

## **Sawbones 175: The Purification Rundown**

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

[theme music plays]

**Justin:**

Hello everybody, and welcome to Sawbones, the martial tour of misguided medicine. I am your co-host, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

Now, it's rare... Sydnee is always excited about doing the show, but it is rare that Sydnee is as excited as she has been about this episode that we're gonna talk about today.

**Sydnee:**

That's right. I am. I'm very excited, Justin. I—If you listen to our show regularly, you may know that, last week, we did an episode on detoxification. As in products, and therapies, and processes that are supposed to cleanse you of toxins that exist in your body that you don't know about that doctors have no ability to test for and therefore can't treat you for. So, pay us lots of money and we will do it for you.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, in... in my research, I came across a particular detox program. And every once in a while, this happens, and it's very exciting when it does. I just started going down this rabbit hole and I, when I realized where I had landed, when I realized the wonderland [laughs], in which I had arrived, I was shocked and I knew it would be interesting and Justin would be very excited and it merited its own episode.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So Justin, I'm going to tell you the title of this and you have never heard of this before, correct? The Purification Rundown.

**Justin:**

No, I have never heard of the p— a purification rundown.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

I solemnly swear.

**Sydnee:**

I am going to tell you h—... there are people who have heard of this and right now, they're— they're losing it. I'm going to tell you about the detox program known as the Purification Rundown, okay?

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So this is a specific process. Again, just devoted to cleansing you of toxins, that dates back to the late '70s. Uh, it was used by several different rehab groups in particular. Um, some names – Narc Anon, Crim Anon, Second Chance, the International Academy of Detoxification Specialists. So a lot of, of big—

**Justin:**

Reputable—

**Sydnee:**

Important—

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Right, sounding, sounding groups were using this and uh, it was used for— for drug detox as well as the non-specific detoxing your body from various chemicals. Um, the guiding concept behind this program is that chemical exposures are happening to you all the time.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, specifically the initial impotence for it was the idea that people who did LSD. The thought, the belief was that the reason that they might have flashbacks later is because LSD was kind of hiding it their fat cells. And so periodically, you would have LSD released from your fat cells—

**Justin:**

Just sneak back out?

**Sydnee:**

It would sneak back out. You would trip, and it was preventing you from being a successful member of society. And so, the original birthplace of this Purification Rundown was for people specifically who had used LSD. Even if they had used LSD, I mean, years ago. So this was not like a drug detox, like we think of, you know, you need to come down off of a substance kind of program. This was you used it years ago, we think it is still preventing you from living a healthy life, so we're going to do this program on you. From there, it spread, like I said, to everybody for non-specific toxins of all kinds.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Okay? Uh, they also thought this was the root of addiction. These lingering—

**Justin:**

Hiding out—

**Sydnee:**

Substances in your body.

**Justin:**

That makes a certain amount of sense. I can see how you would think that your body would just like, hang on to that stuff if you weren't well versed—

**Sydnee:**

Well, if you didn't—

**Justin:**

Well as myself, like myself.

**Sydnee:**

Pay any attention to science.

**Justin:**

Or science.

**Sydnee:**

Right.

**Justin:**

If you didn't listen to the podcast Sawbones—

**Sydnee:**

Then you might—

**Justin:**

So—

**Sydnee:**

Then you might think that. You know, the thing is though, if you thought that, what you should probably do is test to see if you're right. And then, either prove or disprove your hypothesis.

**Justin:**

That is one—

**Sydnee:**

But forget that.

**Justin:**

Path.

**Sydnee:**

Let's just run with it.

**Justin:**

Okay. I'm running. I'm there. I'm with you.

**Sydnee:**

And in addition, what was cornerstone of this for people who began to try it and became part of this program and be kind of... became part of this way of life really, is that uh... doctors in—what they would sell you on is that doctors did not understand this. They didn't know how to diagnosis you with it. They didn't know how to treat it. And so, there was no other option.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

This is the only treatment because doctors don't even understand that it's a problem.

**Justin:**

It's so forward thinking.

**Sydnee:**

Exactly, that you can't even get diagnosed with it so how in the world could a traditional physician ever treat you?

**Justin:**

A boring old, by the numbers medical degree having doctor.

**Sydnee:**

A boring old sawbones. [laughs] Um, the foundation was... the foundation of the program was spending a lot of time in saunas, like five hours a day—

**Justin:**

Whoa.

**Sydnee:**

In saunas. Lots of time in saunas.

**Justin:**

Man, I don't know what field you're in with that kind of schedule, but I hope it... y— your paperwork is laminated because that—that's rough.

**Sydnee:**

This is... there were a lot of uh, facilities that would offer this program so you would just go live this.

**Justin:**

Live this life.

**Sydnee:**

Live this for a while. I mean, certainly you could do it at home, but most people who were participating were going to a place to participate in the—

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

In the detox. So you would do saunas like five hours a day. You would exercise a lot. You would eat a lot of fresh vegetables. That's fine. Initially, uh, it was called the Sweat Program, and they also had a portion where you jogged a lot while you wore a rubber suit.

**Justin:**

Hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Which, obviously, was kind of dangerous, because—

**Justin:**

And miserable.

**Sydnee:**

Of all of the massive loss of bodily fluids—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Through sweat. Um, also in that program, you took a lot of vitamins and a teaspoon full of salt a day and lots of water.

**Justin:**

I probably get a teaspoon of salt a day by, just right now.

**Sydnee:**

Right. Well, you weren't taking a lot else in and this was a problem. People were getting really dehydrated on the old sweat program, so it evolved into—

**Justin:**

Wouldn't this all be helpful—

**Sydnee:**

The Purification Rundown.

**Justin:**

Actually, if you were losing a lot of water, wouldn't that help to hydrate you?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, I mean, but if you're gonna jog in a rubber suit, you're gonna need more than some water and a teaspoon full of salt to keep you okay.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, especially if then your other activity is spending all day in a sauna.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

In the rundown, as it... as it evolved, you would take mega-doses specifically of vitamin B3, Niacin. Uh, like they would get you up to 5,000 milligrams a day. By reference, most people are taking like 15 milligrams a day.

**Justin:**

Wow!

**Sydnee:**

Um, even, even like where you prescribe mega-doses of Niacin in certain cases, which we do sometimes. Not often, but we do. Uh, you would not prescribe doses like this. This is definitely beyond what we would consider a safe dose.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, Niacin, even at regular therapeutic doses, can cause flushing when you take it. That's a very common side effect of... I've told patients that before when you take this, you might get hot and sweaty and flushed. Very common. Uh, so basically, the way that they titrated your dose of Niacin—

**Justin:**

Sorry. Titrate?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, slowly increase.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Your dose of Niacin to the... what they consider the therapeutic level you required. So the way they would titrate your dose is you would take one dose each day until... the flushing would happen, of course.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

And the first day that you didn't flush, they would bump your dose up. And then you would take that dose until you didn't flush, and then they would bump your dose up again.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And just keep going until they got you to that goal dose of 5,000 milligrams of Niacin.

**Justin:**

What is this based on? What—why would they just do that?



**Sydnee:**

Well, the belief was that... there had been some early studies in Niacin and, and they... I mean, I think it was sort of like Vitamin C. Remember we did a whole episode on Vitamin C?

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Where like, they had done some studies where they had attempted to treat some things with Niacin and they thought maybe they saw some results. And specifically, there was this belief that Niacin could help with radiation poisoning and so they had done some early trials with that. And—and again, like this concept like so of, if it fights radiation, maybe it fights other toxins or deadly substances and that kind of thing. So Niacin was kind of in the scientific air so to speak. It was—it was a vitamin of interest.

**Justin:**

Yeah. The um... it reminds me of something my theater professor used to call the uh, the rubber chicken theory. One rubber chicken is funny. One thousand rubber chickens is—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

One thousand times as funny. Like, just because something's good for you, does not mean that you can not have too much of it.

**Sydnee:**

That's right. What have we—we've said it before on this show. The dose makes the poison.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Right.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, uh, enough Niacin is necessary. Too much Niacin is dangerous. Uh, and, and this was shown because a lot of people got sick, by the way. And we'll get into how and why and how sick people got. But a lot of people got sick from doing this. Um, in addition to all the Niacin you were taking, you would also drink a cup of pure vegetable oil every day.

**Justin:**

Mmm.

**Sydnee:**

Yum.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Eh, you had... there were a bunch of other minerals and, and vitamins and things you would take to support uh, in addition. Even though Niacin was the cornerstone, you also had to take calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron. There were a bunch of other things. You would drink a lot of fluid so, which was... I mean, important considering how much you're probably sweating.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

And then you also had to get a drink that they, that the inventor of this program specifically came up with.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So you had to buy this as well, or if you were already staying in the facility, they would supply you with it.

**Justin:**

It was just coming out the walls I imagine. You charge down—

**Sydnee:**

Charge you for it later.

**Justin:**

And grab the tube that's always pumping it into your room.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Uh, you had to drink—

**Justin:**

There's no water fountains.

**Sydnee:**

Um, multiple bottles of something called Calmay... Ga—... CalMag, Calcium Magnesium—

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

CalMag, which was calcium gluconate, magnesium carbonate, apple cider vinegar, and water.

**Justin:**

Uh.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, and you would—

**Justin:**

That sounds like—... I'm not a scientist, but the words that you're saying right there, sound like they would give you diarrhea.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

It sounds like... a diarrhea cocktail.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, that's not... Magnesium citrate will definitely give you diarrhea. Magnesium Carbonate, I mean, there's magnesium in there. I don't know. I—I would worry that—that this program anyway, I mean, you're taking in a lot of liquids. Um, you could eat fresh vegetables, so I guess you're getting some roughage in there. I don't know. I think diarrhea is a distinct possibility.

**Justin:**

One of these days I wanna do a Sawbones episode that's just me rapid fire naming things and you tell me if they could give you diarrhea.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I don't know Justin. If you try hard enough, I bet anything can give you diarrhea. [laughs] If you really believe—

**Justin:**

If you believe.

**Sydnee:**

In yourself.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, if you put your heart into it. Uh, but you would drink this CalMag that you would either purchase or, you know, if you were staying at one of the, one of the detox facilities, they would supply you with at least three times a day. But as often as you could, it was definitely encouraged. Um, the idea was that it would purify you, of course. That it would cleanse you of, if you had been on some sort of illegal substance, had an addiction problem before, that it would cure—it would purify you from it.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Not only would your body be cleansed of the last remnant of whatever drug was in your system. But you would also be free of the addiction, because that's why you had the addiction. So if you—

**Justin:**

Because the drugs were in your—right.

**Sydnee:**

Right, so if you cleanse all the drugs out, you're not gonna have any cravings. You're not going to want to do the drug anymore. It will—

**Justin:**

You can—

**Sydnee:**

Completely cure your addiction.

**Justin:**

Can you... can you give me a timeframe again? Like, when abouts we're talking?

**Sydnee:**

How long you would do this?

**Justin:**

No, like what time of... like, history?

**Sydnee:**

Oh, it was like the late '70s and into the '80s.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And—

**Justin:**

So, so not—

**Sydnee:**

Still—

**Justin:**

That... like, we had science then.

**Sydnee:**

Being practiced today. We'll get there.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Um, yeah so, uh, the idea was that this would fix your addiction. Uh, it would also, by the way, help you survive radiation poisoning if we... if it comes to that. And back in the '70s, this was, I think, more of a—

**Justin:**

A cold war—

**Sydnee:**

A topic I guess?

**Justin:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, yeah, so it would help you survive radiation if you needed it. Um, it will treat HIV, liver disease, heart disease, cancer, kidney disease, and obesity.

**Justin:**

That's a lot of things, Sydnee.

**Sydnee:**

It's a lot of things—

**Justin:**

It's a lot of things.

**Sydnee:**

That it'll treat.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

And back then, I would cost somewhere between \$2,000 and \$4,000 to do the whole program. In the '90... er, sorry. That was actually... Those are actually '90s prices for \$2,000 or \$4,000. Today, it would cost around \$5,000, and even more depending on which facility you use and how fancy it is, how shushzzy—

**Justin:**

Don't go bargain basement—

**Sydnee:**

The bargain is.

**Justin:**

With this though. You don't want the off-brand stuff. They try to pad your CalMag out with Tang.

**Sydnee:**

Now, as I've mentioned, the Purification Rundown, while it was... while it arrived in the '70s and it has been... I—I'm going to tell you about how it has been much criticized. It is still around today. It is still being practiced today, and there are actually even more facilities under these different rehab group names in many more that I've named, uh, that are doing this. Now, if you're not familiar with the name Purification Rundown, maybe you've heard it by its other name. It's also called the Purif. Have you heard that name?

**Justin:**

No. Purif—

**Sydnee:**

No? Never heard of the Purif? Maybe you're heard it called The Hubbard Method.

**Justin:**

N—no.

**Sydnee:**

As in the L. Ron Hubbard Method.

**Justin:**

What?!

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. This is a Scientology detoxification that we're talking about.

**Justin:**

Oh, dunk!

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] You can read the notes now. [laughs] So, Scientologists described this detoxification program as a way of removing the toxins and drugs that are in your body that can cause bio-chemical barriers to spiritual well-being. Uh, this is a quote from their literature now. This is straight from um, a current site. "The Purification Rundown is a tightly supervised regimen of exercise, sauna, and nutrition. It is conducted in a properly ordered schedule

to include sufficient rest." Um, it is obviously, advertised as— as essential if you're going to join Scientology.

**Justin:**

Right, because they're—

**Sydnee:**

All the members of Sea Org go through this.

**Justin:**

And they're not—

**Sydnee:**

Which you know a lot... Justin, you know a lot more about Scientology than I do because you read that book.

**Justin:**

Yeah, it was a while go though so... I— I... it's a little fuzzy, but um, the... uh, yeah. Sea Org's kind of the elite of the elite of—

**Sydnee:**

Right.

**Justin:**

They're sort of the— the—

**Sydnee:**

They will go through this program because this is how you get all of these blockages that are keeping you from your spiritual, you know, enlightenment from—

**Justin:**

They're also in my limited understanding, very down on most pharmaceuticals.

**Sydnee:**

Exactly, so they believe that, you know—

**Justin:**

Not just like, heroin and stuff that we would think of as like, you need to get these drugs and LSD out of your system. But rather—



**Sydnee:**

No, that's... no psychiatric medications um, that's a big, that's a big deal. And that you would never use any medicines to help people get off drugs. And again, that the idea that addiction can be completely cured. That it would not be something that would ever... I mean, they believe that. If you go through the right program, you get over your addiction and you will never again crave whatever you were addicted to.

**Justin:**

This is probably—

**Sydnee:**

Which is very contrary to what—

**Justin:**

This is probably a good time to mention Sydnee and I are not Scientology experts. We have a, a, an interest in Scientology, for sure. But—

**Sydnee:**

No. But we, no... and we're, we are also—

**Justin:**

Cannot speak of—

**Sydnee:**

Not Scientologists.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

No.

**Justin:**

That you know of.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Uh, they... when they talk about why they think this works, um, you'll read cases, specifically of like, there was a Vietnam vet who had levels of Agent Orange that they tested for in his system. And then they did the program, and it was all gone.

**Justin:**

Ta-da.

**Sydnee:**

They tried this on victims of Chernobyl.

**Justin:**

Other things that were gone? His bones.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

They all turned to liquid and fell out of him.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, that... they tried this on victims of Chernobyl and they found that they had reduced radioactive atoms after they did this program to them. Uh, there were some people who were detoxing from Valium and cocaine and they used the program. And they talk about how helpful that was and then the... I mean, these are like... these aren't studies. These are like, what they cite as evidence, which are really just like anecdotes, case reports—

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

And then they're... in this they mention a lady who secreted black stuff through her pores because she got rid of so many toxins like, lead and mercury that were in her system. Um, and they use this as evidence that this Hubbard Method can purify you. But obviously, there are problems.

**Justin:**

I [laughs] can't imagine what those might be. It seems okay to me.

**Sydnee:**

Well Justin—

**Justin:**

A layman.

**Sydnee:**

I'm gonna tell you about the problems uh, with the—with the Hubbard Method, but first, why don't we head to the billing department?

**Justin:**

Let's go.

[theme music plays]

[ad break]

**Justin:**

Sydnee, I'm hearing a lot of buzz about the Purification Rundown not being great for your body. Can you fill me in on that?

**Sydnee:**

Well, okay. There are a couple of problems that, some of which, I've already alluded to. There have been several cases and maybe more. It gets, as I tried to read for lists of... of who has been harmed by the Purification Rundown, it gets kind of sticky as you may imagine. Uh, Scientologists do not want you to know that it could be life threatening or indeed fatal, it, which in some cases, it has been.

Uh, and it... it's really difficult to find straightforward news, like, actual reports of these cases. So what I find are a lot of stories from probably family members who are trying to get the word out. Like, you know, my sister, cousin, dad, uncle, daughter, whoever, went and did this and they got super sick and they were in the hospital. Or I know that this led to their death, or something.

But, but it's really hard for me to pin down actual events cause it... I think it's been kind of maybe covered up?

**Justin:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

Maybe.

**Justin:**

That's not like... something Scientology has been accused of.

**Sydnee:**

This fit.

**Justin:**

Can I ask question—

**Sydnee:**

Was my understanding.

**Justin:**

That you may or may not know the answer to. Is this something that's just open to Scientologists or can you get up in there—

**Sydnee:**

No. It is... no, you can get up in there.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

It is not just open to Scientologists.

**Justin:**

Okay, great.

**Sydnee:**

Um, but it's... it is necessary for certain Scientologists depending on where they are in the hierarchy. But it's not—

**Justin:**

It's just like a... it's just like church camp. They get you in with the fun stuff.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

The— the fun, easy things and then you hear about the religion.

**Sydnee:**

Then you gotta sit in the sauna for five hours and drink MagCal. Uh, but the vitamin dose that you're taking, that Niacin dose, like I said, it is toxic. Uh,

you run the risk of severe dehydration and that's... well, most of the, of the cases that I've seen of hospitalization as resulting from this are for, are for dehydration. Severe dehydration. Also severe electrolyte disturbance, largely because of all the sweating and loss of body fluids and not being able to replace them. Uh, and that, and that doesn't sound like a big deal.

Like, so what? You're a... you don't have enough electrolytes. Like drink a Gatorade. We're gonna fix it. But I mean, if you're electrolyte disturbances are severe enough, you can have seizures, you can have fatal heart arrhythmias. Electrolyte disturbances are a big deal.

**Justin:**

That's why you can have too much Gatorade.

**Sydnee:**

Well... I mean—

**Justin:**

Right? That's what you're always telling—

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Me. Don't drink so much Gatorade.

**Sydnee:**

Well, there's also like, sugar.

**Justin:**

Oh yeah—

**Sydnee:**

There's a lot of sugar—

**Justin:**

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

In Gatorade.

**Justin:**

Okay, so it's more that—

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Probably.

**Sydnee:**

If you really want to rehydrate, Pedialyte is probably your best bet.

**Justin:**

I don't like it. It tastes salty.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] But these people, Pedialyte would have not been enough for.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

No these were hospitalizations—

**Justin:**

There's not enough Pedialyte in the world.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and kidney failure as a result of the dehydration. There were a lot of reports in people who had underlying chronic diseases becoming very ill. There was some uh, reports of people who maybe went blind who had uh, diabetes. Who went blind as a result of this program. There were people who had heart attacks as a, just... if they had underlying heart disease. Especially as a result of this program. Um, and like I said, I think there were some people that had seizures and weren't taken for proper medical care and actually died.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

As a result of this. Um, it is acknowledged as part of the program that you, you probably will get sick. I mean, that's an accepted part of it is that, you

know, generally people get really um, dehydrated and generally, taking all that Niacin is gonna make some people puke and they're gonna have trouble tolerating it. Um, for members, like of Sea Org, for members of Scientology, you're expected to kind of grin and bear it.

**Justin:**

Mmm.

**Sydnee:**

Like listen, this is what like...

**Justin:**

It's natural.

**Sydnee:**

Do you wanna get pure or not? Do you wanna get clear? I mean, that's what it is. Like, they— you're going clear.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

Do you want to get clear or not? This is what you're supposed to do. Um, and generally, taking people to actual physicians is not... it's not part of the plan.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

They don't wanna do that. They're gonna try to avoid that. There was one story I read from a former Scientologist who has kind of left and talked about her experience. Uh, she was a Sea Org member, actually, this was back when she was 14, when she had to do the Purif. Multiple times because she just could not tolerate the Niacin. It made her so sick and she... they kept trying to raise her dose and she just was puking and sick as could be. And finally, they said, you know what? It looks like actually, the problem is we've over treated you. You were already clear—

**Justin:**

Too much.

**Sydnee:**

That's the problem.

**Justin:**

It was going good.

**Sydnee:**

Is that it was great... we already cleaned you out and then we kept it going and that was the problem. So like, you're done. Don't worry. You're fine.

**Justin:**

Actually, good on you because you go through it very quick. You did a very good, quick job.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

At it. Faster than we thought.

**Sydnee:**

You must not of had a lot of toxins in you.

**Justin:**

Mmm. You didn't tell us you didn't have many toxins?

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm.

**Justin:**

That's kind of on you. Well, bye.

**Sydnee:**

The auditing didn't go as well as I thought. Now here's... the reason I found this detoxification program is because when I was looking up detoxes I stumbled across, initially, something called the New York Rescue Workers Detoxification Program that had been promoted by Tom Cruise. And I thought, this seems very odd. What could this be? So the Purification Rundown was used in 2003 under this name, the New York Rescue Workers Detoxification Program, to help rescue workers from 9/11.



**Justin:**

It sounds like my homie's in Scientology. I was trying to click for stuff. They know... sometimes you see something on TV and you're like, "Mmm, that sounds pretty good. We should treat each other nice and try and live good lives." And then you call them and they're like, "Hello, this is Scientology. We got you again." Like, oh come on.

**Sydnee:**

Is that what those commercials for the Society for... the Society for Better Living or whatever?

**Justin:**

No, they did have some... remember they... we got that DVD.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, we did get that DVD.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Um—

**Sydnee:**

Um... no, after 9/11, uh Scientologist saw, I mean, that there were a lot of... there were a lot of things in the air that people were inhaling. This is true, we know this. That the air quality was bad—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

At Ground Zero for a period of time. Um, and when the EPA came in and said we now feel like it's safe. Like, the what has been in the air is no longer there and it is safe again to be at Ground Zero. Um, like and Tom Cruise was on, I think it was like, Larry King, saying like, yeah, but there's no way that's true. We know that's a lie.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

We know that's not true. And we just had to do something. And so, this is what they did. They setup two clinics in New York to help address what they

say as the detoxification needs from all the chemical exposures in the air. So there was one called Downtown Medical, that was like two blocks from Ground Zero. And then, there was another one out on Long Island. And what they did at these facilities, was the Purif. It was the Purification Rundown.

That was... they just took that Scientology program and... did it. There. They treated... some 800 and some rescue workers from September 11th. With it, um, and while they did it, they discouraged them from receiving any other traditional medical care. They said, just... this is enough. We got this.

**Justin:**

I'm glad we can't curse on this show. We'd have to take an extended pause here.

**Sydnee:**

And it's hard—it's hard to say, you know, some rescue workers said they felt better afterwards.

**Justin:**

That—

**Sydnee:**

But—

**Justin:**

Is good.

**Sydnee:**

That's uh—

**Justin:**

I'm happy that that is an experience that they had.

**Sydnee:**

We don't have real evidence that anything happened. Um, but there was a lot of attention as you can imagine on this program, because we have these—

**Justin:**

Because Tom Cruise was there, hand detoxifying police officers. I'd go see that too.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, and the problem is that, if you read about this, there were a lot—okay, so first of all, this received \$900,000 of public funding. Public funding. Because for a lot politicians, initially, it was hard to under—I don't think they understood what they were buying in to. You have doctors... I mean, they have doctors. Like they have actual doctors who now, I don't know if they are Scientologists are believe in this—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Or believe in Scientology. Whatever. Who came and worked at these clinics and said, we're offering a program to help 9/11 rescue workers who need to recover from being exposed to stuff in the air. And if you're a politician, and you didn't really do your homework, I can see you saying, "Well, y—yeah. Yeah, we'll give money to that."

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Absolutely.

**Justin:**

It sounds good.

**Sydnee:**

Like these were our heroes. We needed to help them, so of course we'll give money to that. Uh, so it got a lot of public funding. There were a lot of people who kind of like, initially supported, and then realized what they were supporting and had to do—

**Justin:**

Oh no!

**Sydnee:**

Like a quick—

**Justin:**

They got them again. You see?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

They got them. They got them too.

**Sydnee:**

They had to do like a quick, I think like Schumaer was one of them, who like initially, was like yeah. And then was like, whoa. No, no, no. Wait. Wh— wh— what is this? Oh no. No, no, no. I don't think I... I don't think I—

**Justin:**

Hey, you hear—

**Sydnee:**

Never mind.

**Justin:**

Quoting Mission Impossible Seven, because if not sir, I'm actually going to need to depart.

**Sydnee:**

It— it was a lot of people who, you know, were there and then realized what they were promoting. And I have to wonder, there were a lot of celebrities who donated money to this. Like there was \$2.3 million total donations for this. A lot from high profile celebrities. Um, in addition to Tom Cruise, who obviously gave lots of money for this, uh, Paul Newman, Paul McCartney—

**Justin:**

Mmm.

**Sydnee:**

Adam Sandler, Will and Jada. Like a lot of people donated money to this who I don't think are Scientologists. I mean, I know Tom Cruise is, but I don't know. And that makes me wonder, did they know what they were donating money to?

**Justin:**

Uh—

**Sydnee:**

Did they think it was just a medical program to support 9/11 rescue workers?

**Justin:**

Probably not. I know that those people... I'm fairly certain none of the people you listed are Scientologists.

**Sydnee:**

I don't think so.

**Justin:**

I don't think so, uh—

**Sydnee:**

But I don't know.

**Justin:**

I know—

**Sydnee:**

I mean, like Lira Meaning gave a bunch of money, but she used to be a Scientologist though.

**Justin:**

I... yeah, and... yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, some of that money did go to two Scientology groups. The Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education, which—

**Justin:**

Cool name.

**Sydnee:**

Sounds like a... like, legit.

**Justin:**

Classic Scientology. Cloak, cloak.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, and The Association for Better Living and Education.

**Justin:**

Again—

**Sydnee:**

Which sounds really nice.

**Justin:**

Sounds so real.

**Sydnee:**

But they are both Scientology groups and they didn't get some of this money that went to this 9/11 rescue workers—

**Justin:**

That's fun.

**Sydnee:**

Program. Um, today it is still promoted by FACE, what I mentioned, the Foundation for Advancements in Science and Education and a health med clinic as well as there was a book, Diet for a Poison Planet, which was not written by a Scientologist, but was essentially the same thing. I mean, it was. It was the Purification Rundown released as a non-Scientologist publication.

Um, the Church of Scientology tried to get Hubbard a Nobel for this, by the way.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

They worked really hard to get old L. Ron on a Nobel Prize—

**Justin:**

Yeah, be nice.

**Sydnee:**

For his Purification Rundown.

**Justin:**

Great.

**Sydnee:**

Now, um, it has been criticized over and over again by medical organizations and independent researchers who have tried to reproduce any of its claims. The Niacin, the MagCal, the sweating, anything.

**Justin:**

Any of it.

**Sydnee:**

Any of it. Um, they only evidence that they've ever been able to produce that it's helpful, in addition to the testimonials I mentioned, people who went through it and said, "Yeah, I think I feel better now."

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

In addition to that, they would hang, especially in the downtown medic where they... where they did the Downtown Medical, where they did the New York Rescue workers program, they would hang towels with a lot of like, stains. Like, brown and black stains outside the clinic to show like, look at what we're getting out of our heroes. [laughs] Look at the toxins we've gotten—

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Out of them. We've collected them on these towels as evidence.

**Justin:**

There—no, do foot pads? No, no. Not on foot pads. Ear candles? No, no, not an ear candle. It's towels. Detox towels. Special ones.

**Sydnee:**

So, so like I said, it can make you sick. We've never been able to prove that it can do anything independently. Um, in addition, just the whole impetus was that... for this was LSD. Remember that. And that's uh.... when I talked about, I—I didn't clarify who did this. L. Ron Hubbard was trying to find a way to get um, members... when he was out on his Yacht.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

You know? I always get it confused with that movie? The Master. When he was out on his yacht with all the people that he was coming up with the original Dianetics with.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

When they were floating around their boat, there were people who were having like, flashbacks and he needed a way to get them all pure. To get them all clear, so they wouldn't have this anymore. And so they all thought it was—

**Justin:**

So he just pulled—

**Sydnee:**

From LSD, so—

**Justin:**

So he just pulled something out of his butt?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Why not?

**Sydnee:**

Exactly. So—

**Justin:**

Sure.

**Sydnee:**

So, that's what he did and uh, you know, after a while, they actually stopped letting... if you used to use LSD, they wouldn't let you in Sea Org.



**Justin:**

Oh really?

**Sydnee:**

Even though they have this. Like they have this Purif.

**Justin:**

But they certainly won't let you—

**Sydnee:**

But the point is—

**Justin:**

Steer the boat.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] The point is LSD is out of your body in about 24 hours. So I mean, this isn't... even like the, the very basis of it, to get that residual LSD out of your body, that's not a thing.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

That's not something you need to worry about. So, here's the scary thing. Narc Anon is still out there rehabbing patients with what they call the New Life Detoxification Program. At, I mean, dozens of centers worldwide. Like I looked at one place, and I counted all the centers and I counted 38. Um, I mean, they're all over the world. Like there are some in the U.S., they're in Mexico, they're in Australia, they're in Russia, there is a ton in Italy. They're everywhere. they're all over the world.

But I counted those and I was like, so they're about 38 worldwide. And then I found like, it redirected me to like, something Narc Anon East or something ? Which was a whole other host of centers.

**Justin:**

I thought... Is Narc Anon not a real group?

**Sydnee:**

They do this. This is what they do. I mean, they do other thing. But they do the detox program. It is no longer a science, like they no longer claim that they are Scientologists. Like, they don't claim that.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

But like the—follow the money. Follow the money. It's all going back—

**Justin:**

It's so rare that we get to say that literally on this show.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, it's all... it's a, I mean, this is... this was an off shoot of Scientology. Like that's where this comes from. Um, they were doing, Narc Anon was doing free uh, like Don't Do Drugs programs for kids in California schools for a while.

**Justin:**

Gross.

**Sydnee:**

And like promoting this. And then they realized what was happening and like they looked over at the literature and they were... not only were they promoting a Scientology-based program, but they were also um, giving out inaccurate information about addiction. Because like I said, they don't understand addiction based on this—

**Justin:**

I did not—

**Sydnee:**

Program.

**Justin:**

I swear to God I did not know Narc Anon was a... a Scientology thing.

**Sydnee:**

And I mean, I mean, these places are all over and this happens a lot where I've found a lot of cases where like public money would be used to send

people who were battling addiction to one of these programs. And then it would, because it wouldn't come to light.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

I mean, because you do that all the time. You see like judges force people to go into a rehabilitation program as opposed to going to jail. And these programs kind of get slid in there sometimes if people aren't aware of what they're... and they change their names. There's all kinds of other names, like these are just some of the names. Um, but it's easy, like you click on... if you got to one of the Narc Anon sites, and you click on New Life Detoxification program, it's what I just told you.

**Justin:**

Yes.

**Sydnee:**

Like the Niacin is there. The saunas are there. They don't make it sound so... scary. But I mean, it's not... they don't hide that—

**Justin:**

Well, you wouldn't until you show up, right?

**Sydnee:**

And if you look at a Narc Anon website, they talk about the founder of the detox program being L. Ron. They've got a picture of him on there.

**Justin:**

Oh...

**Sydnee:**

I mean, it's there. Like it's not, it's not that hidden. Let me say that. I don't, I don't make... mean to make them sound sinister. I never got... I mean, it's not that hidden. You can find it.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, what they'll say though that it is... they have branches that are secular in that they are not Scientologists. They will not try to get you to join Scientology. They are not using those principles, but they are using this detox because they believe it is scientifically founded. So it's not religious, it's scientific.

**Justin:**

When you say the sentence, "They believe it is scientifically founded."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

I actually get literally hives. Hives cover my body. Uh, folks, that's gonna do us for this week.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Thank you so much uh, for joining us. Uh, special programming note. Whoop, whoop. Special programming note alert.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Alert, alert. Um, we've got a fun treat for you next week. Uh, if you don't know, if you don't listen. Um, we have sort of a... a... a... well, not us. We didn't have anything to do with it. But a court appointed has a podcast that Sydnee's Uncle Michael and her dad—

**Sydnee:**

Tommy.

**Justin:**

Tommy, make about law, and it's similar to Sawbones but kind of a, kind of a more legal take.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, Micheal's a lawyer and he talks about law... funny laws and the history of law things. And my dad makes dad jokes about it.

**Justin:**

So next week, we've gotta... sort of a two parter—

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Show, I guess you could call it that, that's gonna be about—

**Sydnee:**

We're gonna talk about um, like patient privacy and sort of the history of HIPPA and then the doctor/patient confidentiality and those kinds of issues. But from like, medical and legal perspective.

**Justin:**

So that's gonna be fun, but we're gonna be... uh, in addition to that, sort of two part, looking at it from two perspectives, or are we switching are... uh, are dumb guys. [laughs] So—

**Sydnee:**

Those are Justin's words, not mine. I don't ever call him—

**Justin:**

Yeah, those are my words, but—

**Sydnee:**

Or my dad dumb guys.

**Justin:**

I'm gonna be over on Court Appointed talking about this and uh, Tommy, Sydnee's dad is going to be on Sawbones next week. So, it's gonna be fun.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

I think people are gonna dig it. But uh, check that out and uh, I wanted to mention um, uh, one of my other podcasts, My Brother, My Brother and Me got a TV show. It's on Seeso. Uh, is a... which is a comedy streaming service from NBC. Kind of like Netflix but with jokes. And that's at Seeso, S-E-E-S-O.com. Um, and they have an app on the Apple TV and iOS and Roku and

you can watch it through Amazon Prime and, and what have you. So... um, there's six episodes of it. We worked really hard on it and the feedback on it's been really great. So if you get a chance—

**Sydnee:**

And it's hilarious—

**Justin:**

Go check it... thank you Sydster.

**Sydnee:**

And you should go get it and watch them all right now and watch them over and over again.

**Justin:**

And you can see the Sydster in episode... what? You're in two—

**Sydnee:**

The jobs one. Is that two?

**Justin:**

And three.

**Sydnee:**

Oh yeah.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

I am in three.

**Justin:**

Both of those. Um, so I... we hope you'll check that out.

**Sydnee:**

Thanks.

**Justin:**

Anything else?

**Sydnee:**

That's it.

**Justin:**

Oh, Taxpayers. Thanks for letting us use your song Medicines—

**Sydnee:**

Oh yeah.

**Justin:**

As an intro and outro to our program. But uh, that's gonna do it for us until next week. My name is Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

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

[theme music plays]

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