment that you've got over the past year or since June in our case-

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

... uh, maybe could you kick-

Sydnee:

That's close enough.

Justin:

... maybe could you kick in a few bucks? Uh, and so that is when we, this is the time of year that we do that. Um, if you go to maximumfun.org/donate, you're gonna find a lot of different options that you can give at. Now, we're not just asking for you to pledge a certain amount of money that you're gonna give us every month. Um-

Sydnee:

No, we've got some great gifts for you.

Justin:

.... We've got gifts for you. Uh, if you can pledge \$5 a month, you're gonna be a Maximum Fun member, and you're going to get exclusive bonus content. Uh, we've got a bonus episode on there about, um, what was it Syd?

Sydnee:

So we, we sent ourselves in TARDIS a hundred years into the future to, um, talk about what we think somebody would do a Sawbones episode on a hundred years from now.

Justin:

Yeah. So we look at today's medicines and, and-

Sydnee:

And kind of critique what we're doing right now.

Justin:

... Uh, that, and like part it's part of 44 hours of bonus content that you're gonna get for just \$5 a month. We send you a link and you can start listening to bonus episodes and videos and all kinds of stuff from all our different shows. Uh, if you're willing to pledge \$10 a month, you're gonna be a friend of the family. You're going to get an 18 month mini Max Fun, uh, cat calendar.

Sydnee:

Which features, uh, all of the different hosts from the Max Fun network, uh, rendered as cats.

Justin:

It's adorable.

Sydnee:

Kitties!

Justin:

Wait till you see, I don't know what month we have. I hope we have a good month.

Sydnee:

Oh, I don't know either.

Justin:

Yeah, we have a good month.

Sydnee:

I hope it's a warm month.

Justin:

We're adorable. That's \$10 a month. At \$20 a month you're gonna be part of the diamond friendship circle, and you're gonna get the Max Fun morning essentials kit. That's a cobalt blue Max Fun rocket mug, half a... half a bag, easy for me to say, of delicious Tonx coffee.

Sydnee:

Which is very fancy coffee.

Justin:

It's very fancy.

Sydnee:

It has many different notes and flavors.

Justin:

[laughs] Also-

Sydnee:

Aromas.

Justin:

... thanks to Tonx for supporting us by the way. And you're gonna get a bar of stack soap, uh, that is a soap that has a divot in it, uh, where you can put-

Sydnee:

So you can like take the old little piece of soap that you've got left over and like stick it in the new bar of soap.

Justin:

That dumb sliver you can just—

Sydnee:

And never, never waste your soap.

Justin:

Put it into your divot, your soap divot there. So thank you [inaudible 00:23:02] soap for helping us out. And, uh, at \$35 a month, you can be part of the Judge Hodgman justice squad. You're gonna get all that step before. Each level comes with all the previous levels gifts.

But you're also gonna get a pair of rocket engraved highball glasses with Max Fun logo on them. They're lovely. They match our rocks glasses.

Sydnee:

Yeah. And you, you can do a lot of drinking for me out of them.

Justin:

Yes. Uh, uh, and you can get that for just \$35 a month. Don't miss out. Uh, we have other levels, there's a hundred dollar level, Jesse's Golden Eagles, where you're gonna get a monthly culture, uh, gift from one of the hosts, uh, on our network. \$200 a month you'll get all that stuff plus free

registration on the Atlantic Ocean comedy and music festival [inaudible 00:23:47] for more information on that. And, uh, the, the important thing is you're helping to make content, more content that you love.

Sydnee:

Absolutely. And if you especially happen to love us-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... make sure and mention that-

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

... when you donate.

Justin:

Yeah. It is, uh, uh, a great way to help us make more of our podcast. Uh, we need to buy equipment and everybody on the network uses it to like, uh, pay people to make these shows. And if you love these shows, then this is a great way of showing it.

Sydnee:

Plus, we got a baby on the way.

Justin:

We got a baby on the way. Just tell `em you love *Sawbones* best, and please give us some money.

Sydnee:

And Justin's already trying to give her a really vicious drug habit, so we're gonna need help with that.

Justin:

It's not habit forming there, John Law.

Sydnee:

Okay. Well, fair enough.

Justin:

Buzz Killington Okay. So, uh, one more time, maximumfun.org/donate. If you can go there and help us out with a donation, gosh, that would just mean the world to us. Um, and, and thank you in advance if you're able to do that, it would just be the best. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Sydnee:

And thank you.

Justin:

More weed.

Sydnee:

So, uh, things were going pretty well in the U.S. People were, you know, taking in cannabis in various forms and loving it, until 1906. So in 1906, the pure food and drug act of 1906.

Justin:

That's [laughs], that's the name. It's so convenient that, that lined up that way.

Sydnee:

I know that was luck though.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Um, uh, changed a lot of the way, uh, patent medicines were sold in this country. It insisted that certain, uh, substances be mentioned on the labels so that you would know what you were getting. And this included, as I've already mentioned things like opiates and alcohol, but it also included cannabis.

Justin:

Huh.

Sydnee:

Uh, which was kind of our first recognition that this is something, um, that isn't benign, you know. It's, this is something people need to know about. It's not, it is an herb unlike other herbs. And we should, we should inform

people if we're going to give them a bottle of some sort of liquid that contains it.

Um, after this, it, this, this was kind of like the first, uh, first nail in the coffin. And after this state started one by one banning it, um, that you couldn't, you couldn't have cannabis containing medication. You couldn't sell them. You couldn't market them. And, and this started to spell the end slowly, slowly, slowly, many, many years until we get there but the end of, um, the free reign of cannabis in the U.S. Um, prohibition gave it a little bit of, uh, one last breath of life.

Justin:

Why's that?

Sydnee:

Because you couldn't drink.

Justin:

So?

Sydnee:

So-

Justin:

Weed.

Sydnee:

... Weed. Uh, that actually started to popularize the recreational use.

Justin:

Huh.

Sydnee:

You gotta understand, up to this point it was largely a, it was a, it was a medicine, you know. I mean, yes, people understood much like they did with Laudanum that it made you feel good. But, uh, it was largely used, you know, for medicinal reasons. This is when people started saying, well, hey, you know, I can't drink anymore. That cannabis stuff really makes me feel good.

So if you were in a state where you could still get it, there you go. Um, we were growing actually in the us from like 1918 to 1925, so we're talking some prohibition years here, about 60,000 pounds of cannabis annually in the U.S.

Justin:

Wow.

Sydnee:

So I mean, people were definitely using it. Um, now the United States government was not thrilled with this.

Justin:

Naturally, 'cause they hate fun.

Sydnee:

Right. Anything that's fun. They took away alcohol, they were gonna take away weed. Um, and there's a lot of reasons that go into this. There's a lot of political reasons. And again, I already mentioned that I'm not gonna go into the whole history of hemp, but there are a lot of people who will, who have, you know, a lot written and, and a lot that I don't know about the battle between the, um, people who were making cloth and paper specifically out of hemp pulp as opposed to wood pulp.

And there was a lot of, um, financial interests that were disrupted by hemp. And so there were a lot of theories that part of the reason that, um, cannabis was rebranded as marijuana and became criminalized was in, in order to suppress hemp as well.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

So again, another story for another podcast, but that's part of this, um, kind of complex political financial picture. Uh, so, uh, as I mentioned, part of that was starting to use over and over again the term marijuana. This is when this became really popular. Um, hash and cannabis were words associated with medicine-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... up until that point with something that was natural from the earth and used to make you better. So they started using the word marijuana because they thought it sounded scarier.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

[laughs] And uh, it was, it, it called it something new.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

So you didn't associate marijuana with anything until the government told you marijuana was something bad.

Justin:

Sort of like when, uh, the auto manufacturers wanted us to get rid of jaywalking, they started calling it jaywalking and turning it into a thing that they could easily sort of like brand and, and, uh, slander people for.

Sydnee:

That's a good comparison. So then we can start, you know, I mean cannabis, oh, that's just cannabis, but no, marijuana, now, that sounds scary. And then of course-

Justin:

Thank you, Roman Mars by the way, for and *99% Invisible* for informing me of that, that occurrence.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

I'm just, I'm just [laughs] regurgitating what I heard there.

Sydnee:

But you sounded really smart.

Justin:

Thank you so much. I have my moments.

Sydnee:

Um-

Justin:

And those moments are specifically when I'm regurgitating *99% Invisible*.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Uh, and then of course in 1936 *Reefer Madness*, the movie, are you familiar?

Justin:

I've heard of it. I have.

Sydnee:

Propaganda film.

Justin:

I haven't seen it myself.

Sydnee:

Uh, that, um, dramatized the effects of marijuana and what it could do to you and how it was spreading across the nation and scared a lot of parents and, um, probably some kids and started, you know, again, as we kind of look at the downfall of, um, the use of marijuana. In 1942, it was officially removed from the U.S. Pharmacopeia.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Meaning that it was not listed as a medicine that we should be, you know, and that's nothing official, it's just, it kind of falls out of common medical use.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Um, but what really is important for marijuana is in 1970.

Justin:

What happened then Syd?

Sydnee:

That is when it's listed as a Schedule 1 Drug.

Justin:

What's that mean?

Sydnee:

So the, uh, the DEA classifies, uh, medications in this country, according to schedules. And, um, these schedules kind of dictate how it can be prescribed, um, and this is based on its medical usage, it's, uh, addictive potential, how safe it is. Um, so it's the reason why there are some prescriptions that your doctor can just send to the pharmacy.

Sydnee:

And then there are other prescriptions that maybe they have to give you a copy of on paper and some prescriptions they can give you refills and others that they can't, that kind of thing.

Justin:

Now I'm... I didn't think marijuana was addictive.

Sydnee:

Well, that's the thing. So it was put in the category of Schedule 1 Drugs, and Schedule 1 Drugs are things that are supposed to be highly addictive, have no medical use whatsoever. And that there is a, a lack of data in terms of safety. So we, we don't, you know, we, we can't use them in any way. Um, this is the same class as well, heroin, for instance-

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

... or PCP or LSD. Um, these are not medicines that are prescribed, you know, nobody's prescribing Schedule 1 Drugs for the, well, they, they are when it comes to marijuana, but that's, that's why it's a special case.

Justin:

Sounds like kind of a trumped up charge to me.

Sydnee:

It, and that's what many would argue ever since then, basically ever since it was called a Schedule 1 Drug, uh, proponents of, uh, marijuana for medical use have been trying to remove it from that, um, because it greatly limits our ability to study it.

Justin:

Why is that?

Sydnee:

Well, think about it. So let's say that you wanna do a study on heroin.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Um, so you propose that you're going to give 25 people heroin and not give, and then give 25 other people a placebo and see what happens, compare some variable.

Justin:

I can't imagine I'd be allowed to do that.

Sydnee:

No, of course-

Justin:

'Cause I would have to have it.

Sydnee:

... well, of course you wouldn't be allowed to do it, 'cause you'd have to have heroin and then you would have to intentionally give people heroin.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Which would be bad.

Justin:

Because I need to keep the heroin for myself to enjoy my own leisure time.

Sydnee:

Okay. No, you can't enjoy heroin. Heroin is, we're just gonna say heroin is bad and we're not gonna-

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

... do a podcast on it because heroin is bad. Don't do heroin.

Justin:

Don't do heroin guys.

Sydnee:

Don't do... the jury's still out on marijuana, but don't do heroin. Um, so the, so that kind of gives you an example of why it's so hard to do any really good studies on marijuana because it's Schedule 1. So how am I even gonna write some sort of proposal and get approved to do a study on marijuana, 'cause then I have to give it to patients, and it's a Schedule 1 Drug, which theoretically has no medical use and isn't safe.

Justin:

But we can't test that because-

Sydnee:

Because-

Justin:

... it's already a Schedule 1 Drug.

Sydnee:

... it's a Schedule 1 drug.

Justin:

Oh yeah.

Sydnee:

So we, a lot of the stuff that we end up having to use for study is stuff that we've seized illegally. Well, not seized illegally. It was seized from illegal transactions.

Justin:

Huh.

Sydnee:

So, you know, the DEA busts somebody, gets a bunch of, uh, marijuana and then it's used, it's studied, you know, by the government. But a lot of those studies are again done in, in uh, rats [laughs].

Justin:

Rats smoking weed.

Sydnee:

Yes. Rats smoking weed.

Justin:

Well at least something came of this episode.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Um, I get to imagine rats smoking weed.

Sydnee:

So, um, before we get into the research, 'cause I do wanna tell you about some of this research.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, real briefly just to kind of round out the history since it was, uh, called a Schedule 1 Drug, we have had some advances in as far as there's a synthetic THC, the active ingredient in marijuana that we theorize as responsible for all of these great effects, um, Marinol which is used for cancer and HIV patients for appetite and nausea and that kind of thing.

Sydnee:

Um, marijuana, as you probably know, has been legalized for medical use in, in 20 different states. Uh, in some of these states, this is actually used, um, because there are dispensaries.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, some of these states it's not even practical. So it's, it's legal to prescribe medical marijuana, but there's nobody who dispenses it, so-

Justin:

Right. Not a lot you can do with that.

Sydnee:

... No. So I mean, it's just, it's just on the books and you know, if that's it. Uh, this is still in violation of federal law though.

Justin:

It's sort of like the, one of those hear no evil, see no evil type deals though, right.

Sydnee:

Well, every once in a while, the, the DEA gets all upset and talks about prosecuting, you know, physicians who prescribe it or people who grow it or whatever, but then they're not doing it.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

And I think it's because of all this controversy we're talking about. Um, and because you know, people like Sanjay Gupta are in favor of it for medical use.

Justin:

And I trust Sanjay.

Sydnee:

And, and multiple other countries have done this. Um, now here would be my question.

Justin:

Hit me.

Sydnee:

Does it work?

Justin:

I don't know.

Sydnee:

For anything?

Justin:

You're the doctor.

Sydnee:

Well, this is a hard question to answer. And, and I mean, I guess my, my final answer is, I don't know, but let me give you some reasons why. Again, like I said, a lot of studies on the, um, effects on our brain are done in rats. We know that... now we do know enough about the human brain and, and, uh, cannabinoids to know that we do have receptors for it.

And we know that it can do a variety of things. Uh, but when we do studies on like dependence and withdrawal, um, a lot of those are done in rats, which is really funny because they actually get little rats to like smoke a joint.

Justin:

Ah.

Sydnee:

I mean, they can give it to them in other ways, but there are ways where they can get them to like puff on a little fake, like vaporizer.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

It's not a [crosstalk 00:35:31] joint I should say. It's like a little vaporizer, you know, so they can smoke it [crosstalk 00:35:35]. I know. So that's,

that's kind of cute. And they found that like once the rat gets high, it doesn't go back for more until it's not high again.

Justin:

Oh, that's good. I'm cool.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

I'm good now. No problem. Um, they, but both, uh, withdraw independence while we have observed this in rats, to some extent is not nearly as severe as it is in benzodiazepines, which are medicines like Xanax and Ativan.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Medicines that are legal or opiates. So if we're worried about dependence and withdrawal, well, we're already prescribing medicines that are way, you know.

Justin:

Way worse.

Sydnee:

That are way worse than marijuana.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

As far as human studies, a lot of what we do is anecdotal. So we interview of people who smoke pot.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Because we can't give it to them. So we take a bunch of people who have pain and say, do you smoke marijuana? And if they say yes, we put them in one group. And if they say no, we put them in another. And then we ask them a bunch of questions.

Justin:

Seems like a weird way to get a sample.

Sydnee:

Well, it's not a very good sample.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Because these people are already, you know, risking incarceration depending on where you are, uh, to use the marijuana. And so that may say other things about them and, and they may actually already be sold on marijuana for its recreational use. So then how much is it helping with their chronic pain? I don't know. That's, and I mean maybe it is, but the thing is, it's not a great way to do a study.

Justin:

Okay. That makes sense.

Sydnee:

Um, now, uh, there are, there are some recent studies that we've done, um, that have shown some limited benefits. So if you look at Parkinson's patients, we think maybe it can improve their symptoms, decrease some pain, improve some sleep.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

In HIV patients there've been some small studies done where it's improved pain, depression, nausea, weight loss, all kinds of different things. In general, our thought is that it may be helpful with chronic pain. It may be helpful with nausea, with appetite, of course, glaucoma, because there were some old studies that showed that it lowered intraocular pressure.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

But none of this is, is really that heavily supported. Um, if you, if you wanna find a good controlled trial, you know, placebo controlled trial out there, it just isn't. And the bigger problem is that, um, a lot of it, we're just asking patients to tell us how they feel.

Justin:

And they perceive it as better because it's marijuana.

Sydnee:

Exactly. So that's the big limitation with marijuana research. It makes you feel good. So you receive more benefits, but then some people would mention, well, isn't that enough then?

Justin:

Isn't that perception of reality?

Sydnee:

Yeah. I mean, if it, if your perception is that your pain is less, does it matter, you know. And, and they do functional MRIs to say like, well, but look, the pain areas of the brain are just as strong in this versus this. But if your perception of the pain is less, does it, does it matter.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

I don't know. And, and then the other thing is, you know, is, uh, is the question of a gateway drug, you know, is marijuana truly, you know, a way that our, you know, our kids are gonna start using marijuana because it's legal, and then all of a sudden they're gonna be using heroin.

Justin:

That's a dumb reason not to do something though.

Sydnee:

It is. And there's not, there's not consistent evidence to support that either.

Justin:

Right. [sighs]

Sydnee:

But there's not consistent evidence to say the other way. That's the, and that's the problem with a lot of this. And then you throw in there that a lot of the people were asking about smoking marijuana, they're not getting it from one, you know, it's not like everybody's getting pot from the same place.

So we're talking about different strains that are grown in different parts of the world, different amounts of different cannabinoids and different potencies, what works for what.

Justin:

Some it's very kind. Some it's less kind.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

It's hard to keep track.

Sydnee:

Well, and you, and different things may work better for nausea versus pain versus depression, whatever. We have no way of knowing in unless we're actually manufacturing it.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So I, I don't know. The, my... the big question for me would be this, do the risks of marijuana really outweigh the risks of opiates, which we already use for chronic pain 'cause that's a big question with marijuana. We wanna use it for things like cancer pain, and if it works for cancer pain, I'm all for it. I don't know. I think it would probably a lot of the evidence says, is it an adjunct? You would wanna use it with another pain medicine.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

but I certainly think it's less addictive than, uh, oxycodone. I think many people in the state of West Virginia would attest to that.

Justin:

Well, I hope that we can get some more research on it Syd because I'd like some answers darn it.

Sydnee:

There are just to let you know, there are two medicines on the market-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... that are derivatives of cannabinoids that are legal everywhere, everywhere. Well, Marinol, which I've already mentioned, which, which is a synthetic THC, which is legal in the U.S. And then there's, uh, Sativex which isn't legal in the U.S. but is in many other countries. And it's actually an oral, oral mucosal spray.

Justin:

Meaning?

Sydnee:

Um, that you just spray it in your mouth.

Justin:

Oh, okay.

Sydnee:

And it's absorbed. And it's used for MS Patients for, um, the kind of nerve pain they get.

Justin:

Huh. Well, those sound boring. I would like to have actual weed please. So let's get this research done together America, please, before my child is here and I have to stop anyway, 'cause there's nothing lamer than, than like me smoking, doobin' it out with my baby upstairs.

Sydnee:

[laughs] I think-

Justin:

It's not a good look.

Sydnee:

... Well, I think you hit on the big, this would be my last take home point.

Justin:

I'm ready.

Sydnee:

Which would be that if marijuana really can improve pain, improve depression and help with things like loss of appetite and nausea in um, you know, cancer patients. I think I'm all for it. I certainly think that anecdotally on my end that people do a lot, uh, less harm when they're high on marijuana than they do when they are high on opiates, when they're, um, high on benzos or when they're drunk-

Justin:

Drunk. Okay.

Sydnee:

... for instance.

Justin:

Yep.

Sydnee:

And I don't know that we can make a convincing argument that marijuana is any more dangerous than cigarettes.

Justin:

There it is.

Sydnee:

So, so if the evidence is there, I'm all for it, but we gotta, we've gotta reschedule marijuana so that we can prove it 'cause as a doctor, I'm gonna need some hard evidence before I'm willing to write that prescription.

Justin:

Reschedule marijuana.

Sydnee:

There you go.

Justin:

And I could suggest a time maybe 4:20.

Sydnee:

Really?

Justin:

As the reschedule.

Sydnee:

You made it the whole episode.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

The whole episode.

Justin:

Uh, listen, thank you so much for listening to our program. I wanted to give you one last pitch on this before we let you go. maximumfun.org/donate Max Fun Drive. We only do this once a year. Um, and gosh, it would just mean the world to us when, when just so you know, when people go and make their donations and then say listen to *Sawbones*, uh, it really makes us look good and it helps everybody like us, which is all we've ever wanted.

Um, for \$5 a month, you can be a Maximum Fun member, get you 44 hours of exclusive bonus content. For \$10 a month, you'll be a friend of the family and you'll get a delightful cat calendar by Megan Lynn Kott of all of us as kitties.

Sydnee:

You won't have that a picture of the cat like that's like hanging on the branch that says, hang in there.

Justin:

It's better than that.

Sydnee:

I'm sorry about that. But otherwise it's way better.

Justin:

It's better than that.

Sydnee:

Other than that huge exception, it's way better.

Justin:

Uh, for \$20 a month, you'll be in the diamond friendship circle and get the Max Fun morning essentials kit, which includes a coffee mug, a delicious bag of Tonx coffee. Well, the coffee's delicious. I don't know that the bag is frankly, uh, probably is probably biodegradable and like made of filo dough or something. And then you get a-

Sydnee:

It's not.

Justin:

... it's not. And then you get a bar of stack soap, the soap with a divot.

Sydnee:

So go get clean-

Justin:

Go get clean.

Sydnee:

... you dirty kid. Come on.

Justin:

Dirty punk. \$35 a month you'll be in Judge Hodgman justice squad. And you'll get a pair of rocket engraved high ball glasses. So go to maximumfun.org/donate. Please help us to, uh, make more shows, uh, pay for the people that make the shows and pay for the stuff we used to make the shows with.

Sydnee:

And don't forget that if we happen to be your favorite show, go ahead and mention that.

Justin:

Uh, one last thing super quick. We are doing a live show, two live shows technically in New York on May 24th, uh, at the, uh, People's Improv Theater. Uh, you can go to our Twitter page, uh, which is, uh, twitter.com/sawbones or to, uh, the People's Improv Theater's, uh, website. If you want to get tickets to that, there's a-

Sydnee:

There's another podcast that will also be doing a show.

Justin:

... Yeah.

Sydnee:

You may have heard of them.

Justin:

My Brother, My Brother and Me is also gonna be doing a show. *Sawbones* will open for, uh, them. You can go to thepit-nyc.com to get tickets. Uh, all tickets are 20 bucks. We're doing a 4:00 PM and a 9:30 PM. Both completely different shows, but come out and see them because I... they'll be good.

Sydnee:

They'll be great. I mean, I'm gonna be super pregnant, but they're gonna be awesome.

Justin:

Sooo prego. Uh, so please come on to those shows. We, we would really appreciate seeing you there and come shake our hand and give us a hug and stuff. Uh, don't touch Sydnee's stomach, uh, because that's creepy.

Sydnee:

Yeah. That's... I, I was gonna say, oh no, it's okay. But no, really.

Justin:

No, it's, it's creepy.

Sydnee:

No, but I'll hug you.

Justin:

Sure. Not too tight though 'cause of the baby.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Uh, anyway, we'll be really close to the finish line there guys. We just wanna make sure that stay on the straight and narrow.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Uh, anyway, um, go get those tickets, follow us on Twitter maximumfun.org/donate. Thanks to The Taxpayers for letting us use their song medicines and our intro and outro. And that's gonna do it for us. I think, make sure to join us again next Tuesday for another episode of *Sawbones*. Until then I'm Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

And as always don't drill a hole in your head.

[theme music plays out]

Maximumfun.org.

Comedy and culture,

Artist owned.

Listener supported.