

## **Sawbones Episode 60: The Goat Testicle Solution**

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### **Justin:**

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

### **Sydnee:**

[laughs]

### **Justin:**

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

### **Sydnee:**

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

### **Justin:**

You go ahead and knock that out. Thanks.

### **Intro (Clint McElroy):**

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

[theme song Medicines by The Taxpayers plays]

### **Justin:**

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

### **Sydnee:**

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

Happy a MaxFun Week, everybody. Uh, um, deep in, almost in the home stretch of MaxFun Week.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, I hope you've been enjoying it.

**Justin:**

I hope you've had a lot of fun. Thank you to everybody sharing, uh, episodes. Uh, we are joined by our, um, our, our third member, our unofficial, um-

**Sydnee:**

Mascot.

**Justin:**

Our unofficial mascot. This is a two and a half person for, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Oh, no.

**Justin:**

So close. Uh-

**Sydnee:**

Two and a half, uh, not, uh, we don't want to call her man.

**Justin:**

Um, no.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, that's weird.

**Justin:**

Well, I don't want to call you a man either, so it's not really accurate.

**Sydnee:**

Oh, thanks.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Two and a half person podcast, uh, Sawbones.

**Sydnee:**

Oh, she dressed as a ninja turtle just for this.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Uh, so, thank you.

**Sydnee:**

She looked horrible.

**Justin:**

She's the cutest. Uh, thank you everybody tweeting by about the show and sharing your favorite episodes yesterday and, and leaving ratings, and reviews. You've all been, uh, wonderful. There's uh, uh, still more to come though, uh, MaxFun Week isn't over yet. So go to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) and uh, fun, slash MaxfunWeek final list of activities there. Uh, Syd, we owe people an apology.

**Sydnee:**

We do?

**Justin:**

Yeah, for last week, uh, we talked about cataracts and, well, I don't know how to put this, but it was a little much for some folks.

**Sydnee:**

Does that bother people?

**Justin:**

It is, I, I got a lot of people saying, uh, who had like initially thought, "Eh, nothing bothers me." Then they were indeed bothered by all the eyeballs and cutting the, of the eyeballs and the-

**Sydnee:**

I-

**Justin:**

... unpleasantness.

**Sydnee:**

See, I understand conceptually that, that kind of thing bothers people, but it's so hard for like literally nothing-

**Justin:**

You've at least gotten past-

**Sydnee:**

... bothers me.

**Justin:**

... the point where you'll tell like hugely upsetting stories while we eat. I appreciate that.

**Sydnee:**

That's true. That's true. I will say this one thing, spit kind of bothers me.

**Justin:**

Spit does bother you.

**Sydnee:**

Like to see spit, that kind of bothers me. But cutting into eyes, nah, that's fine.

**Justin:**

Uh-

**Sydnee:**

You do that all day.

**Justin:**

... but I was hoping you could dig into your archives and pull us out something a little lighter that we could talk about this week.

**Sydnee:**

Um, um, let me see what I got. Um, ooh, I know. You, you want to talk about Ebola?

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

That's not, you don't think that's lighter?

**Justin:**

No, try again.

**Sydnee:**

Um, um, uh, oh, okay. I got, I got like three more episodes worth of Black Death stuff.

**Justin:**

Yeah, no. I guess, just lighter-

**Sydnee:**

You want Black Death? Is that lighter? Is that-

**Justin:**

Lighter, a little lighter.

**Sydnee:**

No. Uh, oh, uh, broken heart syndrome.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

You want know?

**Justin:**

No, no, no. Try again.

**Sydnee:**

No, not that. Okay. Oh, okay. Okay. I got something here.

**Justin:**

Hit me.

**Sydnee:**

So, uh, this is something that a lot of our listeners have actually asked us for. We've talked about this guy a little bit, briefly in one episode before.

**Justin:**

Who is he?

**Sydnee:**

But uh, Dr. John Brinkley, uh, you may remember him as the goat testicle doctor.

**Justin:**

Nailed it. Perfect.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Goat, testicles. I thought that might be what-

**Justin:**

I want to put a-

**Sydnee:**

... the doctor ordered.

**Justin:**

I want to put-

**Sydnee:**

Ha ha. Ha ha.

**Justin:**

... I want to put away the, the, the paper I was using for the foley work.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

I provided the foley work for that segment.

**Sydnee:**

I didn't know what that was, but I figured it out in context.

**Justin:**

That, that was fine. That's foley, that's my foley work.

**Sydnee:**

Those are my verbal skills. I know what it means in context now.

**Justin:**

Did we, did somebody submit this one to us? Is it-

**Sydnee:**

Well, most recently, Michael emailed us asking us for this topic.

**Justin:**

That's sawbones@maximumfun.org.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, but I will say, uh, I realize that there are probably people listening going, "I recommended that. I suggested that too." And I know we've had this suggested several times and I hadn't done it. Like I said, because we kind of alluded to him. I think uh, when we talked about, um, aphrodisiacs or something.

**Justin:**

Maybe. Okay. What, what's his full name?

**Sydnee:**

Dr. John Romulus Brinkley.

**Justin:**

Oh, that's a good middle name.

**Sydnee:**

You know what-

**Justin:**

Woof.

**Sydnee:**

... you know what sad though? Do you know? True fact he later changed it to John Richard Brinkley.

**Justin:**

You doofus.

**Sydnee:**

Because he thought Romulus uh, was too-

**Justin:**

Was too sweet and he couldn't-

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

... live up to the pressure of having such a sweet, sweet name.

**Sydnee:**

He was made fun of for it, and he didn't like that. So-

**Justin:**

I can't imagine.

**Sydnee:**

So his dad was Do- was John Richard Brinkley, and so he just went ahead and became John Richard Brinkley. He-

**Justin:**

John Richard was trying break the cycle of boring, and I'm not going to have my son suffer the same fate.

**Sydnee:**

... he actually made himself a second and then created a third.

**Justin:**

Oh, okay.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Skipped, it almost skipped a genera, the Richard skipped a generation, but-

**Sydnee:**

So he was born in 1885. And I think I already kind of mentioned his dad. So let me tell you just a little bit, because if we're going to tell the whole story, let me tell you a little bit about his dad. So his dad was a doctor, a medical doctor. I think it's interesting. His father was married a total of five times.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]



**Sydnee:**

The first time his marriage was annulled because he was too young to get married.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And this was in, in the, well, this would've been the mid 18 hundreds.

**Justin:**

So he must have been a toddler.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. So I'm figuring three, three or four.

**Justin:**

He was three or five, three, three or four years old.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, he went on to get married four more times all to women much younger than him. At one point he married a Sarah and then her niece also named Sarah came to live with him.

**Justin:**

Mm, okay.

**Sydnee:**

And John, the doctor that we will be speaking of, the John Romulus,-

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... uh, he is the product of, uh, his dad and the niece, Sarah, not wife, Sarah, but niece, Sarah. However, then she died, and so he was raised by his father-

**Justin:**

Sarah and Sarah one.

**Sydnee:**

... and the first Sarah.

**Justin:**

Okay, Sarah one.

**Sydnee:**

Although he referred to her as aunt Sarah, he was aware that wasn't his mother. So he didn't call her-

**Justin:**

Wow, this is some wild, "I'm my own grandpa." Stuff going on here.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

I'm, I'm trying to, to parse this all out. Uh, yet, and you know, with, with a origins like that, I can't believe the dude didn't turn out more normal.

**Sydnee:**

I know. It's, it's a wonder he had some problems. Uh, so he was, so he was raised mainly actually by aunt Sarah because his father passed away when he was pretty young. And so mainly by aunt Sarah, he came from kind of humble origins, you know, not, not a great educational background, not a great, not a lot of money. Um, he started out when he started working as a patent medicine salesman, which we've talked about before.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

Um, so basically he was like an early medical huckster who kind of went around the country trying to sell people stuff that wasn't really medicine, but he was trying to pass it off as medicine.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

And he, he pretty early on got married to a younger woman named Sally, and they actually did this as a team. So early on, they would go around, they had a medicine show that they ran.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

So like, have we ment- we've mentioned medicine shows before, haven't we?

**Justin:**

I think so. Yeah. It was sort of a touring production where you would get some entertainment and you would also be persuaded to buy some pills-

**Sydnee:**

And-

**Justin:**

... or a, a tonic or a tincture.

**Sydnee:**

... and they usually would pose as something that maybe exotic or unfamiliar to the average-

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

... towns person, so they pretended to be Quakers because not everyone was familiar with Quakers, and so they were thought to maybe have medical knowledge beyond the realm of the norm. So they would pretend to be Quakers and they would sell a, a virility tonic.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

Uh, but he really did want to be a real doctor.

**Justin:**

Had a, had high hopes,-

**Sydnee:**

Yes.

**Justin:**

... aspirations.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. Even though-

**Justin:**

Fake it till you make it. I say.

**Sydnee:**

That, that was the plan. I'll just keep pretending I'm a doctor and then maybe one day-

**Justin:**

It'll stick.

**Sydnee:**

... it'll work out. So they eventually settled in Chicago and he entered the Bennett Medical College of Eclectic Medicine.

**Justin:**

Eclectic medicine.

**Sydnee:**

Eclectic. Do you know what that is?

**Justin:**

Uh-

**Sydnee:**

Eclectic medicine.

**Justin:**

... I've, I mean, I certainly get a vibe, but is it legit?

**Sydnee:**

Well, no, it was a popular, it was a, kind of a, a branch of medicine in the early 1900s, and it drew from different... It was eclectic. It drew from different areas of medicine, none of them particularly real, uh, a lot of herbal stuff, um, sim-similar to... I think we've talked about the Thompsonians who kind of created their own branch of medicine, their own like medical beliefs. Uh, basically just kind of drew on anything that sounded like it might work, not really evidence based.

**Justin:**

Kind of like some late Decemberists, some Sea Shanties, uh, some Bruce Springsteen Ruth Rock in-influence, the Indy thing.

**Sydnee:**

Just whatever.

**Justin:**

Just whatever, kind of whatever worked.

**Sydnee:**

Whatever felt good that day. So he, uh, he actually was working his way through medical school. He worked at Western Union at night and he went to school during the day and this would have worked out fairly well, um, although, I mean, it was a struggle. He was constantly in debt. He was, you know, he was raising a young family and, and trying to go to school, um, except his marriage kept having problems. So first of all, his, uh, he came home one day and his wife had taken their daughter and run off and filed for divorce. So he tracked them down. He found them. This, this, this is why he had several interruptions in his medical education. So he tracked them down and then kidnapped his daughter and went to Canada for a while.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And then he came back and him and his wife reconciled and got back together.

**Justin:**

That's nice.

**Sydnee:**

And then she got pregnant again and ran away again.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

And so he, he tracked her down again with their two children now. And basically she was like, "I don't want you going back to medical school. I'm done with this doctor thing. Stay here with me." And he said, "Okay, all right. I'm not going to go back to medical school."

**Justin:**

Well, that's good. Happy ending.

**Sydnee:**

"But I still want to be a doctor."

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

So, uh, he, he gave up his dream for a little while and then he started kind of looking around. He was living in, uh, near Kansas City at the time, and he, he thought, "Well, there's a, there's a school there maybe I could get into." So he went and applied there among different medical schools. And then he went back to the, to Bennett College, Medical College, the first medical school and said, "Okay, I need my records." You know?

**Justin:**

Hmm. Right.

**Sydnee:**

"Like of the years that I've, I've already completed so that I can get into one of these new medical schools." And they said, "Dude, you owe us like a ton in tuition."

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

"So, no."

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

So, it's like chaos.

**Justin:**

It's kind of like when I, it's kind of like when I try to graduate and Marshall told me that I had \$430 in parking tickets.

**Sydnee:**

Yes. You can't graduate until you pay the parking tickets.

**Justin:**

Can't graduate until you pay your parking tickets folks.

**Sydnee:**

That is the truth.

**Justin:**

Don't be like me kids.

**Sydnee:**

That is the truth. There was also a book that I had from the library.

**Justin:**

Really? It slowed you down.

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That was an issue too. So they wouldn't forward his records, so he couldn't actually attend any of the medical schools he applied to in, in, um, including the one in Kansas City.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

However, the Kansas City Eclectic Medical University did not have what I would call high standards.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

He was able to get a degree for the low, low price of \$500.

**Justin:**

A bargain.

**Sydnee:**

And no actual attendance. Uh, no, you know, not actually going to any classes there.

**Justin:**

Oh, cool. Like Phoenix University, like uh-

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Well, I mean, don't they make 'em do something?

**Justin:**

I think you have to, I'm just kidding. I think Phoenix is like a real thing.

**Sydnee:**

I know, there's somebody who's mad now.

**Justin:**

Yeah. I'm sorry.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. I don't, I don't know. No, this was not like Phoenix, this was like, "Here's 500 bucks." And they were like, "Great. Here's your degree."

**Justin:**

Oh, like WVU. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Ha haaa! That's, see, there now.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Well, a little interstate rivalry.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Go hard.



**Justin:**

Go hard. Okay. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

So he sort of-

**Justin:**

Sorry.

**Sydnee:**

... went in and bought a degree.

**Justin:**

Uh, okay.

**Sydnee:**

And, and that degree was actually-

**Justin:**

Sorry for our West Virginia listeners, enjoy.

**Sydnee:**

Well, for our, yeah, for our Huntington listeners. Right? As usual, uh-

**Justin:**

Right. as usual, yeah, Huntington listeners, did not enjoy that.

**Sydnee:**

... the three of you, loved that.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Um, so that degree, so to speak... I, I'm, I would be doing air quotes if I wasn't holding our daughter. That degree-

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... was good in about eight states,-

**Justin:**

Oh, okay.

**Sydnee:**

... believe it or not, at the time. So-

**Justin:**

That's fine. They didn't have cars.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Just get one state and stick with it.

**Sydnee:**

There you go. Uh, so he, he took his fake degree and he started trying to get work as a doctor. Um, but the problem was people knew, I mean, it was a fake degree, so he was having trouble. It was like-

**Justin:**

It was, um, it was printed on gum.

**Sydnee:**

He was having trouble getting patients-

**Justin:**

Is printed on a big piece of gum.

**Sydnee:**

... at first. Um, he was also, uh, he hadn't completed any of, kind of what would've been a residency training at the time, like an apprenticeship of any kind, and so without doing that, it was hard to get work as well. So he had his fake degree, uh, his wife, he's trying to drag her around, um, with now there are three children to find work and she basically just said, "I'm through with this buddy." And took off.

**Justin:**

Sure.

**Sydnee:**

And he let her go that time. So, exit Sally and the three children-

**Justin:**

Did he have another-

**Sydnee:**

... for now.

**Justin:**

... did he take a lesson from his dad and have another Sally waiting in the wings?

**Sydnee:**

Um, not another Sally, but hold on.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, so he moved on down to South Carolina and he hooked up with this other doctor named Crawford, who was also like a pa-patent medicine man. Um, and they opened an office and they started giving out injections for virility. He was really into virility, you'll find. This is a theme in his life. It was one of the few things maybe he showed up for in medical school, like-

**Justin:**

He was there for-

**Sydnee:**

... for more lecture or something.

**Justin:**

Yeah. He was there for virility class, front and center.

**Sydnee:**

And he, he was really into virility. So they started giving injections for virility, uh, that were actually just colored water, which was a popular trick of patent medicine men at the time, just give you an injection or something that looked like it may be a medicine, and he actually charged 25 bucks a piece for these.

**Justin:**

Whoa!

**Sydnee:**

Which-

**Justin:**

That was a mint back then.

**Sydnee:**

It would've been, it would've been over a hundred bucks, I believe. Uh, they called it electric medicine from Germany.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

I guess that made it sound like, like... I don't know, maybe the Germans were known for their-

**Justin:**

Electric medicine??

**Sydnee:**

And their sexual prowess or-

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... stamina or something.

**Justin:**

Viril Germans. Viril is a German. That, that man is.

**Sydnee:**

I've heard that, and that's a very popular expression.

**Justin:**

It's an old expression, especially around here.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. That, people say that in Huntington all the time.

**Justin:**

It used to be a local thing.

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Totally true. Um, however, after about two months they hadn't paid any of their bills for the storefront that they had rented for electricity, for the place where they were living, uh, basically any bills. Um-

**Justin:**

It's recurring theme with Mr., Mr. Brinkley.

**Sydnee:**

... they'd passed some bad checks and they basically had to sneak out of town before they were arrested.

**Justin:**

Nice.

**Sydnee:**

So he headed on to Memphis and this is where he gets remarried.

**Justin:**

Oh good.

**Sydnee:**

So he does not meet another Sally. He does meet a, a young lady, again, much younger than him named Minnie. Um, and I think this is great. They, they fall in love, uh, four days later, I believe they got married. They go on a honeymoon and while on their honeymoon, he's, then he's tracked down and arrested for passing all those bad checks in South Carolina.

**Justin:**

"You know, it's not perfect. It's not what I wanted, but it's our story."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

"It's still special. It's our story. No one else has a story like this. I love you."

**Sydnee:**

He's taken back to South Carolina, uh, to stand trial. Um, and when he gets there, he basically by the way just says, "It wasn't me. It was Crawford." So they track him down too and take him back.

**Justin:**

Uh-huh [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

Um, but his father-in-law, so Minnie's dad-

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

This is why it's important Minnie entered the picture.

**Justin:**

Mr. Minnie.

**Sydnee:**

Mr. Minnie. Uh, he helps out by bailing him out of jail because he's actually a medical doctor. Again, he keeps finding doctors. He's not one, but he keeps finding doctors. And he has some money, and so he, he does help bail him out, which I don't know why you'd do that at that point.

**Justin:**

Uh, you know, you want to believe that your daughter has found a, a legit guy and he wants to give him every opportunity.

**Sydnee:**

I don't know, because I, like I really am a doctor,-

**Justin:**

You're correct.

**Sydnee:**

... and if Charlie brought home a guy who had a fake medical degree-

**Justin:**

Uh, he's more like a doctor groupie though, right? He's like Luis Guzman, in, in uh, in Boogie Nights, you know, he's not part of it really, but like, God, he wants to so bad.

**Sydnee:**

But I mean he calls himself Dr. Brinkley. Like he, he had to-

**Justin:**

It's more like an affectionate doctor.

**Sydnee:**

... bought a medical degree.

**Justin:**

It's more like affectionate. Like I call-

**Sydnee:**

He's like Dr. Phil-

**Justin:**

So I call my aunt Stephanie-

**Sydnee:**

... who isn't a medical doctor.

**Justin:**

... aunt Stephanie, even though she's not technically my aunt, but like she's family basically. So I call her aunt Stephanie sort of like that. It's basically like that.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, but I, giving somebody the title aunt, even if they're not technically your aunt doesn't then entitle them to like do surgery on you.

**Justin:**

That's true.

**Sydnee:**

Prescribe medicines.

**Justin:**

I would not ask aunt Stephanie to do surgery on me.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I, that's not a good idea because she's not a surgeon.

**Justin:**

That's correct.

**Sydnee:**

So, uh, so he, for whatever reason, Minnie's dad bails him out. He goes back to Memphis to, you know, get, get back to his life there that he's, with his fake medical degree that he's attempting to build, when, guess who shows up?

**Justin:**

Who?

**Sydnee:**

Ol' Sally?

**Justin:**

Sally, you dog. Where have you been?

**Sydnee:**

Sally trucks him down with her three kids in tow and she's mad.

**Justin:**

Not happy.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, she doesn't want him back, but she doesn't like the bigamy.

**Justin:**

Oh because, yeah. Right.

**Sydnee:**

Because now he's married to two women.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Technically I guess in the eyes of the law.



**Sydnee:**

So here's the thing, she shows up to tell Minnie, like, "Just so you know, he married me first. That's my man."

**Justin:**

That's my man.

**Sydnee:**

And Minnie apparently doesn't care, the only thing they're concerned about is that bigamy of course is illegal.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

So they hightail it out of town again.

**Justin:**

Again!

**Sydnee:**

Again. So they start-

**Justin:**

Poor John, I'm starting to feel bad for that guy. He's just trying to make his, make his way through this crazy world.

**Sydnee:**

So basically at this point he's traveling around, he finds some work here and there as a doc. Um, he makes enough money to pay his debt to Bennett Medical College eventually, so that-

**Justin:**

Nice.

**Sydnee:**

... they will release his records to Kansas City who officially graduates him, not after completing any actual training, but because he gives them a hundred more dollars.

**Justin:**

Oh great.

**Sydnee:**

So at that point he, he's not one of their fake degrees, it's one of their real degrees that he still didn't earn.

**Justin:**

But-

**Sydnee:**

And these are still all from what would've been considered even at the time, highly questionable medical schools.

**Justin:**

Sounds official though.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, and what did he do during this period? He actually started working at a meat packing plant.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

He was doing, but he was doing medical work there like for the workers. I don't know. Occupational medicine, I guess.

**Justin:**

Sure. If you're on staff doctor at the meat packing plant.

**Sydnee:**

With his, with his new medical degree, he starts working at the meat packing plant. And this is very important because it is here that he, he becomes fascinated with goats.

**Justin:**

Finally. Oh, I've been waiting for the goats to enter the story.

**Sydnee:**

So I guess among the meats that are packed at the plant are goat meats, and-

**Justin:**

Goats and goat byproducts.

**Sydnee:**

... and he notices. And so he's um, part of the whole process, like the slaughterhouses there and everything. So he sees the live animals before they become, you know-

**Justin:**

Not.

**Sydnee:**

... packed meat.

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

And he notices that the goats are like, they're really down to get down.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Uh, I guess-

**Justin:**

The goats are like a, the goats are like the, uh, the jock in a horror movie like, "This could be our last night. What if we die tonight? I don't want to die a virgin, you?"

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

"No, me neither. Let's do this thing."

**Sydnee:**

And that's, and that's what all the goats are doing all the time, not the cows, not the pigs.

**Justin:**

Um, no, cows are resigned to their fates.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, I don't-

**Justin:**

Pigs don't know what's up.

**Sydnee:**

No.

**Justin:**

Goats are down to clown.

**Sydnee:**

And he, he starts thinking about this because he is already, you know, like I said, fascinated with virility. And so this is where he starts piecing together, "How can I take my knowledge of goat, goat horniness-

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

... and my fake medical knowledge and use it to serve mankind?" Now, this, mm, uh, was almost the end of his story.

**Justin:**

Oh yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Because right at this point, when he is on the verge of his great revelation about goats, uh, World War I happens and it almost interrupted his career because he was a reservist.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

So he was called up, but he only served two months because he basically spent the whole time hospitalized for a nervous breakdown.

**Justin:**

I, yeah, that would be stressful.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Well, I-

**Justin:**

Can't fault him for that.

**Sydnee:**

Well,-

**Justin:**

Uh-

**Sydnee:**

... eh, with this guy's history.

**Justin:**

At least now, okay, yeah. Uh, maybe he was running a, a, something of a scam.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. So it, it, it almost interrupted his what, what is to be known, what he's to be known for very shortly though,-

**Justin:**

Like-

**Sydnee:**

... but not quite. Speaking of interruptions, I'm going need you to do something for me, Justin.

**Justin:**

Let me guess. Billing department?

**Sydnee:**

Head to the billing department.

**Justin:**

Let's go.

[ad break]

**Justin:**

Okay! So interruption past. Sydnee, what's next for John?

**Sydnee:**

So at this point, John Brinkley decides, um, "We're going to, we're going to settle down, Minnie and I. We're going to settle down."

**Justin:**

No more running.

**Sydnee:**

No more running. Sally, can't find me. [laughs] "Uh, we're going to settle down in Milford Kansas." And this will be the site of his great revelation.

**Justin:**

Beautiful Milford.

**Sydnee:**

So first of all, he starts working in Milford, uh, right, uh, at the onset of the flu pandemic of 1918.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

And he makes quite a name for himself at this time. This is, this is basically why he is able to go on and do what he does next, because he's got a really good bedside manner, uh, he's really well liked by the people he cares for, and, you know, there are a lot of patients all of a sudden who desperately need a doctor and are not taking the time to check credentials.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

So, and you know the thing about the flu at the time, um, there wasn't a lot to do about it. So just being there and holding people's hand.

**Justin:**

A little, a little TLC.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, I mean, that, that would've been considered the standard of medical care. So, whether or not the patients were living or dying, he probably wasn't, you know, discredited. So at this point, he's, he's made a name for himself, people kind of like him. And a young guy shows up at his office, and he's there for what he calls sexual weakness.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

And he says-

**Justin:**

Oh boy, you just hit, you hit right on the button. Boy, did you come the right place!

**Sydnee:**

And he's like, you know, "Th-this is my thing. He's here for sexual weakness. That's, virility is my favorite thing to take care of." So he says, "Doc, is there anything you can do to, you know, put the spark back in the bedroom for me and the missis?" And he, he has this, Dr. Brinkley has this great knowledge about goats. And he's like, he actually makes a comment to him, you know?

**Justin:**

Have you seen a goat?

**Sydnee:**

"If you just had goat testicles, you wouldn't have any problems." And this young man says-

**Justin:**

Boy, you have got to nail that delivery. You get one shot to, to look somebody in the eye and say, "You know, if you had goat testicles..." I- see, even that, I don't think you would buy that from me. I don't think I could sell it the way that Romulus could.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, well, the way Romulus sold it worked because the young man says, "Well, why don't you just gimme goat testicles?"

**Justin:**

Sure.

**Sydnee:**

And he says, "All right, I'll do it for 150 bucks." [laughs]

**Justin:**

"Grab a seat. Cop-a-squat."

**Sydnee:**

Which is great, which is great that not only does he talk this guy into letting him try this experimental surgery on him.

**Justin:**

He charges him 150.

**Sydnee:**

But he charges him 150- \$150 at the time, not-

**Justin:**

Oh-

**Sydnee:**

... not-

**Justin:**

... forget about it, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... corrected. \$150, you know, in 1918. So the guy agrees and he takes, you know, goat testicles, and basically the way he would do this surgery is he would just, wow, I guess this is going to be kind of-

**Justin:**

I'm good.

**Sydnee:**

... kind of bad.

**Justin:**

I'm good. I'll use my mind's eye. Thanks.



**Sydnee:**

Just kind of puts them in the sack.

**Justin:**

With the others?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, with the others.

**Justin:**

Really?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Bonus.

**Sydnee:**

Yep.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Just kind of put 'em in there.

**Justin:**

Just get in there.

**Sydnee:**

So,-

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

... the guy later on is, claims that it works.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Uh, and this is supported by the fact that shortly after this, his wife actually gets pregnant. This is the story.

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

This guy's wife gets pregnant and even better for the time. It's a boy.

**Justin:**

Fantastic.

**Sydnee:**

So,-

**Justin:**

And, and, and thus Jim Breuer's classic Goat Boy sketch-

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... was born.

**Sydnee:**

This is where it comes from.

**Justin:**

That's where he got the idea.

**Sydnee:**

They actually did name the kid, Billy in honor of the goat.

**Justin:**

Nooo.

**Sydnee:**

You know, that's, yeah.

**Justin:**

Okay. It's bit on the nose, but I'll, I can, it is a different time.

**Sydnee:**

I'm not making this up. So at this point, everybody wanted it. And I should say he was not the only guy who was experi-experimenting with this idea. There were doctors at other places in Europe who were trying, um, they were actually taking the material from testicles, not actual testicles from animals but like crushed dog, guinea pig, lamb, monkey testes, just pieces of it and injecting the material into, um, human testicles and, in an attempt to do the same thing. And this was probably not so much for sexual weakness as what we would now call erectile dysfunction.

**Justin:**

Got it.

**Sydnee:**

I would say. So, this really took off in Milford. Uh, he did lots and lots of transplants. He started, uh, charging \$750 a piece,-

**Justin:**

That's-

**Sydnee:**

... which... I did check this out. That would be about \$8,800 a surgery now.

**Justin:**

Yeow! Yewoza!

**Sydnee:**

The problem with this is that the more surgeries he did, the more times, uh, things could go wrong.

**Justin:**

I could see how there might be a slip up-

**Sydnee:**

And-

**Justin:**

... well, with him not being a doctor and all.

**Sydnee:**

All through this time, period as, as I tell you more about what happened next, you've got to understand he's constantly being sued.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, there're, there're wrongful death suits. Um, and then just people suing him for not, him not, it not working. Although, still more people claim that it does work. One reason is that he actually, at one point only, uh, advertises it for what he calls intelligent patients.

**Justin:**

Oh, okay. Discerning.

**Sydnee:**

And I think the reason is that he, he believes that intelligent people are less likely to want to go tell other people if it doesn't work.

**Justin:**

Okay. Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Like, "I got goat balls and it didn't work."

**Justin:**

Yeah, no kidding.

**Sydnee:**

And he thinks stupid people will just go tell everybody. So he'll only do it if he thinks you're smart enough.

**Justin:**

"This guy gave me goat testicles." [laughs] "I don't do it any better than I did it before."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

"He's a charlatan."

**Sydnee:**

Uh, you know, they did it, he did it for women as well.

**Justin:**

Nice. Where did he put 'em?

**Sydnee:**

About where he thought her ovaries were.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Maybe actually-

**Justin:**

He had no idea. He, he just had to-

**Sydnee:**

Well, yeah, I mean, he never really went to, I mean, he never finished a decent medical school,-

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

... so I, about where he thought they were.

**Justin:**

Sheesh.

**Sydnee:**

And I, I think this is great. He would give them either male goat testicles, or he would get a female goat and get the ovaries. And the way he would decide which one a woman got was based on what gender child she wanted.

**Justin:**

Oh, good. Kind of a customization mix and match kind of deal I'm into it.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, if you want a male child, you know, you get goat testes. If you want a female child, you get goat ovaries.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

Um, he advertised very heavily and the more surgeries he did, the more things he claimed that they could fix. So instead of just fixing virility and fertility, he could cure flu, dementia, emphysema, insanity, acne, hypertension, basically anything could be cured with goat testicles.

**Justin:**

Oh, oh folks, you know what that makes this? A cure all. And what do we know about cure alls is that they cure nothing.

**Sydnee:**

Nothing. Uh, and this was related to his belief by the way, that sex energy was the basis of all energy.

**Justin:**

Now I'm into that, like orgone energy, right?

**Sydnee:**

Exactly.

**Justin:**

The kind energy that Albert Einstein tried to capture in his sex box.

**Sydnee:**

That's, uh, it's the same thing. It was just you know, the testicle energy.

**Justin:**

Well, check out that episode everybody if you, if you haven't. Listen, you know what? I still, I asked people to tweet when they listened to that, that they found out that, uh, our, our greatest mind spent an afternoon trying to capture sexual energy in a box. Uh, and I still see those tweets from time to time actually, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

That makes me happy every time I see that.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, he thought that goat testes contained what he called... This is great. This is his actual writing I was reading. Vitamin, which was an indeterminate substance, but he thought was very important. You know, vitamin. Uh, he did run into a hiccup when he tried to use Angora goats instead of Toggenburg goats.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm [affirmative]

**Sydnee:**

And Angora goat balls, I guess, smell really bad.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

And so all of his patients were not thrilled about the Angora goat testicles. They wanted the Toggenburg's back.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Uh, you tried to cut costs.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

He, he, you try, you try to get some set of materials and this is what you get.

**Sydnee:**

People will call you on it.

**Justin:**

You do, they notice, they notice it's different.

**Sydnee:**

Dude, you're doing something that doesn't work for \$750 each.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Why rock the boat?

**Justin:**

And just get the expensive balls. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

You know what's weird too is that, in the article I was reading, it said that Toggenburg goats were actually more common. So he was finding like the rare goat testicles that are all... I guess it's like fancy cheeses are really smelly.

**Justin:**

Yes. Yeah, literally. Yeah, exactly.

**Sydnee:**

Just stick with cheddar.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Um, so, uh, the AMA was getting involved at this point.

**Justin:**

Thank god.

**Sydnee:**

He's making all this money and they're trying to shut him down, but the more that they advertise that he's a quack, the more he kind of turns this publicity his way and is like, "The AMA is trying to stop you from this great new procedure." And he relies a lot on testimonials. So he gets his patients to come on and, you know, talk about how great it is because they were. Uh, he also, he started a radio show. So this guy got really big into radio advertising and he would answer questions. It was like the medicine box or something. And he would answer questions and then advertise all of his, uh, products and procedures. And he got a lot of publicity when did the procedure on the then owner of the LA Times-



**Justin:**

Hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... who felt like it worked great. And he spent some time in LA and actually got a lot of Hollywood endorsement at that time. It said that he did this procedure on some stars of the time, but I don't know any names. Um, but this is actually why-

**Justin:**

I can't believe they wouldn't be rushing to volunteer that information.

**Sydnee:**

"I have goat balls." But this is I actually, why, um, did you know that the term goat gland was used at the time in Hollywood for uh, when you would add voiceover to a silent film?

**Justin:**

Uh, no. I did not know that.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, when you would try to add, make it a, make it a talkie, to make it, you know, fit the time-

**Justin:**

Hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... it would, it was called goat gland-

**Justin:**

Huh!

**Sydnee:**

... because of this procedure.

**Justin:**

I did not know that.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, so he built a radio station to continue to advertise in Mexico, which was... Have you heard of these border blasters?

**Justin:**

Yeah. Mexican. There's a song about it.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, okay.

**Justin:**

[singing]

**Sydnee:**

He was one of the first ones to do this.

**Justin:**

Wall of Sound, I think is the name of it?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

Wall of beauty, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Okay. I heard that reference as I was reading about border blasters. He did this. Um, basically that way he could skirt any US laws about, you know, being a charlatan-

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... on the air, because you weren't allowed to be like a fortune teller, you know, that kind of stuff on the air. Um, so he would call in via telephone to broadcast, like from the US to Mexico, to broadcast from Mexico, which is actually specifically banned now by the Brinkley Act.

**Justin:**

Huh.

**Sydnee:**

Named for him.

**Justin:**

Wow.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

I did not know that.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, so he would give them advice, sell meds. Um, he also launched the careers of several country music artists this way.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

And he would sell other fake stuff. For instance, my favorite autographed pictures of Jesus.

**Justin:**

I don't know where they thought he found a pen, but okay.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Um, he eventually expanded to adding human testicles, uh, for transplant instead of just goat testicles. Uh, he got them from criminals on death row, and that procedure would cost you 5,000 bucks. In addition, he opened the national Dr. Brinkley Pharmaceutical Association and sold a bunch of colored water that way.

**Justin:**

The classics.

**Sydnee:**

Um, so this guy was making a mint. I mean he had houses and cars and was filthy, filthy rich until 1930 when at long last the AMA was finally able to build a case and shut him down.

**Justin:**

Wow.

**Sydnee:**

Um, and this was, they were working on him, the, um, FRC was working on shutting down the radio stations, finally finding ways to. Every time he, every time they would make a law, he would skirt it and they finally made enough to stop him. Um, he was actually even violating the international treaties at that point, because it was a back and forth across the border. Uh, so as they shut him down, his last ditch effort to stop it was to run for governor of Kansas.

**Justin:**

Nice.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, which he actually did a total of three times, thought it was twice. It was three times. Um, he almost won. He, the last time he won 30% of the vote. And this was just a write in candidate.

**Justin:**

What a different state that would've been

**Sydnee:**

As a write in candidate, he did this. And his goal was then he could give himself back a medical license.

**Justin:**

Think how sweet Kansas would be now, Kansas.

**Sydnee:**

He was actually, he went down as the, he was known as the Milford messiah because of all this.

**Justin:**

Wow.

**Sydnee:**

He did in total 16,000 transplants.

**Justin:**

Amazing.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, but the, as I mentioned, everything was kind of caving in around him at this point. He was, in addition to the AMA and the FRC, um, he was investigated for tax fraud and for mail fraud, uh, by 1941, he had to declare bankruptcy and he basically lost everything. And in 1942 due to, um, multiple blood clots and he lost his leg and he had several heart attacks, he passed away.

**Justin:**

Yeah, pretty good timing though.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. The money lasted right till the very end.

**Justin:**

Yeah. He died pe, uh, he died penniless which has always seemed like a pretty good timing to me. Um-

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... uh-

**Sydnee:**

He, he made the best use of his money-

**Justin:**

Yeah. Right.

**Sydnee:**

... while he was alive.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

That's for sure.

**Justin:**

It's like Jim Treiving says on *Dragon's Den*, uh "You never see a hearse with a bricks' truck behind it." You know, you got to spent them while you're here. Anyway, uh-

**Sydnee:**

Uh, this is uh-

**Justin:**

... this is-

**Sydnee:**

... this is true.

**Justin:**

... this is, uh, a, uh, Ca-Canadian *Dragon's Den* fan cast and medical history show.

**Sydnee:**

They're, they're, they're, our Canadian listeners right now are cheering.

**Justin:**

Yeah. Yay.

**Sydnee:**

And well, everyone else in the US is going, "Who?"

**Justin:**

Man, this, they're all on YouTube. Catch it. Anyway-

**Sydnee:**

All of them. Thank you.

**Justin:**

They're all there. I think, you know, I was doing this.

**Sydnee:**

I don't why you do that, but thank you.

**Justin:**

Um, and this has been our show *Sawbones*. Thank you so much for listening. Uh, gosh, we sure appreciate you. Max Fun Week has been a really good opportunity for us to, uh, check back in with everybody and see all you fine people tweeting about our, our show and that's really, uh, kind of you. Thank you to people tweeting about us with the @sawbones, uh, username on Twitter, like our sister Theresa McElroy, uh, Ashley Pana, Kara, uh, Anell, Ryan James Hopped, uh, Dan, something scary Mark. It's hard with Halloween. You know, everybody's names are, are different. Kids Dr. Dave, Devin Valdivia, Seffy Halloween, see I mean Halloween, I don't know. They're Halloween names, but you know if you, who you are, if you tweeted about us, thank you.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] We appreciate it.

**Justin:**

You know, we appreciate you with those-

**Sydnee:**

Halloween names or not.

**Justin:**

... Halloween names. Uh, uh, thank you to, uh, everybody else on the Maximum Fun network for letting us be a part of your family. *Jordan, Jesse, Go! Judge John Hodgman, Bullseye, One Bad Mother, Lady to Lady, Goosedown, Flop House.*

**Sydnee:**

*My brother, My brother and Me.*

**Justin:**

Thank you, dear. I could go on. There's a lot of great shows, maximumfun.org. They're all waiting there for you. We're on iTunes, if you could give us a, uh, a, a subscription there or rating or review or whatever, uh, that would be, that would be amazing. And, uh, that's going to do it for us here on, uh, *Sawbones* until next Tuesday. I'm Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

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

[theme music plays out]

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