

## Sawbones 160: Frankberry Stool

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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, a marital tour of misguided medicine. I'm your co-host, Justin McElroy.

**Sydnee:**

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

**Justin:**

Syd, pretend I did the intro sad, like pretend that I sounded sad when I did it.

**Sydnee:**

Do you wanna start over again and sound sad?

**Justin:**

No, no, no, no, just pretend I sounded sad.

**Sydnee:**

Ju—oh, Justin, you sound so sad. What's wrong?

**Justin:**

Thanks for noticing, Sydnee. I'm just a little bit depressed.

**Sydnee:**

Why are you a little bit depressed?

**Justin:**

Well, it's a, just I don't know, you know, the seasons are, are, are changing all around us, but I get—

**Sydnee:**

The beautiful fall leaves are falling.

**Justin:**

They're kind of unimpressive this year—

**Sydnee:**

And the—

**Justin:**

... don't you think?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, well, I—

**Justin:**

Foliage is particularly ...

**Sydnee:**

... I feel like it kinda happened all at once 'cause it was hot—

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... all the way up until it wasn't hot. So they're a lot more like brown and crunchy, straight there instead of like the red soft—

**Justin:**

Oh, why did you have to say brown and crunchy? Oh, that's why I'm really sad.

**Sydnee:**

You're really sad because of brown and crunchy?

**Justin:**

Yeah, the my—

**Sydnee:**

Oh, this is, you're gonna have to give me some explanation [laughs] here.

**Justin:**

Sydnee, Halloween season is over, and that can only mean one thing: monster cereals are over.

**Sydnee:**

Ohhh.

**Justin:**

Why do they make cereals that I can only have sometimes?

**Sydnee:**

Well, really if you think about it, all cereals should only be eaten sometimes [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay, Dr. Phil, maybe you can get off my back for a second and try to sympathize with me.

**Sydnee:**

I'm just saying like not every single night right before you go to sleep maybe, all cereals, maybe not.

**Justin:**

I haven't had it the past two nights, but thank you for noticing my huge accomplishment and really giving me credit for it.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

I'm just—

**Sydnee:**

I think it's because you made cookies.

**Justin:**

I did make cookies. They were hazelnut sea salt cookies. What do you want from me? Sydnee, I'm so sad about monster cereals going away.

**Sydnee:**

I, I am sorry about that, Justin. I know that you enjoy the, all of the Halloween-inspired, monster-themed artificially flavored and colored.

**Justin:**

Artificially flavored—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... and colored, how dare you? They harvest those Frankenberries naturally.

**Sydnee:**

Monster-shaped cereals with sweeties.

**Justin:**

With sweeties.

**Sydnee:**

With sweeties.

**Justin:**

Well, you're at, at, that check out the old commercials for them if you haven't.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

The, they— they— they used to say, "They're filled with sweeties..."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... to keep from saying like, "We put marshmallows in the cereal. Dig us."

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

That's what they are. They're secretly ... I don't think that's better. I still think either way I'd think like there's candy in there.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, well Justin, even though you might not be eating Halloween-themed cereals anymore, you may still be able to experience their joy in a way.

**Justin:**

How is that possible?

**Sydnee:**

Well, has your poop changed color?

**Justin:**

I, it changes color every day, Sydnee. I'm a—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... I'm a man in the midst of a change, always.

**Sydnee:**

Is that what that song's about?

**Justin:**

I'm vibrant—I'm vibrant that way.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Uh, have you heard of Franken Berry stools, Justin?

**Justin:**

Uh, no, I haven't. And I'm assuming it's not the kind you sit on.

**Sydnee:**

No, [laughs] no. Um, I wanna tell you about Franken Berry stools.

**Justin:**

Okay, great.

**Sydnee:**

Um, but before I get into this intriguing Halloween tale, [laughs] post-Halloween tale, uh, about—

**Justin:**

Woo-woo-ooo.

**Sydnee:**

... multicolored poop, um, you know the, the various excretions that come from the human body can come in a wide variety of colors.

**Justin:**

This is no surprise to me. I'm almost 36.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] We tend to, we tend to assume that there are, there's kind of like a designated color for everything, um, but we've known, and I mean you can find records of this back to the Ancient Greeks that we can look at poop and pee and spit and blood and, you know, all the other various things that come outta the human body, snot, uh, and based on its color or its odor or even its flavor, we've been able to tell things about our state of health. Um, we've referenced before on this show that there used to be a wheel of urine flavor—

**Justin:**

Yes.

**Sydnee:**

... that you could check.

**Justin:**

America's worst game show.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Wheel of Urine Flavor.

**Sydnee:**

But there is so much, uh, that the color of these various, uh, human excreta could tell us. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Well, I'm sure there's no way I'm going to be able to dissuade you from it, so, um, let's talk about colors of excretions.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Can you paint with all the colors of your pee?

**Sydnee:**

Let's start with urine because—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... I think we all have some preconceived notions about like what colors pee can come in and—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... what it might mean.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

So like Justin, what does good pee look like?

**Justin:**

Good pee is clear 'cause that means you're getting enough water.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, good, so the, you don't, well, you don't want it completely clear.

**Justin:**

What?

**Sydnee:**

If it's completely clear, if it looks like water, then you may be over hydrated.

**Justin:**

Nobody's over hydrated. Nobody's drinking enough water.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, I— I understand what you're saying, like generally speaking, most people don't drink enough water, um, but there is such a thing as over hydrated.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

That you can drink too much water.

**Justin:**

I'm not, ah, okay, so, okay, I— I wa— I wanna ask you a question, but we're gonna wait until we get through these first few colors. So clear is maybe over hydrated?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. Pale yellow is what you're really shooting for.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Now let me say this though, I think it's important to note, a lot of people think they're supposed to hydrate to some sort of urine color. Thirst is a much better marker.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**



So don't, I— I'm like you shouldn't be looking at your pee constantly and going, "Ooh, it's still a little darker yellow than I think it should be."

**Justin:**

I've heard that once you're thirsty, it's too late. You're already dehydrated.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, when you're thirsty though, drink. Don't go like pee and think, "Well, I'm not thirsty at all, but my pee isn't quite as pale as I think it should be. I better drink a bunch of water."

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

This is, uh, this is just, it's a little tedious, gets a little a silly. Um, is it, in a general way, if your urine is a little more pale yellow, you're probably better hydrated. If it gets darker yellow, a little bit dehydrated, all the way to, you know, if you're really dehydrated, your pee can even start to look like orange-ish.

**Justin:**

Okay, here's what I wanted to get to.

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm.

**Justin:**

The, and this may be more of a theological question, [laughs] I guess, uh, or philosophical.

**Sydnee:**

Go on. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Okay, if your, you, okay, if you pee clear liquid, you might be over hydrated. If your, uh, pee—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... like yellow or orange, then—

**Sydnee:**

You might be a redneck.

**Justin:**

Oh come on.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Sorry.

**Justin:**

You might be—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I didn't know where you were going there.

**Justin:**

You might be dehydrated, right?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

But pee is mainly water, right?

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

So why isn't your body, why is your body get ... If your body's dehydrated, why does it have extra to pee? Why isn't it holding on for—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... dear life?

**Sydnee:**

Well, it has to flush, I mean, you still have to flush toxins outta your body, and they come out dissolved in a liquid.

**Justin:**

That's what I have my footpads for.

**Sydnee:**

But, but if you noticed—[laughs] No, okay, that, no, no, no, no.

**Justin:**

That was a joke.

**Sydnee:**

We'll move on, no. The, the thing is, what you're looking at, the color of your urine is how concentrated it is. So when it is darker and more concentrated, your body is doing exactly what you're suggesting. It's conserving water. It's keeping liquid in and excreting the stuff that needs to be excreted in a smaller amount, a smaller volume of liquid. So you have more solute within the liquid so it looks darker.

**Justin:**

So, uh—

**Sydnee:**

But you still have stuff you gotta flush out. There's stuff your kidneys just have to get rid of.

**Justin:**

So orange is very dehydrated, among other things.

**Sydnee:**

It can also mean things like you have a buildup of bile, of so like maybe a liver problem.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Um, there's certain medications that can turn your urine orange. The one that I hear about most frequently is an over-the-counter medication that people sometimes use if they have a urinary tract infection and they get burning while I—while they pee, it's called pyridium, um, but this, this medication, uh, and it is sold over the counter and it will tell you on the box, it will turn your urine orange, bright orange, impressively orange. I cannot stress that enough.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Um, there's also things like, um, muscle breakdown that can turn your, that can turn your urine orange. Uh, now pink urine is possible. Now generally when we see pink, we get nervous because pink is the predecessor for red [laughs] Um, but and pink can mean something scary like blood, but it could just also mean you ate a lot of beets. If you eat enough blueberries, it will turn your urine pink. It—

**Justin:**

Okay, I gotta step up my blueberry consumption.

**Sydnee:**

If you eat enough rhubarb, so there's, you could think of like a really delicious pie maybe that would—

**Justin:**

Pee—pee, pee, a pink pee pie.

**Sydnee:**

A pink pee pie, a blueberry rhubarb pie. That probably works, right?

**Justin:**

I think that would.

**Sydnee:**

If strawberry rhubarb works, doesn't blueberry rhubarb?

**Justin:**

I mean, it's not gonna hurt your pee to throw some strawberries in there if you're worried about it.

**Sydnee:**

Well, I mean, don't throw strawberries in your pee.

**Justin:**

Well, no, that would be ridiculous.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

That'd be a very bad punch for an even worse party.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, of course, red urine makes us all nervous. We worry about blood in there. We worry about, um, lead or mercury poisoning or there are certain other things that can cause red urine in general. If your urine is pink or red, you probably should go talk to your doctor. Um, your urine can turn green.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Now generally, um, this is from, uh, food dyes can do this, you know, obviously green food dyes, certain herbal supplements. Uh, I've seen green urine before, um, quite green—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... from just taking various herbal things. You could actually eat enough asparagus to cause your pee to turn green.

**Justin:**

Asparagus is always wanting to mess with pee.

**Sydnee:**

I know. We all know about the odor, but it can also, it can turn it green.

**Justin:**

Do you know the odor doesn't come from the asparagus?

**Sydnee:**

Where does it come from?

**Justin:**

It's something your body's doing.

**Sydnee:**

We've talked about this before.

**Justin:**

Did I learn this on Sawbones? That would be—

**Sydnee:**

Yes.

**Justin:**

... very embarrassing.

**Sydnee:**

Yes, because not everybody has ...

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

... not everybody has weird asparagus pee.

**Justin:**

We've talked about asparagus pee. I don't wanna get into it. The sense of pride—

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, we've already covered this, so we won't cover this old ground.

**Justin:**

I don't wanna talk about the sense of pride I get from asparagus pee ...

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... 'cause I know I ate some asparagus like a good boy.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, have you ever heard of blue diaper syndrome?

**Justin:**

Nope.

**Sydnee:**

I bet you could guess what that is.

**Justin:**

Blue pee-pee.

**Sydnee:**

Blue pee-pee, that's right, and it is something that usually shows up in babies, so we call it blue diaper... Sometimes in medicine, we're not very creative.

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Like you pee in your diaper, and it's blue, and so it's blue diaper. There you go. Um, it's actually related to like buildup of tryptophan, which will make the urine look blue from a familiar, uh, elevation in calcium, a familial genetic kind of disorder.

**Justin:**

Hm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, but yeah, he, the first thing might be your diaper's blue.

**Justin:**

Hm.

**Sydnee:**

And not like when the stripe on the diaper turns blue to tell you that your baby pee-peed ...

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... which is just a little handy thing. Uh, there are a couple different foods that can turn your urine black.

**Justin:**

Ooh.

**Sydnee:**

If you eat enough rhubarb, push it past pink, you could actually make your urine look black. Um, aloe, which we've talked about before, there are like aloe drinks and things, which—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... I still haven't had, can make your urine black. Fava beans.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm, what about a nice chianti?

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Would that help?

**Sydnee:**

I don't know, maybe that'd make it kind of a nice burgundy.

**Justin:**

Something.

**Sydnee:**

I don't know. Um, if urine is white, it could mean infection, but it could also mean that you got a lot of protein in there or some calcium.



**Justin:**

That would be weird. That one would trip me out.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, yeah, white. Uh, usually cloudy is what you see first, but it can be white. Um, now purple, this is kind of an interesting. Ha— have you ever seen purple urine?

**Justin:**

Um, okay, think about what you're saying. Like, no, I don't en—

**Sydnee:**

Purple pee.

**Justin:**

... I don't encount—okay, if—if I had seen purple urine, you would've heard about it 'cause it would've been my own. I don't know what your life—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... is like, but I only see—

**Sydnee:**

I see pee all the time.

**Justin:**

... I only see my own pee, classically speaking, I see my own pee. Have I ever seen purple urine?

**Sydnee:**

Uh, I have seen purple urine, um...

**Justin:**

I saw it in the—in that one episode of Scrubs though.

**Sydnee:**

Oh, I was gonna say don't you remember when I brought home the porphyria pee and put it in our windowsill?

**Justin:**

Yeah.

**Sydnee:**

I had, there was a patient. There's porphyria, if you have this, then when you take the pee and put it in UV light turns like a dark purple kinda color.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm. Should you say that you brought home someone else's pee?

**Sydnee:**

It was, I didn't do that. I didn't [laughing] bring someone else's pee, no, I didn't—

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

... do that.

**Justin:**

All right.

**Sydnee:**

I put it in the windowsill, uh, uh, in a—

**Justin:**

It's before we had a toddler if that makes it any better.

**Sydnee:**

... in the hospital of a sterile room designated for pee experiments.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Every hospital has one.

**Sydnee:**

In the hospital is where I put that there, and then it, I, it was turned purple there. Now that isn't even the purple that I'm talking about though. So there is something, uh, called purple urine bag syndrome.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Now I bet you can't guess what this does.

**Justin:**

Uh, no, try me.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, it turns catheter bags or urine bags purple.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

Why that specifically?

**Sydnee:**

Okay, so this is kind of an interesting thing. This was observed. There were—there were some case reports of actually a lot of female residents of nursing homes who had chronic catheters, so they always had a catheter in their bladder.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

And they started noticing that several different patients that the bags, the—the catheter bags where the urine was collected was turning purple, bright purple.

**Justin:**

Okay, all right.

**Sydnee:**

Okay. So this is why, um. You have in your diet tryptophan. We're back to tryptophan again, this colorful, little amino acid. Tryptophan is metabolized by bacteria that's already in your gut to produce something called indole. Indole is absorbed into the blood, passes into the intestines, passes the

liver, converted to something called indoxyl sulfate. This is excreted in the urine. Now what makes that turn purple, it c—it can be broken down into indirubin and indigo, which obviously are pigmented things that look purple, are certain bacteria that can live inside urinary catheters, specifically certain ones made of like PVC and stuff. So—

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

... anyway, the bacteria are just living, not causing problems, just like harmlessly living inside this tubing and bag. Then this indoxyl sulfate comes along. It gets broken down by this bacteria. Bam, you've got a purple catheter bag.

**Justin:**

Wild.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

That's really wild.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah. But it's easily fixable usually.

**Justin:**

Okay. I'll take care of it.

**Sydnee:**

Now, um, one thing we don't talk about very often is breast milk.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

I mean, I talk about it a lot.

**Justin:**

Yeah, I was gonna say, by we, do you mean you and I? Because there, I feel like there's, it's a hot topic.

**Sydnee:**

I think it's interesting just to not everybody is gonna secrete breast milk in their life. Some of us are. Some of us aren't. But I think it's an interesting thing to hear about because if you are someone who at some point in your life is going to breastfeed, uh, it, the fact that sometimes it comes out different colors can be very disturbing to you.

**Justin:**

I can imagine.

**Sydnee:**

So the—an experience that Justin, you and I had ...

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... was pink breast milk.

**Justin:**

Well you and I had witnessed.

**Sydnee:**

You witnessed.

**Justin:**

From a safe distance.

**Sydnee:**

And I will say actually the breast milk itself wasn't pink but my, my pump and tubing and all this stuff turned pink.

**Justin:**

Hm.

**Sydnee:**

And that is because there's a bacteria called serratia that's normally found inside your baby's gut, um, and it can in certain settings cause different diseases. But usually, there's not enough there to make babies sick or anything. The problem is that if you leave your pumping equipment out and you didn't completely clean it, so it's still got a little bit of milk residue on it,

and it sits at room temperature too long or if you were to just sit a bottle of breast milk out at room temperature too long, this might happen too.

**Justin:**

And let's be honest, if you have a baby that requires breast milk, you probably didn't properly clean it—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... [laughs] before you started.

**Sydnee:**

Ah, you'll—you'll do really well in the beginning, and then there's late nights that one time you're gonna think you rinsed it out pretty well, and, and then it turns pink because it's growing this bacteria on it. And then you probably need to replace everything. But it can make your milk look pink, so you can have pink breast milk. That sounds adorable. It's not really great 'cause it, I mean, it is in fact a bacteria.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, there's, uh, green breast milk, which again, just from stuff you eat like spinach or seaweed or again, different like herbal supplements. Um, there's, uh, something called rusty pipe syndrome, which can cause brown breast milk.

**Justin:**

That's a bad name.

**Sydnee:**

I have just learned this name while researching this episode, and I am simultaneously calling for the end to this name [laughs] because I find it offensive as something with breasts that produce milk. Don't call them rusty pipes.

**Justin:**

Yeah, that sounds like bad slang. It sounds like British slang, honestly. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I don't—I don't like it at all. What it means is that there was a little bit of irritation in one of the ducts, and there was some dried blood in there, and the dried blood came out, kinda like a rusty pipe. The name completely upsets me. Please stop calling it that. It's just a little bit of dried blood. It's fine. Nobody's getting hurt.

**Justin:**

You need another name for it.

**Sydnee:**

How about—

**Justin:**

You were just getting on doctors for not being creative enough. Someone comes with a, a fine metaphorical name, and then you try to shoot them down.

**Sydnee:**

That, okay, no. That compares the beauty of the mammary glands, the magic and wonder that is everything that goes into lactation to rusty pipes.

**Justin:**

I'm just saying, you need a better alternative.

**Sydnee:**

I am not plumbing, sir.

**Justin:**

[laughs] Fair enough. I never said you were.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, black breast milk can be caused by a certain medication, metacycline, which probably shouldn't be taken if you're breastfeeding anyway, and there can be orange breast milk, seasonal orange breast milk...

**Justin:**

It's fun.

**Sydnee:**

... if you eat enough pumpkin or squash.

**Justin:**

Oh, kinda, everybody's going to that pumpkin spice in breast milk.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I wish, I wish I had thought to do that. Eat just so much pumpkin or squash that Charlie could have festive—

**Justin:**

That's the weirdest pumpkin spice—

**Sydnee:**

... festive orange.

**Justin:**

... thing you could have this season.

**Sydnee:**

I didn't have a lot of weird pumpkin spice.

**Justin:**

I saw pumpkin spice, uh, uh ...

**Sydnee:**

Twinkies?

**Justin:**

... Twinkies—

**Sydnee:**

I was gonna say, that was the weirdest thing I saw, but I didn't get it.

**Justin:**

Uh, we had pumpkin spice Cheerios. That was fine.

**Sydnee:**

They were okay.

**Justin:**

They're fine.

**Sydnee:**



They're fine.

**Justin:**

They're fine. You eat too many Cheerios, I feel like, uh, uh, solitary in among cereals, I feel like if I eat too many Cheerios, I'm like, "What am I doing?" Like what is even hap—like, I'm, nothing's happening. I'm eating these like, there's no variation. It's so boring to eat Cheerios.

**Sydnee:**

Well—

**Justin:**

Even—

**Sydnee:**

... uh, okay.

**Justin:**

... Rice Krispies they'll like clump together appetizingly sometimes. Like that does not happen with Cheerios. It's so boring to eat Cheerios, any flavor.

**Sydnee:**

Well, well, uh, while I appreciate Justin that you're sinking deeper into a sense of existential ennui over Cheerios, could we, um, maybe head to the billing department?

**Justin:**

Let's go.

[theme music plays]

**Justin:**

Okay, I, I, uh, you have— you talked about pee and you talked about breast milk. I think there's a, a notable other secretion, uh, there that you're, you're skipping.

**Sydnee:**

Right, let's talk about poop.

**Justin:**

Heck yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Now we've talked about, we've talked about poop on this show before. That's not new, but I don't know that we've gone into all the different colors of poop.

**Justin:**

No, I keep trying—

**Sydnee:**

So—

**Justin:**

... to edge us into that territory, and you're always pushing back against it.

**Sydnee:**

So before we get into the story of Franken Berry stool, let's—let's talk about some of the things that might happen to your stool anyway.

**Justin:**

I should mention real quick just sidebar, not, I'm super not grossed out by any poop-related stuff, so like if you are, I'm sorry in advance for not being a good, uh, mouthpiece for your displeasure—

**Sydnee:**

Mm-hmm.

**Justin:**

... listener.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

I apologize.

**Sydnee:**

Um—

**Justin:**

But Sydnee doesn't like ...

**Sydnee:**

I don't like poop stuff.

**Justin:**

Okay, well go on.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Uh, do you know that Boo Berry could turn your stool green?

**Justin:**

Uh, that doesn't make sense.

**Sydnee:**

It can turn it—it can turn it kind of blueish, but a lot of people do report sorta bright green stools if they—

**Justin:**

So is—

**Sydnee:**

... eat enough Boo Berry.

**Justin:**

... just, uh, is this episode just all monster cereal character assassination?

**Sydnee:**

No, 'cause I don't think Count Chocula does anything to your poop.

**Justin:**

[laughs] I've ...

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... I leave a lot of nutrients in there with my marshmallow sweeties.

**Sydnee:**

Um. Uh, you can get blue stool from, like I said, Boo Berry could make it kinda blue although most people report green, uh. There was a Smurf cereal that used to turn your poop blue.

**Justin:**

Ohh, ohh, Sydnee.

**Sydnee:**

What?

**Justin:**

It's my favorite cereal in—

**Sydnee:**

Did you love Smurf cereal?

**Justin:**

Sydnee—

**Sydnee:**

You've never talked to me about Smurf cereal.

**Justin:**

Are you kidding me?

**Sydnee:**

No.

**Justin:**

Smurfberry Crunch or Smurf Magic Berries, uh, so—but specifically for me it was Smurfberry Crunch was the most delicious cereal I've ever eaten in my entire life and no cereal tastes like it. I'm—

**Sydnee:**

Did it turn your perp—your poop blue?

**Justin:**

I wasn't big into checking that sorta thing. Um, this is, this is like seriously, and it makes me sa—uh, I bet we'll have some listeners here in the same boat, it is my, it is my favorite cereal, uh, on the planet. They're so good, and they're—no cereal tastes like them. And you'll find people in some of the forums talk about how like they don't, no other cereal tastes like it, um... And I don't care what color it turned my poop. I would eat a box of those so hard right now. I'm checking eBay to see if I can score any.

**Sydnee:**

Okay, while you're doing that, let me tell you that if you want orange poop, you could eat some Flamin' Hot Cheetos, and—

**Justin:**

I don't mean the Smurfs cereal, okay. The Smurf cereal is based on the ill-fated Neil Patrick Harris vehicle, not interested.

**Sydnee:**

No.

**Justin:**

Smurfberry Crunch.

**Sydnee:**

Okay.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

If you want purple or magenta stool, you could eat enough beets, could do that.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Um, did you know that if you drink enough Guinness, your poop could look black?

**Justin:**

I did not know that.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, but also—

**Justin:**

You should be saying that to your dad.

**Sydnee:**

I know. I'm not gonna ask my dad about his poop. But also, um, blood could turn your poop black, so go see a doctor if your poop's black, same with red. But also, enough Cherry Icee will turn your poop red, so there you go.

**Justin:**

I love Cherry Icees.

**Sydnee:**

Um, there are pills out there that you can take that will make your poop sparkle poop. Have you seen those?

**Justin:**

No. [laughs]

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, there are capsules you can buy on the internet that you can swallow, and you won't digest them. They'll just come out in your poop, give you sparkle poop if that's your bag or whatever.

**Justin:**

Don't poop in a bag.

**Sydnee:**

That's, no, I mean, whatever, whatever you enjoy. You can also buy actual gold leaf pills that will make you have 24 karat poops for the low, low price of \$425. [laughs]

**Justin:**

Ugh.

**Sydnee:**

Let's talk about Franken Berry stool though.

**Justin:**

Finally.

**Sydnee:**

So in 1971, General Mills released a line of monster-themed cereals that we have been discussing. Count Chocula and Franken Berry, I believe, were the first two to be released.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Justin can correct me on cereal history if he wants to.

**Justin:**

Yeah, this is part of my new series, Cereal History.

**Sydnee:**

You would, you would do great at that series, by the way.

**Justin:**

Yeah, it was Franken Berry and Count Chocula first.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, Franken Berry, of course, is strawberry flavored and thusly must be pink because—

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... strawberries of course are quite pink.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

That's not true, but strawberry-flavored things tend to be pink.

**Justin:**

You're right.

**Sydnee:**

So it turns out that the, the dye that they used originally in Franken Berry cereals was red dye number two. Now red dye number two is not broken down as it passes through the human digestive tract, so it will come out looking pretty much exactly like it did on its way in.

**Justin:**

Okay, which is bright, bright, bright pink.

**Sydnee:**

Bright, bright, bright pink, and this was used in other things by the way, like hot dog casings for instance used to red dye—

**Justin:**

Yuck.

**Sydnee:**

... number two.

**Justin:**

Yucky.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah, um, what followed after the cereal was released in '71, in 1972 were a lot of freaked out parents because as they began and I, I can vouch for this, parents often investigate their children's droppings [laughs] to make sure everything's looking cool.

**Justin:**

Yeah, I'm desensitized to it.

**Sydnee:**

We do that. Uh, their children were pooping pink. Um, now a lot of parents seeing pink, as I mentioned, we tend to think of pink as a precursor to red, through that, "Oh no, my child is having blood in their stool," so they went to their, to their children's doctors, freaking out, worried. Um, a lot of kids were probably checked to see if there was blood in their stool, uh, but nobody was quite sure what was going on. Now I imagine this was something that was coming and going, depending on how much Franken Berry cereal your child—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... was consuming, um. But it was finally, the case was finally cracked by a doctor in—

**Justin:**

Acula.



**Sydnee:**

[laughs] No.

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

Dr. Payne.

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

Dr. John Payne, uh, who worked in Maryland and published a case report in the Journal of Pediatrics, which followed the story of a 12-year-old boy who was admitted to the hospital with what he called "strawberry ice cream-colored stools."

**Justin:**

Well, that ruins strawberry ice cream, excellent, great, excellent.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] I think you get, but I mean, I think that's a good descriptive. Like I see exactly what color that must have been.

**Justin:**

Oh, you think this—

**Sydnee:**

You think?

**Justin:**

... this is the worst episode we've ever done.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

I'm retitling this one, "Two Hosts, One Yuck." Uh—

**Sydnee:**

Oh [laughs], no. His mother was particularly afraid because this particular 12-year-old boy had a history of eating strange things from time to time, like she caught him eating coffee grounds one time.

**Justin:**

Oh.

**Sydnee:**

Like, right, so like, things that weren't necessarily edible. And so she thought he's eaten something really crazy, and it's either, you know, causing hemorrhaging in his bowels or maybe it's poked a hole in his bowels. I mean, she was really worried.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

Now it should be noted by the way, the kid was totally fine otherwise. Other than that his stools were this pink color, he was feeling fine, he was acting fine. Like this was not a sick child. It just had pink poop. So he was admitted to the hospital and was there for a while, while the doctors tried to figure out, did every test they could think of on this pink poop, sent it to the lab and ran it for all kinds of bacteria and for blood and just to, to try to figure out what is happening inside this kid's digestive tract that he's making pink poop.

So Dr. Payne had a creative idea. After taking a thorough history and figuring out all the different foods and things that went into this kid's diet, he staged a test. He had the kid stay there until he was pooping normal colored poop again, and then he fed the kid four bowls of Franken Berry cereal.

**Justin:**

Hooray science. I bet that kid and that young man was named Bill Nye.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

Uh, it made him love science forever. Oh, man, you know—

**Sydnee:**

Uh, so—

**Justin:**

... I'm saying that, but like I have definitely eaten one bowl of Franken Berry or any cereal of that nature and thought like, "I can eat a little bit more." I've never eaten two bowls of cereal and thought like, "Yes, I let—"

**Sydnee:**

But when you were—when you were 12, don't you think you could've eaten four bowls of Franken Berry?

**Justin:**

When I was, uh, 10, I ate an entire box of Pac—Man cereal and threw up all night and couldn't eat cereal marshmallows for a decade.

**Sydnee:**

Ew. That's—

**Justin:**

I know it's, are you sad? Is that what you're saying—

**Sydnee:**

No, I mean—

**Justin:**

... it's like a sad story? I couldn't eat—

**Sydnee:**

... I guess I'm sad that like it's too late and I've already been married to you for a decade, so like I can't go back and take that back now that I know that story.

**Justin:**

Well, the, if you want the really sad part, that 10 years included, uh, periods where the monster cereals were in constant production and not just a seasonal production like they are now. So there's a lot of bowls, uh, your, your man, J, missed out on 'cause he was on that, he couldn't eat cereal marshmallows 'cause—

**Sydnee:**

Think about all the extra years you're going to live because—

**Justin:**

I try not to think about ...

**Sydnee:**

... of all those bowls of cereal marshmallows you didn't eat.

**Justin:**

... what might've been. That was then. We have taken different roads.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs] Just whatever you do, if time travel is invented, please don't go back and stop yourself from eating that whole box of Pac-Man cereal because chances are then you would've been eating cereal marshmallows on a daily basis for that decade, and you might not be alive right now.

**Justin:**

Okay, so you, I'm sorry to interrupt. You were throwing shade at, at my boy, Franken Berry.

**Sydnee:**

Anyway, so the kid eats four bowls of Franken Berry cereal. Uh, some period of time later, and I'm assuming some light bathroom reading, he—

**Justin:**

Some Highlights.

**Sydnee:**

... [laughs] he, uh, begins to once again poop strawberry ice cream—colored stools. And the condition, the actually named medical condition, Franken Berry stool, is born. Uh, he was discharged, and it is noted that his mom took him home to find his little sister now pooping pink as well 'cause like I guess while they were at the hospital, dad just let her eat nothing but Franken Berry or something.

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

I don't know. Uh, so after this, after this was published, word spread about the new diagnosis so that when worried parents rushed children into the emergency rooms, the doctors could reassure them, "Hey, is your kid eating

Franken Berry? Yeah, don't worry, that's all it is." [laughs] Um, so either, yeah, I mean that you don't even have to stop if you don't want to. Keep eating Franken Berry. You can have pink poop. Um, now they did take, um, red dye number two out of the cereal, so.

**Justin:**

I would hope, yeah.

**Sydnee:**

Yeah.

**Justin:**

One would think.

**Sydnee:**

So Franken Berry actually will not cause you to poop pink now because they replaced it with red dye number 40. This wasn't actually only because of Franken Berry stool, um. While that was distressing to parents, it wasn't actually dangerous. There were some tests done, and again, like with most things, they thought that maybe it caused cancer in rats, so they—

**Justin:**

Oh, it doesn't.

**Sydnee:**

So, and— and this was also during like the later part of the '70s when kind of the, the first like fear about food dyes began to—

**Justin:**

Right.

**Sydnee:**

... become popular. So in response to that, they went ahead and took red dye number two out of all foods, um, replaced it with red dye number 40, which is broken down.

**Justin:**

A classic.

**Sydnee:**

Uh, so it— it wouldn't do that anymore, and that's been all the way since like '76, '78 something—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... like that. So any Franken Berry you've had in your life has been red dye number 40. Nowadays, only about 75% of the dye in General, uh, or about 75% of the dye in General Mills cereals are—is actually natural.

**Justin:**

Ugh, and it's the worst.

**Sydnee:**

So by 2017, their goal is that all food dyes will be plant based and natural, and so you won't have any of this red dye number 40 left.

**Justin:**

And so we're, eh, on this like go to, go look at a bowl of like Trix right now with natural colors. It is repellent. The cereal is disgusting now. It looks ... It—it's terrible. It looks like a broken amusement park. It's like—

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

... muted purples and muted yellows and muted oranges and muted reds. It's terrible.

**Sydnee:**

I completely disagree with you. I think it's probably a little closer to what food is supposed to look like.

**Justin:**

Nah, no way. I'm really angry about this.

**Sydnee:**

I completely disagree with you on this, but, but again, I'm not a, I'm not the cereal fan. You are.

**Justin:**

They ruined it.

**Sydnee:**

I thought it would be worth noting, did you ever read Cujo?

**Justin:**

Uh, no.

**Sydnee:**

The Stephen King book, Cujo?

**Justin:**

No.

**Sydnee:**

There, uh, and I have not read it either, but, um, as I was researching this, I found that there is a part in it where there's a cereal called Red Raspberry Zingers...

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... which turned kids' poop red and freaks their parents out, and their parents all come running into emergency rooms thinking their kids are hemorrhaging inside.

**Justin:**

Oh, so it's probably related—

**Sydnee:**

Probably inspired by Franken Berry. So I think it came out in the early '80s—

**Justin:**

Mm-hmm.

**Sydnee:**

... the book was written in the early '80s, so this would've been right on the heels of all this, so.

**Justin:**

Cool. Well, I'm sorry you had to besmirch the name of some of my favorite cereals here, Sydnee.

**Sydnee:**

Hey, listen, I think they clearly, there is a market out there for people who want their poop to look like something. So if you wanna eat some Boo Berry, I have seen reports of electric green stool [laughs] in response—

**Justin:**

Oh, I gotta check it out.

**Sydnee:**

... to Boo Berry, so there you go.

**Justin:**

I'll give it a shot. Um, uh, folks, thank you so much for listening. We hope you enjoyed this week's show. Uh, wanna say a big thank you to The Taxpayers for letting us use their song Medicines as the intro and outro of our program. Uh, oh, you know what I wanted to mention that I, we have not, I don't think we've actually talked about on the show, um, Sydnee and I are gonna go on a cruise, and—

**Sydnee:**

We're just bragging [laughs]

**Justin:**

No, we're not 'cause we want you to come with us on the cruise. Um, if you go where, it's the, uh, JoCo Cruise, Jonathan Coulton Cruise. If you go to joco, J-O-C-O, cruise.com, you can book a cabin right now. Uh, we're headed out in, um, uh, 2017. Oh, Sydnee, guess who's gonna be there? They just added Cecil Baldwin—

**Sydnee:**

Hey.

**Justin:**

... is gonna be on the cruise, very cool, host of Night Vale.

**Sydnee:**

Very cool.

**Justin:**

It's very cool. Um, Max Temkin, uh, creator of Cards Against Humanity is gonna be there. Uh, Jonathan Coulton, Ed Brubaker, Rhea Butcher, Cameron



Esposito, uh, Matthew Weiner, the creator of Mad Men, Peter Sagel, Patrick Rothfuss, John Roderick, Paul and Storm, Gail Simone, Janet Varney, Wil Wheaton, Nerf Herder, um, creator of the Buffy the Vampire Slayer theme song is gonna be there. Um, uh, a ton of other people, and I guess they're doing live Welcome to Night Vale on the, uh, the ship too, so that'll be fun.

**Sydnee:**

That's—

**Justin:**

You can come with us. We're gonna do—

**Sydnee:**

Come float with us.

**Justin:**

Yeah, we're gonna do a live Sawbones. Chuck—the Chuckster will be there, and it's gonna be great. So go to [jococruise.com](http://jococruise.com) and book, uh, your suite now. Uh, thanks to [maximumfun.org](http://maximumfun.org) for letting us be a part of their network. Um, and there's a lot of great shows you should go listen to, so go do it. And, um, is that all, Sydster? Is there anything else?

**Sydnee:**

I think that'll do it for us, Justin.

**Justin:**

Okay.

**Sydnee:**

Thank you to The Taxpayers for our theme song, "Medicines."

**Justin:**

I think—I think I ta—I think I thanked them.

**Sydnee:**

No you didn't.

**Justin:**

I didn't?

**Sydnee:**

I'm pretty... I don't... Uh, if you didn't, now—

**Justin:**

I did. I feel like I did.

**Sydnee:**

I don't think you did, but even if we did—

**Justin:**

Well, we'll never know.

**Sydnee:**

... it twice, I think they deserved it.

**Justin:**

Please don't tweet about it.

**Sydnee:**

[laughs]

**Justin:**

[laughs] Really, I can't, I can't find out.

**Sydnee:**

You can tweet about anything you want.

**Justin:**

Um, there is going to be, oh, one other thing that just occurred to me, there's going to be a, um, Nashville MaxFun meetup. Uh, our buddy Eric Near is, uh, reminded me of it. Um, he's a, a Nashvillian, um, uh. There, uh, there's gonna be MaxFun meetup for fellow, uh, Nashville, uh, uh, folks. That's gonna be on November 9th. If you search for it on Facebook, search for Maximum Fun Nashville, um, you'll—you'll find all about it. So, uh, go do that. It'll be a lot of fun. And, uh

**Sydnee:**

And also, go vote, please.

**Justin:**

Vote, please.

**Sydnee:**

This is the last time we'll talk to you before Tuesday, November 8th, election day. Please go vote.

**Justin:**

Please go vote.

**Sydnee:**

Um, I prefer you vote for the candidate I support, but I, it is important either way that you vote, so.

**Justin:**

Well, no, I mean, I—

**Sydnee:**

Well.

**Justin:**

... I really prefer...

**Sydnee:**

No, actually, just, you know, go vote for who [laughing] I think you should vote for.

**Justin:**

[laughs]

**Sydnee:**

I'm kidding. Go vote. Participate in the democratic process, um, please.

**Justin:**

Cool.

**Sydnee:**

Please.

**Justin:**

Now, folks, that's gonna do it for us. Thank you so much. Uh, uh, 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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