

Sawbones Episode 57: Color Theory

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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 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:

Okay, Syd, so I got the, um, I was looking at new lamps today. We're, we're s-

Sydnee:

Oh, this sounds thrilling.

Justin:

I know. This is a thrilling intro. I was looking at new lamps today, because we're trying to, like, get the house back into some sort of shape. We kind of took nine months off. Like, ugh, done. Can't do anything.

Sydnee:

Right. And so we thought right now would be the best time to do some major overhauling of-

Justin:

Baby's not doin' that much. Yeah, we're overhauling the house. So, uh, uh, the one thing-

Sydnee:

I was, I was being sarcastic.

Justin:

No, it's, uh, yeah, it's a lot of work. But anyway, the one thing I really wanna do is get rid of that green.

Sydnee:

Yeah. There's a pretty atrocious color in our house.

Justin:

Oh my g- There is, it is almost like a unifying theme of the worst possible shade of green. If you put, like, I'm trying to think of-

Sydnee:

How would you describe it? It's kind of a light pea green. Maybe a pea green?

Justin:

If you, if you had Doublemint gum and you put it through the w- uh, the washing machine, you left it in your shorts, you put it through the washing machine, when you got it out, that is the color of green that you would have.

Sydnee:

This sounds like something you've done.

Justin:

It's wholly unappealing, this color of green.

Sydnee:

And it's, and-

Justin:

Pea soup, but, like, like, not even appetizing.

Sydnee:

And you may be wondering, well, what room is it in? Just paint the room. Here's the problem.

Justin:

First off, all rooms.

Sydnee:

It's everywhere.

Justin:

It's everywhere. Any nook or cranny. It's like they won a bunch in a contest.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

And, uh, whoever had, uh, uh, that won a bunch in a contest and then every nook and cranny-

Sydnee:

And-

Justin:

... that they could, they could put it in... I don't know-

Sydnee:

It's on-

Justin:

I'm sure they liked it. It's just not our bag.

Sydnee:

It's on chair rails and baseboards. It's on the stairs.

Justin:

It's everywhere.

Sydnee:

Like, not the top, not the part your foot touches, but, like, the, you know-

Justin:

I think the color of this green is so implicit to me-

Sydnee:

... vertical part of the stairs.

Justin:

I'm sure they, the, the people who, uh-

Sydnee:

It's a bunch of doors.

Justin:

... painted it on enjoyed it.

Sydnee:

It's everywhere. No.

Justin:

It's everywhere.

Sydnee:

And you know, and it's that old, like, it's so old you know it's probably got lead in it too.

Justin:

It's probably-

Sydnee:

Like, it's probably lead.

Justin:

Probably is giving my baby lead, you know, lead.

Sydnee:

It's probably something that, well, I mean, we just gotta make sure she doesn't eat it.

Justin:

Just stop eating the paint, baby. It's terrible. The, the good news is, the color is so unappetizing that even the baby won't eat the paint. But I think this color, I hate the color green that this paint is so much, I think it's actually hurting me.

Sydnee:

Well, you wouldn't be the first one to, to think that color could have that kind of effect on you.

Justin:

Do tell.

Sydnee:

So, let me tell you about chromotherapy, Justin.

Justin:

Tell me about chromotherapy, Sydnee.

Sydnee:

And first of all, I wanna thank, uh, Katie for recommending this topic. I thought it was interesting, she pointed out in her email that she didn't know if this topic would be off limits, because it's still, um, something that some people believe in. Which is sometimes, oh, uh, a topic that we would stray away from.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

But this is why I think, uh, that it's okay. As I started to research it, it was called a pseudoscience multiple times in multiple places without me even doing much searching. So I think once it is uniformly recognized as a pseudoscience-

Justin:

This is the thing about the pseudo-

Sydnee:

It's fair.

Justin:

The, the, the funny implication about that word, pseudoscience, is that by definition, if someone calls it a pseudoscience, that means there's someone saying, "Ah-ah [negative]. No, no, no. This is real. This is legit."

Sydnee:

No, this is a science.

Justin:

'Cause otherwise, it would be like, like, nobody calls Spiderman pseudoscience. You know what I mean? Like, nobody calls... Well, the jury's still out on radioactive spiders. Most are unconvinced that this pseudoscience of radioactive arachnids... If there's a pseudoscience there's one guy who's like, "I don't know. I don't know. There's something to it."

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

"Get some rays into the bugs."

Sydnee:

There's somebody out there who is just begging spiders to bite him left... And he's just chasing them around on walls. "C'mere. C'mere. Right here."

Justin:

Listen, it wor- and, and he's like, "Listen. It worked for one guy. It's gotta work..." No, it didn't. Dawg, it didn't.

Sydnee:

No. That was a comic book. I, that's, so I think that that's one criteria. The other criteria that I thought made it fair game for an episode is that I saw it mentioned as a possible cure for cancer.

Justin:

Uh oh. You done goofed.

Sydnee:

Oh. And when I see that I, I kind of feel like, all bets are off. If you're claiming that something that definitely doesn't cau- d- doesn't cure cancer-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... cures cancer, then-

Justin:

Syd's gotta bring the hammer down.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Syd "The Hammer" McElroy has gotta bring the hammer down.

Sydnee:

So, chromotherapy. You may, you may be able to, to piece together what this is, Justin. From the word, chromotherapy.

Justin:

Color therapy?

Sydnee:

Yeah. Good job.

Justin:

Yeah, you kind of gave it away talking about color at the beginning, but-

Sydnee:

Well, I don't know, I th- I thought you wanted to impress us with your-

Justin:

[laughs]. With my basic understanding-

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

... like, of context clues? How f- how far have I fallen?

Sydnee:

Do, do you want me to answer that?

Justin:

Movin' on.

Sydnee:

So color therapy is based on the idea that we can use, uh, light, in the form of color, so, you know, various colors of light, specifically, to balance energy in someone.

Justin:

Now, what's the, what's the basic idea behind this?

Sydnee:

So, the idea is that we are made of matter.

Justin:

I'm with you so far.

Sydnee:

Matter has many properties.

Justin:

Okay. Yes.

Sydnee:

One of which is a vibrational energy.

Justin:

Ah, oh, I'm feeling, slipping.

Sydnee:

And everything in our bodies vibrates at a different energy.

Justin:

That's true. Well, that is true. The guy at the health foods store told me that the, um, uh, the aromatherapy I got vibrated at my energy, because he had this pendulum and he checked my hand, and he checked my energy, and he said, "We're a good match."

Sydnee:

Okay. I've lost all credibility now.

Justin:

You did? Or I did?

Sydnee:

Well, I'm associated with you.

Justin:

I didn't have much to lose to begin with, though, let's be honest. [laughs].

Sydnee:

Our DNA is mingled in this tiny human in my arms.

Justin:

[laughs]. Fair enough.

Sydnee:

So, okay, so everything's vibrating at a different energy.

Justin:

Got it. We're all buzzin'.

Sydnee:

And that means that all those vibrations, those good, good vibrations-

Justin:

Good vibrations.

Sydnee:

... if you, if you like.

Justin:

Thank you.

Sydnee:

Correspond to different wavelengths of color.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Like, light wavelength.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

So, we can affect things in our body with different colors.

Justin:

Just find the right vibration of color light-

Sydnee:

Light. Of color light.

Justin:

... that grooves with that part of our bod.

Sydnee:

So we will respond to color, and we can also use color as, like, a diagnostic tool.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Which isn't totally wrong. I mean, I definitely, if somebody walks in and they're yellow, I say, "Uh oh, you're jaundiced." So that, I mean, I guess that is, like, a diagnostic tool. I don't think that's what they're talking about.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And that, um, color, uh, uh, and that we're also made of color. That's the other thing.

Justin:

Oh, oh yeah, made of color. Right.

Sydnee:

You gotta remember, we're made of color. Different parts of our body are made of different colors. And I could go into... There's a whole, like, tangent you could go on with chakras here. I'm not g- I'm not doing that. That's not what, that's not what this show is about.

Justin:

Okay. We're not, we're not gettin' into chakra town.

Sydnee:

We're not gonna get into chakras. That's related, it's slightly different, but we're not goin' there.

Justin:

When I was, uh, a kid, I saw this special where they were, like, trying to disprove ESP or, or prove that it existed. And there was a lady who, um, said she could see people's auras. And they tested it by having ten people stand behind a wall in, like, different numbered slots. And she had to tell 'em which, which ones had people in it, which didn't. 'Cause, theoretically, she could see their auras through the, the, uh, wall.

Sydnee:

How'd she do?

Justin:

Badly. Very poorly.

Sydnee:

I can't say I'm surprised.

Justin:

It didn't pan out.

Sydnee:

But don't get me wrong, I would love if that kind of thing worked, 'cause, like, magic is cool.

Justin:

Magic's cool. I'd love that if that worked. And it would probably make your job easier. You wouldn't even have to stop in the patient's room. You'd walk right past and be like, "Uh, ugh, that's lime green."

Sydnee:

I can sense the pneumonia coming from their room.

Justin:

That's got a real pneumonia vibe. 10 CCs of yellow.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

20 CCs of burnt sienna, stat.

Sydnee:

Stat. That, all you'd have to do to, to go to medical school is just memorize the Crayola box.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

You'd be done.

Justin:

CC stands for colored crayons.

Sydnee:

So the Egyptians believed in chromotherapy. They thought it, uh, came from their god, Thoth?

Justin:

Th- Thoth?

Sydnee:

Thoth?

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Thoth? Thoth? Thoth? I'm not, I, I didn't develop a lisp suddenly. It's Thoth.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

If it's pronounced something else, you know-

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

... lemme know. So they would use gems, and stones, and salves, and minerals, all of different colors, for healing.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

They would use dif- different colors for different problems. Uh, the Greeks also used similar ideas. Different gemstones, different minerals.

Justin:

I can see it. They h- have a, kind of, this has kind of a sexy appeal. Different colors, you know, seem powerful. It's pretty.

Sydnee:

Well I, I mean, the, we've always used color as different, um, to, to denote, like, purple for royalty.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

You know, different, different kind of meaning. So, why not? Why not healing properties?

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

We're already just off making offerings to various gods to ask for cures for things at this point. So I don't think it's that far off.

Justin:

Couldn't hurt, right? I mean, eh, rub something red on it. Who knows.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. An, an a- l- during this time period, uh, sunlight was often used, in general. So the, and that was, the reason that's included in chromotherapy is that it's, you know, all colors.

Justin:

The, right.

Sydnee:

Sunlight. So it's white light, uh, you would just have somebody stand outside in the sun.

Justin:

Get those, get that D.

Sydnee:

There you go.

Justin:

Good for what ails you.

Sydnee:

Uh, they would also paint rooms different colors. So this kind of strays a little bit from the light. But-

Justin:

It's kinda gettin' into a feng shui vibe now.

Sydnee:

Yeah, well, and it kind of borders on that idea, that, like, um, surrounding yourself with certain colors will... There, there are definitely psychological effects. But there was very much a belief that it could also heal, you know, physical problems, as well.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, but they did have healing rooms that w- would be painted to kind of mimic nature. So you'd have, like, a green floor, and a blue ceiling. And you would hang, like, prisms in the windows to let light come through, and colors, and-

Justin:

It seems like, I don't know about all the healing, but it seems chill. Like, chill. I'm into this room.

Sydnee:

A lot of this stuff, uh, it would be... I mean, it, I don't think that it would be surprising to say, a blue room would be calming.

Justin:

Mega chill.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

You might say.

Sydnee:

And, and I don't, I'm not suggesting that it's not. I'm not suggesting that all those people who tell you that a red room is gonna make you wanna eat more-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... you know, that they're wrong. I'm not saying that. I'm saying that it's not gonna, maybe, heal your, you know, open wound on your foot.

Justin:

It'll make you wanna eat more at McDonald's but it won't cure the diabetes you get from eating McDonald's.

Sydnee:

There you go. That's what I'm saying.

Justin:

Right on.

Sydnee:

Uh, now, Avicenna who is a famous writer from the Islamic Golden Age-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... he wrote many medical texts, 40 of them, 150 other various texts, uh, very, very clever guy. Unfortunately, also believed in chromotherapy.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um-

Justin:

Can't win 'em all.

Sydnee:

And he, he kind of invented the concept that there were, uh, different, uh, he, he has a, there's a chart, and it has to do with temperatures in the body connected to different physical conditions that can be caused. And then, linking those to different colors that could also kind of denote the problem. So if you can, like, look closely at the patient and see different color changes. And then also, what colors could be used to combat-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... those problems. So, for instance, he believed that red would stimulate blood flow.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

The color red. Uh, that you could use b- blue to slow it down, or cool something down that was inflamed. Um, you could use yellow as a laxative.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

That kinda thing. So, so there, so he came up with this big, uh, chart, and The Canon of Medicine, and, and kinda set out, like, the, the groundwork for this, for this theory. One example that I ran into there, and then many times as I was reading about this, is that, uh, you, i- it works both ways. Uh, a color can fix a problem, but you also have to be careful of the application of a color, 'cause he also noted that you could make a problem worse if you

used the wrong color. So, for instance, if you have a nosebleed, don't shine red light on yourself. 'Cause then your nose will bleed more.

Justin:

I wonder how you're even finding a red light in this time.

Sydnee:

It's... I don't know.

Justin:

It's not like we have, it's not like we can get gel from the th- gels from the theater supply company.

Sydnee:

And then, and I'm sure that.. Well I don't know if gemstones, maybe?

Justin:

Of course, we had stained glass, right? So I mean-

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

... you could cover-

Sydnee:

So, yeah.

Justin:

Yeah. So- Something.

Sydnee:

So you could, I mean, yeah, there are a way to make different pigments and things.

Justin:

Yeah, yeah.

Sydnee:

At the time.

Justin:

That makes sense. Lamp covers. Maybe that kind of thing.

Sydnee:

Ye- Yes. Lamp covers.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Sure.

Justin:

Why not?

Sydnee:

I don't know.

Justin:

You're lookin' at me like that's a bad idea. But I think colored lamp colors, covers is a, is a fine way... You didn't have any better ideas.

Sydnee:

I, I don't know why this is the, this is the main problem you have with this theory.

Justin:

Uh, I, it- it's not the main problem. I'm curious about how they executed it. I'm not saying that maybe it sounds like there's a grain of truth and something I wanna explore more in my day-to-day life, the healing power of light.

Sydnee:

You're gonna do this, aren't you?

Justin:

What if we could both be doctors, but different kind of doctors. This is my wife, she's more of an allopathic physician, and I'm more of like, Doctor Light.

Sydnee:

This is... Okay, this is where I know that-

Justin:

Like in *Mega Man*.

Sydnee:

... um, chromotherapy is not an excepted, uh, healing technique in North America.

Justin:

That's just like, th- that's just... No. We haven't opened our eyes yet.

Sydnee:

There's no solid evidence that it can be used to treat or cure anything.

Justin:

It's not, it couldn't be solid, it's light. Think about it.

Sydnee:

Um, and if you don't believe me-

Justin:

Solid light, whoever's heard of a such a thing.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Double check me on WebMD where you get all of your medical information. Don't lie, you know that's where you go. [laughs].

Justin:

No, I, no, no, no. I get it all from the rays of the sun. Pop the sun, send its curing beams down on to me and all his children.

Sydnee:

So these theories, uh, persisted.

Justin:

Theories. You said it with such a sneer.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

Let it, let it in.

Sydnee:

Uh, uh, one of the, one of the next practitioners had a great name, Augustus Pleasonton.

Justin:

We prefer children. Not practitioners.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna give you that name again.

Justin:

We're chil- we're children of the light.

Sydnee:

Augustus Pleasonton.

Justin:

Augustus. Papa Augustus as we called him.

Sydnee:

Pleasonton. He was a Civil War general.

Justin:

[laughs]. Civil War general named Pleasonton. That's pretty good.

Sydnee:

And he, he wrote a book about how great the color blue was for healing and stuff. [laughs].

Justin:

I wanna read that. Oh, for healing. I thought it was just, [laughs], like, a really chilled out book about, [laughs], "Hey, it's me, it's A- Aug- Augie, Augie Pleas writing you from the front lines. I just wanna-"

Sydnee:

It's 853 pages long, about the color blue.

Justin:

... reiterate, I am so into blue right now. [laughs].

Sydnee:

I'm really feelin' the color blue.

Justin:

Really into blue. Check out my sequel, Greenish, kinda into that next.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Although, he wrote about the healing properties of the color blue on the human body, but he also noted how it was really great at making grapes grow.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And making animals fertile.

Justin:

Man, what can't the color blue do?

Sydnee:

Now, I wanna know how that experiment was set up.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Hey, cow, look at this.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

How you feelin'?

Sydnee:

Check out, [laughs], how fertile do you feel now?

Justin:

How fertile do you feel, cow?

Sydnee:

Cow.

Justin:

Hey cow, you like this blue?

Sydnee:

He inspired, uh, Dr. Seth Pancoast, who kinda came up with the modern concept of chromotherapy, which is mainly about sh- you know, an extension of what we've already talked about.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, codified methods of shining different lights on people for various lengths of time. Different parts of the body, and what those colors of light, uh, can do. Um, and this kind of moved to the next century, there were all kinds of different color healers who were writing about different ways to use different colors. And, um, the Spectro-Chrome, Chromometry Encyclopedia was written. And, uh-

Justin:

It's like Spectro-Chrome M- M- Chrome Metry.

Sydnee:

Chromometry.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

There we go. And throughout that, uh, century, we have kind of the definition of all the different colors. So what each color was for was, um-

Justin:

This is gettin' a little Birth of a Nation for me right now.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

I'm warning you. The, the territory you're veering into.

Sydnee:

Well do you-

Justin:

Wh- What the colors are for, and what they're good for. It's, it's gettin' a little racy for me.

Sydnee:

Do you wanna know?

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Well do you wanna know what they're good for?

Justin:

Yeah. Just don't, like, you're starting to sound like my great grandpa right now, with all this color talk. I, it's starting to freak me out.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. What are you tryna, I'm talkin' about, like, ROYGBIV.

Justin:

Okay. Well, let's just keep it, let's keep it steady there.

Sydnee:

Okay. Watch it. [laughs].

Justin:

You watch it.

Sydnee:

All right. Red.

Justin:

Tell you what the colors are good for.

Sydnee:

Okay. This is a family show.

Justin:

There's only one good color and it's all the colors.

Sydnee:

Family show.

Justin:

I'm a bel- you're the mother of my child.

Sydnee:

We don't y- we don't-

Justin:

These views you're espousing.

Sydnee:

That kind of humor is, that's not primetime humor, J-Man.

Justin:

[laughs]. Who's bringing that kind of humor? I'm just trying to keep, I'm just trying to keep you from, from, from bringing your extremely social conservative viewpoints to this program. There's no room for it here.

Sydnee:

All right. All right. So let me tell you about the colors.

Justin:

Here she goes again. Drunk uncle off on another tangent. Go ahead, tell me about the colors, Sydnee. Yikes.

Sydnee:

I already mentioned that red was great at simulating blood.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And growth. And energizing your organs. And it's really good for sex stuff.

Justin:

All kinds of sex stuff.

Sydnee:

Yeah. So there you go.

Justin:

Red negligee. For instance.

Sydnee:

Uh, it was noted, it was noted specifically that you should not use red for cancer. Which, I think you could apply to any of the other-

Justin:

[laughs]. Rookie mistake. Classic rookie mistake.

Sydnee:

... any of the other colors as well. Don't use any colored light for cancer, would be my advice.

Justin:

Right. N- Including but not limited to, red.

Sydnee:

Yes. So I would agree with that piece of, that piece of advice.

Justin:

"What do you mean I'm not in remission? I used light. I sat in the light, like.."

"You... Did you try, d- was it red?"

"Yeah, it was..."

"Uh, there's your problem."

Sydnee:

Ah, there you go.

Justin:

That's your problem.

Sydnee:

No. Now, orange on the other hand, would be helpful for me right now, because it can increase your milk production.

Justin:

Fantastic. I think you should just stick to the cookies I'm making you.

Sydnee:

The cookies are much more... Justin is making me these lactation cookies. Which, actually, mom made first. I have to give her credit first.

Justin:

Yep.

Sydnee:

But, uh, now Justin is making them. They're really good. I- If, if anybody's breastfeeding look up lactation cookies and make those suckers.

Justin:

I'm making these blueberry bramble ones. I'll send you my recipe.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

No worries.

Sydnee:

Leave out the Brewer's yeast though, 'cause it can make your baby gassy.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And why would you want that?

Justin:

Make them, make your mom gassy too, but also the baby.

Sydnee:

Now, yellow light is good for the stomach, the liver, the intestines, and your stool.

Justin:

Okay, so that has a certain logic to it, right? 'Cause we're, we're dealing with, like, bile, an- and-

Sydnee:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Justin:

... that kinda deal.

Sydnee:

You can see where somebody woulda come up with this idea.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

However, it's also good for scars.

Justin:

Mmmm.

Sydnee:

So I, I got nothing there.

Justin:

Yeah, I'm not sure.

Sydnee:

Green, uh, it says that it's good for basically anything.

Justin:

[laughs]. Great.

Sydnee:

So, you know-

Justin:

'Cause you have to spend money.

Sydnee:

And you know that that's, you know it's reliable when they say, "This is pretty much good for healing everything."

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Uh, they mention specifically that it's good for cleansing germs. Now, now, scientifically-

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

I don't really want my germs cleansed.

Justin:

You don't?

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

We don't want that?

Sydnee:

Well, do you wanna scrub your germs?

Justin:

Or do you wanna-

Sydnee:

You want to just get 'em all squeaky clean?

Justin:

No, I wish it would kill the germs.

Sydnee:

Right.

Justin:

You're right.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I don't want, I, I take issue with cleansing germs.

Justin:

I think that the fact that you're h-

Sydnee:

Cleansing [crosstalk 00:20:57] germs.

Justin:

I think the fact that you're hung up on semantics right now, uh, is maybe missing the point of g- uh, the fact that green light is even in the equation right now.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Well, if I'm giving them the benefit of the doubt, they at least need to say it right.

Justin:

Fair enough.

Sydnee:

All right, so blue is more useful. It's good for stopping that bleeding. So, if you cause a nosebleed by looking at red light-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... go look at a blue light.

Justin:

Perfect.

Sydnee:

Uh, you can also use it for headaches, high blood pressure, and, uh, hysteria. I liked that application, that you could treat hysteria with blue light, because hysteria, as we have mentioned previously, is a fake problem.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And this is a fake cure.

Justin:

So it kinda... That's nice, actually, f- when they can dovetail like that.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

My thing is better. Well, good.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

I'm glad we cured it.

Sydnee:

It wasn't a thing, so I'm glad that, you know-

Justin:

It's... Yeah.

Sydnee:

Indigo light has uses, but I'm not gonna address them, 'cause it's not officially part of the rainbow anymore.

Justin:

Burn. What's up?

Sydnee:

So you're out, indigo.

Justin:

Take that.

Sydnee:

We're goin' right on to purple.

Justin:

Pluto cures stuff too, but we're not even foolin' with that either.

Sydnee:

No, forget it. We didn't even put it on our kid's wall. She's got the whole solar system. Not Pluto.

Justin:

Nope. Not Pluto.

Sydnee:

Uh, purple is good for alcohol addiction. [laughs].

Justin:

Yep. Tell that to the bottle of Crown Royal I got, uh, inside my cupboard.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Uh, it's also good for white blood cells. That was very non-specific, I thought.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

I mean, I, you have those.

Justin:

They're good.

Sydnee:

Yeah. So this is good for those.

Justin:

Feel good, look at th- these look great.

Sydnee:

It also has the added benefit of decreasing sexual activity. Now-

Justin:

Now, okay. Maybe you've never seen Prince's bedroom, but I can definitely, definitely say that that one is BS.

Sydnee:

Also, why is that a problem?

Justin:

What do you mean?

Sydnee:

Why do you need to decrease sexual activity?

Justin:

Oh, you're saying, like, why... Well, you know, for some p- members-

Sydnee:

This was listed as a healing property.

Justin:

But for some people of the population, a little overactive sex drive, nymphomania perhaps, they need the, the purple light to sooth them.

Sydnee:

I don't think it would work.

Justin:

Now, Sydnee, I'm looking ahead here on the notes. It says here, "White is good for everything." Yikes. Again.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

With the racially charged material.

Sydnee:

I'm talking about-

Justin:

Can we just do our science show?

Sydnee:

... chromotherapy.

Justin:

Please?

Sydnee:

I just like that this was a, this is a m- medical treatment in which green and white are pretty much good for everything.

Justin:

Go Herd.

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

It's a Marshall, Marshall reference.

Sydnee:

That's our local football team.

Justin:

Marshall reference, for those of you out there. We are. And then somebody who's listening to the podcast just shouted, "Marshall." It was a cool moment for them. You know if you-

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

... are looking for a movie to watch this weekend, you might treat yourself to the hit-

Sydnee:

[laughs].

Justin:

... Matthew McConaughey film, *We Are Marshall*, filmed right here in Huntington. You can see Sydnee's dad for, like, a half second in one of the scenes.

Sydnee:

That's right. That's right. He is there. Uh, now, things got a little sketchy. We moved into colors-

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

... that, at this point-

Justin:

It's been above board until now.

Sydnee:

Uh, uh, uh, well I st- I felt like we'd started moving into colors that are a little bit harder to, I mean, like, magenta is our next one.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Are we really including that in our prime, like, you know, these are the colors that are easily...

Justin:

Uh, uh, well, it's hard to recreate too, magenta.

Sydnee:

Magenta. It-

Justin:

You don't wanna ma- you wanna make sure you nail it.

Sydnee:

But you've gotta get it right because the, the healing property of magenta is that it strengthens contact with your life purpose.

Justin:

Whoa. That's the secret.

Sydnee:

I don't know what that means.

Justin:

The secret.

Sydnee:

I copied that directly from the, the chromotherapy-

Justin:

Strengthens contact with your life purpose. Okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah. So, um, pink is good for grief and sadness. And then, finally, turquoise. I like turquoise, because it's good for sensitivity and intuition, but also for disinfecting.

Justin:

Sure. I'm at my most empathetic and receptive when, uh, I'm free of germs.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. So, I, I mean, I, turquoise, that seems a little more useful than, for intuition.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Disinfection. So, those are pretty much the, that- that's pretty much what we're working with now. Now you understand the basis of chromotherapy.

Justin:

Yes.

Sydnee:

Okay.

Justin:

I, I consider myself well-educated.

Sydnee:

So, some different applications, uh, there was a Dr. Finsen who, he had observed that ultraviolet light can inhibit the growth of bacteria, which is true, right? We know that ultraviolet light can be used-

Justin:

A really cure for li- a real use for light.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Awesome.

Sydnee:

Uh, but then he went on to just use randomly, different lights to treat wounds, to try to get rid of smallpox scars, and to cure TB. I think he had, like, a TB, um, clinic where you went and got light treatments.

Justin:

Gah, couldn't just be happy with that ultraviolet inhibiting the growth of bacteria thing. Although, I could see how, you know, we give old timey people a hard time. I bet it is kinda confusing that in, uh, especially in 1877, one of these things works.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Something actually kind of happens.

Sydnee:

But I don't think that's fair to say. Like, our, w- were we that dumb back then, that when one thing worked we were just like, "Well, there we go."

Justin:

As someone who is, uh-

Sydnee:

So all semi-related thing-

Justin:

... nearly 60 episodes of this show in, I can, can, uh, confirm that, yes, we are just that dumb.

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Uh, Harry Spitler later developed syntonics based on chromotherapy. Syntonics is something that, if you start to do some research, you will find is very much still practiced.

Justin:

Oh yeah?

Sydnee:

Absolutely. Uh, this is where you shine different lights directly into somebody's eye, to do different things. To bring different things into balance-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... and to cure different problems. So you would kind of sit there with, I don't know, like some kind of goggles on, and they're shining a color of light into your eye for a certain amount of time so many times a week. Uh, it can do everything to, but, from treating, like, anxiety and depression.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

To correcting, like, a lazy eye, or different visual issues. Um, nearsightedness.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

I don't know. Different visual problems.

Justin:

This is basically lasik, right?

Sydnee:

It, oh, yes. This is what lasik is.

Justin:

Basically.

Sydnee:

Uh, it can, it's been said it can-

Justin:

I said basically so it, no matter what I say it's correct.

Sydnee:

More or less. It can cure dyslexia. It's one of the claims. It can improve your tennis game, it can make you read faster. [laughs]. Uh, and you can feel calmer all day long.

Justin:

Well, certainly, if it cures your dyslexia it will s- it will, uh, speed your reading along.

Sydnee:

Well that is, that is true. Uh, you can, you can try different, um, lenses, and prisms, and light colors. And basically, by improving your vision, and your visual problems, you're gonna improve your whole body. That's kinda the theory. And like I said, there are people who are practicing this, mainly optometrists.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Not all optometrists. I'm not saying that your local optometrist is doing this. But you will find that there are some optometrists who do this.

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

Currently. Uh, there was also some interesting research done in the '50s that linked sunspots to levels of non-specific unnamed proteins in the blood that can change your menstrual cycles.

Justin:

What?

Sydnee:

And so, therefore, proving that light had an effect on your body?

Justin:

What?

Sydnee:

Uh, this was repeated in the '80s, um, m- I don't, I can't imagine it was confirmed, 'cause it probably wasn't right in the first place. But that was where they, they began to, like, say that, well, if sunlight, then maybe absorbed through the eyes can affect internal organs. And this was more support for all of this craziness.

Justin:

Okay. So speaking of this craziness. Sydnee, today, what's, what's goin' on in this field?

Sydnee:

So, like I said, it's considered a pseudoscience, chromotherapy, at this point. Uh, i- i- people, there are people who are still practitioners of it. You can go to them for chromotherapy. And they're basically just gonna shine different colors of light on you, uh, either on your whole body or different parts of your body.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Uh, for, depending on what your complaint is. Uh, there are also infrared saunas that you can go to, with different colors in them.

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

And just sit in a purple sauna, if you're having too much sex.

Justin:

That sounds chill. That's also at Prince's house.

Sydnee:

Uh, pr- [laughs], practitioners can use-

Justin:

[speaking softly] "Welcome to my cool down room. You've been having too much sex."

Sydnee:

Is that your Prince impression?

Justin:

"Bathe in the purple light. Dearly beloved."

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Is that what Prince sounds like?

Justin:

That's basically what Prince sounds like.

Sydnee:

Uh, practitioners can use everything from gems and candles, prisms, lenses, color baths, to lasers-

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

... and crystal wands.

Justin:

Okay. [laughs]. Wait a second. I sincerely doubt that crystal wands at any point have been held by anybody. Well, I shouldn't say anybody, 'cause people'll believe anything, won't they? Crystal wands.

Sydnee:

All I'm saying is, is that if you're going to a doctor's appointment because you're like, I don't know, "Gosh, my stomach's hurtin' really bad, and I've been pooping blood for the last week." And they pull out a crystal wand in response-

Justin:

"[whimsical yelp], no problem!"

What?

Sydnee:

[laughs]. Like, leave.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

And don't pay them. [laughs].

Justin:

"Let me consult my owl, Archimedes."

Sydnee:

Uh, you can also combine it with hydrotherapy, if you're just in the mood for all kinds of things that don't really work.

Justin:

[laughs].

Sydnee:

And, uh, get one of those colored shower heads.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

You know, like they have in Sky Mall.

Justin:

Oh, yeah, that's bo- that's a healing, that's a therapeutic item.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Then you get, get the-

Justin:

Bill it to Medicare.

Sydnee:

... therapeutic light and water. And you're, I mean, you're clean.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Which I approve of. There's also a chromotherapy torch that I found advertised, which is a-

Justin:

I'm assuming it's a British site, then.

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Which is a flashlight-

Justin:

In American speak.

Sydnee:

Yes. That's what we, that's what we call a torch, flashlight. W- Th- In which you can insert different little colored, like, clear discs.

Justin:

I had some-

Sydnee:

You know, so it'll shine different colors. [laughs].

Justin:

I've had something like that when I was eight that I used to shine the bat signal on my wall. So, I'm well acquainted.

Sydnee:

So you are already a, you already practice chromotherapy, is what you're saying.

Justin:

Yeah, I'm, I'm basically plugged into this tech.

Sydnee:

On the, um, I like the, the frequently asked questions for this product. One of the, one of the frequently asked questions was, "Can I use it on animals?"

Justin:

[laughs]. Yes. I am here to guarantee you that it will be just as effective on humans as it will on animals. Equally effective.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna need, I'm gonna need some, some pink light now, to fix my grief and sadness over the fact that there are that many people who are trying to use chromotherapy, [laughs], on their animals. [laughs].

Justin:

Poor things.

Sydnee:

They also, there are also, uh, colored sunglasses you can buy if you just wanna look at the world-

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

... through some cool magenta shades. Um, and then, on this website, in addition to all of these, you know, medical devices, the manuals, charts, etc, you can also buy a decoder wheel and a mood ring.

Justin:

Excellent.

Sydnee:

If that gives you some idea of what we're dealing with.

Justin:

Like with all fine dealers of therapeutic goods.

Sydnee:

So here's the deal. I, I didn't find any solid evidence that chromotherapy is real. Um, there are uses for light in therapy. A, a lot of people would mention, um, for high bilirubin levels in babies we use, you know, UV light.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So there, there are ways to apply light in, uh, in medical practice. But shining purple light on somebody, as far as I know, isn't gonna do anything other than, hey man, I like the color purple, so maybe it'll cheer you up.

Justin:

Thank you to, uh, everybody tweeting about *Sawbones*, our program. Like Carly, Amanda C., Corey, who asked if we were gonna have an episode today. Uh, here you go, Corey. Um, Ka- [laughs], also Katie, Madeline, uh, Brendan, Steve, Hontocar, sounds like a barbarian, Adam, Carrie, Justine, Corrine, Slimdog, Bethany, Alex, Bob, Hannah, uh, Klohoo, Josh. So many others. Thank you so much for, uh, tweeting about our program. Uh, we hope that you have enjoyed it.

We're @sawbones on Twitter, so you can, uh, talk to us that way, or use the Sawbones hashtag. We've also got a growing, uh, Facebook group for you to come join us. Search for *Sawbones* there and, and come join up. It's a lovely community of people. Um, we'll put episodes there, and some photos, and tons of great stuff. There's a picture up there right now of our baby chucking a blanket one of our dear listener's made us. So you can go enjoy that.

Uh, thank you to Maximum Fun network for having us, uh, on, uh, they've got a lot of, uh, great shows. Uh, thank you to The Taxpayers for the use of their song, Medicines, for our intro and outro. And I think, Syd, that is gonna do it for us, right? Yeah?

Sydnee:

Yeah, we have a, we have a house to repaint.

Justin:

Thanks to iTunes for, uh, tweeting about our, our show. We appreciate that iTunes.

Sydnee:

Yeah, thank you.

Justin:

You're the best. Uh, uh, but that's gonna do it for us for right now until next Tuesday. I am Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

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

[theme music plays out]

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