

Sawbones 177: Norovirus

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Intro (Clint McElroy):

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

[theme music plays]

Tracy:

And I will hand you over to Sawbones.

Justin:

Let's keep it going. Thank you, Tracy.

[audience cheering]

Justin:

I don't need this one. Hold on.

Sydnee:

And we have too many mics.

Justin:

This is fine.

Sydnee:

There's so many.

Justin:

If this one rolls off, you guys shout at me. Don't want to like, Poseidon Adventure this bad boy. All right, thank you.

Sydnee:

Thank you, Tracy. One of my podcast scene muses, inspirations. Thank you.

Justin:

Um, so what are we doing a show about today, Sydnee? Oh, oh, I— let me do my... the right one.

Sydnee:

Do your thing. We're recording this too.

Justin:

We're recording for posterity.

Sydnee:

Yes, so...

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.

[audience cheering]

Justin:

You know what? It used to hurt. It doesn't anymore. You people can't hurt me anymore. Skin of stone. So, what's the show about today, Syd?

Sydnee:

Well, uh, you... many of you probably don't know this. None of you know this. Uh, w—what I just do is I know... I mean, I know everything, right, about medical history, like it's all just up here. I certainly don't research this and so I just have a list of topics and you know, whatever week it is, I just click through and we'll just see what's up this week so let's... Hold on, I'm gonna tell you.

Justin:

[dooting]

Sydnee:

Oh... [whispers] This was bad timing.

Justin:

What is... what is it? What's...

Sydnee:

This was very bad timing.

Justin:

What is it?

Sydnee:

Let's not... You know what, let's just take questions. Why don't we do questions? Let's not... We don't want to do this.

Justin:

No, no, no, no, no. We only—

Sydnee:

We don't want to do this.

Justin:

We only do Q & A ones when we don't have time to prep an actual episode.

Sydnee:

No, let's just... you know, shots, hey! Shots for everybody!

[audience cheering]

Justin:

Is it... okay, no stop.

Sydnee:

There we go.

Justin:

This isn't Senor Frogs, okay? We're on a cruise ship. This is a classy place. What's it about, Sydster?

Sydnee:

Um, well the topic this week is... norovirus.

[audience cheering]

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

I am sorry about that.

Justin:

What? I don't get it.

Sydnee:

But it's Friday so you've made it this far.

Justin:

Yeah, if you didn't get it yet... by yet, you're probably fine.

Sydnee:

Probably, hopefully. Ooh, well, we'll get into that.

Justin:

This feels weird to me over here. Are you usually over here?

Sydnee:

I'm usually over there. Hold on. Oh, this is so much better.

Justin:

Thank God.

Sydnee:

That was very awkward.

Justin:

Yeah, let the show continue or begin now actually. Start.

Sydnee:

Do you want to know about norovirus?

Justin:

Yeah!

Sydnee:

Since you have seemingly survived it hopefully. Keep your fingers crossed. Uh, so norovirus... In 1929, a pediatrician named Zahorsky, uh, that I want to tell you just a little bit about. Dr. Zahorsky was an immigrant from what was then Austria-Hungary, who moved to Missouri as a child and then

worked three jobs to pay his way through medical school, and then he went on to devote his life to the care of premature infants.

In St. Louis, he saved lives. He improved neonatal care. He was one of the first fathers of what we think of as the neonatal intensive care unit of those boxes that you see premature babies in. He was one of the first fathers of that. He encouraged mothers, uh, breastfeeding. He was a— an amazing doctor who then retired to return to his hometown and be a home country doctor for kids in his hometown.

An amazing guy who also wrote about winter vomiting sickness which is what we now call norovirus.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I only mention all that because immigrants gettin' the job done.

[audience cheering]

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Just had to... had to throw that out there, Dr. Zahorsky.

Justin:

Unless that job is naming his disease because that was not a very good job. That— that... In that one instance, winter vomit—... What is it?

Sydnee:

Winter vomiting sickness. [laughs]

Justin:

You get one chance to finally name something and you're just like, "Well, what time is it? Okay, it's winter. Okay, I'm vomiting. Done."

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I mean, we named it again later.

Justin:

'Cause we all acknowledged like tacitly and I was like, "Hey, they didn't do a very good job, did he?" No.

Sydnee:

That was great. We love you. You did a great job but we're gonna rename that.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

But he was probably the first one to write about it but at the time, we didn't have the technology to see like, is this the same bug that's causing it, what family is it in, what are we gonna call it, so he just like, winter vomiting sickness and everybody went, "Hmm, interesting." And then moved on. It wasn't until a lovely fall day in October, 1968—

Justin:

And somebody got it and they were like, "Well, we have to rename it."

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

So let me take you to Norwalk, Ohio. It's a... We are at Norwalk-Bronson Elementary School. Do you want to be the principal?

Justin:

Uh...

Sydnee:

You're Principal Conway, Principal William Conway.

Justin:

Uh, Principal Conway here.

Sydnee:

It's a... it's a beautiful fall day.

Justin:

A beautiful fall day...

Sydnee:

School has just started.

Justin:

School has just started.

Sydnee:

And you... and the bell has already rung.

Justin:

The bell's already rung. What?

Sydnee:

The students are in their classrooms.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Doing what they do as students.

Justin:

Do go about your business, young fellow.

Sydnee:

And he begins checking the attendance rolls. Is that something Principal's do? [laughs]

Justin:

Hello, it's me. I'm a Principal with poor time management.

Sydnee:

He goes through all the attendance just to see who's there.

Justin:

Check the rolls.

Sydnee:

Which is scary, your principals were doing that. They knew when you skipped school 'cause they were checking. So he's checking his attendance rolls and he notices something odd.

Justin:

Oh, this is odd.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

There are [laughs]... there are a lot of absent students.

Justin:

And it's... it's fall. Wait... How could... how could this be?

Sydnee:

[laughs] About a third of his students between 3rd and 5th grade are gone, which is like ten times more than an average school day. So there are a lot of people gone. So he does what any responsible principal does and alert the local health officials, which I didn't know they did that so he called the local health department and was like, "Uh, I got a third of students out. Something is going on. Somebody... somebody got us sick. I don't know."

Justin:

What time period are we talking about again?

Sydnee:

1968.

Justin:

Okay, all right.

Sydnee:

Does that help? [laughs]

Justin:

So relatively recent. Well, no...

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

No. Yeah.

Sydnee:

Are you picturing him in bell bottoms now or what...

Justin:

No, I was gonna make a joke about how like, maybe the new Mario game came out, but like that doesn't make any sense in that—

Sydnee:

No, that doesn't.

Justin:

Like on what, punch cards?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Is that the history of video games? I don't even know.

Justin:

UNIVAC has a new Mario game out. I'm still the principal who apparently is an expert in video games? [laughs] Old timey video games?

Sydnee:

So he calls the local health department and an investigation begins, but by this time people are getting really sick. Students, teachers, the faculty, people in this elementary school are dropping like flies. There are students and teachers puking in the hallways, like laying the hallways, sick... I mean, it's a... it's a whole... it's a mess. It's a mess.

Justin:

That one scene from Gone with the Wind, it's just like laid out.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

We don't... we don't curse on this show but it was a poop show was what I would say. Not the other word.

Justin:

Literally.

Sydnee:

Right. [laughs] That's exactly what's happening. In two days, half of the school, students and faculty, everybody got sick with GI symptoms. They were puking, they were pooping. They were sick. Another 32% of the school got it from those initial contacts, so everybody got sick. Norwalk-Bronson Elementary School was a disaster scene.

But then four days later, it's gone. Everybody's better. Whatever caused it has left town. All the kids are back in school. All the teachers are back. Principal Conway can go through his attendance rolls and everything's normal again. But nobody knows what's happened.

And as a result for another six months in this elementary school, all the kids had to bring like boxed lunches and drink bottled water and everybody was terrified every day, like, "Is the pooping coming back?" [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

But they were okay. So initially they couldn't... they couldn't figure out what caused it but they had alerted public health officials and so the CDC got involved and the Centers for Disease Control, the CDC, decided we are going to chase this down and keep studying it until we figure out what the heck happened in Norwalk, Ohio. So they took...

Justin:

So...

Sydnee:

... isolates from the sick people. Now I... by that I mean they took poop from sick people. [laughs]

Justin:

Y'all got so many charming ways to not say poop. I meant to compliment you on that. You're... you doctors have a lot of cool ways of not saying poop.

Sydnee:

I— I am about to go through a series of ways that... I love.. I love—

Justin:

Cool ways.

Sydnee:

... to read research papers, uh, by scientists who are trying to describe really disgusting things that we do when we're trying to figure something out but they don't want to say like, we made people eat poop, so they came up with like all these like creative way of wording it. We—

Justin:

We gave people Dominos. Wink.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

That's just the first thing that came in my head y'all. I'm actually into Dominos. They have gotten a lot better in recent years. Where all my Domino Head people at? Yeah. Yeah, you like Dominos.

Sydnee:

I like Dominos. It's good now. Uh, so...

Justin:

[laughs] That was its slogan for a long time.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

It really was. It really was. Like the commercials were like, "Have you tried it recently? 'Cause it's so much better."

Justin:

"It used to be bad... Dominos."

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

So the first... the first task, this was 1968, and they wanted to figure out was this a bacteria or a virus? And this is like a big deal. This sounds like, "Well, who cares?" I mean that's what most people who aren't in medicine are like, "Whatever. Who cares? Just like stop me from pooping." And [laughs] the thing is viruses were and still kind of are like the mysterious, sexy undead of the microbiological world.

Justin:

They look sweet. They look totally sweet.

Sydnee:

Well...

Justin:

Like a cool.. they've got like a cool crystal at the end and it's like a staph and it's like spider legs.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

That... okay.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Yeah, that's a bacteriophage. That's really good.

Justin:

Thanks. Thanks Sydnee.

Sydnee:

I'm really impressed.

Justin:

Yeah, no problem.

Sydnee:

That's good.

Justin:

No big deal.

Sydnee:

It really... they really are.

Justin:

I just know some things I guess. This whole time...

Sydnee:

And you know that? How do you remember that thing? How is that the thing?

Justin:

'Cause it looks sweet, Sydnee.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Everything else looks like a big, dumb glob with a circle in the middle and that one thing is like a friggin' heavy metal album cover.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

That's really true. Viruses are kind of like the Edward Cullen of the microbiology world because it was like, "They're dangerous but they're so sexy and I can't keep myself away. Is it alive? Is it dead? I don't know."

[laughs] But its cheekbones are amazing.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

So— so they passed it through a filter to try to figure out is this a bacteria or a virus? So that's where we get all of these next sentences, from the various studies that were done. That's what we're talking about is they— they took poop and they passed it through a filter. So they then in one study, fecal filtrate was used to induce illness in human volunteers. So let's—let's break that down a different way.

Justin:

Nah, nah, nah, nah, nah, nah. It's fine, I get it.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

No, no, no. I got another one. Aerosolized bacteria free throat washings or fecal suspensions from persons in a gastroenteritis outbreak were administered to humans.

Justin:

That's, uh... that's when the 1960s Batman show got way off course like...

[audience laughs]

Justin:

"I don't buy...i don't buy it, Penguin."

Sydnee:

[laughs] I got one more. They induced afebrile diarrhea illness following oral administration of pooled bacteria free fecal filtrates or throat washings of patients. So they got volunteers to eat poop from sick people. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Did you say it's bacteria-free though?

Sydnee:

Yeah, well no, it was a virus so you're... I mean, that's how...

Justin:

Oh, all right. Cool.

Sydnee:

... they proved it.

Justin:

All right.

Sydnee:

But they had to give to so many people just to say, "Nope, it's definitely a virus. We still don't know which one. We don't know anything about it but we made all these humans eat poop and..."

Justin:

What could that sales pitch be? Could... do you think it was like you just laid it out to me, like they threw a bunch of jargon out and then they were like, "So, do you want \$10?"

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Like, "Can you repeat it on more time?"

Sydnee:

That's what they figured out at the end. They were like, "This is definitely a virus and humans will do anything for money."

Justin:

Anything for... yeah. Throw \$10 at them...

Sydnee:

Anything at all. [laughs] So they proved that it was a virus but it was still really hard to figure out, viruses, what do they look like? Um, we have to use... this is one of the things that attracted me to infectious diseases initially 'cause in order to look at viruses you have to use an electron microscope and you have to make these little like pellets of stuff that then... you then cut with a diamond knife... a diamond... 'cause it's so sharp. And you cut it and then you look at it under an electron microscope.

Justin:

It's so cute when you expect nerdy things to get the kind of reaction you're hoping for.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I felt like on this cruise people would agree with me. [laughs]

[audience cheers]

Sydnee:

I feel like I was in, you know, like minded company.

Justin:

I'll allow it.

Sydnee:

So eventually by 1972, they fed a lot of poop to a lot of people.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

By 1972, they were able to isolate a virus that caused all this pooping and they called it... Well, there were several different things. They initially called it the Norwalk virus. So when you talk about norovirus and Norwalk virus, you're really talking about the same thing. You're talking about the clinical syndrome that happens as a result of norovirus. So Norwalk virus is what a lot of people call it. They also called it Norwalk like virus, Norwalk agent, Small Rounded structure virus, which is not...

Justin:

They knew that one wasn't gonna catch on.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

They tried to go back to the winter vomiting bug, winter vomiting disease, snow mountain virus, acute nonbacterial gastroenteritis, stomach flu. Norwalk is kind of what stuck. For the record, in that light, the people of Norwalk, Ohio... [laughs] ... would like you to know the following, Norwalk, also known as the Maple City... Sounds delightful, doesn't it? The Maple City. They are home to a hundred year old furniture factory, [laughs], a performing arts center, a drag racing track, and they are the home of Paul Brown, famous football coach of Cleveland Browns fame.

Justin:

I'm enjoying this list and I'm starting to guess what's not gonna be on it.
[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

They would like you to remember Norwalk, Ohio for literally anything other than the vomiting, pooping bug named for Norwalk, Ohio.

Justin:

And also one time, a school full of kids pooped their brains out.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

"Darryl, I told you to get it off the list! I don't know how to edit HTML and you know this and it's cruel. Please go and remove it from our website. Please. You are my deputy. Please, you have to do this."

Sydnee:

I actually searched... I searched the Norwalk, Ohio website to see like is there any mention. Well, of course not. Of course. They have all these lovely things like please come visit Norwalk. Please. I promise you nobody is puking and pooping here right now. That was 1968. That's gone. Please come visit us, the Maple City.

Justin:

That would be a weird tourism thing to lean into though. I don't know how they would capitalize on that.

Sydnee:

[laughs] If they want us to do ads, I'm ready. I know everything about Norwalk, Ohio now. So norovirus, now that we know what it's called, let's talk a little bit about it. It is a viral illness that causes inflammation of your stomach and your intestines.

Justin:

Do you know how noro came from Norwalk... why noro...

Sydnee:

Noro is like the family of viruses.

Justin:

Oh, so it's not connected?

Sydnee:

It is, I mean when... Yes, there are other...

Justin:

Oh, is it cute?

Sydnee:

There are other...

Justin:

Is it like clever? Is it a pun?

Sydnee:

No.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

There's just like there are other noroviridae. There are other noroviruses. It's just when you start puking and having diarrhea, Norwalk virus is what you're talking about.

Justin:

But are... you... but it's not... you...

Sydnee:

No, it's different.

Justin:

It's not called noro because noro sounds like of like Norwalk?

Sydnee:

Well...

Justin:

Was anyone else thinking the same thing? Like I was not... Okay.

Sydnee:

I mean, yeah. No, I guess it must have been because then they broke it down afterwards. Yeah, noro came from Norwalk.

Justin:

Okay. I wasn't trying to...

Sydnee:

No, you're right.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

But there was... there was this... There we go. [laughs]

Justin:

Well....

[audience cheers]

Sydnee:

From what I...

Justin:

None of us have Wi-Fi. Let's not go crazy, okay?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I couldn't find this...

Justin:

Nobody's writing 'til we get to San Diego [laughs] and we can check.

Sydnee:

I couldn't find this substantiated but what I had read norovirus is initially what a lot of, like if you got... if you got sick, they would say norovirus and there was like this big push not to call it norovirus because Noro is a common last name and it was associated with like this family name...

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

... and so instead let's just through this tiny town in Ohio under the bus and call it Norwalk instead. But there's actually multiple noroviruses. Anyway, it causes you to puke and you get stomach pain and you poop a lot and you

get headaches and you get fevers and body aches but it's pretty quick. After you're exposed, you're gonna get symptoms in between 12 and 48 hours, usually pretty early though and it... it really hits fast and furious, and one to three days later, you're completely fine. Which is why like it hit that tiny elementary school and everybody got sick and then everybody was fine.

The only real worry is dehydration which is true with any kind of diarrheal illness, like we just worry that you're not going to replenish your fluids fast enough and you're gonna get really dehydrated and that can cause other problems but for most people, it's just really inconvenient. Uh, for the very young and the very old and anybody who has any underlying illness, it could be more of a big deal. But for most people, it's just... it just sucks.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

[theme music plays]

Sydnee:

It does come on sometime between November and April, so like the winter vomiting illness, that's actually pretty true and it spreads really easily as in like 20 viral particles are all it takes for you to get sick from getting in contact with this. So, we talk about it on cruise ships, but actually, it's just as common in schools, day cares, nursing homes, restaurants, any kind of catered event, uh, military settings. Any place where a lot of people are really close together, you're at risk.

Justin:

It could pop off. If it pops off there, it's gonna pop off pretty much anywhere there's concentration.

Sydnee:

Exactly. Um, and I... and I love how do you get it? How do you get it? This is my favorite part. How do you get it? The CDC says you can become infected with norovirus by accidentally stool or vomit from infected people in your mouth. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I hope... I mean, accidentally, let's hope like, accidentally.

Justin:

It's a cool disease 'cause it's kind of like the nihilism of diseases 'cause it forces you to confront some unpleasant realities.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Just like, "Hey, and also, you eat poop sometimes. Shh, anyway, enjoy your diarrhea."

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

That's also called the...

Justin:

Like enough times that we have a name for the thing when it happens. They need slang for how often you eat poop.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Like if you ask how it happened, they don't say like, "Get a chair. I'm gonna need some time to explain this to you." They say, "Oh, we have a name for it. It's the fecal oral route. It goes... from poop to your mouth. Get it? Anyway, that will be \$50."

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

I'm so proud that you know the name of that route now.

Justin:

Yeah, I'll—I'll be trotting that out at every dinner party I want to get evicted from.

Sydnee:

That's my favorite route. It's so much better than respiratory droplets or airborne. The fecal oral route. You know exactly what it is, and it reminds us that, I mean, we're animals everybody.

Justin:

It's a lot better than 23 when you're going up through Kentucky, there's nothing there.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Better stop and get gas in Portsmouth 'cause you're not gonna hit fuel for... See, if you're going to Cincinnati, it's usually the quick...

Sydnee:

[laughs] Now the problem is that even though...

Justin:

From Huntington at least.

Sydnee:

Yeah, right. Everybody—everybody's point of reference is from Huntington, West Virginia.

Justin:

To Cincinnati on the east coast of America.

Sydnee:

Everybody thinks like, "Where am I going? Well, let's start in Huntington, obviously, that's where we start." Uh, the problem is that even though your symptoms are really short lived, so you didn't puke and poop very long, you're continuing to shed the virus in your stool for up to two weeks. So you're still infectious long after you feel better, you're still... if you don't wash your hands, you're still gonna give it to people which is why you get these outbreaks where it just keeps spreading if people aren't, you know, washing their hands like they're supposed to.

It's the leading cause of illness from food in the United States. It causes 19 to 21 million illness in the US yearly. What that means is we think about it as this like isolated outbreak kind of thing, everybody's had... probably in this room, you've all had norovirus. You are likely to get it about five times in your life.

Justin:

How's your week? How's your week going, pretty good?

Sydnee:

The only illness...

Justin:

Remember the route? Remember five times?

[audience laughs]

Justin:

[blows raspberry]

Sydnee:

The only illness...

Justin:

That's five times just when people already have it!

[audience laughs]

Justin:

That means you'll eat poop infinity times probably!

[audience laughs]

Justin:

I hate this.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

I take it back. I don't want to do this one.

Sydnee:

The only viral illness that is more common is the common cold, so we think about norovirus as this... as this specialized thing... No, it's out there. Most of the time when you get something that may... You know, they call it the stomach flu. "I got a stomach bug." "Oh, I just can't stop puking." "My

kid..." we have a kid. "My kid gave it to me again." You probably had norovirus so does demystifying it help? No?

Justin:

No. No, ma'am. No ma'am, it does not.

Sydnee:

Once you get it, you can still get it again.

Justin:

Cool.

Sydnee:

So, it's not like... you're not protected forever, sorry.

Justin:

Do you have any good news about it or...?

Sydnee:

Um, you can test for it [laughs] in stool and vomit if you want to do it that way, uh, that is frozen, and in frozen individual bags, that will last up to five years. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

[laughs] If you're into that.

Justin:

So grody. Hey, can we please clean this freezer up? No, wait, hold on. I'm running some tests and it's only been four years, so just get comfortable, okay? Put your sandwich somewhere else.

Sydnee:

But that's exactly what somebody did at some point. Somebody did that.

Justin:

Yeah, no kidding, Sydnee.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Science is great.

Justin:

Yeah, science is the best. It's just the best.

Sydnee:

Um, for...

Justin:

Don't cheer for science on this one, guys.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Listen, we don't have to support science in everything, okay? Sometimes science goes off on some whack stuff and you don't have to follow it there.

Sydnee:

If I put your poop in a bag, how long do you think it would last in the freezer? An individual bag, one of the little Ziploc baggies that are only big enough for half a sandwich.

Justin:

Isn't that sad though? You put one person's poop in a bag, you're a scientist. You put a bunch of people's poop in a bag, you're a weirdo.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

They didn't know about that, honey. You didn't have to tell them about that.
[laughs]

Justin:

You take that poop out of the bag, use it to grow potatoes on Mars, you're Matt Damon.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

They were showing that joint on a loop yesterday. I don't know if anybody caught it. Yeah, this guy knows what I'm talking about.

Sydnee:

Great movie.

Justin:

He watched the Martian with me.

Sydnee:

So the treatment, I mean, mainly you just ride it out, buddies. You just drink a lot of water and hopefully it will pass soon and you won't get too dehydrated on the way. For most of us, that's—that's all we're gonna do. Stay hydrated and ride it out.

Obviously, as I mentioned, there are specialized populations, very little kids who I... Let me tell you, if you ever tried to get a one year old to drink when they're dehydrated, that is a task. That's a whole thing unto itself so obviously there are cases where people could have to be hospitalized, but most of us, it's just gonna be locking yourself in your cabin and drinking a lot of water until you get better.

Prevention is easy. Wash your hands.

Justin:

Don't eat poop.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Wash your hands. Wash fruits and veggies. Cook seafood, uh, wash your laundry. Like if you get sick, wash everything. Don't cook... if you're sick, don't cook food for other people. [laughs] It's kind of—

Justin:

You know, we should really take some time to relax, you're earned it.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Yeah, lay back and poop—

Justin:

You don't feel good. Get some fluids.

Sydnee:

... and let somebody else take care of the cooking. [laughs] 'Cause it's gonna take a really long time too 'cause you're gonna keep gong to the bathroom. Clean all surfaces, I mean but really hand washing. Hand washing, basic hand washing is the way that we prevent the spread so it's not like this... Every time somebody gets norovirus it doesn't lead to this horrible outbreak 'cause if that were true, we would all be pooping all the time every day. [laughs] You just wash your hands.

Justin:

I did... I mean, we're not supposed to be pooping every day?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Well, I mean all the time every day.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

Okay. [laughs]

Justin:

Back and forth forever.

Sydnee:

So why...

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Ew. So why do we associate it then... if it's that common, if it's the same thing that your kid brings home from school, if it's the same thing that can

tear daycares apart, why do we associate it... Well, I mean it's true. Why do we associate it with cruises? Well, it's kind of like we're all jammed in here together. That's just a big part of it. We're all... we've all gotten very close this week. Um, that's true. And also...

Justin:

We didn't meant it like that but please woo.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

We meant like fecal oral close but that is fine emotionally... emotionally as well. Wooing is appropriate.

Sydnee:

Which when you think about it what's more intimate than that really?

Justin:

[retches] Stop.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

But the other thing is it's tracked on cruise ships so it's kind of an unfair thing. You know, every time it happens in a school or a day care, it's not like it's—it's on the news, um, unless it shuts the whole school down like in Norwalk but it's... we keep track of it on cruise ships.

So when an illness happens, it's being logged somewhere. If you're sick in your room and you tell somebody, they're keeping track of that and the CDC keeps track of it. So because we keep track of all these illnesses and tally them up, it seems like it happens a lot more but it's just because we're aware of it. So that's... that's a huge thing.

Justin:

I always assumed there was an element of jealousy to it too. Like when you see those stories on the news, the thought in your head is always like serves them right for going on a cruise that I'm not on. Those jerks.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Um, if you do get sick, and we've... we are... we have such little time left, it's probably too late for this. This was good advice at the beginning of the week. If you do get sick, you should tell somebody so we can quarantine you immediately in your cabin. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Can you bring your ukulele?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

You can bring your ukulele with you, just, I mean, wash your hands if you're gonna lend it to anybody.

Justin:

Oh, right.

Sydnee:

Um, if you do see somebody sick, the advice is get away from them fast.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Run away. [laughs] If you see somebody puking, turn away and run. If you see somebody pooping, where are you or where are they?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

What is happening? I mean, that's fine. Far be it for me to judge. Um, but because of that, we keep track of it. There were 20 reports of noroviruses on cruise ships last year, that's 2,384 people who got sick, puking and pooping which isn't really that much when you think about the scale of norovirus. It's just... that's... we keep track of it so we count those numbers.

Um, many cruises have reported this illness because we have to report them all. One ship gets the name the Cursed Cruise Ship. That's not this one. Because of how many different outbreaks it's had. That's called the Balmoral. Uh, it's an old ship. It was built in 1987, Balmoral. Either way. It's

had six outbreaks of norovirus in the last seven years which is a lot. That's a lot for a cruise ship. Most don't have those kinds of numbers.

Um, the last one, last year... about 300 people got sick. They had to cut, uh, the cruise early by a day. A lot of... all those 300 people were like kept inside their cabins and people got very angry and complained. They refunded one day worth of cruise for everybody. They gave them like a discount on a future cruise.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

But like legal action resulted because people were so upset 'cause their holiday was ruined. Now, you can look up any ship's record, like their most recent inspection on the CDC website at the vessel sanitation program. You can go to cdc.gov and look up any boat. They've been... within the last year, they have been graded, like a health inspection grade and as long as you get over 85, you're passing and of course once I figured this out, guess what I did?

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

Now who wants to know?

[audience cheers]

Justin:

Go for it.

Sydnee:

We got 100%.

Justin:

What!

Sydnee:

The Westerdam did great. It did great. I looked its history up. We're fine. This ship is great.

Justin:

It's great. 100%.

Sydnee:

That's right.

Justin:

Let's give another round of applause for the crew of the Westerdam. That's fantastic.

[audience cheers]

Sydnee:

That's right.

Justin:

Even... even if they were tempted to...

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

... they never gave anybody...

Sydnee:

[laughs] To give... because it's intentional, obviously.

Justin:

It's not intentional, you know what I mean.

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

Um, is that... is that all the show?

Sydnee:

[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

The... usually at the end of our show if you're not familiar Justin says is that all the show and I say yes.

Justin:

Yeah, but then I edit it out. Uh, so, uh, thank you to the Taxpayers for the use of their song, Medicines as the intro and outro of our program.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Well, I'm recording it and I don't want to do it twice so I'm just...

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

So thank you to them.

Sydnee:

Uh-huh.

Justin:

Thank you to the Maximum Fun Network so having us as a part of their family of podcasts.

[audience cheers]

Justin:

Thank you to, uh, uh, uh, the Jonathan Coulton cruise and the people who organized it and everything for having us. It's been an absolute delight so thank you to them. Um, do you, uh, do— do you, uh... should we do the s— song I wrote?

Sydnee:

Do you want to do it?

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I was giving you room to...

Justin:

Sydnee told me the topic and I told her that I wanted to write a song 'cause I had a ukulele all of a sudden.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

And I, um, I only one song on ukulele.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

This is true actually.

Justin:

It's Lady Gaga's Born This Way.

Crowd:

[laughter] Woo.

Sydnee:

That sounds like a bit. It's not, it's the only song he knows on ukulele.

[laughs]

Justin:

Yeah, it's the only song I know on ukulele is Lady Gaga's Born This Way so I had to write a song. [laughs] I had to write a song about norovirus to the tune of Lady Gaga's Born This Way.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

And also, the other thing about it is that that song is just the same chords over and over again so it's not very long 'cause it would have gotten boring and also, um... Sweetheart, if you could just point the other mic at the ukulele. I don't want... I don't want people to miss a note. Well, I mean...

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Here we go. Perfect. There we go. Human mic stand in position and podcaster, what can't she do?

[audience cheers]

Sydnee:

Like at the sound hole there?

Justin:

Yes, at the sound hole. You're.. that's a joke but that's actually what it's...

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Okay. Sweetie, we can do this together. I'll stop moving, I promise.

Sydnee:

Okay.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Got for it.

Justin:

Move my lyrics over here. Also, we wrote this in the half hour before the show and I didn't know if I was gonna do it or not 'cause we wrote it in the half hour before the show. Are there anymore qualifiers? Oh, and also... Ha! I didn't... Sydnee wouldn't tell me what the episode would actually be about, like the specifics, so she would only tell me facts if they would rhyme.

[audience laughs]

Sydnee:

That's actually true for all of our shows. I intentionally don't tell Justin information ahead of time because then I don't know what he's gonna say.
[laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

[playing ukulele] This is the intro. [singing] Nausea, fever, headaches, then poop until my butt breaks. My stomach cramps, norovirus feels this way.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Come on, sing along, you know the words. [laughs]

[audience laughs]

Justin:

[singing] The fecal oral route, that's right, from mouth to poop chute...

Sydnee:

I hate that line.

Justin:

[singing] The fecal oral route, that's right, from mouth to poop chute... wash your hands, or norovirus has its way. People get it every day, more commonly before May. Norovirus feels this way.

[audience laughs]

Justin:

Uh, hold on. My phone went off, so I don't have the last verse and it's a really good one. [singing] Guaranteed to cause a frown, named for an Ohio town, norovirus feels this way!

[audience cheers]

Justin:

My name is Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

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

[audience cheers]

[theme music plays]

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