

Sawbones Episode 92: Sunburns

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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:

Hi everybody. Welcome to *Sawbones: A Marital Tour of Misguided Medicine*. I'm your co-host Justin McElroy.

Sydnee:

And I'm Sydnee McElroy.

Justin:

Sydnee, what's wrong?

Sydnee:

I'm just... I mean... I- I don't know. I don't wanna talk about it. I don't wanna... I don't wanna hurt your feelings.

Justin:

Just, uh, go on. Go on and say it. Everybody else on the internet said it. You might as well say it too.

Sydnee:

I just... You know... Last week's episode, it was... It seemed to be really popular.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Like, a lot of people...

Justin:

Yep.

Sydnee:

Really liked it, and said really nice things, and I'm not saying that they don't say that about our show when you're on it...

Justin:

Well, in fiction, I was on it, to be fair. I was just in the body of a 14 year old girl.

Sydnee:

Right. Sure. Uh-huh [affirmative]. That was the case. I'm, I'm just saying that when it's you in your own body, with your own voice, people aren't necessarily as... I don't mean they don't like it, they're just not as, like, enthusiastic?

Justin:

Okay. Yeah.

Sydnee:

About our show.

Justin:

You know, Sydnee, I'm gonna be honest, especially for the start of the show, and we're like... we're like, married, and we should be supportive and stuff, that was a pretty sick burn. There's, there's a lot of burning going on right now.

Sydnee:

Well you know what would have helped you with that burn?

Justin:

What, Sydnee?

Sydnee:

If you would've worn sunscreen.

Justin:

Wow. Wow. That's like a double burn on... I guess. Is it? On a... On both of us, I guess.

Sydnee:

If you're asking medically if that was a double burn, that's not a thing. There's second degree burns, but there's not a double burn.

Justin:

No, I know there's not a double burn. Okay. Sunscreen. Fine.

Sydnee:

"Sydnee, I've got a double burn."

Justin:

Okay, this... Okay. Fine. Intro over. We're talking about sunburns.

Sydnee:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

Justin:

It's all right, it's a really good posi-start to the show. I'm really into it.

Sydnee:

[laughs] I am glad that you're back.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative], mm-hmm, go on, on, on. Yes, yes, yes.

Sydnee:

I did miss you. And I love you.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And our child is glad you're back, and even Rileigh is glad you're back. Probably. A little.

Justin:

I think, uh... So thanks to the people who suggested this topic, and here it is. No more need to d- denigrate Justin.

Sydnee:

Well, I'll tell... I'll tell you who the people are, who suggested this episode.

Justin:

Yep. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Let's ju- Let's not just thank them in general. Let's name them. [laughs]

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

All right. Thank you to-

Justin:

I'm not gonna help you. I'm not gonna name them with you. I'm too angry.

Sydnee:

You're not gonna help at all? Okay. All right, thank you to Jackson, and Tina, and Anthony, and Nicholas for suggesting some variety of this topic. They're the... I included you all because you suggested either sunburns, or sunscreen, or suntanning, and we're just gonna talk about it all, because it's summer!

Justin:

Summer time.

Sydnee:

Yaaaay!

Justin:

Summer time.

Sydnee:

Which is great, except for, in the summer, everybody forgets that they haven't been outside all year long.

Justin:

Right. You're so happy to get out there and get that D.

Sydnee:

And the first thing they do is go outside, and hang out in the sun all day, and get sun burnt. And that's a big problem. So I think we should talk about it.

Justin:

Sounds good, Syd. Hit me.

Sydnee:

Okay, so, it's been known for a while that there is a link between skin damage and sun exposure. We didn't really understand it, we just knew that, you know, if you were out in the sun and the heat for a long time, sometimes it hurt, you know; your skin hurt.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

It got red, and it would peel off, and... But we thought it had something to do with the heat, mainly.

Justin:

Yeah, that makes sense. Your skin feels hot afterward, so...

Sydnee:

Exactly.

Justin:

That adds up. That tracks for me.

Sydnee:

Exactly. And we didn't really understand anything else about the sun, other than that it was bright, and that there was heat, and... Then of course, we liked the sun, because a lot of cultures, ancient cultures especially, would worship the sun.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

So it, you know... And we didn't understand anything about, like, UV rays or anything. That wasn't until like the 1800s when we figured out, like, ultra violet light, and the spectrum of light, and the... the spectrum of light, and... and like, that there are things like rays from the sun that hurt us, that have nothing to do with, like, the heat itself.

Justin:

So how, how did, sort of, ancient cultures sort of, adapt to this?

Sydnee:

It's interesting, cause as you kinda go through history, people would come up with ways to protect themselves from the sun to varying degrees, kinda based on what, um... A lot of it was based on what was considered beautiful. So for a long time, pale skin was kind of the ideal.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Y- you wouldn't want to look like you spend a lot of time outside. Um, and a lot of that had to do with the, just the connotation that if you s- if you did have a tan, or if you were... certainly if you were burnt, and you spent a lot of, of time outside, then you were a laborer.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

And so the upper classes would be inside. And so they wouldn't have tans. So-

Justin:

You want soft hands. Soft hands makes it for a cool guy. Or lady.

Sydnee:

What? Soft hands makes for a cool guy?

Justin:

Or lady. As they say.

Sydnee:

Where did... Who says that?

Justin:

It's an old saying. From the olden times.

Sydnee:

I have never heard that.

Justin:

It's in hiero- Well it's translated loosely from hieroglyphs, so... Hieroglyphics, so...

Sydnee:

So... [laughs] So you're a cool guy? Did you make that up?

Justin:

I have rough hands. I've been building a, uh, swing set all day for Charlie, so I have rough, laborers hands.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Justin has developed rough, laborers hands in one day.

Justin:

So-

Sydnee:

From do- From building the swing set.

Justin:

So Sydnee, how was that handled in Egypt?

Sydnee:

Uh, since they felt that pale skin was the ideal, they would try to protect their self from the sun, knowing that it did... I mean they, they recognized there was a color change in their skin after being out in the sun. So they would lighten their skin with like myrrh, and frankincense, and actually even dye it sometimes with, like, a yellow ochre.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

That you would rub in to your skin, and would make it appear paler. Um, they also used a kind of ancient sunscreen, which was made of jasmine, and uh, rice. Um, and there was actually, um, in the rice bran, there is a chemical that absorbs UV light, and can help restore damaged DNA. So there actually was some like...

Justin:

Man, dry-

Sydnee:

Logic to it.

Justin:

Dry out your cell phone, make delicious treats when added... toasted and added to marshmallow. What can't rice do? Rice is the closest we have to a cure-all.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

If you are a phone, or you are skin, or you are hungry.

Sydnee:

No. No. But also, if you're not... if you're trying to limit your carbohydrates, don't...

Justin:

No, it- correct. That's true.

Sydnee:

No, don't, so then... Bad.

Justin:

Bad.

Sydnee:

Then not rice.

Justin:

Not good.

Sydnee:

Um, in Greece, they also attempted to kinda protect themselves from the sun. Specifically, you know we... I always picture, like, the ancient Olympics, and there're all these... I mean they were men. It was men. I say men, just because only men were allowed to participate. And, uh, they were all like, doing their athletics, and they were naked. Like, you know that, right? I'm not making that up.

Justin:

Right. That's not new.

Sydnee:

Like... Yeah. Like, they did their... naked Olympics. And they were all oiled up.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

That's, like, true. They would rub olive oil all over themselves.

Justin:

For the sun damage.

Sydnee:

Yes, to protect themselves from the sun.

Justin:

Does that work?

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

Oh.

Sydnee:

No. I mean, somewhat, but no.

Justin:

I mean, it's probably better than nothing.

Sydnee:

No.

Justin:

And at the very least-

Sydnee:

Yes.

Justin:

You'll end up delicious.

Sydnee:

Yes. Better than nothing, um, and your skin would be great.

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

I mean like the, you know, moisturizing, and... good for your skin. But, all in all, is that, like, your ideal sunscreen? Is that what you wanna use today?

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

No. But it does give us the image of all these, like, hunky, Greek, athletic dudes.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Oiled up.

Justin:

I'm ready to move on whenever you are.

Sydnee:

Throwing discuses.

Justin:

Disci, I think.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Throwing disci. Um, the Native Americans also had their own version of sunscreen. Um, you uh... Well actually, their own version of treating a sunburn. You could mix hemlock with deer fat, and that would help treat your sunburn.

Justin:

Hm.

Sydnee:

If you- if it was too late; if you were already... had one. Um, you could also try plantains.

Justin:

Oh, just to eat them, or...

Sydnee:

Well no, I-

Justin:

Rub them on?

Sydnee:

Like, mash them up and put it on your skin.

Justin:

Topical plantains?

Sydnee:

Topical plantains. Although, on that note, you should try plantains if you have them.

Justin:

Yeah, I mean if you haven't, they're delish.

Sydnee:

[laughing] They're really yummy.

Justin:

Yeah. This and many other food recommendations right here, on *Sawbones*, a medical history show.

Sydnee:

I'm just saying, plantains are delicious.

Justin:

They are.

Sydnee:

They're not like bananas though. Don't be confused.

Justin:

Don't think-

Sydnee:

Don't just eat one.

Justin:

Yeah, don't just eat on and think it's gonna be banana-esque, because it's not.

Sydnee:

I mean, you'll know right away. They're much harder to peel, so, you know...

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

If it's a banana and you're having a hard time peeling it, it's probably a plantain. Should we talk about how to fix plantains, or?

Justin:

Or maybe we move on to like, the next thing you wanna talk about. Either way, I'm like, good.

Sydnee:

Okay. Well I, I just... I really like plantains.

Justin:

Yeah, I mean... Yeah, plantain chips. Fry 'em up. Mm. Hoo boy. Mashed plantains? I could go on like the Bubba Gump of plantains if you'd like, or we could move on to the next, like, thing.

Sydnee:

[laughing] For a long time, like I said, uh, avoiding a tan was important because, uh, you know, then you were showing off that you didn't have to labor out in the sun.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And specifically women were supposed to be, you know, fairer skinned as a mark of beauty. So like, for instance, Europe during the Middle Ages, women would cover themselves up. You know, like, wimples, the, like... women would wear, like over their heads.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Like the little, like, cloths on their head.

Justin:

I'm not familiar with the term.

Sydnee:

Like nuns wear.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

Except the... You know, like, olden, olden times?

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Ladies would wear over their heads, and it protect you from the sun so that you could kind of stay pale, uh, which was associated with more money. Um, in Japan, they would actually use, like, some, uh, white powders to even lighten their skin. I know this isn't really sun, but just kinda the idea that pale skin was... was... was somewhat beautiful, um, they would use these powders to lighten their skin. Which was not a good idea. Don't use lead or mercury based...

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

Powders.

Justin:

Deal.

Sydnee:

On your skin. Um, in China it was even, like, a recommendation, like ancient beauty recommendation, that you should wear, like, dark blue clothing, because it would highlight your skin. Like, it would make it look paler.

Justin:

Oh. Does that work? I don't know.

Sydnee:

Which-

Justin:

That's probably a fashion question I guess.

Sydnee:

Yeah. I don't... Well, I guess? Contrast?

Justin:

Yeah, sure.

Sydnee:

Yeah, high contrast; to provide a contrast. Um, so anyway, fair was in. And I only mention this just because I think that, as we're moving forward you're gonna agree with me, that that's not necessarily still the trend.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Um, but the- we spend-

Justin:

Well it vacillates. I feel like pale has, has its moments sometimes.

Sydnee:

I'm gonna make a case for that.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Um, and then, and then, so, so fair skin is in, it's the beauty ideal, everybody's trying to protect themselves. We don't really know how, except for, as we move forward, we start to see, like the use of sunlight to treat things.

Justin:

Mm.

Sydnee:

So the idea that maybe sunlight is good for you starts to become commonplace. So, uh, the best example being tuberculosis. We talked a lot... We did a whole show on tuberculosis, and if you remember, because we had no idea what to do for it, we would like, sit TB patients out in the sun; they'd just sit here in the sun.

Justin:

Dry 'em out.

Sydnee:

[laughs] "This is probably good for you." Well, there was like the dry climate thing, but just like, sun in general, we thought. And I th- I mean, I guess

that's nice. Like if we're not gonna cure your TB, you can at least spend some time in the sun.

Justin:

Get your D. Just toast out there.

Sydnee:

Uh, and well, there was... That was another-

Justin:

Get your base tan.

Sydnee:

Well the... You mentioned vitamin D, but that was something else we started to discover, was a link between sunlight and vitamin D, and lack of vitamin D and rickets, and... So then we started thinking like, well, maybe the sun isn't all that bad. Maybe it's not this negative thing that hurts your skin.

Justin:

It's gotten a bum rap all these years.

Sydnee:

Right, um, but the beauty thing still held a lot of people back from spending time out in the sun, because, you know, if you wanted to look fancy, you were pale.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Until after the industrial revolution.

Justin:

What happen then Syd?

Sydnee:

Well that's when people started... That was when leisure time was invented.

Justin:

[laughs] Before that, everybody worked. And then we invented leisure.

Sydnee:

Well that's really true. There really were, like... I mean it- Yeah. Through a lot of human history. I mean, think about it. Like, for most of human history, we've been just trying to survive, man.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Like hunt, and gather.

Justin:

Stay alive so that future generations could invent leisure.

Sydnee:

Exactly. So that after the industrial revolution, there could be really rich people who would say like, "I have all this time on my hands, and I don't have work to do. What should I do?" And somebody was like, "I don't know, be leisurely?"

Justin:

I appreciate the gesture, past generations. I really do. I know you g- I give you guys a hard time, but, I really enjoy leisure now, so thank you for that.

Sydnee:

Thank you for inventing leisure time.

Justin:

Thank you for inventing leisure.

Sydnee:

And, um, where do you go for leisure time but the beach?

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

Right? Or some kind of lake.

Justin:

Well I didn't know they had to figure that all out.

Sydnee:

The seaside somewhere.

Justin:

Leisure time was still in its prototype faze. They with- They tried a lot of things maybe. They went to forests, they went to caves.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

Nothing.

Sydnee:

And somebody-

Justin:

"I'm not- Are you enjoying yourself?"

"I'm not. This does not feel leisurely to me."

"No, I was just thinking the same thing. We should try the beach."

Sydnee:

So what they d- They used Corona commercials as references and said, "They- Those people look quite leisurely."

Justin:

These- This time traveling Corona ad I found in a space bottle from- that traveled through time, and washed up on the beach has people... Why are we at the... Okay. So we're at the beach for no reason.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

A time traveling bottle rolls up with a Corona ad in it from the future. And we're like, "This is right. We should be here. I already like it here." And I was like, "Yeah, me too. And you know what I just invented? Uh, just invented daiquiris. Just like that. It was just simultaneous."

Sydnee:

[laughs] And also, hopefully, Corona.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

But that didn't come around until later.

Justin:

No. No, no, no, no.

Sydnee:

Definitely not using a lime in it.

Justin:

No. Absolutely not.

Sydnee:

Um, so, all these people started spending time at places like the beach and the lake. And I think humans are drawn to water when they wanna relax, or just whenever. And so they started, like, chilling outside more, and it started to become a thing like, well, you know, if you're rich, you've got time to hang out at the water, so maybe you start to get a tan. But what really... According to what I have read, and I find this hard to believe, a lot of people link it to Coco Chanel. One incident. Which this sounds apocryphal to me.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

But maybe it's true that, supposedly, Coco Chanel was, um, yachting, as you do when you're Coco Chanel.

Justin:

You're Chanel, yeah.

Sydnee:

Off the south of France.

Justin:

As you do.

Sydnee:

Um, as you do. And she was laying out on her yacht, and she fell asleep.

Justin:

Unsafe yacht operation for... if anybody's curious how to yacht. That is, that is a bad start.

Sydnee:

I'm going to assume someone else was steering.

Justin:

Yes.

Sydnee:

The yacht. I don't...

Justin:

I assume that Coco Chanel has her own yacht guy. I would hope she did.

Sydnee:

I would hope. I would, I would assume. It's Coco Chanel. Uh, so she's, so she's laying on her yacht, she falls asleep, she wakes up, and is just a sun kissed beauty, instantly. Now why she's not burnt, and why she's tan, in this story, I don't know.

Justin:

Just jumped to tan. Yeah.

Sydnee:

But it, but the story goes that she, she came back to the coast, and walked off the yacht, and instantaneously tanning became popular.

Justin:

"Coco, over here!" Click click click. Paparazzi.

Sydnee:

And she was just like, "This is intentional. Check out this tan."

Justin:

I'm assuming that it was more of like uh, a flashpoint perhaps, or a, a, a tipping point for tanning, rather than just like, her changing the whole game in one fell nap.

Sydnee:

I don't know. Maybe so.

Justin:

It's possible.

Sydnee:

So at that point, tanning really started to become a mark of wealth, first of all, cause you had time to be leisurely, and also then beauty. Especially from Coco Chanel. And then, you have to imagine the like, fashion would follow that, like, to show off more skin.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

You know? So that you could... You know, you didn't have to hide your skin and keep it un-untouched by the sun. You could uh, you could show off your tan. Um, now that didn't completely stop us from trying to protect ourselves. We were still trying to figure out why being out in the sun for a long time hurts us. Um, and that was when, as far back as 1918, that's when we first linked sun exposure with cancer. And specifically like you... You know, there were UV rays coming from the sun that could cause cellular damage. So, we've known this for a really long time. And as a result, people started trying to make real sunscreen.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And uh, so what do, what do they make it out of?

Sydnee:

Well, Justin, I'm gonna tell you all about sunscreen. But before I do, why don't you come with me down the billing department?

Justin:

Let's go.

[ad break]

Justin:

Okay, so people started making sunscreen Syd. What, what uh, what did that look like?

Sydnee:

So first... So, we go all the way back to 1878, there's a sunscreen that was made. It's got this, uh... Otto Veiel of Australia proposed it, and it had tannin in it, which was a substance that would stain your skin a yellowish brown color, if you applied it. So...

Justin:

Not...

Sydnee:

It may have worked somewhat...

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

But...

Justin:

But, but now you have to pay for that in a spray form, right?

Sydnee:

That's true. That maybe, in a sense, Otto invented the first spray tan and didn't realize it.

Justin:

That's... Wow. He should've trademarked that. He'd be rich.

Sydnee:

Although I don't know ag- Yellowish brown color, mm, I'm not sure exactly what color you're gonna end up looking.

Justin:

Yeah. That's fair.

Sydnee:

You may just look jaundiced.

Justin:

Yeah. Not great. So what other, what other options do I have available to me?

Sydnee:

The first, the first sunscreen that was commercially produced was by Milton Blake in Australia in the 1920s. Um, and that was, and that was the, the big seller for a long time. And a lot of these early sunscreens, uh, did work. Um, a lot of 'em were actually based on the idea that you could reflect the sun rays. So they were a sunblock is probably what you would've called them. We kinda use the terms interchangeably, but what you're really talking about with any kind of sun protectant, so to speak, is are absorb-like, are you absorbing sun's rays with the thing, or are you reflecting the sun's rays? So when you're talking about, like, the, like the zinc oxide kind of stuff that people... You know, that people put on their nose?

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

You know what I'm talking about?

Justin:

Kinda like the really strong white...

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Stuff.

Sydnee:

You're talking about like reflecting the sun's rays.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Newer sun screens, most of 'em kind of absorb the sun's rays is how they, is how they block the sun. So when we're talking about the older stuff, it's mainly reflector kind of things. So you probably would've seen them on people. So they weren't as popular.

Justin:

Yeah, that makes sense. Not as-

Sydnee:

And hard to coat yourself with.

Justin:

Not a great beach look.

Sydnee:

Um, in uh, in 1946, uh, a Swiss inventor, Franz Greiter made glacier cream.

Justin:

[laughs]

Sydnee:

Which sounded very fancy. Um, it was supposed to be better, but actually had an SPF today we would know of about two.

Justin:

Okay, not great. Not, not great Franz.

Sydnee:

No, this was... This was before SPFs, so he didn't know that.

Justin:

No.

Sydnee:

To his credit. He didn't know.

Justin:

Yeah, and in his defense, since he wasn't aware of them, it was very early in the process, that's like two better than none, he would probably say. It's 200% more effective than the leading remedy, which is nothing.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, now during World War II, Benjamin Green made a new, a new substance you could use to protect your skin from the sun. He used a red veterinary petroleum jelly, or, or what was called Red Vet Pet.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

Um, that did indeed create a barrier to the sun. It was effective as a sunscreen. Um, but, you were red.

Justin:

Oh, well that's not... That's not ideal.

Sydnee:

No. [laughs] Most people...

Justin:

That's what you're trying to avoid.

Sydnee:

It was very practical-

Justin:

Sure.

Sydnee:

For use, you know, like in a wartime setting. Like if you're out in the sun. I did- I wouldn't have thought much skin was exposed. Maybe their face is, you know.

Justin:

Sure. You got, you got, you got downtime out there.

Sydnee:

You get leisure time.

Justin:

Leisure time.

Sydnee:

We've invented leisure time by now.

Justin:

We've invented leisure time at this point.

Sydnee:

So, you... So you're outside, and you don't want your face to get burnt, so I guess like, putting something that was completely all over your face... Petroleum jelly too, was okay. Um, but later on her kinda, he kinda adjusted the formula, he added some cocoa butter. Because everybody loves cocoa butter. He added some coconut oil, because that smells wonderful.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

And, lo and behold, Coppertone.

Justin:

Oh, hey... Is that... So that's a reference to the original...

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Way it dyed your skin huh?

Sydnee:

Absolutely.

Justin:

Huh, interesting.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

I had no idea.

Sydnee:

Yeah. And obviously Coppertone eventually no longer turned you red.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Which made it a much more popular...

Justin:

In case the Coppertone folks are listening. We're not saying that's still a feature for your product.

Sydnee:

No, it does not make you red. I... As far as I know. I don't think I use Coppertone.

Justin:

They have some s- kid's sunscreens now that actually change your skin like, blue, for a bit, just so you can tell where it's all been applied. And then as it dries, it, it, it turns clear.

Sydnee:

Oh, okay. I was gonna say, that could be terrifying if they're swimming.

Justin:

Oh yeah. That would be horrific.

Sydnee:

If you turn around, and your kid's like...

Justin:

Don't. I can't.

Sydnee:

Swimming around, and they're blue. Like I'd freak out.

Justin:

I can't even think about that. It's terrifying.

Sydnee:

No. So, but it turns back to like, normal? To whatever your skin tone is?

Justin:

Yeah, after you... It's just so you can see where it's... make sure you got it everywhere, and then it dries clear.

Sydnee:

Okay. Well that's a pretty good idea.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Yeah. Um, so, with uh, with all this new sunscreen though, y- you would think that people were like, "Well, now that... now that they're making sunscreen, I should probably use it." But that wasn't necessarily... Not everybody felt the need to protect themselves against the sun. There was still this idea that had, kind of, permeated society, that you need some kind of healthy glow.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

That it was... It was not only, uh, beautiful to look like you'd spent a lot of time out in the sun, but that it was actually a, a mark that you were in better health than people who were pale.

This got worse... I guess that's the word I'm going to use for this. This got worse up until the 60s. And this really where you see kind of the height of this idea that tanning is the ideal. Um, there are way more products out in the 60s to make you tan more, than to make you tan less.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

So if you go... I mean, i- it would've... Especially if, like, you know, teenagers at the time, or young people probably were not going and buying sunscreen. They were going and buying, you know, um, tanning lotions that would...

Justin:

Make their skin more susceptible?

Sydnee:

Yes. Absolutely. And I remember these from back in the day, things that... I remember they had something called like a tingle factor. And when you put 'em on, they'd kinda burn; they'd kinda tingle. And then you would be in the sun, and that was bad. But I remember that these things existed.

Justin:

That's... Yeah. That sounds...

Sydnee:

It seems... And that's not that long... I'm not that old. It's not that long ago.

Justin:

But you know what? I could remember actual sunscreen stinging too, when I was a little kid. It used to sting. Maybe I'm just thinking about like, being in my eyes and stuff.

Sydnee:

Yeah.

Justin:

Maybe. I didn't get out a lot as a kid.

Sydnee:

I think that's what you're... [laughs]

Justin:

I didn't get outdoors much.

Sydnee:

[laughing] Maybe it was just being outside stung.

Justin:

"Ahh!"

Sydnee:

"Ahh! It's the sun!"

Justin:

"My eyes!"

Sydnee:

"I need to get back inside!"

Um, so this... along this trend, by the 70s we see the invention of the tanning bed.

Justin:

Euuuughhhh! Gross.

Sydnee:

Yes. Um, but, but, on the other hand in the 70s, and maybe in reaction to this, we also see SPF become a thing. So this... the idea that we can start rating sunscreens, and the, the FDA gets involved to start regulating sunscreens and the sun protectant factor so you can actually figure out, like, is this product that I'm buying, that might be turning me a color, yellow or red or whatever the sunscreen is, is it actually protecting me from the sun? Which, I mean I guess you find out sooner or later.

Justin:

Right. It doesn't take much... much work to figure that out.

Sydnee:

But you'd prefer to find it out before you go outside in the sun and get burnt, rather than after.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

So then we see like the FDA starts regulating these, and you start getting numbers, and like, okay, this one's better than this one, and, and that kind of thing. Um, and you can't make like outrageous claims.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Um, by the 80s we figured out that there are problems from both UVA and UVB rays. So you know that both kinds of rays from the sun are dangerous, and can... it can cause skin damage, and, and cancer. And a- as a result, as we move into the 90s and 2000s, you see more and more types of sunscreen, you see broader spectrum ones that cover both types of rays. Um, uh, they're more popular. And then you see, like, spray sunscreens and things that are water resistant. If it says waterproof, that does not mean you can swim all day and not reapply.

Justin:

Got it.

Sydnee:

Um, and then of course, you know, sunscreen really took off with that whole Baz Luhrmann thing in 1999.

Justin:

Sure, that lit the fire.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

That was the anti Coco Chanel.

Sydnee:

There are probably young people who are listening who don't know what we're talking about.

Justin:

Just google it. Baz Luhrmann made a thing out of somebody else's thing, that a lot of people thought was written by Kurt Vonnegut but wasn't, and it's called... What is it just called Wear Sunscreen I think? Or...

Sydnee:

Y- You're Free to Wear Sunscreen?

Justin:

Free to Wear... *Everybody's Free to Wear Sunscreen.*

Sydnee:

That's what it was called.

Justin:

That's what it is called.

Sydnee:

Yeah. And he gives you like life advice.

Justin:

Yeah. Go check it out.

Sydnee:

And also-

Justin:

I have no idea if it'll be culturally reso- resonate or not.

Sydnee:

I don't know if it will either.

Justin:

I have no clue.

Sydnee:

I don't know.

Justin:

But in the... in the late 90s we were in-to it.

Sydnee:

It was. It was considered very cool then. And either way, it tells you to wear sunscreen, so go for it.

Justin:

Go, go nuts.

Sydnee:

Um, a- a-... Of course by now we see that like, self tanning is a popular alternative; like spray tanning, or you know, like s- s- the things you can massage in, like mousses and stuff, to just make you look tan, but not actually be tan. And also, pale skin is coming back.

Justin:

Woo!

Sydnee:

I actually don't know if that's true, I just declared it.

Justin:

All right. Put... There you go.

Sydnee:

Folks, you heard it here first.

Justin:

Sydnee McElroy, the Coco Chanel of her day, has declared that pale skin is back.

Sydnee:

That's right. I... I, as I do every year, the first warm day of the season, I emerge from my house. It's not the south of France, and I'm on a yacht. But I do emerge from my garage, and I am wearing a T-shirt and shorts, and the reflection of the sun off my pale, pale skin blinds my neighbors, and they say, "Oh my gosh, who is that pale beauty?" [laughs]

Justin:

[laughing] "She's back."

Sydnee:

"I can't see, but oh I love that look."

Justin:

"Let me... Let me get a Tumblr post up about it real quick."

Sydnee:

"I want... I want to blind my neighbors too. How do I do that?" And I'm like, "It's easy. Just don't go outside."

Justin:

Syd, how much SPF do I need?

Sydnee:

You know, it's funny, you'll read a lot about this. This is a big like, conspiracy theory online, but it's actually fairly true: SPF really maxes out around 45 or 50. The sun protectant factor, it's really not... Like if you go over that, if something says that it's more than that, it's really not. It's 45 or 50. But honestly, a lot of dermatologists will tell you 30 is fine; that that's plenty.

Justin:

Hmm.

Sydnee:

Because if you look at the numbers, like 15 blocks out like — And I don't have these percentages in... I'm doing this from memory. So it's close to this — are about 96% of the sun's rays. And if you go up to like 30, it's like 97%. And then if you get up to like 45 and 50, it's like 98%.

Justin:

So any sunscreen is better than... Is way, way, way, way better than none.

Sydnee:

Exactly. Exactly. I would say that if you really want to make sure, 30 is fine to go with. If you're paying more for... for stuff that says it's like 60, to 80, that... I would not pay more for that kind of thing. Um, but it's not, it's not directly related. It's not like 30's twice as strong as 15. I think that's interesting.

Justin:

Hmm. That's inter-

Sydnee:

Um, and it's a measure... It's actually, the way they derive those numbers, it's a measure of the time it would take for your skin to burn without sunscreen, relative to with this sunscreen, and then somehow they get a number out of that. But, but, 30 at least.

Justin:

Crazy.

Sydnee:

30 is what I would go for.

Justin:

Okay.

Sydnee:

I would go for a 30. Um, there are all kinds of weird treatments for sunburns. So let's say you didn't take my advice, and you did get a sunburn. If you check the internet, [laughing] you will find that people put everything...

Justin:

Just whatever they got handy. You just reach for the first open container and put it on yourself.

Sydnee:

That's absolutely true. I was reading these, and I found... These are some of the recommendations I found. So, if you have a sunburn, here's what you should do: you should put some lettuce on it, and some cucumbers on it,

and some tomatoes on it, and some vinegar on it, and I think we just made a salad. [laughs]

Justin:

Yeah. Or just...

Sydnee:

On you.

Justin:

Or just skip the middle man. Put some tzatziki sauce on there. You're good to go.

Sydnee:

[laughs] Um, you could also try... I mean, really you'll find anything. Smashed up strawberries, coconut oil. Um, one thing I read said that you should cut potatoes in half and rub raw potatoes all over your skin.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Which would be awfully time consuming. Fat free milk. That was specifically mentioned. Not just milk.

Justin:

Not just milk. Fat free milk.

Sydnee:

Fat free milk. Eat a bunch of sunflower seeds, because they contain a lot of vitamin E, and vitamin E is good for your skin. Um, eat yogurt, use tea bags on your skin, baking soda. Um, as far as do these things work, I don't know. I mean, I- I figure it this way: if you really wanna smear yourself with like yogurt, or strawberries, or tomatoes or whatever, I mean fine, go for it.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Why not? There are a lot of these things that have like, certain, uh, anti-inflammatory kind of properties.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

That might take some of the sting out. So I can see... Like, a lot of people will say that about vinegar; that it'll take some of the sting out of the sunburn. And it, it may. It's not gonna cure it. It's gonna go away. Um, so if you don't feel like rubbing yourself with like, boiled lettuce water...

Justin:

Don't.

Sydnee:

Just don't. It's okay. If you- if you're into it, or if it's like a good excuse for you and your... you know, you and your loved one to like... you know, experiment with some...

Justin:

While sunburned? No better time to make whoopee.

Sydnee:

[laughing] I don't know what... I don't know...

Justin:

Uh, what are, what are actual treatments? What can I actually do? Give me the list.

Sydnee:

Okay. So some actual treatments... Wait, I have to tell you this one other thing. I found, I found one other thing. Great advice on the internet. Uh, this is one website, these are the things that they recommended. So don't wear sunscreen, cover up, eat real food, and get a tan were the recommendations. So this is, this... And the reason I mention this... This was one website's sun protection regiment.

Justin:

Mm-hmm [affirmative].

Sydnee:

Is don't just read the internet and do anything they say on there. Because that's all bad advice.

Justin:

Yeah.

Sydnee:

Instead...

Justin:

Well, cover up isn't bad advice.

Sydnee:

Well, cover up is fine, but, like, if you think that eating real food, whatever that means, eating real food is gonna protect you from a sunburn...

Justin:

That's our problem. We don't eat enough raw food.

Sydnee:

And also don't wear sunscreen and get a tan, well... Anyway.

Justin:

Anyway.

Sydnee:

Here's what you should actually do: first of all, don't get sun burnt.

Justin:

That's good.

Sydnee:

Prevent it. That's, that's the best thing you can do, is um, wear sunscreen. Do- I mean, loose fitting clothing, like, I know it's hot out and you don't wanna be, you know, draped in lots of clothing, but loose fitting clothing. Covering up your extremities, wearing a hat, those are all good ideas.

Justin:

Use a sun- Use a sunbrella.

Sydnee:

Yes. Yes. Absolutely. Get out of the sun when you start... Like, if you start to feel like, you know, when your skin starts to get that tight feeling, like a... like, you get a little sore, like you're getting-

Justin:

Then it's already too late.

Sydnee:

Well get out of the sun though, cause a lot of people don't do that.

Justin:

Right.

Sydnee:

Um, if you do get a sunburn, hydrate. It's important, you know, because you're losing a lot of, of insensible fluid losses; you're losing fluid. So hydrate yourself. Moisturize your skin. That's a good idea if you get a sunburn. Things like anti inflammatories that are over the counter; ibuprofen, or you know, Aleve, Naproxen; that kind of thing can help. Um, aloe really can take the sting out. Although again, we're not talking about curing a sunburn. The only thing that cures a sunburn is time.

Justin:

I uh, uh, just as a real quick aside before we wrap up, uh, this is kind of a hard show for me, cause if you didn't know this, maybe you did, my mom died from skin cancer about 10 years ago, so... I say that not to freak you out, or to, to bring things down, but just to say that this is serious stuff, and a lot of people, um, treat it like it's not; like it's just, you know, some advice you can take or not. But I'm here to tell you that it is very, very, very, very important. So please, take the time, take the extra 30 seconds before you leave the house. Even if you're not going to beach, if you're just out and about. On a bright sunny day. Apply your sunscreen, because it could just save your life.

Sydnee:

That's absolutely true. There really is a... research to back up that wearing sunscreen, and protecting yourself from burns can prevent, specifically, squamous cell, cancer of the skin, and melanoma.

Justin:

Or just stay inside all day and listen to podcasts. That's an option.

Sydnee:

That's right.

Justin:

You got that. That's right.

Sydnee:

We are, we McElroys are producing 'em left and right, so check out all of our podcasts.

Justin:

Yeah, you can't... Yeah, like *Sawbones*. Uh, I do one called, uh, *The Adventure Zone* with my brothers where we play DnD. We do advice podcast called *My Brother and My Brother and Me*. Uh, I have a food review show on YouTube called *Things I Bought at Sheets*. Uh, I have a game, video game podcast called *Quality Control*.

Sydnee:

Travis has *Bunker Buddies* that he does with Andy.

Justin:

Right, and he has another one called Trends Like These he does with his friend Brent about what's hot on the internet. And Griffin doesn't have a side project, cause he's... I don't know. Maybe he's working another job.

Sydnee:

He's just lazy, and we're very disappointed in him.

Justin:

Very disappointed.

Sydnee:

[laughs]

Justin:

So listen to all those. Many of them are on the Maximum Fun Network, which we are a proud member of. You can find all those shows at maximumfun.org. Thank you to The Taxpayers for letting us use their song *Medicines* to intro and outro this show. We really do appreciate that. Thank you so much for listening. One other quick note: we're gonna be in, uh, the Pacific Northwest at the end of, uh, August. Uh, go to bit.ly/MBMBAMSeattle, or bit.ly/VanMBMBAM. That's Seattle and Vancouver. Uh, last weekend of August, it's gonna be *Sawbones* and *My Brother and My Brother and Me*, and it's gonna be fun. So you should come out and see us.

Sydnee:

And Riley will be there.

Justin:

Riley will be there. That's true.

Sydnee:

Who you, who you like better than Justin.

Justin:

Yeah. Ow. Thank you so much for that. Uh, that's gonna do it for us folks. Until next Wednesday, I'm 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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